Embodiment as a Healing Process: Native American Women and Performance

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Theatrical roles which may be termed autobiographical can be uniquely therapeutic for both the performer and the spectator, as well as aesthetically and thematically powerful, and have a heightened importance in work by Aboriginal women. In this article I will focus on the examples of Shirley Cheechoo's one-woman show *A Path With No Moccasins*, and Rosalie Jones's dance-drama *No Home But the Heart.* I will also discuss Monique Mojica's play *Princess Pocahontas and the Blue Spots,* and allude to some further examples. The autobiographical nature of the performance is quite different in each case, taking on various shades of complexity, but I will argue that, in each example, the central commonality is the importance of healing and the manifestation of that mission in the body of the performer.

In reference to Black women writing for the stage, African-Canadian playwright Djanet Sears has explained that to write is to "define ourselves, by ourselves, and create stories to keep that definition within the limits of our own controls." [i] Sears, (who was also the director and dramaturge for *Princess Pocahontas*. . .) suggests that this activity is a form of healing, a longing to tell one's story, a process which is also a symbolic gesture to recover the past, to gain a sense of reunion and release: "We have created our own theatre from a language that was forced upon us, and we season it with our own sense of rhythm, ritual and music. Not a song and dance, but a heightened language and ritual." [ii] Métis writer Maria Campbell, among many others, has argued that the storyteller has an essential place in the healthy spiritual life of the community. [iii] To illustrate, Native dramatist Jordan Wheeler explains, "The victory in the aboriginal story is when harmony can be achieved between the character and his or her environment. . . During five hundred years of contact, the lives of aboriginal people have borne the onslaught of pain and tragedy. The result is a beleagured, traumatized people suffering deep wounds. At present the aboriginal community is healing, and stories that reflect the struggle, and the resulting harmonious existence with a given environment, help the healing process."[iv] It is not surprising that this

healing storytelling should take place in the theatre. Tomson Highway suggests that the Native "oral tradition translates most easily and effectively into a three dimensional medium. In a sense, it's like taking the 'stage' that lives inside the mind, the imagination, and transposing it -- using words, actors, lights, sound -- onto the stage in a theatre." [v] Theorist Barbara Godard writes that it is useful to think about oral literature *as* performance, because it:

> distributes the emphasis equally between text and context, between text and receiver. Artistic performance sets up an interpretive frame within which the messages being communicated are to be understood. Performance as frame invites special attention to and heightened awareness of the act of expression . . . [F]ormal patterns have the power to engage the audience's participation, binding its members to the performer as co-participants in an event. [vi]

It is also unsurprising that a number of Native works for theatre have taken the form of the autobiographical monologue, or one-person show, since this particular form is so closely associated with issues of self-identity. Highway's analogy of taking the creative story inside one's head and projecting it onto other bodies can also apply to taking one's intangible sense of identity and personal experience and putting it outside into a physical form. For example, while Highway is best known for his large cast plays, I find it telling that when it came to sharing the very personal story of his own brother's death, Highway chose to use the monologue form.[vii]

Autobiographical and one-person shows have a strong tradition in Canadian theatre, and much of the power resides in the phenomenon of the actor-writer "playing" themselves. In performance, it is the artist's physical presence, their body, which becomes the signifier of authenticity and the site of lived experience. For women, especially, experience of one's own body is often one of lack of control, alienation, and even loathing, which is further compounded with histories of abuse. To reclaim one's own body, to physically re-inhabit it in a public ceremony of sorts, can be both personally healing and artistically profound. As Muriel Miguel, founder of Spiderwoman Theater, notes: "How do you express... in a gesture, in body language, with sound, not using the word? . . . those are the really interesting things when you start looking into what the

body does, where sound comes from, working hard enough to try to get rid of your clichés."[viii] Although she has problems with her own one-person play, *Moonlodge,* being labelled as therapy, Margo Kane recognizes: "It may be therapy to some because it is a story that can assist in the healing process. These stories developed out of a need to say something about native experience, not to educate people about spiritual ways but to remind and state that these practices are still alive -- they are necessary for the healing of our people. That we, ourselves, must reconnect. That healing can occur even against all odds." [ix] Kane is correct in noting that critical reaction to theatre coming from an identified community, whether feminist or "ethnic," is often patronizing. However, I think it is quite common for audiences and critics alike to feel that a one-person show is a unique theatrical form; when the actor is also the author, when the work has autobiographical elements, and when it explicitly addresses a loss of identity, it would be unusual *not* to assume the work has therapeutic benefits. Art and therapy are not mutually exclusive. Part of the reason that a work is healing is because it is aesthetically rewarding, it uses the artificiality of performance to, paradoxically and metaphorically, speak the truth.

