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Giving Shakespeare Meaning, Canadian Style:

Canadian(?) Shakespeares

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ABSTRACT

In his Introduction to the essays in this special issue on Shakespeare and Canada, Daniel Fischlin considers the cultural role played by Shakespeare in creating and bringing into question multiple discourses of Canadian identity.

In memoriam, William Hutt

I

Invoking Shakespeare in the name of Canada or Canada in the name of Shakespeare is a tricky bit of business. Not only does the conjunction of Canada and Shakespeare in the same breath evoke uncomfortable memories of perhaps defunct colonial relations (as in, "we'll bring Shakespeare to the colonies to make them better, more like us"), but it also evokes derisory notions that Canada, the self-thinking quintessential postmodern, pluralist democratic state, should get on with it (as in, "let's get beyond this pretentious need for Shakespeare and make our own literature and theater free of that impossibly confining Shakespearean anxiety of influence"). Moreover, in the mode of high Canadian ironic discourse, a bit of an imagined national trait that apparently separates us from our more earnest cousins to the South, Shakespeare may not be quite good enough for Canada — that is, his works, brilliant, provocative, edgy, and universal as they may be, just aren't good enough as is — they need some tinkering, much in the mode of that supposed *Ur*-Canadian tendency to set off first thing Saturday morning to the local Canadian Tire to stock up on the duct tape and quarter-inch screws that will no doubt make the weekend a more productive one.

Ironic and comic discourses in Canadian performance spaces have a long history of invoking Shakespeare as the butt of our joke-making, even as we've seen fit to get on

the economic bandwagon by structuring our most prominent national theater round classical Shakespearean productions in Stratford, a town that boasts both Shakespeare and swine (in the form of the Ontario Pork Congress) as the twin pillars of its economy. Add to this our own family squabbles round interpretation, some of them given eloquent voice in this special issue, and the general newness of adaptation as an (if not *the*) emergent form of postmodern scholarly address to Shakespeare, and the scenario complicates.

If anything, adaptation becomes part of a larger strand of dominant narratives that Canadians have sought out in addressing identity issues. From Northrop Frye's "garrison," or siege, mentality (first proposed in 1943), an attitude that brings together the twin threats of the telluric and of the powerful (American) other at Canadians' doorsteps, to Margaret Atwood, Frye's student at the University of Toronto who retropped the dominant Canadian narrative (in *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature*, 1972) as one about "survival" with the key character in the narrative being a victim, Canada has not been short on gloomy, adversarial, and inward-looking tropes that ostensibly help to define its identity. Adaptation, as a master-trope of Canadian identity, fits comfortably in the brief succession of such tropes from Frye to Atwood. But it has the advantage of being constructed less in relation to colonial self-doubt (as in, "we're victims struggling to survive in our garrison, surrounded by a vast, empty territory on the one hand and the most powerful nation on the planet, on the other") and more constitutive of an identity that will co-create its future based on making things over as we see fit (as in, "we're opening into the possibility of becoming as a creative process determined by our own imaginations and our own ability to confront our interrelated, mutating past and present realities").

Now, no doubt, using any one trope, no matter how broad and loosely defined, to define identity is highly problematic, but the history of such tropes is profoundly useful in signaling ways in which identity and community get constructed and in pointing to self-descriptive tendencies that may in fact hold a germ of truth in them. To his credit, Frye anticipated precisely such a tropological shift from the garrison to adaptation by arguing that as Canada shook off its colonial influences, both English and French, a "genuine form of cultural development" that he called interpenetration "became more obvious" (Frye 1982, 24). Now the notion of "interpenetration" as a space where community can be imagined in new forms accommodates adaptation if only because it is the key register in which adaptation is possible: anterior "sources" interpenetrate with contemporary re-workings in multiple, unpredictable ways and *voilà*, adaptations are the result.

And what Canadians have done to Shakespeare, as a global brand constitutive of yet another colonial master narrative worthy of adaptation, is instructive in this regard. To begin with, both Frye and Atwood had a history of relations with Shakespeare that may be construed as adaptive: Frye only won Canada's most coveted literary award for non-fiction, the Governor General's award, in 1986 for his book *Northrop Frye on Shakespeare*, a collection of lectures on the Bard (academic adaptation). And Atwood, early in her career (and still a graduate student), wrote the libretto to John Beckwith's *The Trumpets of Summer* (1964), a piece commissioned by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation for Shakespeare's quatercentenary celebration that explicitly examined

the role of Shakespeare in Canadian life (with topics such as Shakespeare in the Canadian classroom; Stratford Festival productions; academic disputes over authorship; and familiar Shakespearean motifs such as the seven ages of man and the seasons). As described in the program notes, the musico-poetic adaptation "illuminates the ways in which Shakespeare has become part of the Canadian experience."

For better or for worse, then, Shakespearean sites of production have proliferated in Canada across multiple media, diverse ethnicities, and multiple ideologies. The Canadian Adaptations of Shakespeare Project (CASP) alone has in its database well over 500 adaptations that date from the pre-Confederation to the present. In theater alone, Canadian productions run the gamut from classical high theater, embodied in the Stratford Festival's ongoing commitment to the Bard's texts and performance practices (or at least to the prospect of making sustainable money from them), to the unconventional adaptations found in any number of fringe, community, and local theaters that take it upon themselves to appropriate Shakespeare's canonical import to their own uses: inter-cultural, counter-cultural, "wildly" adaptive, to use Mark Fortier's sly characterization of the theoretical qualities of the genre of Shakespearean adaptation, or aesthetically challenged and/or challenging adaptations. And, in all this is a recognition that adaptation, "doing things to Shakespeare," has been and continues to be part of the response to Shakespeare. Not that adaptation is in any way an essentially Canadian phenomenon, but that adaptations in Canada reflect on what it means to be Canadian in a way that other adaptations in other national sites do not.

Part of the challenge of running the Canadian Adaptations of Shakespeare Project (www.canadianshakespeares.ca (<http://www.canadianshakespeares.ca>)), currently the most complete website in the world devoted to Shakespeare and to Shakespearean adaptation as a highly telling mode of articulating national identity, remains keeping up with the relentless "doing" of things to Shakespeare in Canada — a full time job, I assure you. And, if the premise for such an undertaking is that Shakespeare and what gets "done" to his work — what I have called elsewhere the "Shakespeare effect" — are worth studying because they tell us something about ourselves as Canadians that is unique and (maybe) wonderful, then one can't take the ironic mode as the only register for addressing Shakespeare in Canada. Let's look at an example of this form of address that may help give readers some sense of what is at stake.

In 1988, the Québécois theater journal *Jeu* (48) published Carole Fréchette's and the editorial board's very public condemnation of Robert Lepage. The French Canadian theatrical *wunderkind* had apparently plagiarized from Jan Kott's well-known book, *Shakespeare Our Contemporary* (1964), in published notes to his 1988 production of *Songe d'une nuit d'été* [*A Midsummer Night's Dream*]. The editorial board stated that they deplored how Lepage had appropriated both the words and the thoughts of Kott (1914-2001), the eminent Polish theater critic whose insights into Shakespeare had been formed in the crucible of the experience of totalitarian state politics.

So Kott, who had done his own thing to Shakespeare (via Ionesco and Beckett, East Bloc politics, and the European avant-garde), now had something done to him by Lepage, who was doing his own postmodern thing to Shakespeare (and Kott) via his unique directorial vision and his derivative commentary, and was in turn being

publicly upbraided for his plagiarism of Kott even as the editors of the journal were doing things to set right Shakespeare's critical history via the sense of fair play that lay at the core of their denunciation. To complicate matters, Lepage never denied the use of Kott, saying that he had been pressed for time and had copied without shame (*sans vergogne*) two large extracts from the book, replacing only a reference to the Brothers Grimm with a reference to Walt Disney. The comment only underlines, if anything, how Shakespeare had been made more "our" contemporary via Lepage's updating of the Grimm Brothers to the less grim Walt Disney, an American entertainment presence that most Québécois would have been repeatedly exposed to, both in English and in translation, by the popular media.

Somehow, Kott, Lepage, Shakespeare, Walt Disney, and the Brothers Grimm (all brand makers of various narratives in their own right) were mixing it up in the arena of Shakespearean representation in Canada and *in Québec*, marked by its linguistic, cultural, and political distinctiveness from the rest of Canada or TROC, as it is often designated in Québec. To further complicate matters, Robert Lévesque, an influential critic at *Le Devoir*, the paper read by French Canadian intellectuals, took up the story prompting Lepage to limit his contact with Québécois media while telling the Anglo-Canadian media that he had little taste for following the rules of show business. Ironically, Lévesque himself was to be fired from *Le Devoir* as a result of *faute professionnelle*, or professional misconduct, for having falsified texts by Claude Corbo, then the Rector of the *Université du Québec à Montréal* (l'UQAM), and the independent journalist, Josée Blanchette. Compounded acts of plagiarism, acknowledged and not, bitter (ironic?/tribal?) battles over interpretation, citation and mis-citation, aesthetic and critical struggles all marked the long, sorry affair — again played out under the originary sign of a Shakespeare who had traveled from Elizabethan and Jacobean England to totalitarian East Europe and then to decolonized French Canada by way of heterogeneous performance practices, critical voicings, multiple languages, adaptations, and histories.

A barely one-page comment on the "regrettable plagiarism" (*regrettable plagiat*) bore witness to a typically Canadian(?) confluence of influence, counter-influence, and controversial sites of encounter and disputation — ones that brought together performance, adaptation, criticism, history, and tradaptation — the cross-cutting of Kott's Polishness with Lepage's Québécois theatrical internationalism and the editorial board's French Canadianness making for a markedly unique instance of how (not) to encounter the Bard in Canada. A tempest in a teapot, or a midsummer's bad dream — the event gets at the heart of any designation that reductively appropriates the Bard to national contexts and histories that are fluid, not as circumscribed as one might think, and extraordinarily, materially meaningful by virtue of the ambiguities that they lay bare round identity and authenticity and who gets to speak in the name of either. This, again, was the Shakespeare effect at work in a Canadian(?) context.

II

This collection of essays explores the ramifications of the Shakespeare effect in Canada across a number of pertinent contexts. First off, they address what it means to adapt something from within a perceived national context. If adaptation is to national identity as text is to theater, then there is an intrinsic link between the two

that begs exploration and analysis. But what if nationalism is merely a front for competing political ideologies confined to a largely arbitrary geographical space? What if "being Canadian," a term I've used somewhat cavalierly in the opening gambit of this essay, is actually a trope under considerable pressure — as if "being Canadian" can be reduced to a common, shared denominator that all Canadians understand, recognize, and help in constructing in shared ways? This collection particulates the notion of an aggregate Canadian, and then in ironic mode asks if that isn't, after all, a quintessentially Canadian postmodern tack to take. If "being Canadian" involves taking on adaptation as a way of signaling what "being Canadian" means, and if, for better or worse, adaptation practices agglomerate around a pertinent, iconic (colonial, neo-colonial, de-colonial?) presence like Shakespeare, then this volume of essays makes a go at sorting out the nuances of any non-reductive discussion of identity politics.

Certainly, the number of adaptations and ways in which Shakespeare has been reconstructed in Canadian contexts suggests anything but a homogenous notion of self-identity. Québec, for instance, and Québécois forms of Shakespearean interpellation, do not construct a solidary, easily aggregated "Canadian" identity fortified by Shakespearean interpretation. Ditto First Nations adaptations that posit alternative histories, alternative visionings of story, and alternate performance and reception practices. Multiple examples from these two sites alone suggest a Shakespearean practice that refuses comfortable definitions, let alone theatrical practices that put the question to what it means to recreate Shakespeare in as complex an interpretative landscape as is Canada.

So if a de-aggregated national context gives rise to multiple interpretative gestures and sites that do the same (de-aggregate) to a major canonical figure like Shakespeare, then something is afoot and worth taking stock of.

In this special issue of *Borrowers and Lenders*, it has been my pleasure to be able to gather a range of essays and reflections that adumbrate this emergent scenario. In the spirit of the usual cant about how this collection, like any other, cannot possibly hope to present a comprehensive picture of that scenario, let it be said that what this collection *does* do is address five key spaces of interpretation in relation to Shakespeare in Canada: theories of Shakespearean adaptation; Shakespeare and French Canada; Shakespeare and First Nations peoples; adapting Shakespeare from the very particular perspectives of theater practitioners (in this case, two Canadian playwrights, Rod Carley and Judith Thompson); and intercultural Shakespeare, as mediated by the formidable multicultural presencing that is giving added meaning to what "Canadianness" may mean.

The collection opens with Mark Fortier's reflections on theorizing adaptation generally, with an opening gambit that respects the need to create taxonomies, but foregrounds the unruliness of adaptation as a genre defined by exceptionalism. Wild adaptation, for Fortier, refuses reduction, refuses policing by the classification cops, and is best defined as "anything you can get away with." Fortier's position, amply given example through multiple Canadian texts, asks that we account for adaptation not by trying to compact its anarchic wildness into a critical knowable, and instead, by taking the much harder road of the unexpected as a truer path to understanding the

vagaries of adaptive practices. Returning to the formulation that adaptation "is, and is not" Shakespeare (along the full continuum of what an adaptation may or may not be), Fortier radicalizes earlier work on adaptation in relation to more recent attempts to constrain its meaning and taxonomize its sub-genres.

Mark McCutcheon, by contrast, takes on issues of genderpellation and Shakespeare in the public curriculum, using an unexpected juxtaposition of Lucy Maud Montgomery's novel *Anne of Green Gables* and the pop song "Billy S.," by Skye Sweetnam. McCutcheon contextualizes "how popular cultural images of school culture represent the Romanticism of literary pedagogy through Shakespearean intertexts, thus problematizing the gender-coding of Shakespeare's canonical authority and, moreover, the gender-based division of cultural and intellectual labour in public education" in Canada. McCutcheon's close reading of Shakespearean intertexts via gender-based pedagogies performs the admirable service of laying bare formational structures of instruction and reception operative in the public school system, structures that, moreover, have a long history of Shakespearean interpellation in the name of gender.

Jennifer Drouin examines the issue of Shakespearean adaptation in nationalist Québec, beginning, like Jean Gascon, the prominent Québécois director, with the pertinent question: Why Shakespeare? Citing the over thirty adaptations of Shakespeare written in Québec since the 60s' Quiet Revolution, in which Québec under Premier Jean Lesage began the process of rejecting its agrarian, Catholic value-systems, Drouin's essay theorizes some of the reasons why Shakespeare has become such an ample presence in the Québécois imaginary. Stuck between the rock and the hard place of Shakespearean influence and canonicity and its potential to contaminate Québécois culture with yet more English, Shakespeare's presence in Québec, as read by Drouin, involves a sophisticated interweaving of political and historical malleability that has been appropriated to nationalist causes, a piggy-backing of Shakespeare's pop celebrity-hood onto nationalist messaging at the same time as doing so constitutes a subversive attack on Anglo-Canadian culture's colonial debt to Shakespeare as a metonymy of British culture. Drouin's careful analysis leads to a reconsideration of national imaginaries and of how Shakespearean adaptations and intertexts are at stake in the real of national identity, as opposed to the imaginary of imagined community.

From the fraught space of Québécois nationalism and Shakespeare in Canada, Don Moore's essay focuses on First Nations peoples in Canada and Shakespearean adaptation as the nexus for an ethical remaking of cultural identity. Taking as its point of departure First Nations playwright Daniel David Moses's *Brébeuf's Ghost*, described by Moses as an adaptation of *Macbeth*, Moore's essay is a far-reaching meditation on Shakespearean instrumentality as worked through non-European cultural filters. In this case, adaptation gains the force of the familiar "writing back" against colonial power and domination. But Moore pushes the theoretical territory further by associating alternate historiographies, as mediated by First Nations rewritings of Shakespeare's hauntological presence, with significant movements in theorizing human rights discourses in Canada. In Moore's reading, Moses's play shows "First Nations identity . . . [to be] *itself* a kind of adaptive process irreducible to 'origins' or clichéd identity politics. His play thus advocates a more 'universalized,' yet irreducibly

'open' approach to rights and cultural recognition as a way of connecting on the level of common 'humanity.'"

In Canada, this negotiation plays out against a backdrop of systemic racism and oppression that, from the start, has had the specter of Shakespeare haunting Canada as a site of encounter. Let us not forget that Nicholas Flood Davin, the author of the infamous Davin Report that gave birth to the Residential School system in Canada responsible for destroying so many families and communities over decades and decades, himself coined a Shakespearean adaptation, *The Fair Grit* (1876), which critiqued the Family Compact politics of Canada as a game played out by opposing sides cut from the same cloth. Americans striving to understand this situation might think of the kind of comments that generalize about Republicans and Democrats as essentially the same form of political aristocracy with, in the end, shared interests in wielding power to their advantage.

Where both Moore and Drouin are at pains to examine how marginalized, culturally distinct groups in Canada have made use of Shakespeare, Ann Wilson's essay provides a feminist reading of Vern Thiessen's play about Shakespeare's life as told through the eyes of Anne Hathaway. Wilson reads *Shakespeare's Will* as a proto-feminist meditation on the nature of desire, identity, and authenticity that de-authenticates notions of Shakespearean originality even as it promotes more spectral notions of what actually constitutes identity via the speculative narrative "telling" of a one-woman show. Wilson associates this form of privileging feminist desires and discourses with the climate facilitated by the Canadian Charter of Rights (1982), which, in its most recent impact on the law in Canada, has led to the enshrinement of the right of gay and lesbian couples to marry. Like Moore, who also references the Charter and its impact, Wilson associates the climate of improved access to rights with new interpretations of what it means to have social relations in communities in Canada. Thiessen's play, then, becomes the sign of a post-Charter *zeitgeist* in which Shakespeare's canonical centrality is displaced by a voice speaking from the margins, an empowerment that mirrors that of the Charter with respect to minority rights. This movement in turn replicates a larger movement in Canadian theater, with "Thiessen suggest[ing] that there is no need for Canadian theater practitioners — or anyone else — to attend slavishly to the cultural forefathers: there are other voices that deserve to be heard, like those of contemporary Canadians writing for the theater."

Deanne Williams's essay on Indo-Canadian novelist Rohinton Mistry and Shakespeare breaks new ground in thinking through the intercultural circulation of Shakespeare in Canada. Like his contemporary, the independent Indo-Canadian filmmaker Deepa Mehta, whose work also frequently cites Shakespeare, Mistry, in Williams's reading, has had a long fascination with Shakespearean allusion and adaptation. Whereas to invoke Shakespeare in an Indian context is to invoke as well the imperial relations between the British and India, Williams's essay reads Mistry as making use of Shakespeare as a "shared frame of reference and source of inspiration for Mistry as an author and for his characters." Thus, Shakespeare plays a role in the intercultural reworking of the past that is the lot of the émigré writer in Canada — a touchstone of the past perhaps, but more importantly, by way of what gets done to him, a talisman of what the future might become. For Williams, Mistry's engagement with Shakespearean presencing in his writing about India replays, in part, the scene of

Shakespearean engagement in Canada: "A touchstone, paradoxically, for both the Parsi theater's populist form of cultural hybridity and nostalgia for the lost status of the Parsi community, Shakespeare symbolizes the past glories and current difficulties facing the Bombay Parsi. The process of invoking at once the past and the present applies to Shakespeare in Canada as well, where Shakespeare's prior association with anglophone ascendancy is countered by the plentiful engagements with Shakespeare from multiple subject positions: francophone, First Nations, gay and lesbian, and allophone." The parallelism in both evoking and freeing oneself from a colonial past metonymically tied to Shakespeare is uncanny, and is redoubled as the émigré writer moves from one space of colonial intercultural engagement to another.

Williams's essay marks the end of the longer academic essays in this special issue. Following it come two essays by Canadian playwrights that address what it means to make theatrical adaptations in Canada that are either political or youth-oriented or both. Part of the project for this volume was to give Canadian playwrights a chance to speak to their own processes of adaptation, and the two essays take very different points of view in terms of self-explication. Rod Carley, a protean adapter of Shakespeare to multiple politicized contexts, discloses some of his own predilections and processes in creating a new adaptation of *Julius Caesar* set in a turbulent period (the October Crisis) of Canadian and Québécois history. By situating Caesar in Québec at a time of intense nationalist activity, one that saw terrorist bombings and murders, Carley seeks to re-tell an important phase in negotiating Canadian identity as a function of Québec's distinctiveness. Carley eloquently advocates Shakespearean adaptation as a way of knowing the present through past stories remade to suit the present. And he squarely places adaptation in the role of political commentary in examining the state. Judith Thompson, one of Canada's most recognized and lauded playwrights, by contrast, tells the story of her ongoing engagement with local schools in Toronto, creating and adapting Shakespeare for youth. In Thompson's poignant account of children daring to encounter Shakespeare, we find a surprising narrative of the range of effects produced by this encounter: transformation, healing, life-changing, language-expanding, empowering, and so forth. Too often designated as inappropriate for youth — as too challenging, too emotionally sophisticated and the like — Thompson's essay reminds us of the power of theatrical (and particularly, Shakespearean) communication to make us rethink preconceptions, rediscover lost or repressed feelings and memories, and to give us the power to heave our hearts into our mouths.

Finally, this special issue closes with a review essay by Leanore Lieblein of Canadian scholar Linda Hutcheon's most recent work, *A Theory of Adaptation* (2006). Lieblein's own work on French Canada and Shakespearean adaptation has been (and continues to be) seminal, and she begins with a useful invocation of adaptation as a "phenomenon of narrative elements overflowing the boundaries of their generic forms, morphing into other structures, or taking up residence in new material environments." Lieblein's review focuses on how Hutcheon sees adaptations as "interpretive and creative acts that retain the aura of the adapted text and contain within them a palimpsestic doubleness." In relation to specifically Canadian Shakespearean adaptation, Lieblein notes how Hutcheon's work points to adaptation as a much broader phenomenon in which cultural identity, power relations, history, and interpretation are interpellated. The fundamental doubleness of adaptation is that

it is both an accommodation to the past and a rejection of its authority — a recognition and a *clinamen* (to use Harold Bloom's term), a swerve away from a source that inevitably entails the presencing of that source in the very movement away from it. Lieblein's reading of Hutcheon highlights the rich critical discourses that continue to be made by Canadians about adaptation, as mediated by the specter of Shakespeare. And it does so by placing the voices of two prominent Canadian female critics into dialogue.

III

Finally, on a personal note, I began writing this introduction on the day that William Hutt died (June 27, 2007). Hutt was perhaps Canada's most eminent Shakespearean actor, though even that designation places unnecessary restrictions on the extraordinary range of his work. And I finished it, for what it's worth, on Canada Day (July 1, 2007). One of the first meetings I had with Dr. Hutt, with whom I had become involved with as the honorary patron of the *Shakespeare: Made in Canada* exhibit and festival that I recently co-curated, involved him fixing his glacial blue eyes on me, pausing for full dramatic effect, then in that rich baritone announcing that as far as he was concerned "adaptation" was hardly the *mot juste* to be used for what CASP was studying.

Call it "hijacking," he said, his voice lifting.

Or, now in full stentorian voice, just in case anybody was to miss the point, call it "BASTARD-ization."

Or anything else. A much longer pause now as the room filled with his presence and the aftermath of his words.

It, whatever *it* was, "was emphatically NOT Shakespeare!"

The gauntlet had been thrown down, and he serenely appraised us for a reaction to his words, knowing full well his oratorical power and the effect of his personal charisma.

A colleague had blanched. Another turned crimson.

I'll admit to a certain trembling of the knees, if not outright *frissons* of terror and self-doubt as I began to explain that my interest via the CASP project was not so much in Shakespeare's classic texts as in how those texts had been Canadianized in hundreds upon hundreds of productions that sought to remake Shakespeare in outposts of theater and community across the country. I did not pretend that these were Shakespeare or were intended as classical Shakespearean interpretations. But they were a reflection, perhaps even a profound one, on the way in which Canada had sought to engage the Bard by making him over in the image of the multiple communities and perspectives and languages and geographical sites that one finds in Canada.

Hutt's face softened and his eyes narrowed. He had not liked how CASP had sought to chronicle his very first *Lear*, staged in a so-called "Eskimo" (now Inuit or Inuvialut) context by the Canadian Stage Company. And he had reminded me of this previously. Why remember such folly? What had it meant to be involved in such a production — out of time and out of place? But now, as we thrashed out the difference between

classical Shakespeare and the Shakespeare effect, the latter an expression of pluralist engagement with the idea of Shakespeare, Hutt gave some ground.

Yes, community was important and theater a crucial public expression of community. Yes, whether one liked it or not, things get done to Shakespeare. Yes, and on this no yielding, this doing of things to Shakespeare could never BE Shakespeare. And yes, it made sense to think of cultural influences as mediated by multiple voices and sites. What point a democracy like Canada if interpretation did not allow for imaginative renderings outside the box — so long as the line was clearly drawn between those renderings and classical acts of interpretation?

The conversation moved on to Hutt's sense, given rich example in lines he recited, that English Canadian accentuation and inflection may have been somewhat similar to Shakespeare's own. From this speculation we drifted to Hutt's own biography and his coming to acting relatively late in life after having seen serious combat in WWII. He spoke movingly of looking for truth after a horrific war. Of trying to find self-definition and meaning in something greater than himself. Of love beyond words or knowing — that which compelled him, and not in any trivial or self-aggrandizing manner, to communicate via the stage. Of the burning compulsion to make and remake reality through art . . .

And then the large black limo that had been waiting whisked him away.

I left the meeting feeling strangely, uncannily unsettled and disturbed. Had I offended? Had I been too defensive? Had I not had the courage to critically rethink my own self-interested positioning vis-à-vis my own work to allow for something else? Had I really spoken my mind? What had really happened?

And that feeling, even as I write these words, has stuck with me since, as if being unsettled and doing things to Shakespeare had become profoundly interconnected.

