

**“Stories are sitting on radio waves”
Morality and Time in *Burning Vision*¹**

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Abstract

The most impressive and potentially confusing aspect of Marie Clements’s 2002 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, and 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, with an exceptional effect. Besides the effect of flickering movie images, this method of rendering time seems to affirm the idea of past, present and future existing simultaneously in a work of art, or perhaps the postmodern idea of David Harvey’s time-space compression. Besides these readings, Clements’s consistent use of changing radio frequency to announce yet another stage-scene/time-frame invites a more radical approach to this text. This article aims to show 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 since there is no elapsed time as a buffer zone to give the comfort of the long and faraway gone. Morality, however, is not the paradigm usually associated with scientific inquiry. This aspect of the play comes when the meaning of Indigenous conceptions of space and time are added to the scientific propositions that form the backbone of Clements’s story. In the spirit of connecting science and art, the ideas of contemporary science will be counterbalanced with Indigenous philosophy.

Key words: *Burning Vision, space-time, radio frequency, quantum physics, Indigeneity, Manhattan Project, morality*

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