Shirley Cheechoo is a multi-talented Cree artist who expresses herself not only as an actress and playwright, but also as a painter, musician and singer, director and producer. She is also the founder of Debajehmujig Theatre Group, a unique theatre company and training environment for Native artists located on the Wikwemikong Unceded Reserve on Manitoulin Island, where her play *A Path With No Moccasins* premiered in 1991. [x] In summing up the play's impact, the Regina *Leader-Post* proclaimed it to be, " Introspective, haunting and appalling in its blunt blast of reality to anybody who claims to know what life was like in Indian residential schools." *NOW* Magazine said: *"Path With No Moccasins* confronts painful memories in a gentle style full of good humour and sharp observation and rich in remembered detail." [xi] The reviewer of one production wrote: "it worked because this woman was so emotionally involved in her play that the audience feels immediately drawn into her life story. Cheechoo cries true tears, and the audience realized that this was not just acting. After all, the play is about her life and the pain of her past and is a play that could not be captured by any other actor." [xii]

Shirley Cheechoo spent her early childhood on traplines with her parents and brother, but was sent to residential school at the age of nine. There she was beaten and told that her parents would die if she ran away. As punishment, her hair was cut and the other children were encouraged to taunt her with the name "Woody Woodpecker." Cheechoo left the school at 15 and went on to struggle with substance abuse. When she was 23 she almost killed a friend while drunk. This incident spurred her to change her life and led, in turn, to the exploration of her artistic talent. Cheechoo explains: "When I began my work I wanted revenge on people for what they had done to me as a child. Once I had healed, I began to look for things in my culture that I could use to reflect reality." [xiii]

In my opinion, the most intriguing aspect of *A Path With No Moccasins* is its autobiographical structure. In four sections, Cheechoo becomes herself at four different ages. The play follows Shirley from residential school at age nine, through periods of alcohol abuse and searching for identity in her twenties, to a healing closure on Manitoulin Island at age 35. The play takes the form of a healing ritual in which, by embodying her own trauma and addiction, the actor emerges renewed and stronger after each performance. The play is clearly autobiographical. In the dedication at the beginning of the published text, Cheechoo writes that she has "transformed my life into a 90 minute play, not knowing that it would be seen by so many people." [xiv] The printed text is not an unbroken monologue, but indicates to whom the various speeches are directed -- usually "To Us," or "To Herself." But often the indication is "Reliving," and significantly, at the end there are three speeches in a row that are labeled "She Connects":

> - This is my body. No one is allowed to touch it unless I allow it. I have the choice to dance, to dance the dance of life. I hate those men for not dancing with me.
> - The eyes of others are my mirrors. What I put out will come back to teach me. Is that why everybody was so angry around me because I was?
> - Those sleeping children taking a path with no moccasins awake. I am one of them. (46)

In his Introduction to the published text, Native Canadian actor Gary Farmer writes that, "in

reading it, we begin the process of healing for ourselves... I offer my thanks to the writer for her humble effort that all may see" (8). I would argue that by "seeing" the work performed, the message and hope of healing is that much stronger. As powerful as it may be to read about Cheechoo's painful experiences, it is that much more effective to watch her become her earlier selves and live through her transformation once again.

In an issue of *Canadian Theatre Review* dedicated to the theme "The Body," guest editor Catherine Graham comments that, increasingly, we are coming to understand that there is a kind of knowledge that is developed and transmitted through the body, challenging the "exclusive use of conceptual reason" as a means to make sense of our world.[xv] An insistence on ignoring the body and denying its role in our cognition of reality, is "not borne out by practical experience" and amounts to a kind of sickness, or, as Daniel David Moses explains it: "that alienation from yourself that the mainstream mindset creates. Up in your head you're separate from your animal self." [xvi] Cognitive scientists have posited that: "Cognition is not the representation of a pregiven world by a pregiven mind but is rather the enactment of a world and a mind on the basis of a history of the variety of actions that a being in the world performs." [xvii] Graham points out that this is both a description of social behaviour, conditioned by the gender, ethnicity and class of the body in question, but it is also a description of how an actor creates the fictional world of performance -- by imagining and "being" within that world.