In many ways the theatrics of our encounter — done in the spirit of disputatious challenge, grandfatherly reproach, honest skepticism, but also with a firm "let's take down this academic highbrow nonsense" — replayed the nature of the very encounters that Shakespeare has been compelled into in Canada. In the spirit of that unsettling, and invoking William Hutt's storied ability to make people feel something — discomfort, anguish, joy, and all the interstices between — may readers of this collection find their own way into the space of meaning that opens as Shakespeare is adapted into a national context that we'll call, for the moment, "Canada(?)."

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Waves and Wills: Van Thiessen's *Shakespeare's Will*

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ABSTRACT

Canadian playwright Vern Thiessen's *Shakespeare's Will*, a one-woman play, presents William Shakespeare through reminiscences of Anne Hathaway, his wife. Thiessen explores the union between the two as a complex, and not entirely fulfilling, relationship in which Shakespeare reneges on vows that he and Anne made privately to each other to accommodate desires that could not be contained within the terms of conventional marriage. The play makes a case for broadening the terms of marriage to accommodate a greater range of diverse desires or "wills." This broadening of perspective is consistent with the ethos of contemporary Canada, where, as the result of new human rights legislation, legal definitions of marriage have become more inclusive in the past twenty-five years. The essay thus argues for understanding the play within the larger context of a major shift in Canada's social and legal dynamics.

ACOUSTIC CHIAROSCURO

Shakespeare's Will, by Edmonton-based playwright Vern Thiessen, is a solo-show for a female actor who portrays Anne Hathaway, the wife of William Shakespeare. The play opens with Anne¹ returning from her husband's funeral, in receipt of his will, from which the play gains one meaning of its title. The death of Shakespeare is the occasion for Hathaway to remember her relationship with her husband, and so the play becomes an adaptation of Shakespeare, not in the conventional sense of referring to his plays in the making of new ones, but of constructing a portrait of the playwright through the imagined memories and musings of his wife. Given that relatively little is known of Shakespeare's family life, save for the details

recorded in parish registers and the infamous will, Thiessen's depiction of the relationship between the playwright and his wife of necessity is speculative, signaled through Hathaway's reminiscences, which are offered through a poetic monologue that is fragmentary, and richly allusive, with the transitions punctuated by movement accompanied by sound. Because the portrait of Shakespeare emerges through Hathaway's reminiscences, two subjects are in play: Hathaway, and through her, Shakespeare. Writing these two subjects involves techniques akin to those of a painter employing *chiaroscuro*, in which the interplay of light and dark make visible some aspects of the subject while others are consigned to shadows, barely visible. Despite the title of the play, which implies that Shakespeare is central, he is the figure in the shadows. The play addresses the long-standing historical impulse to forge a complete, authentic "portrait" of Shakespeare, whether through conventional biography or through painting — but it does so by consigning Shakespeare to a space of absence.

The impulse to create a biography for Shakespeare, in spite of the scant documentation upon which such a project might credibly be built, is long-standing. Undergirding projects associated with reconstructing Shakespeare is an investment in Shakespeare as the putative zenith of writing in English. As such, the project of forging an image of Shakespeare the man, whether in words or through painting, is one of bringing him into the "light" so that the human figure who penned the plays and poetry can be "seen." Underlying such projects is the desire — if you like, the "will" — to forge a stable image of Shakespeare that begs the question: Why the need to bring Shakespeare from the shadows into the light?

Terrence Hawkes, in his essay, "Swisser Swatter," offers some clues to the investment in creating a stable portrait of Shakespeare. In his discussion of the writing of Shakespeare's biography in the influential series *English Men of Letters*, Hawkes notes that by the time the biography was commissioned in 1903, the task was daunting because Shakespeare "for over a hundred years, had been growing to the stature of a cultural superman" (1985, 32). Hawkes argues that Shakespeare's status was the effect of pressures generated on English society, particularly those of the second Reform Bill of 1867, which had extended the franchise (30). In the face of the extension of the right to vote to all male householders, the increasingly dominant upper echelons of the middle class wanted a population worthy of enfranchisement and so, their newly acquired formal participation in the governance of England. Key to this project was education, and particularly, reading; commensurately, literature attained cultural currency as a tool in the education of citizens who exemplified Englishness (30).

The biography of Shakespeare in the *English Men of Letters* represents, as Hawkes avers, the consolidation of a number of ideological forces. Shakespeare's biography was written by Walter Raleigh, who during the period in which he was writing the volume, was appointed as Oxford's first chair of English literature (Hawkes 1985, 32). Raleigh, in less than five years after the biography appeared in 1907, was knighted for his achievements,

including his account of the life of Shakespeare, which rehearsed the dominant cultural sense of Shakespeare as a writer whose work was best appreciated when read rather than performed, as if theatrical performance were a supplement that denigrated the written word (33). Raleigh's Shakespeare was robustly English, as Hawkes notes, citing a passage from the biography in which the Bard's mental processes are described as involving "the thick-coming thoughts and fancies shaping themselves, under the stress of the central will, into a thing of life" (quoted in Hawkes 1985, 35). Hawkes ably demonstrates that Raleigh's biography of Shakespeare is shaped by an ideology manifested as the cultural desire for an iconic figure — "a superman" — who consolidates the values of Edwardian Englishness that were losing currency in the face of the decline of England as an imperial force.

Projects such as Raleigh's purport to present the "true" Shakespeare, as if he can be really known. Their terms of reference largely involve treating the medium purporting to represent Shakespeare — whether words or painting — as if it were a transparent conduit for the "real" Shakespeare. Following the logic of contemporary theory, no medium is ever transparent, and the exact correspondence between a subject and its representation is fraught and full of ambiguity. Rather, media circulate around the inevitable displacements associated with representation, which, in the case of language and textuality, hinge on metaphor and metonymy, tropological systems of exchange and substitution.

Thiessen consciously exploits the mediation of his theatrical medium — the "languages" of the stages that include not only spoken words, but also the body of the actor producing those words as it moves through the space of performance. *Shakespeare's Will* is written in poetry. The connotative qualities of poetry serve to emphasize a fundamental property of language: the unstable relation between the sign and what it represents. For example, "will" takes on multiple meanings in the play, including the literal notion of a "will" as a legal document, "Will" as a contraction of the playwright's first name, and "will" as Shakespeare's "will" to have a life spent in London, largely away from his wife and their three children — Susanna and the twins, Hamnet and Judith. The will of Shakespeare to live independently from his wife and children and to forge a theatrical career in London suggests another meaning of "will" that is related to independence. Thiessen represents Shakespeare and his wife as sharing a bond in which each respects the other's need for sexual independence — that is, for the expression of erotic "will" — outside the terms of a monogamous marriage. This mutual "will" frees Shakespeare to self-fashion "Will" in London, at his will.

The mutability of "will," as represented by Thiessen, occurs within the context of water tropes, and the necessity of water to different forms of life. Water takes on multiple, interrelated forms in the play: as rain, as water used domestically, and as the sea, all tropes associated with the symbolic logic of the play. The play opens with following stage directions:

Rain.
She moves slowly through it.
She enters her house.
She stares at her room.
She lights a lamp.
She removes her mourning attire.
She sits.
She washes off her makeup.
She opens the will.
She stares at it without reading.
She is drowning in words. (Thiessen 2002, 3)

Notable in the stage directions, as cues for the practitioners to translate — or adapt — for the audience, is Hathaway moving "through" the rain. The use of rain creates an ambience, that of an overcast day that cues the designers around light and sound, presuming an affective response in the audience. Against the visual and design cues offered initially are cues to the actor who moves "slowly through it" and lights a lamp, her practical gesture of addressing the darkness brought by a rainy day (3). Following this simple act, the actor removes the character's makeup, presumably by using water, and so removes not only the "public" face that the character offers, but also her make-up, the tool of performing actors. Hence, both actor and character are laid "bare."

For an audience, that much — though subtly offered by Thiessen — is readable within the opening moments of the play, before a word has been uttered. Thiessen sets up tensions between the natural and the social, and between the social and the private, that open a space for reception by the audience of the first line of the play: "I long for the sea" (Thiessen 2002, 3). In the published text, the ascription of these words is to the character named "Anne" who, in the stage directions that precede them, has been identified only as "she," establishing for the practitioners staging the play a tension between the anonymity of the pronoun "she" and the naming of the character by her first name, her intimate name, "Anne." For practitioners, this shift should be read as significant, as it should for students reading the published text: Thiessen's use of "she" signals that an anonymous female character, unnamed, arrives on the stage, moves through the natural element of rain and its accompanying dreariness. "She" executes a set of actions that culminate in her speaking. It is only with the act of speaking that she is named as "Anne." In denoting the character who speaks as "Anne," and not "Anne Hathaway," or "Shakespeare's Wife," Thiessen depicts her as though she were a woman with whom he is familiar rather than a re-creation of a historical person. Given that little is known about Anne Hathaway, the historical figure, Thiessen's re-creation of her is in fact a staging of his familiarity with her as a construct of his imagination.

DOUBLENESS AND SEXUALITY

The constructed terms of theatrical representation, though obvious, warrant mention. Theatrical performance hinges on "doubleness": The actor plays a

character; the space in which performance occurs is an actual theatrical space and is transformed through elements of design into the world in which the performance is set. Theatrical performance has duration within actual time, which frequently has no correspondence to the time frame of the piece: for example, Thiessen's prefatory notes to *Shakespeare's Will* indicate that it "runs approximately one hour and thirty five minutes without intermission" but is set in "Anne's room, her imagination, her memory, her dreams, and the sea," which conflates an imagined setting with actual temporality (Thiessen 2002, 2).

The terms of theatrical performance are significant because the script indicates Thiessen's awareness of them in relation to his dramaturgical project. Specifically, the "doubleness" that is a defining characteristic of theater is embodied in the "she" who becomes "Anne." The actor enters the space as an actor, executes liminal actions in a performance space that is merely a stage and not, initially, a specific setting, as the actor who, through action, is "becoming" the character. Only through speaking does she fully become the character who warrants being named. This transition from the liminality of actor and character, as offered by the stage directions, is a cue for the practitioners, as is Thiessen's conflation of time with space through his placement of the action in an actual space — Anne's room. But that "space" also exists in memory and so carries resonances of temporality: Memory involves the remembering and, crucially, misremembering of the past. In a sequence that moves from an actual space — "Anne's room" — to imagination, then to memory with its implications of temporality, then to dreams, and back to the actual, "the sea," Thiessen not only conflates time and space, but through "imagination" and "dreams," also suggests that these categories labile and fluid. Fact and fiction are not discrete, antithetical categories, but flow into one another. Thiessen's dramatic strategy has implications beyond his own project because it implies that all portraits of historical figures, including those of Shakespeare, circulate within an economy of representation that is informed by imagination, dreams, and fact.

Thiessen, having cued the practitioners to the terms of his project through his prefatory notes and initial stage directions, lets the audience into the terms of his project through Anne's opening words: "I long for the sea . . ." (Thiessen 2002, 3). She longs — desires, as if expressing a modality of "will" — for the sea with its waves, its movement, and fluidity. Thiessen's "Anne" is a vibrant woman who enjoys her own eroticism and so refuses to be contained by the social codes of "appropriate" femininity. In Shakespeare, whom she meets at the fair as they watch a troupe of actors from the "city," she finds a partner who understands and accepts her personal need to live outside terms of social propriety because he shares that need. After they have sex, Anne presumes that the encounter was Bill's first with a woman:

Your hands, shaking
never having been
had
not by a woman at least
not by an older woman
at least. (8)

Her comments open the possibility that Bill has had other sexual encounters with men, which she accepts with the ease of knowing that in Bill, she has found a partner whose sexual inclinations are fluid, as are hers. She, the older and more sexually experienced of the two, recalls asking Bill if he is attracted to men: "Do you . . . I say / . . . do you . . . / What. / I don't know . . . like boys?" (10). After a long pause, Anne remembers that Bill tells her that he doesn't know (10). Her response is to laugh, which she recalls hurts her lover (10). She laughs at his discomfort with the fluidity of his erotic inclination, which lies outside social norms, and not at its more specific objects of desire, men. As she assures him, Anne is also attracted to men and has no interest in monogamy because her erotic constitution is outside the terms of the socially acceptable.

Anne has told Bill, in the initial aftermath of having had sex with him, "You know, I say / I don't want to marry. / Not you, not anyone" (Thiessen 2002, 9). Through this, and the subsequent post-coital exchange between Anne and Bill, Thiessen represents each of them as eschewing convention as a private, pleasure-driven choice, rather than as a mode of social dissent. Anne finds herself missing menses, and so, pregnant, tells her lover, whose response is delight at the impending birth of a child. Bill suggests that they marry; but Anne's father is displeased with the prospect of his daughter marrying a younger man, a Catholic whose family is not held in high regard (12).

The couple then marries, taking their vows publicly in a service officiated by a priest. Thiessen represents the service as a shambles: Anne, suffering from morning sickness, retches twice on her way to the wedding; the service, slated for 11:00 am, does not happen until 2:00 pm, when Bill arrives; he is too poor to give her a ring; and the sobriety of the officiating priest is dubious (Thiessen 2002, 13-14). While the terms of the official ceremony do not auger well for the success of the union, the public taking of vows has been preceded, on the day that Anne and Bill decide to marry, by the couple making vows to each other in private:

We make a vow:
 to wed yes
 but to live
 our own lives.
 To treat each other well
 but to allow for our separate desires.
 To have our secrets
 but to protect
 what we each
 hold most dear.
 It will be
 our own kind of marriage. (12)

These vows, made with one another as witnesses, are ones that the couple seems to uphold, although by the end of *Shakespeare's Will*, Thiessen suggests that Bill only seemingly keeps his private vows to Anne. In the early stages of the play, Thiessen nevertheless signals that from its beginning, the public terms of the marriage are not its actual terms, which are private between Anne and Bill. Marriage presents each with a veneer of nominal conformity to codes of social respectability. In a relationship that has little in terms of public record, Thiessen imagines that the dynamic between husband and wife is consigned to deep shadow, coming to the imagining of the playwright through the memories he ascribes to Hathaway. Thus, the marriage and its terms are not represented by Thiessen as a historical reconstruction, but as conjecture, his imaginative rendering.

Thiessen, as if to emphasize that history always entails imagination, continually employs the motif of the sea as symbolic of flux. For Anne, the sea is a site of solace, particularly against death brought by the plague because, when she was eight, her mother had contracted the disease and died. Against the terminal illness of the mother, Anne's father consoles his children with tales of the sea: "And he settles us in / by the fire, and tells us stories / of the sea" (Thiessen 2002, 46). In his stories, the father — facing the death of his wife and the mother of his children — renders the sea as a character, "proud and boastful," "angry and loud" (47). The sea is a force, dynamic and changing, and in its transformations the sea affirms life.

Anne confirms her commitment to the vows that she and Bill made by accepting his need to have the freedom to go to London, pursue his career, and take on lovers. She accepts his increasingly intermittent returns home, and commensurately, the increasingly longer lapses in their written communication, or so Thiessen imagines. But the silence gnaws: "I become a beggar for news / asking anyone who comes from the city: / Do you have any word from my husband?" (Thiessen 2002, 39). She takes care of the three children in a house on the edge of town, bought with the profits from Shakespeare's plays. With the two servants, Nelly and Brundage, they forge a loving, if socially unconventional, family: Nelly and Brundage live as if they are married, but are not; nor Anne speculates, are they sexually involved, though they love each other. She muses,

Never slept in the same bed
 . . . I don't think?
 Perhaps
 like us
 they have made their own vows. (34)

After a pause, indicated in the stage directions as if to punctuate her realization, "We have become a kind of family: / I and the children and Nelly and Brundage" (34). The location of the house, at the edge of town and so presumably largely without the prying surveillance of the townspeople, allows Anne to act on her need for sexual freedom by taking many men as lovers (35-38). Though the terms of Anne's life are ones that Thiessen presents as largely suiting her and are in keeping with the reciprocal vows made by her and Bill, they are not entirely equitable, given that she bears sole responsibility for raising the children.

When the twins are eleven, the plague again rages. Hamnet — "Harry" — finds a rat that has been killed by one of the family's cats. He takes a pocket knife, one left by his father, and dissects the rat (Thiessen 2002, 50). The moment is innocuous and horrifying, not just because Harry, a child, acts impulsively to sate his curiosity without awareness of the deadly risk that his actions entail, but because he is using the knife of his father, who is too removed from his son and his curiosity to recognize the hazards such tools pose when in the hands of a child. The mother, seeing the child at risk, responds quickly, chastising her son and rinsing his hands in lye "to let him know" that she "is serious" about the risks of his actions (50).

Anne, her life marked by her mother's death, is seized by the terror that one of her children has contracted the plague. Feeling alone because Bill is in London, which has also been ravaged by the plague, and with no news of her husband's fate, she prepares her family — including Brundage and Nelly — to make a trip to the sea. The children are frightened by the intensity of their mother's response to the plague. They have heard rumors of its spread through London and fearfully ask their mother if their father is dead. She assures them that he is not, but in reality she has no such knowledge, until they are leaving and a brief letter arrives:

Dearest Anne:
 Don't worry.
 I am fine.
 Do what you must.
 Much Love
 Bill. (Thiessen 2002, 53)

While Anne is relieved, the terms of the letter are shocking given her desperation to ensure her children's safety.

When they arrive at the sea, Judith turns to her mother and asks, "What does Father look like?" (Thiessen 2002, 57). Susanna responds, "Like his portrait!" (57). But of the various portraits, which one? There are several prominent images of Shakespeare — the Chandos, the Droeshout, the

Sanders — as well as various sculptural renderings. The accuracy of any of these portraits is moot, since that question perhaps diverts attention from another: Why is there the need to have a stable image of Shakespeare? The desire of the children to have an image of their absent father is understandable, and through it, Thiessen frames the cultural significance of Shakespeare as the "father" of English literature whose "shadow" casts, borrowing from Harold Bloom, an "anxiety of influence" (Bloom 1974). Moreover, Thiessen also points to the commensurate need to respond to the legacy of the father through the dual gesture of adaptation, which sets homage against a bid for independence through the writing of a work that is an "off-spring," like but unlike the works of the literary forefather.

Anne, with her children, creates a portrait of Bill using materials that the family finds by the sea:

His face is as shiny as the moss there on the hill.
And they all grab moss to create an outline of your face.

His eyes are like two shiny stones on the beach.
Harry carefully chooses two from the beach
and Susanna places them down.

His hair — what's left of it —
(they laugh again)
Is like the straggly seaweed there. (Thiessen 2002, 57)

Once the portrait is finished, mother and children sit on their haunches, admiring their creation until the tide washes the father's "smile out to sea" (58). The moment poignantly rehearses the ephemeral, fleeting presence of Shakespeare in the lives of his wife and children. These fleeting presences are the terms by which Shakespeare, the man, is known to any of us — an image we fashion through the materials available to meet our need to know him. While the existing images of Shakespeare may have greater material permanence than did the imagined portrait created by his wife and children in *Shakespeare's Will*, those portraits are no less the effect of desire to know an unknowable than is the one created on the imaginary beach in Thiessen's play.

By not trying to forge a rendering that corresponds to assumptions about the historic figure, Thiessen envisions a "Shakespeare" who is mediated by the theatrical conceit embedded in the performance of Hathaway's recollections — hence, a Shakespeare presented, meta-ironically, within the terms of theatrical performance, which is always ephemeral, dissolving at the play's end as surely as the portrait by mother and children is effaced by the sea. Perhaps most obviously, by having Hathaway give voice to her memory of Shakespeare, Thiessen gives this woman, consigned to the margins of history as Shakespeare's wife, a dignified presence that has some relation to Virginia Woolf's conjecture about Shakespeare's sister in *A Room of One's Own*. Woolf, in that essay, champions women who want to work as writers and considers the material conditions that prevent them from realizing their creativity; or, if against all odds, they do, the conditions of

production and reception that prevent recognition of their "genius." Historically, culture has been understood to have been created by men. And Thiessen, ironically in his position of male playwright re-imagining another male playwright as imagined through the voice of a female character he has also created, problematizes this ideological configuration.

Woolf muses that if Shakespeare had a sister, "Judith," equally as talented as her brother and as keen to realize his gifts as a practitioner, what might her fate have been? Woolf imagines that "Judith" might have made her way to London and found her entry to realize her talent by appealing to an actor-manager named "Nick Greene," who

took pity on her; she found herself with a child by that gentleman and so — who shall measure the heat and violence of the poet's heart when caught and tangled in a woman's body? — killed herself one's winter's night and lies buried at some cross-roads where the omnibuses now stop outside the Elephant and Castle. (Woolf 2001, 58)

While Thiessen shares Woolf's concern with the conditions that have prevented women from being recognized for their achievements, he is arguing the case of a woman who was extraordinary, as a *person* and not as an artist — although Thiessen's depiction of Anne forging a portrait of her husband through "found" materials suggests that she does have latent artistic abilities. The point that Thiessen and Woolf each makes is that historically, the social construction of femininity is such that women's bodies, circumscribed by their sexuality and reproductive capacity, have determined their fates. Woolf is willing to speculate on the inauspicious terms of the grave of Judith — unmarked, with the technology and so, purported social "advancement" that technology popularly is seen to represent, rumbling over this "lost" woman. She is less willing to offer cues about the meaning of the pregnancy for the fictive sister of Shakespeare. Does she kill herself because she cannot imagine bearing a child conceived outside wedlock, and perhaps without the possibility of her child being legitimized socially through marriage? Does she imagine that her family will ostracize her for being sexually active before marriage, even though her brother's wife, in Woolf's words, "bore him a child rather quicker than was right"? (47). Or, does the responsibility of motherhood generate for "Judith" an impossible choice between her raising a child and her creative aspirations, as if the two roles were without the possibility of reconciliation?

Thiessen's Anne faces no anxiety about motherhood nor, initially, about the terms of her relationship with her children's father, and how the differing needs of the parents will affect their offspring. By the end of *Shakespeare's Will*, the shambles of the wedding ceremony — Anne retching with morning sickness, Bill, late as if casual about the wedding, the drunken priest — become an eerie harbinger of the terms of the relationship. Despite the vows, Shakespeare, in the play, capitulates to the dominant terms of masculinity that license him to do as he "will." Anne, in contrast, never waivers from her vows, despite what they cost her. Thiessen imagines that the trip to the seashore and Anne's attempt to protect her children,

particularly "Harry," who has handled an infected rat, goes horrifically wrong. "Harry," while playing by the sea with the same abandon and lack of awareness of risk that allowed him to pick up the rat, is carried out to sea by a wave. Watching her son swept out to sea, Anne tears at her own clothing, while looking for Brundage, the servant consigned in the hybrid family to the role of "father" in the absence of Bill. Her daughters plead with their mother not to try and save Harry because in so doing she will surely die and leave them (Thiessen 2002, 68-69). Anne's marriage has come to the impossible moment where there are no real choices, but only the horizon of loss—almost certainly of Harry and probably of her own life should she try to save him, which would in turn leave her daughters bereft. This horizon of loss has an actual symbolic geography, occurring at the limits of the sea and stretching to the perceived infinity of sea and sky. The sea-water, which Anne equates with life, with transformation and possibility, offers no solace in the death of her son by drowning.

Against the loss that now marks Anne's life, there is a flicker of hope when Bill finally comes home, at some point after the death of their son. He and Anne embrace and kiss, momentarily rekindling their initial attraction at the fair (Thiessen 2002, 61). The moment is fleeting. Recalls Anne, "You are / sad / awkward / out of place" (61-62). Having left his life in London and the theater, Bill is adrift. Unlike the characters of some of his plays, Bill's metaphoric drifting never results in his landing on the "shore" of family life, transforming himself from the independent man of the theater into a man living with his family. He eventually becomes ill, feverish. Thiessen's Anne cares for her ailing husband, lying beside him one night to give him comfort. She drifts off to sleep and awakes to find, as she recalls, that "the night has swept you away," as if the night has rhythms akin to those of the sea that took the life of their son (64).

Bill is buried. Anne receives his will, which she reluctantly reads. Much of the estate goes to Susanna and, upon her death, "to the first sone of her body lawfully issuing, and to the heirs . . . / male . . . / of her body"; rings are left to Shakespeare's friends; the house is bequeathed by Shakespeare to his sister, Joan; to Anne, Shakespeare leaves his "second best bed" (Thiessen 2002, 67). These are the actual terms of Shakespeare's will, the significance of which remains opaque to historians, who, as Thiessen notes in a postscript, debate whether or not the will slights Anne (73-74). Certainly, Thiessen is clear about his interpretation of the will through his adaptation of the prose of the will into a prose poem. The line break and ellipsis, between "heirs" and "male," with "male" as the sole word of a single line gives particular emphasis to the terms of Shakespeare's bequest to his elder daughter, suggesting that the force of the bequest is intended to punish Anne for Harry's death, as if that death were the consequence of Anne's negligence. Given the terms under which Thiessen presents Harry's death, his dramaturgical perspective is clear; the death was an accident, and if one parent should be held culpable, it is not Anne, but William, who abrogated his responsibilities as a husband and father to pursue his will to live

independently, to realize his aspirations — both personal and professional — and so, to have the freedom to self-fashion his "Will."

Thiessen is not interested in whether Shakespeare's chosen life of independence led to surpassing artistic achievement as a playwright and poet. The terms of the play suggest that this achievement is a given. What interests Thiessen more are the terms of the private vows that Anne and Bill made to each other and how these vows represent the possibility of forging new terms for configuring a family. Thiessen, through *Shakespeare's Will*, then, offers a discreetly poignant feminist work that, without being dogmatic, is nevertheless insistent in its championing of women. Through dramaturgical *chiaroscuro*, he sheds "light" on Anne Hathaway as a woman whose strength stems from self-knowledge. While her commitment to the private vows she and Bill made allows him the freedom to realize his will, and so to go to London and work in the theater, they also allow Anne to realize her own will and live life on her own terms. But the social construction of masculinity and femininity does not allow easily for equality between the two genders, whatever the private will of individuals, because understandings of femininity circulate around the female body and its reproductive capacity. Having given birth to children, Anne is defined by her role and responsibilities as mother, whereas Bill is estranged from his fatherhood, unwittingly working toward his canonization as the "father" of English literature.

