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Author

Darby, Jaye T.

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willing indigenous participants, only to exacerbate imperial opposition and upset already established alliances with other Native Americans.

Captors and Captives is highly engaging because it crosses so many geographical, social, and cultural boundaries and cuts across many of the specializations within the field of early American history. Family needs and ties of kinship, Native-colonial alliances, attacks on opposing towns, economic desires, and religious expressions, in Haefeli and Sweeney's penetrating study, are of some precedence as both England and France sought to increase their power within the Northeast. With its clear prose and uncomplicated organization—the book remains free of heavy theory while its authors confine a lot of the hard work of the social historian to appendixes and maps—*Captors and Captives* should be accessible to undergraduates and a popular reading audience. This book, the end result of a partnership between two fine historians, is the definitive study of the 1704 French and Indian raid on Deerfield.

Mark A. Nicholas
Lehigh University

“The Cherokee Night” and Other Plays. By Lynn Riggs, with foreword by Jace Weaver. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003. 343 pages. \$24.95 paper.

The publication of this volume marks an important milestone for Native American theater and literature by bringing together three plays by Rollie Lynn Riggs (1899–1954), Cherokee playwright, in one anthology. The first play, *Green Grow the Lilacs*, which served as the book for the Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein musical *Oklahoma!*, is perhaps the best known of Riggs's plays. The second, *The Cherokee Night*, is published here for only the third time since its 1936 publication by Samuel French along with *Russet Mantle*. In 1999, more than thirty years later, it was anthologized on the CD-ROM *American Journey: The Native American Experience*, edited by Jace Weaver, and in the collection *Stories of Our Way: An Anthology of American Indian Plays*, edited by Hanay Geiogamah and Jaye T. Darby. *Out of Dust*, the final selection, is published here for the first time. Taken together, these three plays by Lynn Riggs, as he was professionally known, artfully interrogate a range of internal and external struggles facing the Cherokee and settlers as Indian Territory moved into Oklahoma statehood in the late 1800s or early 1900s.

Jace Weaver, author of *That the People Might Live: Native American Literatures and Native American Community* (1997), which included critical recognition of Lynn Riggs's work, offers an insightful foreword, positioning these plays within the context of Native American literature. Phyllis Cole Braunlich, who chronicled Riggs's career in *Haunted by Home: The Life and Letters of Lynn Riggs* (1988), provides a chronology, a short introduction to each play, and a bibliography.

Particularly helpful to appreciating Riggs's vision, innovation, and craft as a playwright is his own preface to *Green Grow the Lilacs*. Eschewing the theater conventions of his day, focusing on plot, Riggs turns to what he calls “the

nature of true drama,” the dramatic tension inherent in human behavior: “Two people in a room, agreeing or not agreeing, are to me truly dramatic.” He then emphasizes that “the nature of the flow of spirit from each determines both the quality of their conflict, and the shape of their story. The flow may be violent or comic or tender; it may be one-sided, subtle, maddeningly reclusive” (4). Further rejecting the dictates of the well-made play, Riggs insists that the playwright “has no business to interfere just for the sake of making a ‘play’—in its present—and idiotic meaning.” Rather, he stresses the rewards of character-driven drama for the playwright. As he concludes, “And sometimes, his characters may do stirring things he could never have calculated. And sometime, if he is fortunate, he may hear from the people he has set in motion (as Shakespeare and Chekhov often heard) things to astonish him and things to make him wise” (5). It is the “stirring things” that people do in each of these plays that make this anthology so compelling. Thus, the juxtaposition of these three plays, published in the chronological order of their production, provides valuable insights into Riggs’s psychological probing of people’s breaking points and his exacting moral compass as a playwright. Taken together, they also focus on the tragedy of the American West as Euro-American settlers encroach on Indian Territory at the expense of Native communities and their own morality.

After decades of *Oklahoma!* revivals, having ready access to this script of *Green Grow the Lilacs*, which opened on Broadway in 1931, reminds the reader that the play is far more textured and nuanced than the musical. The “intent,” according to Riggs in his preface, “has been solely to recapture in a kind of nostalgic glow (but in dramatic dialogue more than in song) the great range of mood which characterized the old folk songs and ballads I used to hear in my Oklahoma childhood—their quaintness, their sadness, their robustness, their simplicity, their beauty or bawdy humors, their sentimentalities, their melodrama, their touching sweetness” (4). For Riggs, thoughtful character development rather than plot is central. In the preface he then carefully outlines his plan, first an introduction to the people of the play in the first three scenes; then the actual story, which he describes as “their simple tale, which might have been the substance of an ancient song” (4).

Rather than the sweeping celebration of pioneer culture and impending statehood, characteristic of most *Oklahoma!* productions, *Green Grow the Lilacs*, set in 1900 in Indian Territory, is more complex. As Jace Weaver observes in the foreword: “While turn-of-the-century Indian Territory was racially mixed, with Natives, whites, and African Americans all interacting, *Oklahoma!* contains no African American and no Natives” (xiii). Rather, as Weaver argues elsewhere, *Green Grow the Lilacs* celebrates the diversity of Indian Territory and its underlying tensions. He further suggests that the main character, Curly, “is actually an Indian” (*That the People Might Live*, 99).

In scenes 1 through 3 we meet Aunt Eller, struggling to make it alone on a farm; Laurey, her orphaned niece; Jetter, the menacing farmhand who loves Laurey and seeks to possess her; and Curly, the goodhearted cowboy also in love with Laurey. Curly’s song “Green Grow the Lilacs” sets the mood of bittersweet love. Scene 2 opens with a sense of foreboding as Laurey reveals her

fear of loss—bankruptcy, fire, cyclone, and death. In scene 3 Riggs demonstrates his fascination with stress points between people as tensions build between Laurey's two suitors, Curly and Jetter. The songs throughout the opening scenes, each one a ballad of loss, undercuts the love story, wrapping the characters' lives in foreboding and doubt.