In the same issue of *CTR*, director Michelle Newman writes: "when one is working with the body, with presence, incarnation, one is also working with absence incarnate. With the wounds, losses, traumas, memories, dreams, imaginings, desires, even the other bodies that this body incarnates. Of course, in the theatre, one regularly works with many of these categories of absence …." [xviii] Newman says that the impulse is usually to cover over these wounds, to create the image of a "unified body," but advocates instead allowing the actor to identify the symptoms of absence and move from there:

What if the body could give body to, could transform, could dance with loss?

> What other movements, embodiments, remembrances might be possible? . . . What if the body were at last allowed to mourn?. . . For we live in a world, a culture decimated by violence, trauma, ashes still around us everywhere, and yet we are not really permitted to mourn, neither our public nor our private disasters, without always being urged towards forgetting, containment, closure of the wound. (21)

This is a fascinating theory when applied to the examples in question here. It is possible that a performance such as Cheechoo's does just what Newman asks: it is an act of mourning, an act of remembering physically, of making those absent (like Cheechoo's deceased father, like the child that Shirley Cheechoo once was, like all those displaced and lost in the process of colonial invasion) present again, but in the contained and sacred space of the theatre. Thus the wound is not denied, but it is not kept open in "real life" either. It can be honoured in this theatrical setting, in a way that provokes a special kind of recognition in the audience, in what Cixous calls " a sanctuary of recollection."[xix]

Barbara Godard identifies another way in which Native performance works: "it posits the word as a process of knowing, provisional and partial, rather than as revealed knowledge itself, and aims to produced texts in performance that would create truth as interpretation rather than those in the Western mimetic tradition that reveal truth as pre-established knowledge" (184). I find this especially relevant to the three examples under consideration here; there is a strong sense that truth is being created in the moment, and I think that distinction comes from the presence of the performer. It is not a question of a lecture, revealing pre-known facts, nor of an actor playing a rehearsed part. Rather, what the audience witnesses and participates in is the performer discovering and creating a truth for herself, making contact with it physically, a kind of epistemology (and epiphany) of the body. *Inhabiting this self, breathing as she did, I come to understand her*.

Native performance culture has a particularly complex and rewarding set of circumstances to work with. Writers such as Agnes Grant have noted the importance of dreams and the belief in shape-shifting in Native spirituality, and has argued that this lends itself to the creative imagination: "Shape-shifting, the transformation of the body form, which is found in myths and

legends, was not merely a literary device; it was an article of belief and it surfaces in contemporary writing. Visions and the importance of dreams still play an important role in some contemporary societies so they too are reflected in the literature." [xx] Rosalie Jones(who goes by her performance name, Daystar) recounts that an elderly Native woman once asked her, after a performance, if the subject matter had come from a vision. This realization that her work is both an artistic activity and a visionary process came as a revelation for her. Art is a new way to seek visions. Daystar encourages everyone to look at storytelling, the story of their own life and family and how it relates to history and to the circumstances of growing up; the "Talking Circle" can be a healing form for personal and group storytelling. As she explains: "I feel my family story is a very universal one because many Native Americans have a similar story: intermarriage between tribes or with non-native people; the whole process of assimilation and acculturation; adapting to the modern world and changes as they occur. . . Being a dancer and wanting that to coincide with who I am as a person -- Native American and non-Native American. This is actually what the performance is all about. Identity is at the root of it." [xxi] Or, as an art teacher once advised her: "You'll never do any really good work until it comes out of who you are as a person." [xxii]

Daystar's *No Home But the Heart* is autobiographical, subtitled "An Assembly of Memories," although here the embodiment is not only of the author's self but also of her foremothers. The structure is multi-layered, drawing upon events in the lives of the choreographer's ancestors but taking creative license to weave them into a larger context. Rosalie Jones, who is of Pembina Chippewa ancestry, was born on the Blackfeet Reservation in Montana, and from an early age, she was intrigued by stories her mother told about her grandmother and great-grandmother. In *No Home But the Heart*, Jones has tied these stories, selected events from the lives of her female ancestors, to historical events that affected the resettlement of Native peoples on the Northern Plains. As she explains: "History has to be brought down to a personal level. The watermark events that spark personal transformation also mark the passage of time in this production." [xxiii]