Thiessen presents this estrangement as a fundamental slippage by Bill from the terms of his private vows. This slippage is facilitated by the dominant understandings of masculinity and femininity that complacently accept a man's prerogative to enjoy such freedoms because siring a child does not define him. Initially, Thiessen suggests that the private vows represent the possibility for two individuals to live as they "will," but Bill increasingly fails to honor the vows by assuming the privilege of freedom from his family without the commensurate responsibilities. The transforming possibility of the vows dissipates, and the cost is borne by Anne who, in the end, in Shakespeare's actual will, is left his "second best bed." It is Thiessen's focus on Anne and her wish for a marriage in which the desires of each partner, whether or not they conform to the conventional understanding of the roles for husbands and wives, are honored that marks the "Canadian-ness" of *Shakespeare's Will*.

CONCLUSION: CANADIAN-NESS

Both Anne and Bill have sexual desires that are at odds with the dominant cultural norms. Their desires — wills — cannot be met by adhering to the conventional terms of marriage and family and so, their recourse is to forge private vows. Thiessen alludes to Shakespeare having had homoerotic inclinations that were not served by the conventional terms of marriage. But perhaps more crucially, neither Anne nor Bill, in the play, is served by a conventionally monogamous union, as indeed were neither Brundbage nor Nelly, who wanted to marry, to be monogamous but apparently without

engaging sexually with each other (Thiessen 2002, 34). Thiessen's representation of the bonds of affect that bind each of these couples, albeit problematically, speaks to contemporary Canada and the shifts in understanding around marriage. In fact, the play's politics and key adaptive gestures coincide with transformations in Canada around orthodoxies associated with gender roles and families.

Through the Canadian Charter of Rights and the challenges to it, as of June 2005 gay people were able to marry in Canada. Most Canadians accept this right; indeed, the acceptance of same-sex marriage, particularly among younger Canadians, has become a key element of Canada's national identity. Thiessen is not a polemical playwright, and while his plays have a politics, their politics are nuanced. In *Shakespeare's Will*, Thiessen begins and ends his play with the issue of the legal will of Shakespeare. In so doing, Thiessen reminds his audience that marriage is a legal, and therefore social, contract. The private vows between Anne and Bill have no legal force because there were no witnesses. The marriage, and its terms, in the end, amount to the will, and Anne being left her husband's "second best bed." The terms of the will, presented within the context of *Shakespeare's Will*, imply that societies need to change their understanding of marriage, as has occurred in Canada, in a preliminary way, through the legal challenges facilitated by the Charter of Rights. Such challenges have not created full equality, but in the recognition of the rights of same-sex partners and reconfiguration of the understanding of "family," have begun a crucial process of broadly based social acceptance of the kind that Thiessen persuasively argues for in *Shakespeare's Will*.

Another indication of *Shakespeare's Will's* Canadianness is Thiessen's refusal to create a portrait of the Bard and so, his refusal to give Shakespeare "center stage." Canadian theater has long been dominated by the two festivals which are dedicated, at least nominally, to the works of two British playwrights: the Shaw Festival, which features the work of George Bernard Shaw and his contemporaries; and the Stratford Festival of Canada, which was founded to reproduce the work of Shakespeare. These two large festivals (with their numerous stages, on which plays are simultaneously mounted during seasons that run from the late spring into the fall) speak to the history of theater in English Canada and the degree to which it has struggled with its place in a culture that has been dominated by an attitude of obsequiousness to its British forebears. In consigning Shakespeare to the shadows in *Shakespeare's Will* and focusing on Hathaway, Thiessen suggests that there is no need for Canadian theater practitioners — or anyone else — to attend slavishly to the cultural forefathers: there are other voices that deserve to be heard, such as those of contemporary Canadians writing for the theater. Ironically, Stratford's 2007 season featured a production of *Shakespeare's Will*, which was produced in the smallest of the Festival's four theater spaces, the Studio — suggesting that the struggle between canonical orthodoxy and the kinds of new "Canadian" imaginings that are given voice in Thiessen's work is far from over.

NOTES

1. In keeping with Thiessen's naming of characters in *Shakespeare's Will*, Anne Hathaway is referred to as "Anne" and William Shakespeare, as "Bill" in discussions of the play.

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Wild Adaptation

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ABSTRACT

One of the most vexed questions in the understanding of adaptation, and especially, for particular reasons, of adaptation of Shakespeare, is the question of definition. What is, or is not, an adaptation? (What is, or is not, Shakespeare?) While acknowledging the heuristic usefulness of attempts to define adaptation more or less narrowly (it is always interesting to see the specific ways things group together), these theses argue that there is an abiding need, an overriding need, to treat adaptation as a truly expansive and open field of study and activity, no matter how much this might militate against the disciplining of adaptation. Sophisticated analysis of adaptation must entail both systems of categorization and an openness to that which does not fit in these systems. Ultimately, however, the classifiable is no more than a provisional subset in the general and open field of adaptation. This essay explores what Fortier theorizes as "wild adaptation," a form of engagement with prior texts that cannot be policed and refuses containment by reductive definitional paradigms.

I

One of the most vexed questions in the understanding of adaptation, and especially, for particular reasons, of adaptation of Shakespeare, is the question of definition. What is, or is not, an adaptation? (What is, or is not, Shakespeare?) While acknowledging the heuristic usefulness of attempts to define adaptation more or less narrowly (it is always interesting to see the specific ways things group together), these theses argue that there is an abiding need, an overriding need, to treat adaptation as a truly expansive and open field of study and activity, no matter how much this might militate against the disciplining of adaptation. Sophisticated analysis of adaptation must entail both systems of categorization and an openness to that which doesn't fit in these systems. Ultimately, however, the classifiable is no more than a provisional subset in the general and open field of adaptation.

II

My suspicion of classificatory regimes, especially those used for purposes of exclusion, has a deep pedigree in twentieth-century cultural theory: for instance (*inter alia*), in Jacques Derrida's suspicion of genre, in Patrice Pavis's open semiology, in Deleuze and Guattari's rhizomatic becoming. Derrida sets against a law of genre that is "an authoritarian summons to a law of 'do' or 'do not,'" "a law of impurity or a principle of contamination" that projects "an open and essentially unpredictable series" (Derrida 1981, 51-53). Pavis writes that global systemization is "extremely problematic"; he stands for "a healthy state of suspicion about any universal model"; calling for a semiology that is "dynamic and provisional," he moves away from abstraction that smoothes out irregularities (Pavis 1982, 9, 204). For Deleuze and Guattari, becoming — and adaptation is nothing if not a continuing becoming — "is a rhizome, not a classificatory or genealogical tree" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 239). This history of suspicion goes both to the intellectual folly and conceptual leakage of an ordering that inevitably leaves something out, that allows less expansive insight than open, inductive exploration, and to the often unfortunate political consequences of systems of exclusion.

III

I have long been drawn to Marshall McLuhan's aphorism, "Art is anything you can get away with" (McLuhan and Fiore 1967, 132-36). This is definition as provisional, actual, and inductive. I have found the predicate of this aphorism equally applicable to other notions. This is especially true, I think, of adaptation. "Anything you can get away with" implies not merely, or not primarily, a worldly cynicism concerning ultimate value or contingent human judgment, but more important, a recognition of that which is, of success, acceptance, survival, and actuality. "Adaptation is anything you can get away with" means that adaptation is what actually exists, what has been done, what becomes, what survives, rather than what does or does not fit an abstract schema or set of rules.

IV

My own thinking about the expansiveness of studying "Shakespeare" was influenced many years ago by passages from two books. The first is from Graham Holderness's "The Shakespeare Myth": "Shakespeare is, here, now, always, what is currently being made of him" (Holderness 1988, xvi). The second is from Gary Taylor's *Reinventing Shakespeare: A Cultural History from the Restoration to the Present*. In defining what he calls "Shakesperotics," Taylor writes, "It embraces everything that a society does in the name — variously spelled — of Shakespeare" (Taylor 1989, 6). For me, these have served as calls for openness and expansiveness in studying and thinking about Shakespeare. As open as these statements are, however, they each contain a limiting element that perhaps is not as easy to justify as might appear. Holderness refers to Shakespeare as "him," grounding that which is currently being made in a historically specific individual. That's fine as long as we are not returning here to the originary consciousness and intention of the author. The originary Shakespeare was already a cultural formation, including an individual embedded in a certain society and set of traditions, a theater industry, a set of play texts, a reputation, etc. So really, Shakespeare is, here, now, and always what is currently being made of Shakespeare, or, using the logic of substitution: Shakespeare is, here, now, and always what is currently being made of what is, here, now, and always currently being made of Shakespeare.

Obviously, this substitution can be repeated *ad infinitum*. It hath no bottom. Taylor's limitation is "in the name — variously spelled — of Shakespeare." So Shakespeare must be named as such in order to come under the rubric. But why? It is easy to conceive of some influence from Shakespeare going unnoticed — a stray paraphrase or quotation somewhere, for example. Perhaps it becomes a part of Shakesperotics when someone receives it as such — it wasn't so much done in the name of as it was received in the name of Shakespeare. That would make sense inasmuch as something nobody recognizes as in the name of Shakespeare will by definition fail to be recognized as something related to the study of Shakespeare. But once it is recognized as such, then it escapes its previous position as unrecognized Shakesperotics and comes into the light of the name. So, even before it was recognized as such, it existed in a potential state of Shakespeareanness? Or was it the very act of naming and recognizing that gives it this Shakespeareanness? In which case, anything named as such is Shakesperotic? Shakespeare is whatever you can get away with.

V

In our collection *Adaptations of Shakespeare*, Daniel Fischlin and I focused on the groundbreaking work of Ruby Cohn in *Modern Shakespeare Offshoots* (1976) in order to demonstrate how even as elaborate a system of categorization as Cohn's is "ultimately untenable," inevitably producing anomalies in the attempt "to classify the possibilities of rewriting too narrowly" (Fischlin and Fortier 2000, 3). We wrote: "Adaptation as a concept can expand or contract. Writ large, adaptation includes almost any act of alteration performed upon specific cultural works of the past and dovetails with a general process of cultural recreation." We also positioned our own collection within a much smaller compass: "More narrowly, [adaptation's] focus in this anthology is on works which, through verbal and theatrical devices, radically alter the shape and significance of another work so as to invoke that work and yet be different from it" (Fischlin and Fortier 2000, 4). Here, we make a distinction between local, ad hoc, and provisional categorizations and the big picture of adaptation in general.

VI

As is to be expected and desired, our terminology, definitions, and choices have not been without controversy. In *Not Shakespeare: Bardolatry and Burlesque in the Nineteenth Century*, Richard Schoch distinguishes burlesque from "redactions, adaptations, or renderings": "While an adaptation is the play which it adapts, a burlesque represents the play it burlesques . . . Shakespeare burlesques are not Shakespeare because they do not iterate — but rather interpret — their precursory texts." In this regard, Fischlin and I are called to task: We "fail to distinguish between burlesque and adaptation, thus listing both David Garrick's 1772 radically altered version of *Hamlet* and John Poole's *Hamlet Travestie* under the overly inclusive category of *Hamlet* 'adaptations'" (Schoch 2002, 21).

As far as they can go, Schoch's distinctions are engaging — between being and representation, iteration and interpretation. Unfortunately, I don't believe they go very far. Is it possible ever to escape representation into pure being? Thus, in our work, Fischlin and I turned to the Shakespearean formulation that adaptation "is, and is not" Shakespeare. Can any iteration not contain interpretation? I would think, for example, that Charles Marowitz's *Measure for Measure*, which we included in our anthology, is

being (as Schoch seems to mean it), representation, iteration, and interpretation all at once.

That our category of adaptation is "overly inclusive" is open to debate. Smaller categories are possible — although Schoch's own are simultaneously overly exclusive and leaky — but given the works we collected, and given our definitions of both adaptation writ small and adaptation in general, there is coherence in our inclusivity that Schoch fails to register.

VII

Linda Hutcheon, in *A Theory of Adaptation*, cites the passage from *Adaptations of Shakespeare* referred to earlier: "There is some apparent validity to the general statement that adaptation 'as a concept can expand or contract. Writ large, adaptation includes almost any act of alteration performed upon specific cultural works of the past and dovetails with a general process of cultural recreation' . . . But, from a pragmatic point of view, such a vast definition would clearly make adaptation rather difficult to theorize" (Hutcheon 2006, 9). The first thing to note is that Hutcheon's pragmatic position seems somewhat pusillanimous — we avoid something just because it creates difficulty? If a vast definition makes sense, then we should not turn away from it; and the central conviction of these theses is that on an important level a vast definition makes complete sense.

Hutcheon's own definition is markedly more narrow. Adaptation is both a process and a product: it is a "process of creation: (re)interpretation and (re)creation"; as a product, it is "an announced and extensive transposition of a particular work or works" (Hutcheon 2006, 7). In some ways, this is good. Hutcheon acknowledges the inevitable interplay of creation and interpretation in a way that Schoch does not. The notion of an adaptation as necessarily announced, however, leads to the same problems I discussed earlier, concerning Gary Taylor. Hutcheon uses *acknowledged* interchangeably with *announced*. But who announces or acknowledges? This cannot mean a simple return to authorial intention. Hutcheon also stipulates that an adaptation must be an "extended intertextual engagement with the adapted work" (8). Where is the line between extended and not-so-extended to be drawn? And what are those whose engagement is not so extended to be called, and why? Hutcheon works from a rather narrow notion of the work being adapted. She appears to mean a text in a traditional and literary sense — this play, this poem, this novel. In the case of Shakespeare, as we have seen through Holderness and Taylor, Shakespeare as text is more than just his plays and poems. An adaptation of Shakespeare is an adaptation of whatever has been made of Shakespeare. Finally, only certain kinds of engagements with texts are, for Hutcheon, adaptations: not sequels or prequels, since they are telling a different story (9), but spinoffs (171). This seems to be unnecessarily confining. It would, for instance, exclude from our collection John Fletcher's *The Woman's Prize*. But I fail to see a profound difference between a work that rewrites Petruchio and Katharina's wedding or adds scenes to their marriage and one that has Katharina die and Petruchio remarry. Where exactly is the line between the same story and a different story? Are we so interested in patrolling that line?

VIII

Another adaptation that would not be an adaptation according to Hutcheon is Leon Rooke's *Shakespeare's Dog* (1984). It is not an extensive engagement with any work by Shakespeare. It is a piece of *faux* (one suspects) biography, which tells how Shakespeare finally leaves Stratford and starts his career in order to save his dog, Hooker, from the authorities. Hooker has poached a deer. The book is written in the first person from the perspective of the dog.

Certainly the novel contains many references to Shakespeare's works: "Bubble bubble toil and trouble" (Rooke 1984, 13), "young men will do it" (28), "where are your gibes, your gambols" (80), to point out but a few. Moreover, the novel is an explicit and extended critical interpretation of Shakespeare. According to Hooker, Will is strict in conformity and hates equality (34), "licking up his time's dogma as I would lick scented stick or glide my tongue over leg of mutton" (143). Shakespeare doesn't rail against his swinish age, he only tells it as it is. Hooker would like Shakespeare to be quite different: "I wanted him less romantic, less besotted with words' double-turning, less in conspiracy with what his epoch glommed was man and dog's natural configuration. Wanted him less easy with the conscience that called it moral to uphold that we owed nothing to each other. I wanted railing and ranting. I wanted hot revolution" (35). Ulysses' speech on degree from *Troilus and Cressida* comes from Hooker and is laced with irony (34).

Shakespeare's Dog is an adaptation of Shakespeare, but not of one of his plays or poems. It is, *nonetheless*, an adaptation of Shakespeare. It is an adaptation of the biography, of the life-text.

IX

Shakespeare's Dog is an example of an interesting subgenre of Shakespearean adaptation: apocryphal biography or apocryphal biographical etiology, imaginary reinterpretations of how Shakespeare became Shakespeare. See, for comparison, the film *Shakespeare in Love* (1998) or Ann-Marie MacDonald's *Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet)* (1990), in which we are told that Shakespeare borrowed and corrupted the Gustav manuscript, which contained more comic and protofeminist versions of Shakespeare's tragedies. There is also the television cartoon show *Peabody's Improbable History* (1959), in which Mr. Peabody, also a dog, and his pet boy Sherman, travel back in time to watch Shakespeare steal from Francis Bacon.

Shakespeare's Dog, *Goodnight Desdemona*, and *Peabody's Improbable History* all share another interesting sub-element of adaptation: prolepsis. Michael Keefer has written about prolepsis in *Shakespeare's Dog*. Some of this we have already seen, in the way that Hooker anticipates many of Shakespeare's later famous speeches. Moreover, prolepsis runs counter to the simple sense of derivation that seems to be, for instance, at the heart of Hutcheon's understanding. Keefer sees the transgression of prolepsis as running counter to the idea of any particular order as natural (Keefer n.d., 20). In this way, Rooke's twentieth-century canine creation becomes the originator of Shakespeare's sixteenth-century words. And, as Keefer points out, "Remembering that the names Hooker and Rooke are a near-rhyme, we may uncover in this Shakespearean precursor a double identity: Elizabethan dog, to be sure, but also, proleptically, a very contemporary writer, whose voice retains a distinctive North Carolinian twang" (6). By

this temporal play, the act of reinterpretation is given the authority of primacy, so it is no longer late-coming and beside the point, but the real deal.

In Rooke's prolepsis, the primary voice is a critique of all the conservative thinking that Shakespeare stood or has come to stand for: "a confirmed politico-religious radical, an active egalitarian, and a dog" (Rooke 1984, 18). Hooker stands for "the radical pantheism of egalitarian justice" (13). Hooker is, moreover, a poacher, a transgressor, who goes where he shouldn't and takes what doesn't belong to him. He is a creature of the commons and an enemy of property rights. Something like an adapter.

X

That Hooker is a dog should be emphasized. Shakespeare is not Hooker's pet boy (and so not merely a giddy reversal of the status quo), but rather, "in these woods man and dog are one" (Rooke 1984, 22), and everything we think of as Shakespeare is a product/process of interspecies collaboration and creation. Boundaries are crossed, categories are transgressed, that which should not be mixed is mixed, degree is taken away. Shakespeare here is, in the terminology of Deleuze and Guattari (1987), "becoming animal," crossing the cultural landscape in a different way, not by the accepted roads, not following the fence lines, but tracking what exists wherever, through unpathed waters and undreamed shores.

In my past thinking about adaptation, I have intentionally avoided recourse to theories of natural selection and adaptation as any help in an anti-essentialist understanding of adaptation as a cultural phenomenon. I'm not sure anymore that one needs to be as wary as all that, to patrol these borders so carefully. In fear of what? Darwin, after all, speaks of using his terms (specifically "Struggle for Existence") "in a large and metaphorical sense" and wants to make manifest the "infinite complexity of the coadaptations between all organic beings" (Darwin 2004 1, 45). Deleuze and Guattari write, "A becoming-animal always involves a pack, a band, a population, a peopling, in short, a multiplicity" (239); they call the sense of open-ended, rhizomatic (natural) adaptation "neoevolutionism." Adaptation is, quite literally, anything you can get away with. That is its only limit.

We might call this adaptation in the wild.

XI

"Wild analysis" is Freud's term for work done in the name of psychoanalysis, but without the strict orthodoxy of training and method that Freud's school demands (Freud 2002, 1-9). Freud, although admitting that such wild analysis often does some good, is disapproving, since it undermines the psychoanalytic project as he defines it. Freud's policing effort, of course, turned out to be a monumental failure. How many more of us have made wild use of psychoanalysis, adapted it to our own ends, made it work for our needs, than have dutifully followed the dictates of the master? What was there ever to stop us? Those who try to police wild adaptation face a similarly unavoidable defeat.

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"To Skip or Not to Skip": Shakespearean Romanticism and Curricular *Genderpellation* in Canadian Popular Culture

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ABSTRACT | "THE LUNATIC, THE LOVER, AND THE POET" (*A MIDSUMMER NIGHT NIGHT'S DREAM*, 5.1.7) | "I WILL NEVER BE A TRUANT, LOVE, / 'TILL I HAVE LEARN'D THY LANGUAGE" (*1 HENRY 4*, 3.1.204-205) | "SCHOOL YOURSELF [B]UT FOR YOUR HUSBAND" (*MACBETH*, 4.2.15, ADAPTED) | "I READ IN A BOOK ONCE THAT A ROSE BY ANY OTHER NAME WOULD SMELL AS SWEET" | "I DON'T NEED TO READ BILLY SHAKESPEARE" | "SHAKESPEARE ONE GETS ACQUAINTED WITH WITHOUT KNOWING HOW . . . ONE IS INTIMATE WITH HIM BY INSTINCT" (*MANSFIELD PARK*) | REFERENCES

ABSTRACT

This essay investigates the Romantic effects of Shakespearean "touchstones" in popular cultural representations of Canadian curriculum to interpellate girls in the contested institutional space of public education. The essay's genealogy of Shakespeare and gender-curricular politics opens with Lucy Maude Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables*, a popular literary text published shortly after the Victorian-imperial institution of public education. The argument juxtaposes Montgomery's pedagogical and prescriptive adaptation of Shakespeare with Skye Sweetnam's "Billy S.," a 2004 popular song that articulates a rebellious appeal to the imagination, not unlike Anne's own. The paper concludes with questions about how these uses of Shakespeare in popular representations of school and Romantic ideology produce a gender-coded literary curriculum, and students, in English Canadian public education.

This essay compares how Shakespearean quotations work in two popular cultural representations of Canadian curriculum that interpellate girls as a student audience. For the purposes of this argument, I use the portmanteau term *genderpellation* to describe this particularly gender-coded and gender-productive hailing and forming of readers and audiences. The integration or segregation of students according to gender has become controversial in the new century; since 2002, the so-called Canadian national newspaper, the *Globe and Mail*, has run stories almost annually about the pros and cons of gender-

segregated classrooms (see Peritz 2003, Wente 2005, and Alphonso 2006). I wish to contextualize how popular cultural images of school culture represent the Romanticism of literary pedagogy through Shakespearean intertexts, thus problematizing the gender-coding of Shakespeare's canonical authority and, moreover, the gender-based division of cultural and intellectual labour in public education. Juxtaposing Lucy Maud Montgomery's novel *Anne of Green Gables*, published near the start of the last century, with the pop song "Billy S.," by Skye Sweetnam, released near the start of the twenty-first century, we can track continuities and transformations in Shakespeare's function as a touchstone of Romantic ideology in Canadian school culture. The distinctively curricular framing of each of these popular texts' references to Shakespeare leads me to suggest that his authorial function sustains that particular patriarchal gender division in public education that gender-codes language subjects and literary study (such as the Arts and Humanities they represent) as "girls' stuff."

While this division has been embodied by a conspicuous, often dramatically high ratio of women to men students in virtually every Arts or Humanities class I have attended or taught (in Ontario, and more recently in Germany), it begins at much earlier levels of the educational system, and (it should go without saying) and is anything but a natural division of the curricular field (in Pierre Bourdieu's sense of the field as a site where capital and habitus converge and conflict to produce agents and positions [see Bourdieu 1993]). This division is well documented. Examining the practice of reading among British adolescents, Elaine Millard argues that reading as such "is constructed within both domestic and school settings as an interest more appropriate for girls than it is for boys" (1997, 31). Ann Clark and John Trafford also historicize modern language studies in general as a "traditionally 'female' subject" in their investigation of the teaching practices and assumptions that lead girl students consistently and dramatically to outperform boys in the subject (1995, 315). More recently, Nola Alloway et al. have reviewed the extensive literature on how "participation in the communicative and expressive aspects of English has often been identified by boys as a feminine activity" (2003, 352-53), in order to suggest that "the interplay between masculinity and oral performativity in English classrooms . . . is a source of anxiety and tension" (363).

Adopting a longer historical perspective, Carrie Paechter situates the learning of gender in school according to the epistemological *grand récit* of Cartesian dualism (2006, 121); and a survey of research published in *Gender and Education* over the last decade or so shows a similarly broad international scope for the genderpellation of girl students in English and literary studies, from points across the postcolonial Anglophone diaspora (e.g., Britain, Australia, Canada, and the USA) to places where English is taught as a second language, such as Japan (see Kobayashi 2002); perhaps less than coincidentally with Kobayashi's claim that English in Japan is "feminized," Japanese culture has also drawn commentary for its own forms of canonizing *Anne of Green Gables* [see Devereux 2001]). These researches navigate between the schoolyard culture of students and the classroom practices of teachers to map the shifting and often-reified terrain of gender construction in educational systems. What concerns me in the present essay is the way in which popular cultural texts can represent and respond to curricular genderpellation, specifically to its operations in the English curriculum, and more specifically still to its leverage of Shakespeare, who then is often figured, dialectically, as representing the school curriculum in general.

In making this argument, I would not imply that the genderpellation of girls as the target student body for English and literary studies should simply be reversed — that Shakespeare and literary pedagogy should be re-masculinized. (The old-school network of old boys is always ready to protest too much to that effect.) Instead, I hope to show that the particular adaptations of Shakespeare in these popular texts for girls point to possibilities for critiquing the gender-divided priorities of public education, and maybe even for radicalizing the relation of girls and women to the discourse and institution of literary (and more broadly) Arts education. To properly treat *Anne of Green Gables* and "Billy S." in detail, I will first elaborate the historical context of Romantic Shakespeare and curricular Romanticism, as triangulated by the discourse of curricular Shakespeare. A survey of these contexts, themselves well-covered areas of scholarly study, is important in order to demonstrate their conjunction in conditioning the discourse of curricular Shakespeare: as an "author function" (Foucault 1977, 124), a canonical oeuvre, a marker of cultural capital, and a synecdoche for school culture in general.