The rest of the story is well known: Curly woos and marries Laurey, only to have their wedding night marred by Jetter's vicious attack against the couple during the neighbor men's boisterous "shivoree." Jetter first sets fire to a haystack, then attacks Curly with his knife, starting a fight that ends in Jetter's death on his own blade. Despite his claims of self-defense, Curly is taken away to jail to wait for a hearing. Afraid that he may never see Laurey again, he escapes the night before his hearing so that the couple can have their wedding night, possibly their last night together. Thus, the play ends on an ambivalent note. Within this romantic premise emerge themes that dominate Riggs's later work: the nature of evil, struggle and fortitude, and the possibility of love in a seemingly inhospitable world.

The Cherokee Night, first produced in 1932, is set near Claremore Mound in Oklahoma at the beginning of the twentieth century, with the mound filling the stage in every scene. Through a series of seven nonlinear scenes, occurring in summer 1915, spring 1927, winter 1931, summer 1906, summer 1913, fall 1919, and winter 1895, respectively, Riggs interrogates the breakdown of traditional Cherokee values and the wages of assimilation and intense individualism, following almost a century of brutal assaults to their people: the Trail of Tears, the Civil War, the Dawes Act and Allotment, and Oklahoma statehood. Again through deft character development, the play probes the intense cultural dislocation and degeneration of a group of Cherokees—most of whom are young and only part Cherokee. Here characters betray one another: Cherokee youths Viney, Bee, and Art blatantly disrespect their elder, Talbert; Art later murders his wife; Bee entraps Art for the sheriff; Viney, now a wealthy woman, refuses to help her sister Sarah, who is living in poverty. Yet the play itself is not just a condemnation but a reminder of life-affirming Cherokee traditions and the deadly consequences of assimilation. At the end of the play Gray-Wolf, a full-blood Cherokee, describes the past: "I remember the way my people lived in quiet times. Think of my ancestors. It keeps me safe." Seizing on the central issue in the play, Gray-Wolf laments, "Not *enough* Indian" (208).

Out of Dust, first produced in 1949, has languished in relative obscurity until the publication of this volume. According to Eloise Wilson in her 1957 doctoral dissertation, "In *Out of Dust* three great influences upon Riggs, the Bible, Shakespeare, and folk song—have been combined into a three-dimensional drama" (cited by Weaver, xiv). In the tradition of family evil in the Old Testament and William Shakespeare's *King Lear*, the play leads the reader further into the tragedy of the American West. In a modern morality play, brothers on a cattle trail, Teece, Bud, and Jeff Grant, egged on by a disgruntled ex-con, King, conspire to murder their father and then turn on one another.

Of the three plays in this volume, *Out of the Dust* perhaps best illustrates Riggs's intense interest in the interior workings of the people in his stage world. Unlike the other two plays, with their larger sets, *Out of the Dust*, set on

the Shawnee Cattle Trail in the “early ’eighties,” takes place at a camp, in a gully, and a broken-down cabin, indicative of a world closing in (215). The play opens in darkness, revealing Maudie, Teece’s wife, who begins to tell the story by reminding the audience that “what happened to us on the Trail could happen to anyone” (216). Throughout *Out of the Dust* Riggs creates a crucible where power, not love, rules. Grant, the patriarch, drives his sons as he does his cattle. Domineering and cruel, he denigrates each one and justifies his own personal dominance through distorted readings of biblical teachings. Like *The Cherokee Night*, this play condemns the intense individualism and selfishness used to justify the taking of the West by many settlers.

As the play progresses, the audience is taken through a descent into homicidal rage. King, the subtrail boss, plays Iago to each one of the sons’ Othello, exposing their innermost vulnerabilities and fueling their hatred for Old Man Grant. King exploits Teece’s suspicion that his father is once again having an affair with his wife, Maudie; Bud’s dread that King will reveal his part in cattle theft to his father; and even Jeff’s fear that the father will use Rose, his bride-to-be, the same way he did Maudie and deny them a future. Psychological tensions build meticulously as the brothers follow an inevitable course of hatred. Yet in spite of both the temptation and the opportunity to save himself, Jeff ultimately makes the moral choice, choosing to take responsibility for his actions. Rose and Maudie stand with him. Like *The Cherokee Night*, the play ends in darkness with a glimmer of hope, in this case love and responsibility over hatred and malevolence.

“The Cherokee Night” and Other Plays supports Phyllis Cole Braunlich’s claim that Lynn Riggs “was unquestionably one of America’s most distinguished playwrights and poets” (*Haunted*, xi). At the end of the book, this reader shares Jace Weaver’s hope that this important anthology is but the first of others that will republish Riggs’s complete works. Congratulations to Jace Weaver, Phyllis Braunlich, and the University of Oklahoma Press for having the foresight to publish this very impressive book.

Jaye T. Darby
San Diego State University

Creek Country: The Creek Indians and Their World. By Robbie Ethridge. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003. 384 pages. \$59.95 cloth; \$22.50 paper.

Benjamin Hawkins served as US agent to the Creeks from 1796 to 1816. During that extended tenure he wrote thousands of pages of official reports, correspondence with friends and government officials, journals, diaries, and memoranda. Most of that record has survived, much in published form, and collectively it constitutes a remarkably complete and detailed body of information about the Creeks. Robbie Ethridge, an anthropologist on the faculty of the University of Mississippi, has used the Hawkins materials to write a historical ethnography of the Creeks. Confining herself to the period of