Daystar developed her performance *No Home But the Heart* over a period of five years,

beginning in 1995 when, after a career of interpreting traditional tales, she decided it was time to tell her own story.[xxiv] She uses her own family as a vehicle to tell how Natives have adapted and been assimilated over 100 years through events that impacted both Canada and the United States, such as the 1837 smallpox epidemic, the creation of reserves, railroad expansion, selling lands, and boarding schools. The challenge was to find a dramatic context with scenes, lines, and resolution. Daystar wrote down what she remembered in a free flow until structures emerged and she saw themes reoccur. The form came naturally by asking about each generation of woman: where is she when she is young, and where in age? If she were alive today, what would she want to say? Finally, the daughter (who represents Daystar but is played by another dancer) is primarily young because she leads to the resolution. This structure tells the story in capsulized form, and leaves the middle of each story up to the audience's imagination while still allowing for continuity.

The particular qualities of each of her female ancestors energize Daystar, as she "fleshes out the transformative quality" of each character. Susan Big Knife was Daystar's great-grandmother, who came from Canada with the Little Shell Band of Chippewa to live on the Blackfeet reservation in Montana and spoke a dialect of French Cree. Daystar learned that Susan Big Knife was a medicine woman and also that she lost one eye at some point in her life. Daystar has imagined this as the event where the spirit came and she became a medicine woman. Daystar accumulated physical objects, such as a medicine bag, things her great-grandmother would have had, and began to experiment with moving with the drum until, in her words, the breath came. Once she was able to inhabit her great-grandmother through the way she might have moved and even breathed, the connection was made. Daystar comments: "I'm only now getting ... where it feels like its authentic, that I'm not pretending to be old." [xxv] I think that element of authenticity comes from the working method being rooted in physical movement. As Daystar herself ages, her connection with her great-grandmother becomes experiential and the performance takes on a deeper level of identification.

After Susan Big Knife, we are introduced to Rose Jackson, Daystar's grandmother. This scene reminds me of playwright Beth Herst's remarks on the importance of the body in theatre by

Canadian women. Invoking Audre Lorde's concept of auto-bio-mythography, Herst explains, " the centrality of the body, its insistent, problematic presence as the site and source of dramatic conflict," and "the preoccupation with a wounded yet enduring body." [xxvi] It is interesting, too, that in the case of the three bodies being considered here (Cheechoo, Jones, and Mojica) the woundedness is not immediately or visually apparent -- these are all strikingly beautiful, strong-looking women. They display endurance, and they have to work at revealing the pain. This is particularly vivid in the case of Jones and her depiction of her grandmother, Rose Jackson, whose womb fell after many childbirths. Jones, who is tall, straight and graceful, becomes contorted with pain, wrapping black ribbons around her head and twisting her legs up into the air in a wordless evocation of the home remedy applied to her grandmother, whose legs were tied with a rope and hoisted in the air, suspended from an iron hook in the ceiling to give her some relief. As Herst writes, the body is ultimately inescapable, a source of suffering and of strength: "It is memory, identity and story too" (68).

As for *Princess Pocahontas and the Blue Spots*, it is not, strictly speaking, autobiographical.[xxvii] However, as Ric Knowles and Jen Harvie point out, "as an antihegemonic revisioning of dominant myths of Native women, written and performed by Mojica out of a strong and resisting subject position, from which its various characters, historical and contemporary, seem to emerge -- it can be seen as a kind of spiritual/historical autobiography." The play's mission is a recovering of a lost sense of self by positing a strong, stable, and empowering community of Native women, and explicitly tying identity to the biological marker of the blue spot at the base of the spine. [xxviii] Mojica incorporates the story of the blue spot as a sign of authenticity, and the play is concerned with the differences between "storybook" and "real" Native women. However, there appears to be an awareness of how "realness" is complicated by other factors besides biology, and that the presence of a physical characteristic does not guarantee identity. Mojica is accompanied in performance by a musician, Alejandra Nunez, who is Chilean-Canadian, and who contributed material about the *mestiza*, the offspring of the Spanish and Native Americans. Mojica, as the child of a Kuna-Rappahannock mother and a Jewish father, is herself

concerned with issues of hybridity. As Knowles and Harvie point out: “The myths of Native identity that it attacks or constructs are indiscriminately drawn from all of North, Central and South America; and the hybrid nature of Native and other ethnicities is asserted at every turn and embodied in the author-performer...” (208). The play contains a recurring theme of Native women collaborating with white men, acting as guides and interpreters, bearing their children. In one sense, these women ensured the survival of their race in a new form, sometimes at great personal sacrifice, but on the other hand, they were sometimes condemned as traitors.