"THE LUNATIC, THE LOVER, AND THE POET" (*A MIDSUMMER NIGHT NIGHT'S DREAM*, 5.1.7)

In the historical formation of the English literary canon and the discipline of literary study that has followed and superintended it, Shakespeare suffered a well-documented change, a rich and strange makeover from Voltaire's *savage ivre* (see "Voltaire" 2007) to Britain's "national poet" (Dobson 1992). Michael Dobson writes:

[M]any of the conceptions of Shakespeare we inherit date not from the Renaissance, but from the Enlightenment . . . which initiated many of the practices which modern spectators and readers of Shakespeare would regard as normal or even natural: the performance of his female roles by women instead of men; . . . [and] the reproduction of his works in scholarly editions . . . Yet something of Shakespeare's "drunken savagery" persisted to supplement the shift in this author's cultural status. His "drunkenness" mediates a sensibility of intoxication; his "savagery," a primitivist sense of untutored talent; together, the terms of Voltaire's pejorative caricature would become revalued as a sublime authenticity according to the Enlightenment ideals and Romantic aesthetics that displaced the Neoclassical over the course of the eighteenth century, in the process installing Shakespeare as "the paradigmatic figure of literary authority." (Dobson 1992, 1)

Although Shakespeare's rehabilitation and canonization began earlier — between the restoration of the monarchy and the 1769 Stratford Jubilee (3) — the cultural matrix now historicized as Romanticism did much in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries to consolidate the dominant terms of "Bardolatry" for high and late modernity. As shown by Jonathan Bate's research into the Romantic terms upon which Shakespeare's canonicity remains largely contingent today, Romanticism and Bardolatry developed as simultaneous, mutually constitutive cultural phenomena (1986, 6). On this account, Shakespeare's drunkenness was alchemized into sublimity, passion, and creative imagination (10); his savagery, into a peculiarly English valorization of anti-intellectualism, celebrating lack of learning as a triumph of practice over theory (6-7; see also Simpson 1993). In projects of Shakespeare's reclamation by major Romantic figures such as Coleridge, Hazlitt, and Schlegel (among others), Shakespeare (alongside Spenser and Milton) became a "model" of "sublime and pathetic" poetry, in Warton's words, that played a significant part in

directing the late eighteenth-century eschewal of the "wit," "sense," and satire prioritized in Neoclassical literature (Day 1996, 49-51).

In light of the Romantic period's broader changes in modes of literary production — the increase in and diversification of reading audiences, the professionalization of authorship — the retroactive revaluation of Shakespeare by writers and thinkers now situated as Romantics simultaneously made Shakespeare a proto-Romantic author (in Foucault's sense of authorship as an authoritative signature, a discursive effect) and gave Romanticism a specifically Shakespearean authority.

**"I WILL NEVER BE A TRUANT, LOVE, / 'TILL I HAVE LEARN'D THY LANGUAGE" (1
HENRY 4, 3.1.204-205)**

The resulting Shakespearean forms of Romanticism — especially Hazlitt's dramatic character criticism and Schlegel's theory of the Bard's "organic" sensibility of "infinite desire" (René Wellek, quoted in Day 1996, 81) — in turn informed the emergence, formation, and pedagogical priorities of literary education, the discipline historicized by Ian Hunter as "English." As Hunter (1988) argues in his Foucauldian theory of culture in education and government, character and desire became integral terms in producing the discipline of English in public education as an apparatus of moral supervision and emulation, in which students approach texts as sites for imagining and discovering their own character (64-65). Hunter identifies a specifically Romantic aesthetic as an "educational imperative" (210), an "ethical technology" (68) in which the English teacher becomes a moral example for students to emulate (65) in an ongoing project of exploring — and, crucially, imagining — the self (211), and so, microcosmically, reconciling culture and society. Here, the very figure of the subject, like the subject of character, becomes legible as a function of Romantic aesthetics in literary pedagogy (282):

The contours of literary education — the forms in which it confronts us in the present — are . . . the results of a specific set of historical circumstances . . . in which literary pedagogy, having emerged as a privileged embodiment of the technology of moral supervision, permitted the exemplary discipline of the Romantic aesthetic and the clarificatory practice of the human sciences to meet, in a being characterized by a certain ethical and intellectual incompleteness. (283)

In elaborating his theory, Hunter refers to Margaret McMillan's 1904 *Education through Imagination* as a seminal statement advancing the use of drama in pedagogy, focusing on dramatic and literary "character development" as a model for students' own learning (65, 116). The analysis and performance of character in the classroom comprise a "social technology" to monitor and correct the imagination and self-formation of student subjects. Hazlitt's foundational attention to Shakespeare's characters and the actors who played them thus appears in the historical background of this ethico-social technology, as does Schlegel's celebration of Shakespeare's "infinite desire," translated here into the ongoing process of clarifying the subject's unconscious through literary study.

To put it in somewhat chiasmic terms, the focus in English education on the study of literary character development becomes a means to develop the student's character. And because this discipline of character *Bildung* thus exploits the processes of identification (not to mention those of seduction, sympathy, and transference) so basic to the act and pleasure of reading literature, its particular mediation of the imperative to inculcate a love

of learning entails a supplementary inculcation of learning to love. The implicit Romanticism in the pedagogical principle to inculcate a "love of learning," which permeates all levels of the educational system (not unlike Shakespeare's own texts), in English language and literary studies often means learning to "love" Shakespeare — and to love, *tout court*. Pedagogical romanticism thus constructs character development as a simultaneously intersubjective and intertextual romance. And, it should go without saying, this teaching approach genderpellates girls specifically, according to patriarchal traditions that have consistently oriented women's education to "the domestic carceral" (Morrison 1991, 1), from the artistic and domestic subjects feminized as proper to the Victorians' "angel in the house," to the still-circulating assumption that tertiary education for women is mainly a means to marry.

Dobson's history of Shakespeare's promotion to "the center of English literary culture" (3) also accounts for the versatile gender-coding of "the Bard" integral to these traditions:

If there was a tradition dating back at least as far as Dryden's prologue to *The Enchanted Island* of associating Shakespeare with father-kings, there was equally a tradition, dating back to Margaret Cavendish's letters or Aphra Behn's preface to *The Dutch Lover*, of associating him with women . . . This association was institutionalized in the late 1730s by the establishment of the Shakespeare Ladies' Club. (147)

Dobson notes that several contemporary observers, such as Eliza Haywood, gave this club "sole credit" for, in Haywood's words, "preserving the fame of the dead Bard" (quoted in Dobson 147). By the time of the 1769 Jubilee, then, Shakespeare could be celebrated as "the only poet . . . who has delineated to perfection the character of a *female friend*" (224):

But where, O Muse! Can strains be found,
T' express each virtue, charm, and grace,
With which benignant Shakespeare crown'd
The female mind, the female face? (quoted. in Dobson 225)

"SCHOOL YOURSELF [B]UT FOR YOUR HUSBAND" (*MACBETH*, 4.2.15, ADAPTED)

Shakespearean Romanticism thus converges with the Romantic aesthetics and ethics of literary education (not to mention, of course, Shakespeare's "big-time" popularity [see Bristol 1996]) to produce the particular and particularly gender-coded privilege of Shakespearean texts in English curriculum. Shakespeare, as author-function and oeuvre, has become a curricular staple not merely because of his centuries-long canonicity, but also because of his perceived use-value as pedagogical armature on which to hang the literary-educational priorities of subject formation and social reproduction, of imagination and desire.

To observe that Shakespeare informs all but the very earliest levels of modern Canadian school curriculum is to state the obvious. From the popular primary school adaptations by Stratford-area educator Lois Burdett, through junior-high and secondary curricula, to graduate seminars at universities across the country, Shakespeare remains central (despite or possibly because of his epitomic privilege as an imperial dead white male amidst canon critiques and culture wars) to most areas and levels of English studies in Canada. Interestingly, the discipline's focus on character seems concentrated today at the secondary school level, as a mode of study too complex for primary school and too archaic or uncritical for university. Consider the following "specific expectations" (i.e., learning

objectives) for high school English, as laid out by the Ontario Ministry of Education. For Grade 9 English:

Understanding the Meaning of Texts: By the end of this course, students will: . . . select and read texts for different purposes, with an emphasis on recognizing the elements of literary genres and the organization of informational materials, collecting and assessing information, responding imaginatively, and exploring human experiences and values (e.g., *read a play by Shakespeare to interpret a character for performance*). (Ontario Curriculum 1999, 9, my emphases)

A subsequent expectation stipulated for Grade 10 English is as follows:

By the end of this course, students will: . . . select and read a range of texts for different purposes, with an emphasis on recognizing the elements of literary genres and the organization of informational materials, evaluating print and electronic materials as sources of information, and comparing personal ideas and values with those in texts (e.g., . . . *develop a "profile" of a character in a play by Shakespeare or a novel and then role-play an interview with the character*). (27, my emphases)

And one stipulated Grade 11 English expectation for "understanding effective presentations" suggests an assignment to "explain how Marc Antony's 'Friends, Romans, countrymen' speech in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* uses emotional appeals to sway the audience" (Ontario Curriculum 2000, 85). (This same "touchstone" speech will be discussed later for its salutary appearance in *Anne of Green Gables*.)

Alternately, consider these reflections by a Halifax high school teacher, on teaching *Romeo and Juliet* to a grade 11 class:

The way we've been studying the story in class, to be honest, is we read the story together . . . *different people take on different roles — I take on all roles, and trust me when I say my nurse is BY FAR THE BEST*. . . . As we go through the book we discuss the story . . . I always relate it to things they've dealt with and how silly young love can be . . . Today's journal topic was "*What the heck can a 16 year old know about love?*" — *95% of my class is exactly 16* . . . They find the story interesting . . . Juliet (13, are you kidding me?) . . . When we finish the story, we'll do a comparative paper analyzing the old 1960s version of the film and the current DiCaprio version . . . After we do this, we'll begin working towards our "Favorite Scene Presentation," wherein the class will get into groups and re-script their favourite scene from the movie in any genre they would like. . . . We will do a comprehension test once we know the story inside out and backwards (throughout the unit we take very abbreviated notes of each scene once we finish reading it in class). (McCutcheon 2006, my emphases)

These samples of high school English curriculum from Ontario and Nova Scotia are not meant to be nationally representative, but to show the postcolonial and transnational institution of discourses of character, ethical identification, and instructional exemplarity as focusing and structuring the "social technology" of English curriculum since its formation in the period historicized by Hunter. The Ontario ministry quotations show the centrality of character to the secondary-level study of literature (and one wonders if this centrality contributes to the difference in methods and priorities so frustrating to instructors on both sides of the secondary-tertiary transition in literary study). The high school teacher quoted above demonstrates (albeit in a latent or unconscious manner) the moral exemplarity of the English teacher, in his not entirely sarcastic bragging about his

pedagogical performance of Juliet's Nurse as "THE BEST." I have sketched this network of literary and curricular contexts in broad strokes in order to contextualize the production of Montgomery's and Sweetnam's references to Shakespeare and curriculum, and to focus my reading of these references and the texts in which they appear. What I am particularly interested in here are popular cultural representations of Shakespeare in school culture — and especially Shakespeare as a synecdoche for the English curriculum or school in general — and how these representations engage discourses of gender and curriculum.

The texts by Lucy Maud Montgomery and Skye Sweetnam treated here both articulate Shakespearean references in relation to school culture. Montgomery's novel has the additional value of its established foothold in Canadian English curriculum (although certainly nowhere near as widespread or uncontested a hold as old Bill). *Anne of Green Gables* (1908) has, over the course of its century in print, undergone dramatic changes in its cultural and scholarly capital, according to what Carol Gerson has identified as an unusual "decline and rise" pattern (2002, 17). Now often taught in university courses on children's literature, women's literature, and (in the case of my own course) popular culture, Anne also shows up in primary and secondary English curriculum. Perhaps as a way to train local students for work in Prince Edward Island's Anne-fuelled, tourist-industry simulacrum of itself, the province's Department of Education lists *Anne* (in an abridged edition) among its English curriculum's required texts for grade 4 ("Elementary Program" 2003-2004, 68). Small wonder, then, if disaffected locals, sickened by the surplus of Anne in their cultural water supply, go on to produce parodies like *Annekenstein*.

Sweetnam's "Billy S." occupies a very different position in the field of contemporary Canadian popular culture. The first single by the Bolton, Ontario, singing-songwriting teenager put her on the pop charts in the wake of similar successes by another smalltown Ontario teen star, Avril Lavigne. Fans and the music industry media drew inevitable comparisons between Sweetnam and her predecessor (it is always regrettable that such comparisons, when unfavorable, focus their ire on the players themselves rather than the companies' formula-oriented effort to hedge its bets by replicating proven hits). The "Billy S." single was adopted for the soundtrack of a Hollywood high school romantic comedy, *How to Deal*, and was followed in 2003 and 2004 by several other charting singles.

Both texts solicit approximately the same demographic audience of pre-teenage girls, albeit for quite different reasons. Montgomery was quite explicit about her pedagogical intentions for the stories from which her novel developed as stories of moral instruction for girls at Sunday school (Devereux 2004, 15). Sweetnam's pop song achieved heavy rotation in media channels and programs directed at the "target market" of pre-teen girls with disposable income, a group now termed "tweens" in marketing jargon. Needless to say, "Billy S." is not taught in Canadian English curriculum (please correct me, anyone, if I am wrong). But it is a popular text citing Shakespeare in a curricular context, and as such it registers some interesting similarities and differences with *Anne* in how such citations value Shakespeare's cultural capital, and in how they genderpellate their audiences as girls and students.

"I READ IN A BOOK ONCE THAT A ROSE BY ANY OTHER NAME WOULD SMELL AS SWEET"

Mary Rubio notes that the extent of Shakespearean quotation in Montgomery's oeuvre corresponds to the author's penchant for quoting and misquoting from Shakespeare in everyday conversation, often doing so from memory. Based on dialogue with Montgomery's son, Rubio suggests that Montgomery was deeply familiar with Shakespeare's work, and not merely with the more famous plays, either (Rubio 2006). Scholarly editions of *Anne* document the extent and diversity of Shakespearean quotation in the novel, which (along with similar quotation practices in Montgomery's oeuvre in general) has been extensively analyzed by Trinna Frever (2004). Frever theorizes in Montgomery's "adaptive technique" a dialectic between the "gender transforming" of Shakespeare's texts in Montgomery's fictions, on the one hand, and, on the other, "vesting the domestic with tragic import" in order to reconsider critically "the Shakespearean past from her time period and ours" (3). In terms of the particular form taken by Montgomery's adaptation of Shakespeare, Frever notes that

Montgomery's utilization of Shakespeare is almost wholly verbal. Montgomery does not, for the most part, utilize Shakespearean characters in her works . . . [but] seems particularly drawn to Shakespearean phrasings, the concepts they encompass, and the dramatic contexts they draw upon in creating her fiction. (3)

Focusing her own analysis on "the early 'Anne' books," Frever argues that these texts "show the greatest Shakespearean influence across Montgomery's prolific career" (3).

In the first and most popular *Anne* book, most of the Shakespearean quotations are put into the protagonist's own mouth and are often keyed to scholastic contexts. Anne's early and perennial requests to be called Cordelia (Montgomery 1996, 24, 135) and her recollection of reading about the name of the rose "in a book once" (38) introduce the character as something of an autodidact, one who tends initially to understand the domestic and scholastic challenges and crises she encounters in "tragical" terms (24, 82, 85, 101). However, a striking and non-verbal adaptation that exemplifies how curricular Shakespeare circulates in this novel occurs at the Debating Club concert Anne attends, during the Shakespearean recital given by the schoolteacher, Mr. Phillips: "When Mr. Phillips gave Mark Antony's oration over the dead body of Caesar in the most heart-stirring tones — looking at Prissy Andrews at the end of every sentence — Anne felt that she could rise and mutiny on the spot if but one Roman citizen led the way" (153). The public school teacher (whose role as moral exemplar Hunter shows will be transferred to the specialized English teacher) recites the speech with a theatricality sufficient to fire Anne's romantic self-identification as a loyal Roman; however, the narrator (while still occupying Anne's point of view) also notes the desiring gaze at his student paramour, Prissy Andrews, with which Mr. Phillips punctuates his performance. The triangulation of speech act, identification, and desire in this brief scene, in which Anne both imagines herself a subject interpellated by this performance of character and observes a lover's discourse encoded within it, neatly encapsulates Shakespeare's pedagogical utility to instill love of learning and learning to love.

Frever notes a similarly non-"verbal," but significantly "gender shift[ing]," quotation that describes Anne's return to school and her evident desire for learning:

The narrator describes the scene: "There was a tang in the very air that inspired the hearts of small maidens tripping, unlike snails, swiftly and willingly to school" (*AGG*, xxiv, 190). This phrasing provides a sharp contrast with Jaques' well known "All the world's a stage" speech from *As You Like It*, when he describes a time of life wherein "the whining schoolboy" is "creeping like a snail; Unwillingly to school" (II.vii.145-47). . . . In addition to shifting the gender of the subject of Jaques' speech, Montgomery transforms the tone and content of the speech as well. . . . Montgomery wrote at a time when women's access to formal education was still a hotly debated issue. Anne Shirley, one of the "small maidens" referred to here, is a girl who earns not only a teachers' degree, but also a B.A., in the course of the *Anne* series. . . . In this context, Montgomery's . . . modification suggests that girls and women, given the opportunity to be educated, will pursue this education with an unprecedented enthusiasm. . . . By transforming both the gender and the tone of the original quotation, Montgomery's text makes a timely argument about the importance of female education, as well as centralizing the female experience in her texts. (Frever 2004, 3-4)

Frever's insights here are instructive; however, I would add that "Montgomery's modification" does not simply "suggest" that women will enthusiastically pursue education; rather, in a didactically designed text, it *prescribes* that enthusiasm, soliciting the reader to identify with Anne's willing trip to school as part of its genderpellative, pedagogical project. Anne enlists Shakespearean quotations and references in a narrative that strongly advocates a belief, in Marilla's words, "in a girl being fitted to earn her own living whether she ever has to or not" (Montgomery 1996, 242). Surveying gender and feminist criticism of the novel, Cecily Devereux notes that Marilla's vocalization of Montgomery's advocacy of women's education is more ambivalent than progressive (2004, 31); and as Anne's own story shows, women's education is not only oriented towards the bifurcated romance of love of learning and learning to love, but also subordinated to traditionally patriarchal and imperial priorities of self-sacrificing wife- and motherhood. As Devereux argues,

The first novel [in Montgomery's *Anne* series] ends with Anne's having matured to the point of recognizing that her duty as a girl is more important and will ultimately be more rewarding than either her education or her ambition. . . . *Anne of Green Gables* is pervasively and didactically maternalist. That is, the novel is concerned primarily with the development of a young girl from prepubescent child to young adult, charting her development in terms of her academic as well as moral and domestic education in maternal womanliness. (2004, 21, 28)

Anne's character development as both "model student" (Weber 2002, 56) and mother-in-training demonstrates how the Shakespearean intertexts used to tell her story activate a curricular Romanticism that genderpellates "young maidens" as students of desire, daughters of empire, and would-be mothers.

"I DON'T NEED TO READ BILLY SHAKESPEARE"

Fast-forward a hundred years, and we observe both similarities and differences in the genderpellative uses to which curricular Shakespeare may be put. Like Anne, the persona of Skye Sweetnam's text is a post-Romantic individualist; whereas Anne's "drunken savagery" of youth provides the pretext for her education in and reproduction of the social order (in that case, the "culture of imperial motherhood," according to which Devereux

classifies Anne as a "*Mutterroman*" [2000, 6]), the song's voice, studiously true to the school of rock, is explicitly bent on rebellion against the social order, represented in this case by "school," which is figured abstractly as an oppressive institution.

On a first listen, Sweetnam's song sounds clichéd and vapidly anti-intellectual. An uptempo, pop-reggae arrangement of backbeat, bass, and rhythm guitar opens the song, and, together with muted major guitar chords, accompanies the first verse:

Wake up tired
Monday mornings suck
It's way too early to catch a bus
Why conform without a fuss
Daddy daddy no
I don't want to go to school
Whoo. (Sweetnam and Robertson 2004)

At "whoo," the muted guitar chords crunch into the foreground to power the chorus (a variation on the "quiet-loud" song structure popularized by post-punk, and similarly student-themed, anthems like The Pixies' "U-Mass" and Nirvana's "Smells Like Teen Spirit"). The chorus pits Shakespeare, as a synecdoche for school, against an abstract Romantic revolt:

I don't need to read Billy Shakespeare
Meet Juliet and Malvolio
Feel for once what it's like to rebel now
I want to break out
Let's go. (2004)

The reference here to Shakespeare as a sample of standard curricular content seems symptomatic of the sexual politics of modern schooling that have divided the subjects of "useless" and effeminate fancy from those of masculine fact and utility.

The second verse will likely sound naïvely ironic (if not downright humorous) to teachers in the notoriously underfunded public school boards across the nation:

Teachers treat us all like clones
Sit up straight, take off your headphones
I don't blame them, they get paid
Money money, whoo!
Lots of money money, whoo! (Sweetnam and Robertson 2004)

Setting aside the comical image these lines yield, of public school teachers rolling around on beds strewn with cash (after a hard day's work distracting their students from music appreciation), there is in this line not only that absurdity, but also a curiously bottom-line reading of teachers' professional motivation (are teachers in it for the money? Does Sweetnam have private schools in mind here?). The proximity of "lots of money" to the ensuing chorus' resistance to Shakespeare suggests a recognition of the exchanges and equivalencies between cultural and financial forms of capital. Furthermore, Sweetnam phrases this economic reading of teacher motive in sympathetic terms: "I don't blame them." They're just doing their jobs, treating students like clones and inflicting Shakespeare on them. The criticism of being treated "like clones" sustains the song's

Romantic individualism, but in the context of teachers' pay, is there a comment here on classroom crowding and the compromise of individuated attention it usually entails?

The bridge consists of the adapted line, "To skip or not to skip: that is the question," delivered under heavily distorting vocal effects, over a loop of shouted exhortations to "Get out get out get out get out, whoo!" The alternating "quiet-loud" arrangements in this song thus contrast a feel-good "pop" mood for the musing and pouting of the verses, a mood first pressured by each verse's final line (delivered as shouting rather than singing, and distorted, like the bridge, with a static effect), and then exploded by the rebellious declamations and power chords of the chorus. The song represents school as a site of clones and conformity and articulates rock's traditional expression of teenage revolt to three Shakespearean references, making it a more specific expression of student unrest. Here, "school" is a socially homogenizing institution governed by the Law of the Father ("Daddy daddy no"), an ideological and repressive apparatus where teachers do the repressing ("Sit up straight"), in which "Billy Shakespeare" is assigned the ideological detail.

Both apparati enforce heterosexist norms: the directive to "sit up straight" can be read ironically (as can, more disturbingly, saying "no" to "daddy"), and in counterpoint to the liberatory gesture of breaking "out"; similarly, the two Shakespearean "character references" may be read as negative examples of heterosexual relationships. Given the demonstrated function of curricular Shakespeare for teaching a love of learning and learning to love, Juliet and Malvolio quickly become recognizable as case studies in dubious romantic choices: Everybody knows how Juliet's teenage marriage ends; and, as Frever notes regarding a similar reference to *Twelfth Night* in *Anne of Avonlea* (1978), Malvolio is a scheming gold-digger: "Malvolio's desired match, Olivia, represents political power, while the male figure Malvolio represents ambition to marry. . . . The play undermines the idea that marriage aspirations are exclusively a woman's sphere, while political success is exclusively male. *Twelfth Night* also addresses the precariousness of gender roles by depicting a woman who assumes the identity of a man through cross-dressing" (Frever 2004, 9). Otherwise, beyond their names, pairing, and use in rhythm and rhyme structures, the song gives no more detail about these characters, thus leaving them to signify, simultaneously, bad relationship choices and abstract signs of commonly assigned English class texts. Infantilizing and ridiculing Shakespeare by calling him "Billy," the persona ambiguously declares that she does not need to read him. "I don't need to read" suggests that such reading is not just excessive, but also perhaps that it has already been done.

Something of method thus emerges amidst the pop madness. If "Billy Shakespeare" is someone the persona does not need to read, the subsequent and similarly ambiguous refrain from "meeting" Juliet and Malvolio does more than just develop the rhyme pattern (need, read, meet) — it also comments subtly on the Romantic methodology of Shakespeare in school curriculum. A refusal to "meet" Juliet and Malvolio implies in the most concise terms a critique of the Romantic tradition of character criticism that Hunter shows to have been foundational to the disciplinary formation of English pedagogy. The persona's refusal to "meet" these characters expresses skepticism about the popular approach to teaching of Shakespeare (and by extension English) based on the Romantic and essentialist premises that have attributed to Shakespeare's characters a hyperreal life of their own, a transcendent signified *dramatis personae*.

The resistance to heteronormativity, the disavowal of textual knowledge, and the critique of Romantic pedagogy are then all brought together in the persona's gender-bending identification with (and parodic misquotation of) Hamlet, her contemplation of whether "to skip or not to skip." This identification complicates the opposition to "need[ing] to read Billy Shakespeare" by signalling some textual (or at least intertextual knowledge) of the plays, thereby suggesting the opposition to reading Shakespeare derives more from prior familiarity than from anti-intellectual rejection.

**"SHAKESPEARE ONE GETS ACQUAINTED WITH WITHOUT KNOWING HOW . . . ONE IS
INTIMATE WITH HIM BY INSTINCT" (*MANSFIELD PARK*)**

This identification, in which the song's persona performs the role of Hamlet (in however cursory a sound bite), establishes a common point of reference with *Anne of Green Gables*. Anne also identifies with Hamlet, in a similarly cursory way, after the pleasures of concert-going and Christmas: "To Anne in particular things seemed fearfully *flat, stale, and unprofitable* after the goblet of excitement she had been sipping for weeks" (Montgomery 1996, 205, my emphasis). Sweetnam's parodic misquotation of Hamlet's soliloquy repositions school attendance as a question of life and death, in which Shakespeare winds up on the side of death, if refusing to read him frees one's time to "feel for once what it's like to rebel" (Sweetnam and Robertson 2004). *For once*: The indexical value of Shakespeare, here, as a synecdochal figure of Romantic curriculum (and one Romantically resisted, through the aesthetics of rock), is to personify routine or predictable pedagogy; to epitomize the "dead white male" of the canon and, by extension, of the patriarchal social order; and to represent the curricular subjects of literature and language that are so widely and trenchantly reified as female or effeminate — "girl stuff." The critique of a predictably Romanticized English curriculum emerges also in the song's disavowal and demonstration of textual knowledge; the exhortation to rebel "for once" becomes a plea to read, "for once," an author other than Shakespeare, whom everyone already knows, or at least knows, in Jane Austen's words, "in bits and scraps" — a "common enough" form of knowing (1995, 245). (Note how Henry Crawford's combined terms, "common knowledge," suggest the canonical and the carnal.) The song's persona rejects the genderpellation of girl students not only in specific approaches to English teaching, like the bourgeois humanist discourse of character, but also in the general assumptions of literature and language instruction. Is the identification of these voices with the epitome of the tragic hero a rejection of gender typecasting? In identifying with Hamlet, Sweetnam's persona echoes Anne, similarly gender-bending the characterization, arrogating its authority as Shakespeare's own alter ego, and imbuing the scholastic scene, as Frever argues that Anne does for her domestic one, with tragic import.

Another similarity between the pop song and Montgomery's novel occurs in the very ambiguity of their citation practices, instantiating Austen's "instinctive intimacy." The identification of Sweetnam's persona with Hamlet seems to contradict her disavowal of Shakespearean knowledge, ambivalently suggesting foreknowledge of the plays as well as their outright rejection. For Montgomery's part, Anne's identification with Hamlet contrasts — in terms of its arrogation of Shakespeare's own dramatized identity — with her recurring identification with a tragic character with whom Shakespeare was not personally identified, Cordelia. Like Anne's unnamed reference to Juliet's "rose by any other name" (Montgomery 1996, 38), her adoptions of "Cordelia" performs a disavowal of Shakespearean textual knowledge not unlike that performed by the persona of "Billy S."

Anne frames what becomes her recurring fondness for adopting Cordelia as pseudonym (135) and fictional alter ego (208) as the choice of "a perfectly elegant name" (24), and never explicitly cites *King Lear*. But the reference assumes irony for Anne's situation, which is given tragic undertones as a variation on Cordelia's familial estrangement and dispossession. The name also signals other facets of Anne's character: her learned imagination, and hence her leverage of cultural capital towards upward mobility; her embodiment of an object lesson in "being fitted to earn her own living" (242); her melodramatic and tragic sensibilities; and her facility for plain speaking, as demonstrated in her introductions to Rachel Lynde (64-65) and Josephine Barry (157). By alluding only elliptically to the intertextual frames of reference both for Anne's unattributed adoption of Cordelia and for her theory of "any other name," Montgomery suggests that Anne has read widely beyond the public school readers that furnish so many other touchstone quotations in the novel; however, that she reads outside school, and that she reads Shakespeare, produce her gender-specific character as a model student, one who has internalized the moral disciplinary measures of the English classroom and organized them around its leading authority figure.

Thus, the ironies and varied repetitions of Cordelia as "any other name" contribute to the same kind of intuitive Shakespearean intimacy protested (too much?) in Sweetnam's song. The ironic disavowals of Shakespearean intertextual knowledge in these texts convey an ambivalence about Shakespeare — but more importantly, according to his synecdochal gender-coded figuration of curriculum, they convey a deeper ambivalence about the methods and materials of curriculum per se. So despite other striking differences in these popular texts' curricular uses of Shakespeare, both *Anne of Green Gables* and "Billy S." figure the Bard as a synecdoche for the curriculum, synonymous with girls' learning, an integral source of the references that reproduce gender by conflating imagination and romance (in less problematized practices of identification, tragedy, and everyday life, and also in more critical reflections). In these popular images of school girls' culture, the author function of Shakespeare becomes legible as the invisible hand animating Juliet, Cordelia, and Hamlet as sets of available attitudes and positions in an educational field where curriculum and courtship are too readily, and for too long now, brought to much confusion. The burden of responsibility remains on us, as instructors, to rise from our cash-strewn beds, brushing the bills off our shoulders, in an effort to make our readings of resistance and critique in popular texts available and accessible to the "target" audiences for which the dominant commercial systems of distribution and dissemination exert their even more formidable financial resources — in tandem with what Adorno identified as "adapted romanticism" (1975, 15) — to promote only the most impoverished, the most easily domesticated interpretations.

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ABSTRACT | "THE LUNATIC, THE LOVER, AND THE POET" (*A MIDSUMMER NIGHT NIGHT'S DREAM*, 5.1.7) | "I WILL NEVER BE A TRUANT, LOVE, / TILL I HAVE LEARN'D THY LANGUAGE" (*1 HENRY 4*, 3.1.204-205) | "SCHOOL YOURSELF [B]UT FOR YOUR HUSBAND" (*MACBETH*, 4.2.15, ADAPTED) | "I READ IN A BOOK ONCE THAT A ROSE BY ANY OTHER NAME WOULD SMELL AS SWEET" | "I DON'T NEED TO READ BILLY SHAKESPEARE" | "SHAKESPEARE ONE GETS ACQUAINTED WITH WITHOUT KNOWING HOW . . . ONE IS INTIMATE WITH HIM BY INSTINCT" (*MANSFIELD PARK*) | REFERENCES | TOP

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Re-imagining Ethics, Rethinking Rights, and Canadian Adaptations of Shakespeare:

Daniel David Moses's *Brébeuf's Ghost* and the Specters of the Human

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ABSTRACT | THE SPECTERS OF SHAKESPEARE | THE SPECTER OF THE *JESUIT RELATIONS* | ETHICS, POLITICS, AND THE SHAKESPEAREAN SPECTERS OF HURON HISTORY | MOSES'S GHOSTS | THE GHOST OF BRÉBEUF | EXORC-ANALYZING HUMANITY | RETHINKING THE "HUMAN" AND RE-IMAGINING RIGHTS | CONCLUSION | NOTES | REFERENCES

ABSTRACT

"Re-imagining Ethics, Rethinking Rights, and Canadian Adaptations of Shakespeare: Daniel David Moses's *Brébeuf's Ghost* and the Specters of the Human" retells the story of the near decimation of the Huron/Wyandot nation, a founding moment in Canada's colonial pre-history. Moore's essay interrogates Moses's play's adaptation of Shakespeare — a key colonialist symbol of cultural "authenticity" — as a strategy for reimagining and renewing First Nations Canadian history, culture, and human rights. Moses's spectral imagery and "hauntological" approach to historiography demonstrate the ways in which the occluded specters of First Nations Canadian culture haunt and disrupt their Western-centric Canadian context of enunciation. In doing so, Moore argues, Moses rethinks human rights and the very ethical subject of "humanity" as a kind of "adaptive ethics" of cultural inclusivity.

Worlds collide in renowned First Nations playwright Daniel David Moses's epic dark, funny, and finally healing vision of early Canada. — From the back cover of Brébeuf's Ghost



Daniel David Moses's *Brébeuf's Ghost* is a Canadian adaptation of Shakespeare — just barely. Its assimilation and subtle reworking of its Shakespearean content — which Moses himself identifies as the structure and thematics of *Macbeth*, but is also identifiable in *Brébeuf's Ghost*'s intertextual references to other Shakespearean plays, speaks to the quasi-religious power and pervasive cultural effect of Shakespeare, as well as to the ways in which "Shakespeare" has become, from a certain perspective, such an overused signifier of cultural "authenticity" as to render it nearly bankrupt as a concept. Indeed, even "humanity" itself, argues Harold Bloom (1998), is now understood to be an "invention" of Shakespeare.

Moses's play marshals this contestation around the meaning of "Shakespeare" to make a number of important ethical and political interventions. For example, the epigraph above — an excerpt from the back cover of *Brébeuf's Ghost* — captures a number of the ethico-political dynamics at work in the play that are related to the use of "Shakespeare" as a weapon of European colonization against First Nations peoples and cultures. The epigraph characterizes the play as depicting a universal human struggle between "colliding worlds" (analogous to a "clash of civilizations"). This universalism, however, is strategically deployed in Moses's text on a more "local" level for healing the wounds inflicted by the traumatic early vision of Canadian nationalism. This is achieved in part by *Brébeuf's Ghost's* framing of itself as a singularly *Canadian/First Nations* adaptation of Shakespeare. Yet another strategy is the play's capitalization on Shakespeare's massive Canadian cultural and institutional cachet for promoting both Huron and First Nations history and a more "ethical" approach to Canadian human rights for First Nations citizens.

Brébeuf's Ghost thus offers a radically other First Nations perspective on human rights and proto-Canadian history, in part by staging what I call its "exorc-analysis" — a critique that also serves as an invocation and accorporation — of those "specter(s) of Shakespeare" that have traditionally operated as key Westernizing influences on Canadian nationalism and the rights and freedoms attached to Canadian citizenship. This paper will interrogate a number of Shakespearean specters haunting *Brébeuf's Ghost*, including its ghost imagery, its structure and thematics borrowed from Shakespeare's oeuvre — in particular, *Macbeth* and *Romeo and Juliet* — to show the ways in which the *Jesuit Relations* haunt the play as specters of European colonialism, to examine Moses's adaptive approach to human rights, and finally, to consider Moses's re-imagining of the ethical subject of Western humanity via his adaptation of one of its most influential symbols, Shakespeare.

THE SPECTERS OF SHAKESPEARE

Brébeuf's Ghost invokes Shakespeare as a symbol of European colonialism that, in part, led to the devastation of the Hurons and the suppression of their basic humanity, even at the hands of other First Nations peoples. But Moses's play also shows that using "Shakespeare" to leverage national institutional support and funding apparatuses, to tap into privileged national discourses, or to use as a "password" for fast-tracking onto national or international literary distribution networks that promote "classical" literature is not necessarily a bad thing. Moses does not have any problems with appropriating "Shakespeare" in order to re-think Canadian human rights by writing back to their larger institutional apparatus — the Canadian nation-state — that has for so long appropriated and done much worse to First Nations cultures and symbols.

Brébeuf's Ghost, says its author, is full of ghosts and macabre images that evoke the spectral structure and thematics of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, its overall atmosphere, deadly conflicts, spiritual crises, and violent scene changes (Moses and Moore 2002). The structure and thematics of *Macbeth's* opening scenes, for example, are mirrored in the opening of *Brébeuf's Ghost*, which also begins with macabre visitations, witchcraft, and stormy weather:

JOSEPH. No. I'm not dreaming, not asleep. I hear him now. He's coming.

The GHOST enters in a cloud of black flies.

JOSEPH. Praise be to the Lord of the sky, he is risen!

PIERRE. Holy Jesus!

JOSEPH. Yes, he walks on the water like our Saviour holy Jesus did.

PIERRE. Witchcraft!

...

JOSEPH. Have faith, Pierre! Pick it up. The end of the world is at hand. Pick up your paddle!

PIERRE picks up his paddle. The GHOST turns and exits. JOSEPH and PIERRE start to paddle, following him. Thunder and lightning. (Moses 2000, 16-17)

Here, at the very beginning of *Brébeuf's Ghost*, a complex re-working of *Macbeth's* opening scenes and imagery unfolds. The macabre specter of Brébeuf, however, is identified not only with witchcraft, but also with the Christian "holy ghost" who walks on the water and exits with a thunder clap, echoing the entrance of the witches in *Macbeth*. Such a spectral resonance between Christianity and witchcraft is also present in Shakespeare's play, which opens with thunder, lightning, and the entrance of three witches, echoing the holy trinity and perhaps the impending wrath of the Old Testament. Pierre, Joseph, and the ghost of Brébeuf make up this trinity in Moses's play. Indeed, the influence of these three characters on the First Nations groups they encounter in the play has much in common with the havoc wrought by the witches on their victims in *Macbeth*.

The adaptability of these Shakespearean characters and motifs to Moses's particular project of re-thinking human rights and re-claiming First Nations national identity is an example of what Fischlin and Fortier (2000) call the "Shakespeare effect."¹ I reconfigure this effect in "hauntological"² terms to mean the ways in which Shakespeare's name and/or his "spirit" have become widely and influentially disseminated in multiple and heterogeneous spectral forms. The spectral effects of Shakespeare, I argue, are in fact constitutive of such a "spirit." If the Shakespeare effect most often functions in the West and, indeed, globally as an archive of "high" European artistic and cultural references, Moses's play refuses such access to "authentic" origins by conjuring some radically other and singularly First Nations specters of Shakespeare.

Given the political imbalances and systemic racism embedded in Canadian nationalism, Moses's "hauntological" approach to historiography and human rights, I argue, instrumentalizes the fact that, in Canada, radically other re-tellings of Canadian history often must be filtered and/or amplified through cultural icons such as Shakespeare if they are to be heard. This, I argue, is *Brébeuf's Ghost's* most important intervention: its adaptive approach to rights via the specter of Shakespeare.

Shakespeare has been called the very inventor of contemporary humanity. While this sounds a little far-fetched, particularly in Harold Bloom's gushing homage to Shakespeare's "genius,"³ there is more than a grain of truth to such a claim. The ghostly thematics and borrowed Shakespearean structures of Moses's play trope Shakespeare as infecting First Nations communities and cultures with European colonialism,

as if to suggest that their humanity is only possible as a function of colonial encounter. To complicate Bloom's argument, then, the specters of Shakespeare haunting *Brébeuf's Ghost* symbolize a Eurocentric, sovereign exceptionalist (re)invention of the ideal "human" and of what counts as liveable, human life in early Canada. As Giorgio Agamben has recently reminded us (e.g., 1998), such a national project involves demarcating who is banned from that bio-political discourse of allowable humanity. Unsurprisingly, the dominant ideal of proto-Canadian "humanity" was imagined in the image of the colonizers themselves, a legacy that lives on today as an embedded systemic and institutional bias against First Nations peoples, cultures, and communities.

An inherent danger in Moses's remembrance and renewal of First Nations history via its adaptation of Shakespeare is the possibility that filtering these histories through a traditionally Eurocentric symbol of cultural superiority will have the effect of delegitimizing more "authentically" First Nations modes of historiography and story-telling. These are modes of historiography and mythologizing that both reflect and help to construct the very self-imagining of First Nations "life." Moses's organizing thematic of "adaptation," however, models the ways in which First Nations, European, and in fact all forms of "identity" can be understood as fundamentally performative, "adaptive" modes of subjective "being" whose common "humanity" involves their mutual haunting of each other. This is not necessarily a bad thing. Moses, for example, obviously identifies somewhat with Shakespeare's approach to ethics and his complex use of spectral imagery so common in Moses's own work.

I argue that *Brébeuf's Ghost's* "exorc-analysis" — or its invocation, via its very critique of the symbolic caché of Shakespeare — underlines the ways in which Shakespeare has come to symbolize in Canada a certain privileged concept of humanity as authentically "Western" (meaning overwhelmingly white, European and Anglophone, but intriguingly also Francophone, in "origin"). This seems like a shocking, insupportable claim to make about one writer — even a Shakespeare! And yet, one need only look for evidence to the most dominant day-to-day, collective cultural symbols and strategies of mythmaking, selective remembering, and necessary forgetting by which "we" as a nation are continuously accommodating the fact that First Nations citizens consistently end up with less access to basic human rights, essential services, dignity, cultural recognition, and the freedoms attached to national citizenship than do other more identifiably "European" Canadians.

For example, do we have a nationally funded "Coyote" festival in this country on the scale of the Stratford Festival and with the level of government funding it enjoys? And, for that matter, what kind of a First Nations presence occurs in a national theater like Stratford? Could "Canadians" even conceive of giving a consistent national voice to First Nations artists and culture, given our current ethico-political climate and accrued cultural baggage with respect to First Nations peoples? There is, in fact, an array of "Aboriginal Arts Funding" available. But save for a couple of major exceptions, this funding has not produced significant "Canadian" or international audiences for important First Nations works such as *Brébeuf's Ghost*.⁴

THE SPECTER OF THE *JESUIT RELATIONS*

Related to this privileging of European over Indigenous culture is the historical weight attached to the *Jesuit Relations* as key documents recording the early formation of Canadian nationhood. The traumatic history of the near-decimation of the Hurons is most often remembered in Canada through the Eurocentric lens of the "martyring" of Jesuit missionary Jean de Brébeuf. But this episode in the pre-history of Canada's collective national identity, particularly as it is framed in Moses's play as an adaptation of Shakespeare, is riven with the power dynamics of Canadian cultural recognition, not only for First Nations peoples, but also for French Canadians. Indeed, Shakespeare has been used by First Nations peoples and French Canadians to assert their own unique national identities within the wider cultural and institutional apparatus of Canadian nationalism.⁵

By casting the ghost of Jean de Brébeuf as an adaptation of Shakespeare — or, as an early French colonizer of Canada who, ironically, must now speak as a specter of "Shakespeare" to be heard — Moses adds a further layer of political complexity to *Brébeuf's Ghost* that refuses any clear ethical argument for or against any particular party. That said, Jean de Brébeuf's *Jesuit Relations* still represents arguably the most influential historical perspective on Huron history in early Canada. One function of Moses's play is as a corrective to this Eurocentric history and its legacy for First Nations peoples still struggling for recognition and rights within the Canadian national imaginary. The occluded radical other to this pre-history is the dispersal and decimation of the Huron nation. This event thus captures a key orienting moment in the founding of Canadian nationalism and a particularly important historical — if not necessarily *dated* — spectral "event" in and through which the limits, inclusions, and exclusions of proto-Canadian citizenship and human rights were first engendered and still haunt First Nations peoples and cultures. *Brébeuf's Ghost* intervenes to "humanize" the story in complex, yet ultimately practical ways, spreading blame for the slaughter, starvation, infection, and displacement of so many during that period a bit more evenly among all parties.

In spite of the grave subject matter of *Brébeuf's Ghost's* and Moses's critical acclaim and national recognition as a playwright — among many other honors and distinctions, he was short-listed for the Governor General's award, Canada's most esteemed literary prize — the play has received little critical attention, let alone stage time in Canadian theaters. Conversely, many Canadian public institutions, nationally sanctioned archives, and memorials bear Jean de Brébeuf's name and/or officially endorse — through his status as "Christian martyr," "patron saint of Canada (inducted 1940)," and even as the writer of "Canada's first Christmas carol" — his particular historical account of First Nation's history in the *Jesuit Relations*.⁶

The lack of attention paid to Moses's *Brébeuf's Ghost*, in comparison with the national lionization of Brébeuf himself is, I argue, not an accurate reflection of their relative historical importance. Instead, the inattention the play has received speaks to the unpalatability, even for the supposedly "enlightened" multicultural Canadian theater scene, of the message of Moses's play and its "native" form of delivery for the dominant, Eurocentrically-attuned tastes of Canadian theatergoers.

As a critique of human rights, it is instructive therefore that *Brébeuf's Ghost* argues for Canada's ethical and political responsibility to remember its violently excluded First Nations "others," who in reality never left and are still living among "us." The lack of attention paid to *Brébeuf's*

Ghost is also symptomatic of the failure of Canada's major cultural institutions, networks, and infrastructures to re-imagine more justly and openly who counts as "Canadians" and whose "Canadian" histories are worthy of being canonized and recounted — particularly when it comes to those upon whose backs "we" Canadians have come to ratify our collective citizenship and rights.

The *Jesuit Relations* represent perhaps the privileged version of that episode in Huron/Wyandot history and, as such, haunt Brébeuf's *Ghost* as key documents through which a particular set of Canadian clichés of the "native other" were formed early on. These clichés of the Canadian "Indian" as "noble savage" were later galvanized in laws such as "The Indian Act" and widely proliferated in historical, literary, and media representations of First Nations peoples and cultures. Written from an entirely Roman Catholic, European colonial perspective, the *Relations* haunt the play as a kind of dominating hauntological mediation of these events. They have been viewed (perhaps textual-centrally) as one of the only, and thus most valuable, sources of information on the First Nations peoples and their geographical regions in this historical period, despite the fact that the Jesuits' outward focus on their civilizing mission and Christian conversions of natives made the *Relations* a weapon for colonial conquest. The *Relations* catalogued in detail the Huron's traits, habits, goods, possessions, and viability as trading partners and constructed First Nations cultures in such a way as to justify European perceptions of them as conquerable, colonizable, and exterminable subjects to European imperial ambitions. The Jesuits' archiving of "knowledge" about the Hurons, ostensibly for the purposes of "saving souls," was thus more accurately a tool of exploitation employed by the likes of Samuel Champlain, the French government, and later by the British, Dutch, and American colonial enterprises in the region.

ETHICS, POLITICS, AND THE SHAKESPEAREAN SPECTERS OF HURON HISTORY

The traumatic legacy of the Hurons, as retold in Moses's play, contradicts Brébeuf's commonly held status in Canada as Christian missionary martyr. As a Canadian hero and symbol of selfless service and even extreme self-sacrifice, however, his image feeds conveniently into a traditional Canadian view of itself as multicultural "peace-keeper" and leading diplomatic force at home and on the world stage.⁷ Yet, in his *Huron Relation*, Brébeuf constructs his Christianizing mission in "Huron" as one to save less enlightened "savages," a term that peppers his correspondence. "Huron" is, in fact, a derogatory French appellation meaning peasant (*huron*) or, according to Jesuit Father Gabriel Lallemant, referring to a *hure*, the rough-haired head of wild boars. The very name Huron, therefore, invokes an image of uncivilized ruffians rife for conquering and Christian conversion. The more accurate name for that group or constellation of groups, however, is Wyandot. This name, explain Richard and Elaine Federici, belongs "to the Iroquoian linguistic group, Wyandot, Ouendat, or Guyandot, [meaning] either 'dwellers on a peninsula' or 'islanders'" (1997). In English, Wyandot is a type of bird native to North America, and from a First Nations historical perspective, represents a much different and more diversified genealogy of interlinked First Nations histories than the reductive term "Huron" represents. Jean de Brébeuf's detailed accounts of the Huron, like all the *Jesuit Relations*, nonetheless were readily accepted by his European readers, not only as accurate depictions of Aboriginal peoples, but also as blueprints for how to capitalize on those groups, their territories, and their natural resources.

Might this darker, Manichean side of Brébeuf's legacy, like his more storied status in Canada as hero-martyr, also have some uncomfortable resonances with contemporary Canadian "peacekeeping"? For example, does Canada's participation in the recent U.S.-led War on Terror — ostensibly for the noble cause of fighting evil — not more accurately resemble the aiding and abetting of the global corporatocracy's war over control of world oil reserves, particularly in Iraq? Much like Brébeuf — an institutionalized symbol of "good Christian values" martyred in God's (and the state's) higher service — the War on Terror that Canada is helping to fight claims to combat terrorism while often committing much worse against those it purportedly means to "save." *Brébeuf's Ghost's* critique of human rights via its retelling of the decimation and dispersal of the Huron nation can thus be read as a historic — but not *dated* — occasion for reconsidering Canada's *current* global involvement in dubiously defined wars, its image as a figure of moral authority in international politics, and the scandalously unbalanced power dynamics of its domestic policies, as exemplified by, but not limited to, its ongoing treatment of First Nations citizens.

What's more, the events and proto-national players in this colonialist pre-history of Canada bear a remarkable (if not surprising) resemblance to those connected with the wholesale slaughter, exploitation, and colonization of the people, lands, and resources of South and Central America undertaken about a hundred years earlier. Both tragedies, in fact, should be viewed as part of the same ongoing Western neocolonial enterprise, implicating current international discourses of human rights and global economic systems that continue to contribute to the exploitation of indigenous peoples and resources across the Americas.⁸ This enterprise is justified, in part, by the old Western symbols of cultural "authenticity" — such as Shakespeare — that are employed as ethical alibis to buffer its new Empirical discourses. A recent example is George Schultz's post-9/11 warning that in its response to the threat of terrorism, America should not act as the "Hamlet of nations."⁹ Schultz's warning, however, hardly does justice to Hamlet's own rigorous ethics of "great argument" that, far from leading to inaction, causes him, by the end of the play, to make a truly meaningful intervention into the onerous historical legacy left him by his father and namesake. If only this were Bush Jr.'s legacy!

MOSES'S GHOSTS



As Susan Walker points out in her article "The Haunted World of Daniel David Moses," ghosts are a recurring theme in his plays, bridging the gap between "present realities and an imagined or remembered past" (1996, E5) and often signaling the breaking down of discursive barriers and theatrical conventions (Moses 1998, 123). For example, the character of Johnny in Moses's *Coyote City* (1990), the ghost of a First Nation's man killed by Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) officers, is the obvious stereotype of a "drunken Indian." During the action of the play, Johnny's character breaks through the Western theatrical convention of the "fourth wall," as well as the imposed silence of his grave, to scream obscenities at the audience. Thus, Johnny not only violates Canadian law, but also Western theatrical convention — both systemic Western prohibitions silencing First Nations peoples from speaking back in their own voices to their colonizers, jailers, and nationally sanctioned murderers. In other words, as a "lesser-citizen" Johnny must struggle against the fact that he is without the same "right to have rights" as others who are seen as more "authentic" citizens of Canada.

Johnny's ghost is thus forced to speak *through* that very hegemonic Western discourse that has stereotyped him as a drunken Indian and thus as a more exterminable form of human life within the ethno-politics of Canadian citizenship/humanity. Yet, even when dead and buried, Johnny is still an obnoxious, drunken, loud-mouth, ranting to anyone who will listen. Thus, an important implication of Johnny's ghost is that the stereotypical image of "drunken Indian," which has traditionally functioned to orient "authentic" Canadian citizenship as its killable radical other, does not exist. Even Johnny's ghost will not behave as "drunken Indians" are supposed to behave! This representation implicitly begs the question of who is really "dead" here: Johnny's spectral memory or the Canadian discourse of "authentic citizenship" that founds itself in relation to such empty stereotypes.