Princess Pocahontas and the Blue Spots has a complex structure, rooted in the valorization of nature and matrilineal tradition, which Mojica claims was inherent to the characters [xxix] In the play, Contemporary Woman #1 states that, “I do not represent all Native women. I am one,” yet she also embodies countless women across 500 years of history, and suggests a commonality between them based on race and gender. The published version (Toronto: Women’s Press, 1991), explains the play's structure, which consists of thirteen "transformations," but the distinctions between each character or entity are not as evident in performance. As Mojica moves from one transformation to the next, it is as if she is illustrating different aspects of a single subject, evidence, I think, of her deep desire to express a solidarity with her foremothers. Ric Knowles points out that the play works across many borders, from geographical and historical locations, performance genre, history, fiction, and myth, “In fact, the play might seem to combine the shape-shifting qualities of the Trickster figure ubiquitous in various Native cosmologies” (149). Indeed, the transformational structure of the play and its fluidity in performance are themselves a model and a call to arms for Native women.

There are other examples of work by Native women which might also be discussed in terms of autobiography and embodiment. Lori Blondeau of Saskatoon, for example, creates performance art that draws on her personal encounters with the stereotypes of “Indian Princess” and “Squaw.” One piece is based on an incident from her own childhood when she attempted to bleach her skin whiter. Native women’s performance troupes that draw on the personal history of their members include Spiderwoman Theater, particularly their show *Sun Moon and Feather* from

1981, and Coatlicue/Las Colorado Theatre Company in *1992: Blood Speaks* and *Cloud Serpents*. [xxx] Interestingly, both of these examples are troupes of sisters who draw on their own family histories. The title *Sun Moon and Feather* is taken from parts of the Native names of the three sisters/Spiderwoman performers: Lisa Mayo, Gloria Miguel and Muriel Miguel (Kuna/Rappahannock). Elvira and Hortensia Colorado of Coatlicue explain: "These are the stories of our lives… Our theatre work consists of personal stories coming from our oral traditions, which not only entertain, but educate and heal. " [xxxi] There have also been collaborations between these two troupes, such as *Power Pipes (*1992*)*. In another example, Hortensia Colorado was one of the performers in Spiderwoman's *Winnetou's Snake Oil Show from Wigwam City (*1991). Even in plays like this one, which are somewhat less autobiographical, the performers appear as themselves at some point in the presentation. In the cast list, each actor is listed as playing a number of roles, but each is also listed as "playing" herself. For example, after the characters Gunther, Witch #2, Princess Pissy Willow, and Demon #3, Lisa Mayo writes, "At certain moments, during the serious times of the play, I am Lisa Mayo, Cuna/Rappahannock." [xxxii] Similarly, in *Open Wounds on Tlalteuctli* (1995), "a series of vignettes of Native women's experiences in the Americas," the Colorado sisters draw on their Chichimec/Otomi storytelling tradition for a declamatory delivery and the adoption of many roles. [xxxiii] As with the examples of Cheechoo, Daystar, and Mojica, the acknowledgment of the performer *as* a performer is crucial to the meaning of the performance, as is her physical presence as a self-identified Aboriginal woman.

One of the reasons the autobiographical show is so popular is that it draws attention to an essential element of theatre. As Ann Wilson notes, much acting theory is about finding an authentic self, an originating wholeness that living in the world has alienated us from: "Theatre promises to repair the damage and allows for a recuperation of this lost human essence." [xxxiv] Wilson argues, however, that the story one tells about one's self must take into account the forces that have shaped that story, the conditions of living in contemporary society, and not rely on some ahistorical sense of untouched authenticity. The best auto-performances are the ones that "render the self as complex," and one might argue that such complexity is unavoidable for the

contemporary Native performer. As Elizabeth Theobald, an American director of Cherokee descent, observes: "To say the least, identity in a Native world with 500 different Nations and 500 years of oppression, acculturation, adoption, boarding schools, intermarriage, and forced migration can be very confusing. Our stories are unique, individual, and we wear the scars of our histories on our sometimes dreary day-to-day lives." [xxxv]