Brébeuf's Ghost's hauntological adaptation of Shakespeare has much the same function as the ghost of Johnny in *Coyote City*. It operates as a supplement to — that is, in excess of — the normative discourse of Canadian cultural authenticity that "Canadian" evocations of Shakespeare traditionally represent. Rejecting an identity politics of "the return of the repressed," the ghosts haunting Moses's play instead disrupt accepted accounts of First Nations Canadian history. Moses's spectral historiography thus resembles Jacques Derrida's concept of hauntology, in that it "is historical, to be sure, but it is not dated" (Derrida 1994, 4). The "historical record," in other words, is not "set in stone" or reducible to one definitive historical truth, but nonetheless irrepressibly haunts us in multiple, heterogeneous forms. If there is one thing we know for certain about "events," Derrida says elsewhere, it is that we can never definitively know what they are or what they mean.

THE GHOST OF BRÉBEUF

Specifically, ghosts function in *Brébeuf's Ghost* as a means of (re)telling the story of the Huron/Wyandot dispersion of 1649 from a "Huron" perspective. The "actual" and recorded historical events of the Huron dispersion (including inter-native rivalries) were inflected by, and to a certain degree, caused by the influence of European cultural, military, and economic institutional frameworks resulting from European colonial contact. The rotting corpse of Jean de Brébeuf that appears at the end of the play and chases after the doomed Hurons and Samuel (Moses 2000, 140-41), for example, represents not only the death caused by war and disease directly related to Jesuit contact, but also the impending death of the last of the Hurons and of those Jesuits who fled to Christian Island (Sultzman 2000). Brébeuf's ghost thus represents a kind of "rotten remainder" at the core of accepted accounts of this period in Canadian history by offering a grotesque caricature of its own Christian imagery and colonial legacy. Like the entrance of Banquo's ghost in Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (1987, 3.4.47), Brébeuf's ghost causes a violent breach in the normative discourse of Christian "truth" about its "charity" towards non-Christian others.

The play focuses on Brébeuf's "civilizing mission" among the Huron/Wyandot in what he called Huronia and New France. The action is set amongst "the rivers and lakes, rocks, and shores of the forests of the Canadian Shield between Georgian Bay, Lake Nipissing, and Lake Temagami in central Ontario, first in October 1649 and then in April and then June 1650" (Moses 2000, 9). It thus takes place roughly during the period of the "great dispersal" of the Huron/Wyandot that occurred as a result of their definitive loss in their war with the Iroquois in 1648-1649 (Sultzman 2000; see also Federici and Federici 1997).

The macabre specter of Jean de Brébeuf that haunts this play represents one of the only, and thus most accepted, accounts of pre-Canadian First Nations history. In Brébeuf's sections of the *Huron Relation*, he refers to the Hurons as savages (1959, 78 and 106) and as simple minded (108), while at the same time praising their language as being "very complete and very regular [sophisticated], contrary to the opinion of many"

(113).¹⁰ While the Jesuits were opposed to the fur trade with the Wyandot due to the moral "corruption which [they felt it] was causing among the native peoples" (Sultzman 2000), their determined efforts, both culturally and spiritually, to colonize the Huron/Wyandot clearly worked hand-in-hand with the violent forces of economic and territorial colonization. One example of this connection is the way in which Brébeuf constructs Europeans almost as gods divinely authorized to rule over "their" [sic] natives, which were often referred to as "'the eldest children' of Onontio" (Sultzman 2000, italics added). Brébeuf remarks that

[i]t would be impossible to describe the astonishment of these good [simple] people, and how much they admire the intelligence of the French. But they have said all when they have said they are *ondaki* [meaning "But they say it all when they call us *ondaki*"], that is, Demons; and indeed we make profitable use of this word when we talk to them: "Now, my brothers, you have seen that and admired it, and you think you are right, when you see something extraordinary, in saying *ondaki*, to declare that those who make so many marvels must be Demons. And [yet] what is there so wonderful as the beauty of the Sky and the Sun? What is there so wonderful as to see every year the trees almost dead during the Winter, all bare and disfigured, resume without fail, every spring, a new life and a new dress? The corn that you plant rots, and from its decay spring up such beautiful stalks and better ears. And yet you do not say, "He who made so many beauties, and who every year displays before our eyes so many marvels, must be some beneficent *oki* [demon], and some supereminent [meaning 'with outstanding'] intelligence." (Brébeuf 1959, 108-109)

This passage implies that French "intelligence" is comparable to and perhaps even linked to God's own knowledge, suggesting as well that the so-called "simple minded" and supposedly "demonically possessed" Hurons should therefore blindly obey the French as if they were gods with supernatural powers.¹¹ What's more, Brébeuf clearly believed that through Christian prayer he had the divine power to heal the Hurons from the plagues that, ironically, were carried to Huronia by the Europeans themselves. Brébeuf further relates that

among these troubles and dangers, we owe much to the care and fatherly goodness of our Lord; for neither on the journey hither, nor while in this Country, has one of us been taken with this sickness, nor yielded to hunger, nor lost appetite. Some have had since the light attacks of sickness, but they have passed away in a few days. Our Lord be forever praised, and the most immaculate Virgin with her most chaste Spouse, for this singular favor, which has aided us much in giving authority to our Faith among these Peoples. (87)

In this way, sickness and death are leveraged against the Huron/Wyandot by the very carriers of the disease in order to divinely authorize the French colonial project. It is difficult not to draw an analogy in this passage between the plague and the concomitant economic "infection" of the Huron/Wyandot culture by European trade that indigenes would eventually rely upon. This "addiction" to European capitalism that could only be fed by those who introduced it became a powerful means of control over First Nations peoples.

EXORC-ANALYZING HUMANITY

The ghost of Brébeuf accorporates, at the same time as it critiques, a hegemonic "European" discourse of proto-Canadian nationhood and the Western-centric concept of humanity to which it is attached. In Moses's play, this "exorc-analysis" maps out an "ethical" common ground between all parties — this, because the ghost haunts everybody in violent, terrifying ways. Moses gains this ethical common ground in his play by virtue of his irreducibly complex, yet ultimately practical, re-conceptualization of the notion of a common "humanity."

Part of this rethinking of humanity involves the ways in which all the characters in *Brébeuf's Ghost* share a common vulnerability to violence and greed. This is most powerfully represented in the play by the ghost of Brébeuf, who at one point chases the Hurons as they flee the Iroquois — thus serving at once as a specter of inter-cultural rivalries between native groups, of native violence against the Jesuits, and of European colonial violence against natives:

The GHOST, a skeleton dressed in Black-Robe rags, enters walking on the water again, following them, carrying the stick-cross now in flames [. . .]

[A page later, Moses describes the way the GHOST follows the Hurons as they] paddle into the brightness and exit. The GHOST turns to follow them, but then the sun rises, and he disappears in the light. (Brébeuf 1959, 140-41)

These stage directions imply that it is not only the Iroquois who threaten the continued existence of the Huron, but also the macabre figure of Brébeuf who, as a ghostly skeleton cloaked in a black robe and carrying a flaming cross, walks on the water and chases after the fleeing Hurons until the sun appears, which causes the ghost to vanish.

The complex imagery in this passage suggests several interconnected ways of reading the ghost of Brébeuf. First, the ghost embodies the Christian God who can walk on water, but in the form of the grim reaper who, in the Western tradition, is often depicted as a skeleton in a black hood. Second, the burning cross that the ghost carries is another example of a traditional Christian image that has been caricatured and inverted by Moses to signify not only the crucifixion of Christ, but also the burning of Huron villages and Jesuit missions by the Iroquois. Third, this image of the burning crucifix also carries with it the racist connotation of burning crosses associated with the Ku Klux Klan, thus also signifying white supremacist, Christian racial hatred. A fourth connotation is vampirism, signaled by the ghost's disappearance as a result of the rising of the sun. One possible reading here is that the very blood-letting associated with the vampire that gives it "life" means that it is already "dead," poisoned by its own bloody cure. In this way, the *pharmakon* (or deadly medicine) of European trade is the cure that eventually kills First Nations groups by sparking inter-cultural rivalries and cannibalistic violence. The metaphor of the vampire — as one dead and "undead" at the same time — further links the work of the Jesuits in Huronia with a kind of violent, demonic conversion of the natives that involves killing and bloodletting, as well as the spreading of disease, through vascular infection as well as sexual contact. For example, in *Brébeuf's Ghost*, rape is another possible connotation of Father Noel's cannibalistic attacks on his Indigenous converts. This vampiric imagery also fits into a Christian eschatological paradigm of "divine surplus-value," whose ultimate purpose is to save souls by sending them to heaven. There, they will supposedly be rewarded with "the gift of death"¹² in exchange for their blood shed and self-less service to the Jesuit representatives of the Christian God in "this life."

To follow the logic of Moses's adaptation of *Macbeth* alongside his re-telling of Huron history, the rivalry between the Huron/Wyandots and the Iroquois resembles some of the ways in which Macbeth's ambition — the tragic "human" flaw of which many in Moses's play are guilty — is conjured up and exacerbated through the demonic influence of the witches (*Macbeth*, 1.3.49-153). This demonic setting into motion of tragic events also reflects the crises caused by the Jesuit's introduction of Christianity to the Wyandot,¹³ figured in *Brébeuf's Ghost* as inter-cultural cannibalism. The Jesuit Father conjures the images of witches in a conversation with Samuel Argent. In the play, the name Argent, French for money or silver, another demonic element afflicting the common humanity of all characters, alludes in his conversation with the Father to the fur trade in which Argent is involved and that is arguably the underlying reason for the French presence in Huronia. Argent's coldly capitalist motives are contrasted with the Father's apparently insane religious civilizing mission, thus framing them both as equally complicit in the unfolding disaster of European colonialism for First Nations peoples and cultures:

FATHER. I know I have failed in my mission here. There are still witches among them.

SAMUEL. Witches? What are you talking about?

FATHER. That girl, that cripple.

SAMUEL. She's fasting, Father. Don't Christians fast? Star Lily's fasting.

FATHER. I've lost John. Only Martha has been saved.

SAMUEL. She's getting in tough with the spirits. It's like prayer.

FATHER. Only Martha.

SAMUEL. Everybody else is scared of you. Black Star told them you scared the game away.

FATHER. What do you mean?

SAMUEL. You brought all the bad weather. You caused the famine.

FATHER. How can they believe that?

SAMUEL. Father, Black Robes were the ones who brought them small pox.

Argent, who is open and explicit about the underlying economic motives of the French involvement with the Hurons, thus represents a kind of cold, calculating "reason" that is set against the Jesuit priest's naive Christian rhetoric.

While Argent and Brébeuf both present themselves as emissaries of "hospitable" intentions towards the Aboriginal groups they encounter — such as the promises of European trade, prosperity, and "true" religion — their underlying motives and unwavering economic "bottom line" refuse any common human respect among all parties from which to proceed. In response to the Father's charge of witchcraft against the Hurons, for example, Argent points out the similarities between the Wyandot and Christian belief systems. He also points out the irony in the Father's position as supposed "savior" who has actually caused the decimation of a great deal of the Huron/Wyandot through smallpox. Argent, on the other hand, as a contributor to the economic colonization of the Huron/Wyandot, is as responsible as the Father for their misery. Likewise, the different native groups' cannibalistic violence toward one another is also attributable in certain ways, Moses suggests, to the greed driving European colonialism. Both Argent and the Father can thus be compared to the witches in *Macbeth*, for they cause the near destruction of the Huron/Wyandot nation by poisoning the possibility of a common human understanding with the tragic, "human" flaws of greed, ambition, and violence.

Moses further interrogates the pitfalls of such inter-cultural "hosti-pitality" — meaning a dogmatic hospitality that, followed too closely, turns out to be a hostile imposition of the "laws of the house" on one's unwitting guest — through a "Romeo and Juliet" romance between Sky Feather and the Mohawk warrior. A Huron convert named Joseph, who is the companion of Pierre, a Jesuit acolyte (or Priest-in-training vested with ceremonial duties), hears Sky Feather approaching while he and Pierre huddle together, half starved and petrified of the advancing Mohawks. Promising "loaves and fishes" for Pierre's dinner, Joseph grabs Sky Feather and prepares to slit her throat in order to cannibalize her — literally, to consume her humanity in a travesty of Christian sacrifice. At this moment, the Mohawk warrior who has been following and watching Sky Feather from a distance suddenly emerges from the shadows. He pulls Joseph off her and then kills him. Pierre, terrified and unable to comprehend the situation, runs away. After a short and tense courtship, Sky Feather and the Mohawk make love. The Mohawk will later pay for this inter-tribal union, however, by being burned, tortured to death, and ritually cannibalized by Sky Feather's family.

Their racist fear of the Mohawk warrior makes Sky Feather's family unable to comprehend her horror and loss at her lover's execution. Ironically, the Mohawk is being tortured and executed for short-circuiting the ritual sacrifice of Sky Feather — a violent re-inscription of her "human" body as edible, and thus as more "animal" or "food" than human. (That is, if "animality" can be separated from its orienting oppositional term, "humanity," the animal being an anthropocentric concept for that which is "other than human" and thus is itself a kind of negative humanity.) Indeed, such sacrificial consumption is inscribed in the very discourse of Christian conversion, evoking the consumption of the body of Christ in the sacrament of Communion. The Mohawk's own torture and ritual "consumption" by Sky Feather's family thus points to a wider economy of suicidal consumptions in the play — metaphorical and physical, as well as economic — in which competing spectral forms of humanity literally kill and eat one another at every turn.

RETHINKING THE "HUMAN" AND RE-IMAGINING RIGHTS

On the surface, Sky Feather's moral outrage at the execution of the Mohawk warrior offers a seemingly egalitarian discourse of "human rights" that resembles the identity politics of Western liberal humanism. On closer examination, however, the play's ambivalent construction of "humanity" serves as a scathing critique of the concept of cultural "authenticity" that underwrites the liberal humanist identity politics of Canadian multiculturalism and human rights discourses. As such, *Brébeuf's Ghost* can be approached as an example of what Daniel Fischlin and Martha Nandorfy call "the intersection between emergent rights discourses and literary culture" (Fischlin and Nandorfy 2002, 143).

An issue often occluded by discourses of rights is the status of those non-citizens, or "lesser" citizens, who are possibly most in need of rights but, having no access to citizenship nor perhaps even the desire for it, lack recognition as "humans" and are thus without even the right to

have rights. This problem arises, for example, when identity and human rights are framed too narrowly within officially sanctioned discourses (such as that of "national citizenship") and/or obscured by self-interested national agendas. Hannah Arendt, in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951), historicizes the ways in which *human* rights are inextricable from (inter)national *citizenship*, the only subjective mode, she argues, through which nations — the major protectors and progenitors of human rights and freedoms via (inter-)national forums and legal institutions — can even conceptualize discourses of humanity and rights. In short, the "Spirits" of humanity and human rights are inseparable from their multiple, heterogeneous, spectral forms such as (inter)national citizenship. The famous example she provides is the case of those stateless Jewish citizens who were set adrift after the end of WWII and suffered a second dehumanization as a result of being without citizenship and thus left without the protection of human rights and freedoms, even though these were some of the very people who needed them most.

Similarly, First Nations Canadians have less access to basic human rights than other Canadian citizens due to the fact that their cultures, traditions, and values are not seen as compatible with "ideal" Canadian citizenship. The reservation system, for example, is the legacy of what amounts to the cultural apartheid of ideal vs. non-ideal "Canadian" citizens — and let us not forget how the Canadian model for segregating its First Nations traveled to South Africa and contributed to its imagining of apartheid. Likewise, recent violent clashes between the Canadian government and First Nations groups, such as those at Ipperwash and Oka, are symptomatic of a general lack of respect for and/or ability to recognize First Nations traditions and rights within the dominant discourse of "Canadian nationalism."

But Moses does not restrict his critique to the dehumanizing effects of European colonialism against First Nations groups. The Huron-Iroquois conflict is also critiqued in his play as a kind of inter-cultural cannibalism that is partly connected with the racism sewn amongst the native groups as a result of Jesuit Christian conversions and European economic trade. These conversions often split Huron communities along spiritual loyalties, and the overall influence of French commerce pitted indigenous nation against indigenous nation in competition for commodifiable resources, trading routes, and partners (Sultzman 2000). Moses's critique of these political and economic issues and the ways in which they tend to divide people more often than they bring them together is stated bluntly in Sky Feather's defense, to her mother, of her Mohawk lover: "I looked into his eyes. Mother, he's only a man" (Moses 2000, 58). Sky Feather, who is perhaps intertextually and thematically linked with Shakespeare's Juliet by way of Moses's use of "Shakespearean" allusion, condemns the violent racism of her family by replacing the signifier "Mohawk" with "man," or "hu-man."

The implicit critique, in this passage, of First Nations intercultural violence and First Nations-European rivalries — such as the storied torture and burning of Jean de Brébeuf — strikes a universalizing, egalitarian tone reminiscent of Western liberal humanism. On closer examination, however, a much more complex "ethics of adaptation" emerges here. While *Brébeuf's Ghost* is written seemingly from the perspective of the Huron subject position, it also works against essentialist views of cultural identity such as "French," "Mohawk," "Huron," and so forth, preferring the generic label "[hu]man." But what does that mean in the case of the warrior, whose singular "humanity" (for example, his love for Sky Feather, which he has in common with her family) is unrecognizable in the context of his "Mohawk" identity within the ethno-political context of the Huron nation? In this passage, the "human" is constructed as a sovereign, exceptionalist, bio-political limit, rescindable at any moment as a direct result of the power relations at play among the Mohawk, his own national subjectivity, and the Hurons' notion of humanity. The applicable discourse of livable human "life" clearly is inseparable from Huron citizenship, in direct relation to which its limits, inclusions, and exclusions are determined. In other words, while the warrior is, for Sky Feather, a "human" subject who happens to be Mohawk, his "Mohawkness" causes his humanity to be denied by her family. The Mohawk's "humanity" is thus constructed in Moses's text as thoroughly spectral — if painfully corporeal — and as contingent upon his citizenship and/or non-citizenship as a Mohawk warrior. In fact, his humanity is in a sense more tied to citizenship than to anything else.

"Humanism" is, in fact, another Eurocentric specter that Moses adapts and empties of idealized, transcendental Western content in order to refigure it as a singularly "First Nations" ethical trope. "Humanity" thus functions in the play as a kind of hybrid term, uniting First Nations peoples and Europeans through a common ethical responsibility to remain open and hospitable to the *differences* separating one another. In the absence of such openness to human difference, humanity becomes unrecognizable as such and leads to the *inhuman* treatment of other humans. This ethical responsibility for humans — in order to remain humane — to exceed the limitations of their own humanity when dealing ethically with others is modeled in Moses's play as a kind of "ethics of adaptability" to radically other forms of humanity. In practice, this is roughly analogous to the "spirit" of current International Human Rights discourses, if not to their common usage.

One problem with current inter-*national* human rights is that often they function as seemingly universal invocations of "human" rights, yet are immediately veto-able when a dominant national context invokes its own sovereign exception and delimits a *particular* form of human life that it chooses to ban. Take, for example, those prisoners held in perpetuity at Guantanamo Bay who, labeled as "terrorist enemy combatants" by the U.S. government, are thus without recourse to basic human rights or the Geneva Conventions. Another example, *mutatis mutandis*, are First Nations peoples in Canada who, neither identical with nor necessarily desiring Canadian citizenship, are thus denied the very basic rights, freedoms, and privileges afforded to humans who resemble more closely idealized "Canadian" identity/ies.

Moses's ethical adaptation of humanism, however, cannot escape a degree of essentialism in its attempt to "universalize" an irreducible, already Eurocentric specter of the human. But Moses might justifiably point out that in the overwhelmingly Eurocentric Canadian context, how else is one to proceed? Furthermore, Moses seems to suggest that Canadian human rights and freedoms, haunted as they are by this early colonialist period in Canada's self-imagining, which so obviously shaped the current dysfunctional relationship between First Nations groups and the Canadian government, are neither "ethical" nor "just" when it comes to Aboriginal Canadians. Thus, a practical way forward, as modeled by Moses's play, is to take the flawed Canadian discourse of human rights and freedoms that we have at *hand* — for example, through Eurocentric symbols and discourses, such as "Shakespeare" and "humanism," that are associated most closely with the discourse of rights — and make that discourse more *adaptable* in order to more "justly" fulfill its promises of ensuring the humane treatment of Canadian citizens of *all* possible races, genders, classes, cultures, and ethnicities.

But as *Brébeuf's Ghost* demonstrates, this involves a difficult and often painful approach to recognizing what might possibly constitute "human" differences within the Canadian cultural imaginary — differences that are unforeseeable in advance of our being confronted with radically other forms of humanity. In Moses's play, for example, the Mohawk warrior's life exists very differently for Sky Feather than it does for her Wyandot family, particularly after his death. In a sense, his "human life" was already dead to them long before his torture and murder at their hands. The Mohawk's life, in other words, cannot be reduced to any one of its multiple, heterogeneous specters; he is not simply a "Mohawk," a "warrior," a "lover," a "friend," or an "enemy," and thus no clear moral judgment can be made about him based on any one of these aspects of his individual "spirit." For Moses, perhaps the point is that while the category of the "human subject" is always a hybrid, becoming subject, it is nonetheless stubbornly attached to actual, singular, human individuals. Perhaps a way of imagining a more inclusive concept of "humanity" is to refocus on adapting rights to serve those singular *persons in need of rights*. This is not a "human rights" pre-conceived in terms of categories of race, gender, culture, or national citizenship, even if these categories are important aspects of how people express their singular humanity.

Being adaptable to the limitations of such categorizations of "the human" is perhaps a step towards recognizing that the differences between humans — not just their similarities or ability to assimilate to the national ideal — are worthy of respect. In short, for human rights to become more *humane*, they must accommodate the fact that there is no ideal "human" subject, only multiple, heterogeneous specters of the human that are living, dead, and yet to come and that collectively negotiate the "spirit" of human rights and its possible futures.

I realize that what I have just argued is not a perfect or "perfectible" formula; nor is it necessarily an easy plan to follow. It requires *work* that can never be "completed," nor comprehended as a particular "job" foreseeable in advance. Being open and hospitable to irreducible, sometimes unrecognizable spectral "others" — or being "ethical" — for Moses means doing the best we can to historicize rigorously the forms of humanity, given the cultural tools we have to hand, in order to find a common (if irreducibly "open") ground for treating each other humanely. Above all, as *Brébeuf's Ghost* demonstrates, we must remain open to the possibility that the given law or historical record is wrong, or at the very least, that there are exceptions to it that we cannot foresee. One person's father, husband, lover, or freedom fighter is another's terrorist. Nobody can be absolutely subject to moral laws, rights, or national citizenship. "Humanity" is thus always "spectral" in an irreducible way. But working towards the recognition of the ways in which we share a common humanity, for Moses, is a *practical* means of protecting people's human rights by allowing for and *adapting* to their irreducible differences.

Moses makes this point in interview material included in Rob Appleford's essay, "The Desire to Crunch Bone: Daniel David Moses and the 'True Real Indian'" (1993). In the course of the interview, Moses says that "the idea of presenting something that someone will decide is authentically 'Native' seems absurd to me. I can remember asking an interviewer, because I wanted to try and understand what they meant by authentic and Native, 'Does that mean that Margaret Atwood is authentically Caucasian?'" (Appleford 1993, 21). Moses's provocative suggestion here is that the reason Atwood's "Caucasian" subject position is seen as "invisible" is due to the Caucasian-centric Canadian context and its enunciation, in which the hegemonic power dynamics at play *render* that identity invisible, being identical with the white cultural backdrop, or white racial "default" position. Further, when Atwood is "seen" within the Canadian literary scene and thus as a canonical author, any individual differences that contradict Canadians' vision of her as the white, Eurocentric ideal of "Canadian-ness" tend to be filtered out. This particular canonical filtering-system has begun to change in the last few decades. But it has occurred according to a constrained, authorized discourse of Canadian multiculturalism that has its own sets of ideological filters, perspectival lenses, and institutional containment strategies.

CONCLUSION

What is perhaps most engaging about Moses's adaptation of Shakespeare from within a Canadian/First Nations perspective is the way in which it demonstrates that there is no univocal Canadian historical truth, but only a number of competing opinions and perspectives that collectively produce "Canadian history." This view of history has significant consequences for how we understand and collectively normalize the Canadian "ethical climate" surrounding national citizenship and human rights. Moses's intervention into this process of normalizing "Canadian" human rights and freedoms is his adaptive approach to ethics, modeled in *Brébeuf's Ghost* through his adaptation of Shakespeare from within the doubled perspective of what it means to be both/and Canadian/First Nations. The *Jesuit Relations* and Western canonical constructs such as Shakespeare are re-appropriated by Moses and adapted to signify a singularly First Nations-Canadian perspective on Canadian history and human rights.

And yet, Moses does not slot First Nations peoples and cultures into clearly defined categories of "repressed identity," to be reclaimed and defended as such. Instead, First Nations identity is seen as *itself* a kind of adaptive process irreducible to "origins" or clichéd identity politics. His play thus advocates a more "universalized," yet irreducibly "open," approach to rights and cultural recognition as a way of connecting on the level of common "humanity." In short, in order to challenge the hauntological insistence of a *certain* hegemonic Canadian cliché of "the native" — one that de-humanizes First Nations peoples, culture, and symbols — Moses instead resurrects a *différential* and hybrid ghost of Brébeuf (via the specters of Shakespeare) in order that the dead might bury the dead and the living bury the hatchet.

NOTES

1. Daniel Fischlin and Mark Fortier, in their book *Adaptations of Shakespeare* (2000), define the "Shakespeare effect" as "one of the privileged sites around which Western culture has struggled to authenticate and sustain itself" (8).

2. See Jacques Derrida's *Specters of Marx* (1994) for a more detailed account of his neologism "hauntology." This concept is a classic Derridean "double" gesture that circumscribes, in French, the homonyms *hantologie* and *ontologie*. Together, they form an aporia — hau/ontology — that stages a rethinking of historical inheritance, mourning work, and memory. It does this by differentiating between the "spirits" (or more "phenomenological" aspects of a concept) and the "specters" (its multiple, heterogeneous "ontological" manifestations) of events, persons or concepts. For Derrida, however, the "Spirit" of a thing finds its very condition of possibility in its multiple, heterogeneous specters. Likewise, specters, as constitutive of their unifying "Spirits," thus have no recourse to origins or "presence," being themselves supplements of other spectral supplements that collectively comprise the "life" of the so-called "thing-itself." As such, the two terms approach each other to the point of inseparability. Hauntology thus contains a distinctively deconstructive "ethics of alterity," or an axiomatic responsibility to keep the question of the other open and "in question." The implication is that a hauntological critique does not "ontologize remains" or reductively circumscribe a "Spirit"'s life within dates of birth and death for particular ideological purposes. Instead, it examines the "beingness" of such a life and the multiple heterogeneous ways in which it "lives on" in and through its differential specters in unforeseeable and irreducibly open-ended ways.
3. See Harold Bloom's *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human* (1998).
4. Even Canadian content laws are particularly problematic in this regard, as they tend to ignore, or even perpetuate the ways in which "Canadian" content, within mass-media distribution networks in this country, is generally grouped together and othered in relation to "good" and/or "popular" American content, and programmed as such. More local community-based or University-based media, such as CFRU (Campus and Community Radio) in Guelph, arguably represent a much better cross-section of content not so tied to powerful global distribution networks and their overwhelmingly Americanized tastes and trends. Importantly, these "Americanized" tastes tend to feed much more into a Eurocentric "British-North-American" style of Canadian cultural imaginary more than they encourage an openness or acclimatization to First Nations cultural productions.
5. Daniel David Moses is one of many influential First Nations Canadian writers to adapt Shakespeare as a means of re-asserting First Nations identity within an overwhelmingly Euro-centric Canadian milieu. For a survey of the influence of Shakespeare on Canadian Aboriginal cultures, see the "Spotlight on Canadian Aboriginal Adaptations of Shakespeare," on the University of Guelph's celebrated Canadian Shakespeares website (available online: http://www.canadianshakespeares.ca/spotlight_main.cfm) (http://www.canadianshakespeares.ca/spotlight_main.cfm). A similar re-purposing of Shakespeare occurs in French Canadian culture. In her article "Shakespeare in Francophone Québec," Leane Lieblein explains that "the work of Shakespeare, by virtue of its provenance, its language, and its association with Canadian federalism, has helped to define Québec's cultural Other in a context in which Québec itself has been in continual change, and has contributed to the creation of a Québécois national dramaturgy" (2007). Thus, she argues, "the Shakespeare performed in Québec up to 1968 (and in many cases thereafter) was a universal playwright whose work crossed temporal and national borders and spoke equally to people everywhere. Individual productions might, in their setting or allusions, localize the play in Québec." By appropriating Shakespeare as one of their own, Québécois Francophones, says Lieblein, were asserting the relevance of their culture not only within Canada, but also in Europe and abroad.
6. See, for example, the National Library and Archives of Canada's online Bibliography entry on Jean de Brébeuf, which, in spite of his blatant and blindly Eurocentric claims to anthropological "knowledge" of the Huron culture, paints a heroic, glowing portrait of his intelligence and good sense and praises his accurate accounting of his Huron subjects. Likewise ignoring the derogatory and arrogantly paternalistic language Brébeuf uses to describe Huron life in his *Relations*, this official Canadian national archive instead reports that "there was no pettiness in this man, no meanness. One would look in vain in his writings for any sign of rancor, of bitterness in judgment, of secret jealousy. His mildness was proof against all scorn. The audacity which marked some of his actions was less a trait of his character than a form of his apostolic zeal. [. . .] Such was he who has been called 'the giant of the Huron missions,' and more recently 'the apostle whose heart was devoured'" (Latourelle 2007).
7. The introduction to the 2000 Annual Report of the Canadian Human Rights Commission smugly boasts that "Canada is often praised for its human rights record; and some would say that we have already won the major battles. But much as one wishes this to be true, there are still significant issues to be addressed" (Government of Canada, Canadian Human Rights Commission 2000). In an April 2006 report by the United Nations — the first such assessment of Canada's human rights record by the UN since 1998 — Canada nevertheless is roundly criticized for a host of human rights abuses against the homeless, the poverty-stricken, migrants and, in particular, Aboriginal peoples. A May 8, 2006 article by the Canadian Press (Schlein 2006) reports that the UN committee "specifically asked about the government's failure to settle outstanding land claims brought forward by the Six Nations and the Lubicon Lake Indians. The experts also asked why young Aboriginal women are disproportionately exposed to sexual assault and murder. They expressed concern regarding discrimination against women under the Indian Act" (United Nations Rights Committee 2006). Arguably, the fact that such an assessment of Canada's human rights policies is so rarely undertaken by the UN speaks to the way in which Canada's reputation in the international community as an upstanding defender of human rights has allowed it to abuse many of its citizens' rights with little notice or sanction.
8. See Fischlin's and Nandorfy's *Eduardo Galeano: Through the Looking Glass* (2002), 65-184 for a more in-depth discussion of contemporary discourses of human rights, and their connection to literary culture and theory. See also their most recent book, *A Concise Guide to Global Human Rights* (2006).
9. In 1984, former U.S. Secretary of State in the Reagan administration George Shultz pushed a policy of "defense through appropriate 'preventive or preemptive actions' against terrorists before they strike," which stated that "we cannot allow ourselves to become the Hamlet of nations, worrying endlessly over whether and how to respond. A great nation with global responsibilities cannot afford to be hamstrung by confusion and indecisiveness. Fighting terrorism will not be a clean or pleasant contest, but we have no choice. . . . We must reach a consensus in this country that our responses should go beyond passive defense to consider means of active prevention, preemption, and retaliation. Our goal must be to prevent and deter future terrorists' acts. . . . The public must understand before the fact that occasions will come when their government must act before each and every fact is known and the decisions cannot be tied to the polls" (Schultz 1993, 647). Schultz is thus widely accredited as the father of George W. Bush's doctrine of preventative war (the "Bush Doctrine"), and in 2002, reiterated his infamous "Hamlet of nations" quote in a speech defending Bush's decision to go to war in Iraq.

10. All quotations are from the R. G. Thwaites edition of the *Jesuit Relations* (1959), which I have emended based on different translations and the original French. Copies of the original texts of the *Jesuit Relations* and *Huron Relations* are available online through the Library of Canada at <http://www.nlc-bnc.ca/2/19/h19-150-e.html> (<http://www.nlc-bnc.ca/2/19/h19-150-e.html>).
11. Ironically, just as the Wyandot attribute certain French traits to "demonology," the Jesuits also attribute Wyandot religious faith and practices to the "devil," including the spiritual practices of the Arendiouane soothsayers, to whom Brébeuf himself attributes the power to predict future events and do other supernatural things, though he qualifies this by saying that "the Devil reveals to them some secrets, but with so much obscurity that one is unable to accuse them of falsehood" (1959, 122).
12. See Derrida's *The Gift of Death* for a more detailed discussion of the logic of "divine surplus-value" inherent in the Christian belief system, as well as what Derrida signals as the paradox of Christian "ethics" which, as demonstrated by the biblical story of Abraham and Isaac, demands absolute obedience to "God," to the point of abandoning "morals," in order to enforce Christian ethics (1995, 85-87). Within the structural limits of this Christian ethics, therefore, control over the power relation with the "absolute other" (God) becomes of paramount concern, as opposed to any ethical/moral responsibility to the radical other who is not "self-same" (82-115).
13. Lee Sultzman, in his comprehensive article "Huron History," explains that "despite the best intentions of the Jesuits, their success [in converting Hurons to Christianity] was a disaster for Huron unity. The new religion frequently divided Huron communities into Christian and traditional factions at the very time they needed to unite against the Iroquois. The priests usually would not allow their converts to attend tribal ceremonies, and things finally got so bad that Christian and traditional Hurons often refused to join the same war party" (Sultzman 2000).

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ABSTRACT | THE SPECTERS OF SHAKESPEARE | THE SPECTER OF THE *JESUIT RELATIONS* | ETHICS, POLITICS, AND THE SHAKESPEAREAN SPECTERS OF HURON HISTORY | MOSES'S GHOSTS | THE GHOST OF BRÉBEUF | EXORC-ANALYZING HUMANITY | RETHINKING THE "HUMAN" AND RE-IMAGINING RIGHTS | CONCLUSION | NOTES | REFERENCES | TOP

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Nationalizing Shakespeare in Québec: Theorizing Post-/Neo-/Colonial Adaptation

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ABSTRACT | SHAKESPEARE VS. MOLIÈRE | LIMPING, BASTARD KINGS | CANADA VS. QUÉBEC | NOTES |
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ABSTRACT

Québec's political situation and multiple identities as a colonial, postcolonial, and neo-colonial nation make its adaptations of Shakespeare unique. By appropriating the canonical authority of Shakespeare's texts, Québécois adapters legitimize their local struggle for national liberation; however, this appropriation requires that they negotiate a fine line between the enrichment of Québécois culture and its possible contamination, assimilation, or effacement by Shakespeare's influence. This article proposes three reasons why Québécois playwrights choose to adapt Shakespeare more often than Molière: the indeterminacy of Shakespeare's texts; his "big time" status; and Québec's cultural distance from the British canon. These factors result in Québécois playwrights' irreverent, and hence liberating, approach to "le grand Will." Québec's overlapping post-/neo-/colonial identities make its relationship to Shakespeare distinct from that of English Canada. While Mark Fortier claims that Canadians are "undead" due to their ambivalence as settler-colonizers "from elsewhere," I argue that in Québec the national question eclipses forms of alterity in these adaptations of Shakespeare. Québécois adaptations tend to be oriented towards the creation of one multiethnic, national identity to which "others" must assimilate as the nation strives collectively for political sovereignty and legitimacy.

SHAKESPEARE VS. MOLIÈRE

It is common practice in Québec to contrast "la langue de Molière" and "la langue de Shakespeare."¹ Yet, in a Québec that prides itself on still speaking Molière's tongue, it is especially puzzling to find a remarkably rich history of adaptations of Shakespeare since the Quiet Revolution.² Since the beginning of this massive social reform in 1960, more than thirty such French-language adaptations of Shakespeare have been written in Québec — and an impressive number of translations and innovative stage productions have been performed, as well.³ By uniting the Québécois language and Shakespeare's texts, Québécois adapters embrace cultural hybridity in order to appropriate the canonical authority of Shakespeare's texts and to

legitimize their local struggle for national liberation. However, this appropriation requires that the adapters negotiate a fine line between the enrichment of Québécois culture and its possible contamination, assimilation, or effacement by Shakespeare's often overwhelming influence. The paradoxical existence of Québécois Shakespeare, especially in the face of such cultural risks, raises therefore an important question: Why adapt Shakespeare and not Molière?

More so than Molière, Shakespeare has been appropriated by Québécois playwrights in support of the nationalist cause for three reasons. First, the indeterminacy of his texts makes them easily malleable to their political purposes, just as his plays have often been manipulated in service of various political agendas, transhistorically and transculturally. Without succumbing to notions of Shakespeare's timelessness, one can nonetheless argue that Shakespeare's texts are less locally and historically situated than those of other early modern writers, and are therefore more suitable to adaptation in other cultural and historical contexts — as they have been in India and Africa, for instance.⁴ Although colonial importation is unquestionably an important reason for the endurance of Shakespeare's works in these locales, their colonial dissemination does not diminish the fact that their indeterminacy makes them more adaptable and subject to reinterpretation in different contexts than those of Molière, as indeed they are in Québec.

Second, Shakespeare has made what Michael Bristol calls "the big time"; that is, Shakespeare is a pop celebrity. As Bristol observes, "Other literary figures may achieve canonical status within the academic community based on claims to artistic distinction, but Shakespeare is unusual in that he has also achieved contemporary celebrity" (1996, 3). Shakespeare's dual authority within both the academic and the pop culture communities therefore lends credibility within the popular imaginary to the political agenda of authors who cite or rewrite his texts.

Canonical difference provides a third possible reason why Québécois adapt Shakespeare instead of Molière. The lack of investment in, and indoctrination by, the British literary canon, coupled with Shakespeare's big-time status, make his texts both worthy of adaptation and sufficiently culturally distant to become objects of play. Francophone audiences tend to be less familiar than anglophone audiences with the exact details of Shakespeare's text, so Québécois adapters expose themselves less to virulent attacks from critics concerned with fidelity to the source texts. While in English-speaking nations, Shakespeare might be more difficult to adapt without drawing the criticism of desecrating a classic, in Québec Molière is the more sacrosanct of the two and the more risky author for a playwright to tackle.⁵ Moreover, the adaptation of Shakespeare in Québec has the added bonus of constituting a subversive attack on English Canada — where bardolotry reigns more strongly and the British canon carries more cultural authority — by transgressing the norms of the proper representation of an important cultural icon. In effect, Québécois adapters can use Shakespeare to stick it to the English (Canadians), so to speak. In Audre Lorde's terms, they are using the master's tools to deconstruct the master's house, as they simultaneously profit from and repudiate Shakespeare's canonicity. This is not to imply that some English Canadian adaptations may not also constitute a subversive attack on the British canon, but English Canada does not have the same multiple relationships to both Britain and another nation that Québec has with regard to Britain, English Canada, and even France.

Thus, while the appropriation of Shakespeare would normally carry with it cultural risks, as is the case in English Canadian and other anglophone postcolonial adaptations,⁶ in Québec the adapters' cultural distance and indifference to British hegemony adds a playful irreverence to their texts that diminishes the risk of assimilation. This irreverent, and hence liberating, attitude of Québécois towards Shakespeare can be summed up in their nickname for him: "le grand

Will." In Québec, Shakespeare is grand, a big-time author to revere, yet Québécois playwrights are not afraid to bring him down to size, to make him their own, and to develop an affectionate relationship with him on a first-name basis (Lieblein 2002, 178-99). In Québec, the colonial relationship to Shakespeare is multiple and unique. As a former settler colony of France (with a lingering colonial inferiority complex regarding the use of "standard" French versus *joual*),⁷ and as a nation that was then conquered by the British only to be subsumed shortly thereafter into the Canadian confederation, which many Québécois consider to be a form of neo-colonial tutelage,⁸ Québec has both been a colonizer of the Native peoples and has been colonized itself. Québec's ambivalent and overlapping identities as a colonial, neo-colonial, and postcolonial nation inform its Shakespearean adaptations. Québécois playwrights reinscribe the Bard's canonical authority when they appropriate it in order to highlight Québec's distinct cultural identity and to legitimize the nation's struggle for political independence; however, they are also able to play with his texts more freely since they do not belong to the Québécois canon.

Québec's overlapping colonial, neo-colonial, and postcolonial identities make its relationship to Shakespeare different from that of English Canada. In English Canada, Shakespeare has often been an important link between a settler colony and a distant, yet omnipresent, homeland. "Often employed as a bulwark against other 'undesirable' traditions or cultures," Irena Makaryk argues, in English Canada "Shakespeare has also served in many other capacities: as protector and symbol of high art, as morally edifying theatre, as an ally of solid British values, and as a tool of Anglicization, among others" (2002, 5). Makaryk's claim meshes well with Ric Knowles's "autobiographical narrative" in *Shakespeare and Canada*, in which he reveals his subject position as critic as a "white, male, settler/invasor [. . . who] stands as postcolonial subject" (2004, 14). Knowles recounts his subjective experience of feeling like Miranda when she expresses amazement at this "brave new world / That has such people in't" (5.1.183-84).⁹ He points out that she is an "(almost) second-generation settler/invasor [speaking], not about the new world, but the old one — or, more accurately, speaking about debased representatives of old world culture on a temporary sojourn in the colonies" (17), and as a teenager he, too, was awestruck by the old world colonial project, by the costumes, language, and accents of the actors in a production of Shakespeare in Stratford, Ontario. Knowles goes on to describe his "first pilgrimage to England," made "while working on [his] Ph.D.," "in search of authenticity, authority, cultural identity" on his "purchased-in-Canada Brit-Rail pass through train stations named after characters in Shakespeare's history plays . . . and . . . the real, authentic towns, cities, and rivers after which the colonial imitations and the parks of Southwestern Ontario were named" (19). Having made the same pilgrimage myself, I would argue that this colonial relationship to Shakespeare and the mother country remains largely true for Canadian scholars today. For English Canadians, the post- in postcolonial is never fully actualized when it comes to our relationship to Shakespeare; the *mythos* of the mother country haunts our cultural imaginary since Shakespeare and Dickens continue to occupy the Canadian big-time more than Margaret Atwood or Margaret Laurence — especially in our formative years, as we watch Mickey Mouse in Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* every year on CBC and hear countless tales of Romeo and Juliet long before the educational system may attempt to Canadianize our own personal literary canons.

For anglo-Canadian critics, such as Knowles and myself, engaging critically with Québécois adaptations of Shakespeare is risky business because the texts and the authors are so tied up politically and psychologically in the colonizer-colonized binary and the struggle for national independence from the cultural power from which the Canadian critic cannot dissociate him- or herself. The Bardolatry underlying the Stratfordian pilgrimages of young Shakespearean scholars

testifies to its thorough grasp on the English Canadian cultural imaginary, so that even conscious attempts by critics to valorize an adaptation's alternative reading of its sources cannot help but situate the Shakespearean source text as the primary point of reference, to which all else must measure up, even when the critic is aware that not measuring up is the strategic goal of the adapted text. The Canadian adaptation *Harlem Duet* (Sears 1997), for example, writes back to Shakespeare's *Othello*, not Cinthio's source text, because even when the adaptation proposes an alternative reading so radically different as to be incomparable to the source text, the source text, which stands as the point of reference for the adaptation, is always Shakespeare's rather than the sources he himself adapted.

The complicated colonial, neo-colonial, and postcolonial relationships at work in the context of Québécois adaptations become more apparent in comparison with the thematic emphasis of Canadian adaptations of Shakespeare. Knowles claims that Shakespeare's authority "haunts different collectivities within Canada differently, and has frequently been used, not only in the service of shoring up, but also of destabilizing unitary concepts of Canadian nationhood, even as 'Canada' has been used both to reinforce and destabilize unitary concepts of Shakespeare as universal (English) bard" (22). While it is true that different collectivities use Shakespeare to destabilize various unitary concepts within Canadian public discourse, such as race (as in Djanet Sears's *Harlem Duet*) or gender (in Ann-Marie MacDonald's *Good Night Desdemona, Good Morning Juliet* [1990]), no other regions or provinces of Canada do so in order to destabilize *national* identity itself. Unlike Québec, there is no theatrical history, let alone long-standing tradition, of adaptations of Shakespeare in Nova Scotia, for instance, much less for the purpose of nationalist identity affirmation, because, unlike Québec, other regions of Canada are not seeking liberation from federal, neo-colonial tutelage. Canadian nationhood is only destabilized by collectivities within Canada who consider themselves distinct nations separate from the Canadian national identity, that is, Québec and the First Nations. Daniel Fischlin cites in "Nation and/as Adaptation," for example, Warren Graves's 1974 play *Chief Shaking Spear Rides Again (or the Taming of the Sioux)*, but even as the play criticizes Canada's neo-colonial dominance of its Native Peoples, it does so within the framework of a clash of nations within the *a mari usque ad mare* Canadian political structure without positing succession as the solution to neo-colonialism (Fischlin 2002, 328-30). Only Québécois adaptations employ Shakespeare for the primary purpose (above class, race, or gender issues) of reconstructing Québécois — and consequently Canadian — national identity.

The list of thirty-one playtexts to which I am referring as "Québécois adaptations of Shakespeare" are:¹⁰ Robert Gurik's *Hamlet, prince du Québec* (1968); Jean-Claude Germain's *Rodéo et Juliette* (1970-1971); Serge Mercier's *Elle* (1974); Jacques Girard and Reynald Robinson's *Roméo et Julien* (1982); Jean-Pierre Ronfard's *Lear* (1977), *Vie et mort du Roi Boiteux* (1981), and *Falstaff* (1990); Michel Garneau's trilogy *Macbeth de William Shakespeare: Traduit en québécois* (1978), *La tempête* (1989), and *Coriolan* (1989), as well as his *Shakespeare: un monde qu'on peut apprendre par coeur* (1991); René-Daniel Dubois's *Pericles, Prince of Tyre, by William Shakespeare* (1986); Pierre-Yves Lemieux's *À propos de Roméo et Juliette* (1989); Normand Chaurrette's *Les Reines* (1991); Antonine Maillet's *William S* (1991); Reynald Bouchard's *Touchez pas à ma paroisse* (1994); Marco Micone's *La mégère de Padova* (1995); Michel Ouellette's *Songe d'une nuit* (1995); the 38 monologues event (1996); Jean-Frédéric Messier and Paula de Vasconcelos's *Le making of de Macbeth* (1996); Lük Fleury's *Richard moins III* (1998); Daphné Thompson's *Sauvée des eaux: Texte dramatique sur Ophélie* (2000); Larry Tremblay's *Roller* (2000) and *Guitare Tatou* (2004); Alexis Martin's *Dave veut jouer Richard III* (2001); Kadar Mansour's *Sous l'empire de Iago* (2002); Nancy Thomas's *Richard III ou la chute du corbeau* (2002); Madd Harold's and Anthony Kokx's *Henry. Octobre. 1970.* (2002); Yves

Sioui Durand's and Jean-Frédéric Messier's *Hamlet-le-Malécite* (2004); Michel Nadeau's *Les mots fantômes* (2006); and Katy Veilleux's *Elsemeur* (2007).¹¹

Detailing how most of these adaptations work to shore up nationalist identification would be too exhaustive for this article, but a snapshot of several major plays reveals the thematic evolution of these adaptations as a whole in relation to the changing discourses of the nationalist movement over the last four decades. From the Quiet Revolution until the present day, these adaptations reveal the progression, in nationalist discourse, from the rejection of defeatism in the 1960s to the issue of language in the 1970s, the post-referendum disillusionment in the 1980s, and the need for cultural and gender diversity in the 1990s in attempts to imagine the nation less monolithically.

LIMPING, BASTARD KINGS

Soon after the Quiet Revolution, adaptations such as Robert Gurik's *Hamlet, prince du Québec* (1968) and Jean-Claude Germain's *Rodéo et Juliette* (1970-1) raised the question "To be or not to be free" in order to situate Québec's quest for sovereignty in terms of Hamlet's problem of ceaseless thought versus the need to take immediate action. In Québec in the late 1960s and early 1970s, nationalism was expressed largely in terms of taking action, *passer à l'action*,¹² and throwing off the defeatism of a *né-pour-un-petit-pain* attitude of self-deprecation.¹³ This type of nationalism was manifested through anti-ecclesiasticism, neo-Marxism, and parallels with African decolonization in order to develop a more internationalist perspective in counter-balance to traditional nationalist discourses derived from Ultramontanism,¹⁴ and this nationalism came to be articulated in terms of Québec's socio-political, linguistic, and economic inequality within the framework of Canadian federalism.