Finally, the very act of rendering this complexity visible can be seen as empowering. As Daniel David Moses comments:

> One of the words that always comes up in Native gatherings, and particularly among Native artists, is that it is part of our jobs as Native artists to help people heal. . . I think our cultures probably allow us to be more autobiographical than the mainstream... I think it comes from the attitude that everyone is an individual spirit with something unique to say which is important in the life of the entire community. And most Native writers are... speaking first to their own community. [xxxvi]

In these works by Aboriginal women, the scars of history are worn on the body, and made visible by a kind of storytelling that is a mixture of public testimonial and personal healing. While it is primarily the performer herself who is healed, by witnessing their performances, that healing can be shared by the audience and wider community.

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NOTES

[i] Djanet Sears, "Naming Names: Black Women Playwrights in Canada," *Women on the Canadian Stage: The Legacy of Hrotsvit,* ed. Rita Much (Winnipeg: Blizzard, 1992), 97.
[ii] Ibid.,102.
[iii] Quoted in Daniel David Moses, "Write About Now: A Monologue in Changing Lights." *Canadian Theatre Review*, 65 (Winter 1990), 48.
[iv] Jordan Wheeler, "Voice," *Aboriginal Voices: Amerindian, Inuit, and Sami Theater*, eds. Per Brask and William Morgan (Baltimore, London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 39.
According to Drew Hayden Taylor in "Storytelling to Stage: The Growth of Native Theatre in Canada," *TDR,* Vol. 41 No. 3 (Fall 1997),149, traditional Native storytelling does not usually involve much overt conflict, at least not in the way of the European dramatic process, and is therefore sometimes accused of being non-dramatic.

[v] Tomson Highway, "On Native Mythology," *Canadian Theatre History: Selected Readings*, ed. Don Rubin (Toronto: Copp Clark Ltd., 1996), 420-423. Reprinted from *Theatrum,* 6 (Spring 1987), 421.
[vi] Barbara Godard, "Listening for the Silence: Native Women's Traditional Narratives," *The Native in Literature,* eds. Thomas King, Cheryl Calver and Helen Hoy (Oakville, ON: ECW Press, 1987), 137. Further references will be included in text in parentheses.
[vii] This monologue was performed by George Leach as part of a show called *Mortality*, conceived and directed by Ross Manson, which premiered at The Theatre Centre in Toronto in January 2002.

[viii] Quoted in Marjorie Beaucage, "Strong and Soft: Excerpts from a Conversation with Muriel Miguel," *Canadian Theatre Review,* 68 (Fall 1991), 7.
[ix] Margo Kane, "From the Centre of the Circle the Story Emerges," *Canadian Theatre Review,* 68 (Fall 1991), 29.
[x] The name, Debajehmujig, is Cree/Ojibway for "telling of tales," or "first storytellers." See Shannon Hengen,"Tellers of Tales," *Canadian Theatre Review,* 106 (Spring 2001), 35.
[xi] It was produced by PAS Cultural Exchange Arts with the Association for Native Development in the Performing and Visual Arts. It has also been performed for CBC Morningside Drama and at a "Celebration of Native Women Playwrights" at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, sponsored by

their theatre department and the Native American Women Playwrights Archive. The play has been published by The Talent Group in Toronto, and also in a collection of plays called *Canadian Mosaics* (1995), edited by Aviva Ravel. Quotes from reviews are from the published texts.
[xii] Kim Morrison, "A Look into Real Life," *The Meliorist* (30 Sept. 1999), 17. In September of 1999, Shirley Cheechoo gave two performances of *A Path With No Moccasins* at the University of Lethbridge. As part of her residency at Lethbridge, Cheechoo also gave a public talk, participated in a Fine Arts Council conference of high school teachers, and screened her short film *Silent Tears*.

[xiii] Quoted in Andrew Clark, "Celluloid Sorceress," *Maclean's* (31 Jan 2000), 73.
[xiv] Shirley Cheechoo, *A Path With No Moccasins* (Toronto: Talent Group, 1991), 5. Further references are from this edition and will be included in the text in parentheses.
[xv] Catherine Graham, "Theatrical Bodies and Everyday Life," *Canadian Theatre Review,* 109 (Winter 2002), 3.
[xvi] Daniel David Moses and Terry Goldie, eds., "Preface: Two Voices," *An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1992), xvii.
[xvii] Varela et al quoted in Graham, 3.
[xviii] Michelle Newman, "body/absence/body: Symptomatologies,*" Canadian Theatre Review,* 109 (Winter 2002), 21.
[xix] Quoted in Newman, 21.
[xx] Agnes Grant, "Introduction," *Our Bit of Truth: An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature* (Winnipeg: Pemmican Publications, 1990), ix.
[xxi] Charlotte Meares, "Indian Play Dances to the beat of all drummers," Press kit materials.
[xxii] Rosalie Jones, Press Kit materials and class lectures, University of Lethbridge, Lethnridge, Alberta, January 22-26, 2002.
[xxiii] Ibid.
[xxiv] Jones founded her company, Daystar: Contemporary Dance-Drama of Indian America, in 1980. In 1996 she began writing the script for *No Home But the Heart* with the idea that it would be a solo performance; in 1998 it was workshopped in Grand Rapids, Michigan; in 1999 it premiered in Santa Fe, NM; in September of 2000 it was performed in upstate New York; in January of 2002 it was performed at The University of Lethbridge with dancers Sid Bobb, Penny Couchie and Geraldine Manossa. It has also been presented as a lecture/demonstration in Banff, Calgary, and Dublin.

[xxv] Jones lectures, University of Lethbridge, Lethbridge, Alberta, January 22-26, 2002.
[xxvi] Beth Herst, "Review," *Canadian Theatre Review,* 98 (Spring 1999), 66 and 67.
[xxvii] *Princess Pocahonatas. . .* was workshopped by Mojica and Alejandra Nunez, with direction and dramaturgy by Djanet Sears, in the spring of 1988. It was workshopped by Nightwood Theatre and Native Earth Performing Arts in May 1989, directed by Muriel Miguel (Mojica's aunt), and dramaturged by Sears and Kate Lushington. The play was then read at Weesageechak Festival of New Work by Native Playwrights at the Theatre Passe Muraille Backspace in June 1989 and presented at Nightwood's Groundswell Festival in November 1989, directed by Djanet Sears. It was fully produced at the Theatre Passe Muraille Backspace in co-production with Nightwood, February 9 to March 4, 1990, directed by Muriel Miguel, and was published by the Women's Press in 1991.

[xxviii] Ric Knowles, *The Theatre of Form and the Production of Meaning: Contemporary Canadian*

Dramaturgies (Toronto: ECW Press, 1999), 207. Further references will be included in the text in parentheses.

[xxix] Mojica played: Princess Buttered-on-Both-Sides; Contemporary Woman #1; Malinche; Storybook Pocahontas; Pocahontas/Lady Rebecca/Matoaka; Deity/Woman of the Puna/Virgin; Marie/ Margaret/Madelaine; Cigar Store Squaw; and Spirit Animal. Alejandra Nunez played: the Host; the Blue Spots; Contemporary Woman #2; Troubadour; Ceremony; the Man; Spirit-Sister; and the Musician.

[xxx] See the last chapter in S.E. Wilmer, *Theatre, Society and the Nation: Staging American Identities*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

[xxxi] Kathy A. Perkins and Roberta Uno, *Contemporary Plays by Women of Color: An Anthology*, (London, New York: Routledge, 1996). See Spiderwoman Theater pp. 297-309 and Elvira and Hortensia Colorado pp. 79-89.

[xxxii] Spiderwoman Theater, "Winnetou's Snake Oil Show from Wigwam City," *Canadian Theatre Review*, 68 (Fall 1991), 56.

[xxxiii] ViBrina Coronado, "Here is Gone and I Could Not Hear It: Using Coatlicue Theatre Company's *Open Wounds on Tlalteuctli* to Compare Performance Studies and Theater Methodologies, " *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism* Vol. XIV No. 1 (Fall 1999), 152.

[xxxiv] Ann Wilson, "Bored to Distraction: Auto-performance and the perniciousness of presence," *Canadian Theatre Review,* 79/80 (Fall 1994), 36.

[xxxv] Elizabeth Theobald, "Their Desperate Need for Noble Savages," in *TDR,* Vol. 41 No. 3 (Fall 1997), 142.

[xxxvi] Moses "Anthology" xxi.