Hamlet-Quebec discovers federalist duplicity cloaked in sovereignist colours. (Gurik 1968, 41)

The use, quality, and even the existence of the Québécois language was a key debate in Québec during the 1970s, a debate to which Michel Garneau contributed significantly with his "tradaptations" (to employ his own neologism) of Shakespeare. In 1977, the same year that the *Loi 101* language laws took effect and just four years after Québécois poet Michele Lalonde wrote "La deffence et illustration de la langue quebecquoyse," a manifesto for the defense and promotion of the Québécois language,¹⁵ Garneau published *Macbeth, de William Shakespeare: Traduit en québécois*, the first and most radical of these tradaptations. In *Macbeth* and later *La tempête*, without changing Shakespeare's plot or characters (as do most contemporary Québécois adaptations), Garneau exposes the semiotic richness of the Québécois language by translating the text into an approximation of a seventeenth-century dialect (not unlike contemporary *joual*) spoken prior to the Conquest of New France by England in 1759. At the same time, he subtly adapts several geographical and historical details in order to conflate the action within the world of the plays with the Conquest as well as with the 1970s political context of neo-colonialism believed to have resulted from it. The overlapping spatio-temporal markers produce a triple layer of signification, simultaneously locating the play in either medieval Scotland or on Caliban's island, in seventeenth-century New France, and in contemporary Québec. Distinctions between the layers of this palimpsest are blurred since the three spatio-temporal contexts are all linked by a single nationalist discourse centered on the country's usurpation by a tyrant and its desperate need for liberation.¹⁶

Jean-Pierre Ronfard's plays *Lear* (1977) and *Vie et mort du Roi Boiteux* [Life and Death of the Limping King] (1981), adaptations of Shakespeare's *King Lear* and of *Richard III* respectively, employ carnival and magic realism to parody the bastardized state of the nation whose corruption and decay can be eliminated only by the rise to power of strong-willed women. Rabelaisian carnival dominates every aspect of these two adaptations; food, drinking, rampant sexuality, and references to the grotesque lower body abound in every scene. Ronfard carnivalizes the nation, rendering it grotesque through his focus on bastardy, a pertinent theme for a Québec nation still considered illegitimate as a full political entity, at best Canada's limping, bastard cousin. Of all Québécois adaptations, Ronfard's plays best illustrate the irreverence of the Québécois approach to Shakespeare.¹⁷ Ronfard's two Shakespearean adaptations straddle a crucial turning point in Québec's history, the 1980 referendum on sovereignty-association, in which the "No" side won 59.6 percent to 40.4 percent for the "Yes." The Québécois population's struggle for political independence (the momentum for which was at a high point on the heels of the surprisingly strong, and first ever, Parti Québécois electoral victory in 1976), followed by their subsequent rejection of it, marks both of these plays. Whereas in the pre-referendum *Lear*, the declining state of the nation and the need to rescue it figure prominently, in the post-referendum *Vie et mort du Roi Boiteux* the obvious degeneration of the nation is relegated to the background in favor of a focus on gender relations and sexuality, until the nation finally acquires a new ruler at the play's end. The later play's inquiry into women's independence in marriage and their political role in society corresponds to the historical rise of the feminist movement in Québec in the 1970s and the increased social presence of women's issues following the temporary decline of the national question after the referendum. Ronfard's adaptations figure daughters as the survivors, inheritors, and sources of regeneration for fictional, bastard nations that pass through the disorder of carnival and then hover on the precipice of a new social order which will be more inclusive of women, and to some extent immigrants — that is, of the "others" to whom carnival gives leave to rule.¹⁸



The king contemplates a ball of shit . . . (Ronfard 1977, 21) Art © Daniel Kieffer/ VAGA, New York/ SODART, Montreal

Since the 1990s, Québec has seen an explosion of no fewer than twenty-two adaptations of Shakespeare by a range of playwrights from various socio-cultural backgrounds, including the first adaptations written by women, queers, and immigrants, all of which share one important trait: an exposure of the need to redefine the nation more inclusively through greater cultural and gender diversity. (As we shall see, it is significant that this emergence of other voices only begins to appear in Québécois adaptations in the 1990s, especially following the second referendum.) No production better exemplifies the redefinition of the nation less monolithically than the 38 event (1996), a series of thirty-eight monologues about each of Shakespeare's plays written by thirty-eight different playwrights under thirty-eight years of age. Each monologue is a personal interpretation of a play, with little to no intertextual or thematic exchange among the thirty-eight texts. To a certain extent, the pluralist approach of the 1990s could be seen as a temporary turn away from the use of Shakespeare as a medium for nationalist discourses, since the Bard is appropriated in service of new socio-political agendas. For instance, in Pierre-Yves Lemieux's *À propos de Roméo et Juliette* (1989) a gay Mercutio blatantly asserts his homoerotic desire for Romeo; in Daphné Thompson's *Sauvée des eaux: texte dramatique sur Ophélie* (2000) a fictional female adapter tries to save Ophelia from her fate; and in Yves Sioui Durand's and Jean-

Frédéric Messier's *Hamlet-le-Malécite* (2004), an aboriginal man seeks to play Hamlet while living the plot in his own life. While the cultural and gender diversity exhibited in these adaptations is laudable, the paradigm of the monolithic nation remains inescapable, as we see in a play such as Madd Harold's and Anthony Kokx's *Henry. Octobre. 1970.* (2002), which presents the English-French bitterness of the battle of Agincourt as ongoing in the modern era by situating the Hundred Years' War in the context of the 1970 October Crisis and portraying the French more favorably than the English.¹⁹

CANADA VS. QUÉBEC

By using Shakespeare to work through various stages of national(ist) identity in what sovereignists call *la longue marche vers le pays*,²⁰ Québécois adapters challenge a fundamental principle underlying modern Canadian nationhood: the belief in one multicultural nation *a mari usque ad mare* united in all of its diversity. In articulating a nationalist, and arguably sovereignist, discourse through the British Bard who has played such a pivotal role in the evolution of British North America into modern Canada, Québécois adapters undercut the success of that particular colonial project and expose its present-day composition as a false construct, a case of wishful thinking in which unity in diversity has not been achieved and the age-old divide of "two founding nations" that was so prominent at Confederation remains prevalent today.

Fischlin confirms that Canadian national identity may be nothing more than a false construct when he writes that "[n]ational identity is an imaginary entity, an ideality based on the simultaneous production and eradication of difference through the filter of communal values, in this case, putatively embedded in Shakespeare and the Shakespeare effect" (Fischlin 2002, 327). For Fischlin, Canadians have no essential national identity other than that which they socially construct through cultural production, of which Shakespearean adaptation is an important part. This adaptation tradition "links the iconicity of Shakespeare with the symbolic destiny, however illusory, of nation" (321). However, I would argue that national identity is not imaginary, even if the community constituting the nation is imagined. Fischlin agrees with Benedict Anderson that nations are imagined communities, but I would contend that the imaginary composition of that community does not invalidate or render illusory the subjective experience of a national identity by the community's individual citizens. While as Fischlin observes, the very definition of "communal" values obviously depends on the eradication of difference within the imagined community, in Québec these communal values are not embedded in Shakespeare, as they are in English Canada, because Québec does not have the same colonial relationship to the Bard, and its citizens possess a collective, subjective, settler/invasor experience very different from that of English Canadians. Not being as closely entangled with Shakespeare as English Canadian settler/invasor subjects, Québécois playwrights are freer to manipulate the effect produced by Shakespeare's authority in their call for national freedom.

Fischlin pursues this notion of the nation as a false construct in his claim that "[n]ation assumes assimilation into the authentic bosom of an originary identity, however spurious or illusory such an idea may be" (2002, 326). This assertion holds true in that Québécois nationalism claims an originary identity (be it derived from France, l'Île d'Orléans, or the Conquest), but I would claim that the rest of his argument does not apply to Québec when he adds:

The authentic, because it is always predicated on a belatedly assimilative effect, signifies an identity crisis by way of a dialectic that presumes and requires the inauthentic (that which is assimilated) in order to give it meaning. Shakespeare's assimilation by state (read 'authentic') culture is used as a bulwark against incursions in state culture by its 'inauthentic,' nomadic margins. (326)

In Québec, the "inauthentic" (or the bastard, in Ronfard's terms) is precisely what characterizes Shakespearean adaptation — the "inauthentic" nation which is not yet a state, and especially the inauthentic class, since the use of *joual* inscribes the adapted Shakespearean characters as working class. Inauthentic Québécois adaptations reverse Fischlin's Canadian paradigm and make that which is Québécois a marginal incursion into "authentic" Shakespearean culture.

Unlike Canada, whose history of "Shakespearean adaptation is coincident with its emergence as a nation-state" (Fischlin 2002, 321), Québec is a state-less nation whose history of Shakespearean adaptation precedes this political emergence. Shakespearean adaptation in Québec does not coincide with the ascension to full political statehood, although it does coincide with the emergence of renewed and more fervent nationalism, because nationalist playwrights may find in Shakespeare's authority validation for their cause, provided that they negotiate carefully the power relations inherent in their collaboration with him and avoid drowning out their own voices by the clamor with which Shakespearean authority resounds. Garneau's *Macbeth* typifies this search for balance between manipulating the power of Shakespearean authority and succumbing to it — as the long title of his play suggests, beginning with "*de William Shakespeare*" but ending pointedly and forcefully with "*traduit en québécois*." In this case, Fischlin's claims about the nature of adaptation hold true: "Adaptations work both sides of this coin, whether confirming a myth of authenticity and origin or interrogating such a position through alternative and revisionary definitions of authenticity" (326). Québécois adaptations confirm the authenticity of Shakespeare's authority by relying on his cultural power, but they interrogate the English colonialism that his canon of works helped promulgate.

Fischlin sums up his argument with an assertion that "adaptation questions the essentialist qualities associated with Shakespearean authority, canonicity, and cultural value. In short, adaptations serve multiple positionings with regard to national self-identity as mediated by a cultural icon like Shakespeare" (2002, 328). While it is true that Québécois adaptations question authority and canonicity (to the extent that a national group can question a literary canon which is not its own and in which it does not have the invested stakes of those who helped form it), Québécois adaptations do not serve multiple positions within Québécois national self-identity. There are no federalist adaptations of Shakespeare in Québec to construct a unified Canadian identity by anglo-Québécois, and certainly not by franco-Québécois. Instead, Québécois adaptations are all oriented in the same direction towards the creation and solidification of one national identity, of a sovereign people, which includes women and aboriginals and immigrants, but who are expected in these plays to assimilate to a mostly monolithic identity as part of one large, multi-ethnic, sovereign nation. Gender and ethno-religious difference are acknowledged and respected, but are not foregrounded in the collective body of texts because Québécois adapters are almost all men (with the exception of Maillet,²¹ de Vasconcelos, Thompson, Thomas, and Veilleux), and their approach to nationalism is inherently masculinist. Women play crucial roles in the formation of the nation, but the collective survival of the nation takes precedence over the concerns of individual women characters, of which these plays have very few, with Maillet's *Shrew* being the notable exception of a resolutely feminist character.

In respect to this monolithic nation constructed both textually and socially, Mark Fortier's astute observation about Canadian identity, which I would agree holds true in that case, does not, however, apply to Québec:

[T]here is always something un-Canadian about being Canadian, that the from-elsewhere is part of being here. Shakespeare, therefore, is one manifestation of from elsewhere at work in Canada. As such, Canadians confront Shakespeare as the cultural undead, neither dead nor living, not a person but an other forming part of living personalities, if only as part of the sublime personality, the otherness of the past, the remains of which reside here. Canadians too, in their specific ways, are the undead, although as *noir* subjects they may not always realize this. (342)

Fortier's underlying premise does not hold true in Québec, where the notion of "from-elsewhere" did not truly appear until after the 1995 referendum campaign, at which point it entered nationalist discourse as damage control after Jacques Parizeau's famous statement on "l'argent et le vote ethnique" [money and the ethnic vote] that was based on a definition of "*nous*" [us] as *pure laine*.²² After the referendum, the notion that Québec was *le pays de tous les Québécois* [the country of all Québécois] (to borrow the title of a collection by Michel Sarra-Bournet) began to enter academic discourse, but a general mistrust of sovereignists' claims of openness to the inclusion of people of multiple ethnic origins within the national project prevailed. Only very recently has the concept of "from-elsewhere" entered public discourse with great popularity, but the celebration of foreign origins was not in circulation at the time the majority of these Shakespearean adaptations were written to the same extent that it was in the rest of Canada.²³ The reason that "from-elsewhere" was not current in Québec public discourses is nationalism: Canadian nationalism (that is, federalism) is disguised by the celebration of "multiculturalism" as a replacement for the discourse of "bilingualism and biculturalism," based on the notion of "two founding nations" (which ignores, of course, all the First Nations) that was in circulation during the early reign of Trudeau.²⁴ After the 1980 referendum, it became apparent that one way to diminish Québec's claim as a founding nation, on which its claims for greater political autonomy were based, would be to multiply the number of founding national identities which compose Canada (and indeed, many do outside of Québec, although the phenomenon is hardly as widespread as official discourse would have one believe and tends to be confined to the immigration of specific ethnic groups to specific geopolitical locations). Despite attempts to divert the idea of "two founding nations" to "multiculturalism," the binary approach pervades popular thought in Québec and, until recently, has overshadowed references to "from-elsewhere."²⁵

Québec's relationship to Shakespeare as "undead," then, is different from that of Canada's because the lack of "from-elsewhere" testifies in general to a lack of alterity or otherness in Québec.²⁶ The "national question" has a totalizing effect that permeates the collective consciousness, so forms of alterity, such as ethnicity and gender, are eclipsed — without, however, being erased. Racial, gendered, and class-based otherness is not given its full place in Québec, in comparison to other Western societies in which national independence has long been settled, such as Canada and the United States, because the national question remains to be settled first. The preponderance of the national question over other social issues can be seen in the sheer number of nationalist adaptations of Shakespeare versus those that deal primarily with other topics.²⁷

Québécois Shakespeare, therefore, is not the same thing as Shakespeare in Québec. Québécois adaptations of Shakespeare highlight Québec's cultural difference in a way that mere stage

productions of Shakespeare in Québec cannot. The moment of departure from the Shakespearean source text by the adapter imposes a cultural specificity on the text that is also not to be found in performances of Shakespeare in Stratford, Ontario or England. While Canadian adaptations of Shakespeare struggle to wrest authority from an undead author, Québécois adaptations, because they run differently the risks of contamination by that authority and have a neo-colonial relationship to Canada in addition to a postcolonial relationship to Europe, appropriate it much more freely in service of the decolonization of the nation.

NOTES

1. The use of French accents on Québec and Québécois, although not always the standard procedure of translators in English usage, is a deliberate choice on my part in order to highlight the cultural specificity of Québec. Leanore Lieblein, Ric Knowles, and Daniel Fischlin all adopt the same practice.
2. The Quiet Revolution was a period of massive social reform that began in 1960 shortly after the death of Maurice Duplessis, whose reign was labeled "la grande noirceur" [the great darkness], and the arrival to power of Jean Lesage's Liberal party, whose slogan was "*Maîtres chez nous*" [Masters in our own homes].
3. I define adaptations as additions (although not reductions for the purpose of playing time), transpositions, or translations that alter significantly the content or meaning of the source text, as well as blatant re-writings. In drawing an admittedly fine line between certain translations and adaptations, I rely in part on Fischlin's and Fortier's theoretical discussion of adaptation in their introduction to *Adaptations of Shakespeare* (2000). Contrary to Linda Hutcheon (2006), I also limit the use of "adaptation" to dramatic playtexts whose trajectory from page to stage mirrors that of their Shakespearean counterparts because cross-generic adaptations, such as plays to novels, and cross-media adaptations, such as plays to films, necessarily involve a double process of adaptation to account for differences between genres and media. Hutcheon's broad use of "adaptation" across genres and media makes it an umbrella term that loses its theoretical usefulness.
4. Québec's colonial experience is not, of course, comparable to India's. After the British conquest of New France in 1759, the French were allowed to continue to speak their language and Shakespeare was never used pedagogically as a tool of cultural imperialism, as in India. Unlike the rest of North America even, Shakespeare was not a staple of the francophone literary curriculum. English, however, did become the language of commerce, and francophones were largely denied access on the basis of language to the higher levels of business and social power until the adoption by the Parti Québécois government in 1977 of the *Loi 101*, which made French the official language of work and business in Québec and gradually enabled francophones to achieve social and economic power comparable to that of their anglophone counterparts, who had heretofore been the ruling class.
5. Daniel Paquette, writer of *Mon royaume pour un cheval*, provided this reason for adapting Shakespeare in a telephone interview with the author on 17 January, 2007.

6. Is Canada postcolonial? Is Québec? The postcoloniality of settler colonies has long been contested and continues to be debated by critics today. In the collection *Is Canada Postcolonial?* (2003), edited by Laura Moss, several critics, notably Moss, George Elliot Clarke, Neil Besner, Diana Brydon, Terry Goldie, and Stephen Slemon, theorize all sides of the question without arriving at a consensus; or, as Moss sums it up, they arrive at a "typical Canadian response": "an unequivocal 'yes. . . and no. . . and maybe'" or "'it depends'" (2003, 7). In Québec, and in French literary studies in general, the debate has lagged significantly behind for reasons explored seriously for the first time in a special issue of the journal *Québec Studies* in 2003, in which the response is much more categorical. Critics such as Robert Schwartzwald, Marvin Richards, Vincent Desroches, Amaryll Chanady, and Obed Nkunjimana, among others, all argue convincingly that Québec is postcolonial and that Québécois literary studies would be greatly enhanced by the application of postcolonial theory to Québécois texts. More specifically in terms of Québécois adaptations of Shakespeare, all the critical work on the subject by Denis Salter is heavily inflected by postcolonial theory.
7. *Joual* is Québécois working-class slang. The term *joual* is believed to come from the pronunciation of the word *cheval* [horse] in this dialect. While the term has been mistakenly attributed to the journalist André Laurendeau, its usage dates back much earlier, to at least the 1930s. Although previously stigmatized because it was spoken by the working class, *joual* began to be valorized after the Quiet Revolution, most notably by Michel Tremblay's play *Les Belles Soeurs* (1972; first performed in 1968), the first play to be written in *joual*, as well as in popular music, such as Robert Charlebois' songs, and even by some nationalists who saw it as a pride-worthy part of Québec's cultural heritage. In fact, some words considered *joual*, such as *moé* [*moi*; me] and *toé* [*toi*; you], are actually the pronunciations used by royalty prior to the French Revolution. Since Québec was cut off geographically from the rest of France, the Ancien Régime pronunciation remained in use in Québec despite evolving into its current form in France.
8. The application of the term "neo-colonial" to Québec would be contested by most Canadian federalists, but its use is relatively common in Québec. Most sovereignists argue that the Canadian government does indeed control Québec through indirect economic and political means, most notably through *le déséquilibre fiscal* [fiscal inequality], which restricts the Québec government's ability to enact policies in areas over which it has jurisdiction, such as health care and education. Some anti-democratic techniques include spying on Québec politicians and ordinary citizens, stealing Parti Québécois membership lists, and interference in the 1995 referendum through illegal spending and the facilitation of illegal voting. See *Enquête sur les services secrets*, *Le livre noir sur le Canada anglais* (3 vols.), and *Les Secrets d'Option Canada*, by former *Radio-Canada* investigative journalist Normand Lester, for further details on these and other events. Ostensibly, such approaches to Québec date to Lord Durham's *Report on the Affairs of British North America*, published in London in February 1839, which claims that the French of Lower Canada, were "a people with no history, and no literature" who ought to be assimilated by means of English immigration as well as a union of Upper and Lower Canada, which would make the French a minority and appropriate Lower Canada's finances to pay Upper Canada's debt.
9. References to the works of Shakespeare come from the *Riverside Shakespeare* unless otherwise noted.
10. Since my definition of "adaptation" privileges text over performance, the year listed in parenthesis following each title is either 1) the date of publication, or 2) if the text has not been published, the date of composition on the author's manuscript, or 3) failing that, the date of the first production.

11. A notable exclusion from this list is the work of Robert Lepage, perhaps the most famous director in Québec and certainly the most successful on the international stage. As a director, however, he does not adapt Shakespeare's text so much as he stages the source text innovatively in performance. His two most original Shakespeare performances — *Romeo & Juliette* (1989), a bilingual production in collaboration with Gordon McCall, and *Elseneur* (1996), a one-man show — do not adapt the Shakespearean source text. *Romeo & Juliette* is a combination of the Signet edition in English and a literal translation in French by Governor General award-winning playwright Jean-Marc Dalpé. *Elseneur* is a literal translation of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* that is innovative in so much as Lepage performed all the roles himself with the aid of elaborate technology. Other exclusions are Oleg Kisseliov's *Le Songe d'une nuit d'été* (1998), which is also a literal translation derived from François-Victor Hugo, as well as Tibor Egervari's *Le marchand de Venise de Shakespeare à Auschwitz* (1993) and Michel Philip's *L'ère des tempêtes ou Chacun pour soi!* (1996), neither of which are "Québécois" as I define it here (based on the author's birth, residence during the play's composition, or the site of the play's first production), although Egervari's play, first performed in Ottawa, could be considered "French Canadian." The Canadian Adaptations of Shakespeare Project (CASP) database search results (<http://www.googlesyndicatedsearch.com/u/caspsearch?q=franco&sa=Search>) list 175 entries as "French Canadian" adaptations, but this result includes all thirty-eight monologues from the 38 event as separate entries and does not always make a distinction between translation and adaptation, while including some stage productions as adaptations. In the latter two cases, further work is required to understand the relationship between adaptation and translation, and between adaptation and production.
12. "Passer à l'action," literally "to proceed to action," could be translated as "to take action," but it is a notably Québécois expression which loses in translation its underlying emotional force and its double insistence on action with the verb "passer," "to proceed," which indicates a forward progression that is absent from the English expression "to take."
13. In "Entre deux joints" ["Between two joints"] (1973), co-written with RIN leader Pierre Bourgault, Robert Charlebois sings, "Ta sœur est aux États, ton frère est au Mexique / Y font d'argent là-bas pendant qu'tu chômes icitte / T'es né pour un petit pain, c'est ce que ton père t'a dit / Chez les Américains, c'pas ça qu't'aurais appris." [Your sister's in the States, your brother's in Mexico / They make money there while you're unemployed here / You were born for a [little] roll [of bread, as opposed to a loaf], that's what your father said / With the Americans that's not what you'd have learned.] The rejection of the *né-pour-un-petit-pain* attitude thus embodies the generational divide between youth of the Quiet Revolution and their parents (who grew up accepting that they should settle for less (a roll being less than a loaf of bread), as well as the new generation's growing internationalism. The song's chorus also states poignantly the need to *passer à l'action*: "Ent' deux joints, tu pourrais faire qu'qu'chose / Ent' deux joints, tu pourrais t'grouiller l'cul" [Between two joints, you could do something / Between two joints, you could move your ass].
14. From Latin, meaning "beyond the mountains," that is, the Alps, Ultramontanism, equally known as *Ultramontanisme* in French, was the point of view of Roman Catholics who supported the pope as supreme head of the church, as opposed to Gallicanism and other tendencies that opposed papal jurisdiction. Ultramontanism began in Québec in 1840 following the failure of the 1837-1838 Patriot Rebellions, and it peaked between 1867 and 1896. Ultramontane priests were strong advocates of the *né-pour-un-petit-pain* attitude. For an in-depth analysis, see Denis Monière's *Le Développement des idéologies au Québec des origines à nos jours*, especially chapters four and five.

15. Lalonde's manifesto is closely modeled after Joachim du Bellay's 1549 *Deffence et illustration de la langue françoise*. Du Bellay pleads for the aesthetic beauty of vernacular French and the use of French, rather than Greek or Latin, in the composition of poetry. Lalonde picks up key elements of du Bellay's text and expands the argument, first by situating the notion of language as a living tree in the specific historical context of Québec's linguistic isolation from France in the aftermath of the Conquest, and then how Québécois is not only as rich as *français de France* but also how it is less corrupted by anglicisms. She then identifies the two most common attitudes towards the Québécois language: one which ensconces the virtues of *français de France* while maligning *joual* and another, vice-versa, that extols *joual* to the detriment of all grammar.
16. This is, of course, a reductive reading of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and *The Tempest*. Like most adaptations, however, summary readings of the source text are precisely the interpretation against which the adaptation works, and this broad reading of the plot does, in fact, describe well the adaptation's use of the text.
17. One example of this irreverent play is Ronfard's *Lear*, in which two Shakespeare figures, huddled together under "*un parapluie typiquement 'british,' 'se lancent, avec verve et conscience historique [. . .] dans la grande narration du rêve de Clarence (authentiquement tirée de RICHARD III du grand William)*" while the Fool figure drowns them, like Clarence, with a rain of "*pipi de chat*" [*a typically British umbrella; jump into, with eloquence and historical attention, [. . .] the long narration of Clarence's dream (authentically excerpted from the great William's RICHARD III); cat pee*] (46-48, 50). This carnivalesque association of Shakespeare with the grotesque lower body also takes place when the Lear figure "*contemple une boule de merde qu'il tient dans sa main, dans une posture qui rappelle Michel-Ange, Rodin, l'Hamlet traditionnel*" [*contemplates a ball of shit that he holds in his hand in a posture that invokes Michelangelo, Rodin, the traditional Hamlet*] (21; italics in original stage directions).
18. For an in-depth discussion of Ronfard's two plays, see my article, "Daughters of the Carnivalized Nation in Jean-Pierre Ronfard's Shakespearean Adaptations *Lear* and *Vie et mort du Roi Boiteux*," *Theatre Research in Canada / Recherches théâtrales au Canada* 27.1 (Spring 2006): 10-39.
19. The 1970 October Crisis began when the Front de Libération du Québec (FLQ) kidnapped British Trade Commissioner James Cross followed by Pierre Laporte, Québec's Minister of Manpower and Labour. Laporte was strangled to death by his kidnappers (Francis Simard, Bernard Lortie, Jacques Rose, and Paul Rose, collectively known as the Chénier cell of the FLQ) after he cut himself on broken glass while trying to escape and began bleeding profusely. Refusing to negotiate with the FLQ, Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau invoked the War Measures Act, which suspended civil liberties and resulted in the arrest of almost 500 people without warrant. See Comeau, Cooper, and Vallières (eds.) for further details.
20. "The long walk towards [the achievement of] the country."

21. Antonine Maillet might, at first, appear somewhat out of place in the category of Québécois authors. Fischlin consistently situates *William S* in an "Acadian cultural context" because of Maillet's famous origins in Acadie (Fischlin 2002, 333). Yet this claim overlooks the fact that the play was written and first performed in Montréal, and, in fact, the play is not nearly as "Acadian" as her other plays, since it is written in so-called "standard" French rather than the Acadian language employed in many of her other texts, such as her novel *Pélagie-la-Charette*. In addition, despite her ethnic origins, Maillet is not only a descendent of deported Acadians, but an example of the necessity for most Acadians and French-Canadian artists to "immigrate" to Québec. Québec remains the only francophone region of Canada to receive adequate funding for literature and the arts, in large part because it has the demographic base to be self-sustaining and has thus developed many funding agencies in parallel to the "Canadian" organisms, which are supposed to promote bilingualism and multiculturalism, but which inevitably fall far short of the demand necessary to sustain and promote French culture outside of Québec. It is precisely because of this cultural and economic reality that I have included Maillet's work among "Québécois" adaptations. She represents an important part of the Québécois population: French-Canadian immigrants from other provinces. (The music industry best illustrates this cultural and economic reality; we need only think of Edith Butler from Acadie, Zachary Richard from Louisiana, and, more recently, Wilfred Le Bouthillier, the winner of Star Académie, also from Acadie.) Finally, the argument that Québec is the only francophone region of Canada with adequate cultural and economic resources for francophones outside of Québec to follow a career in the arts also extends to academia. Notably, Maillet completed her doctoral dissertation on *Rabelais et les traditions populaires en Acadie* at Université Laval in Québec City in 1970 and was a professor at the Université de Montréal in 1975-1976.
22. *Pure laine* is generally translated in English as "dyed in the wool." The term refers to Québécois who are born and raised in Québec, speak with a Québécois accent, and show no traces of any particular immigrant origin.
23. For example, on the cultural front, the most popular male artist at the 2004 Gala de l'ADISQ was Rwandan-born Corneille, who is well-known for his song about immigration, "Parce qu'on vient de loin" ["Because we come from afar"]. On the political front, the Bloc Québécois's election in January 2006 of 4 MP's from cultural communities (of 51 elected) testifies to a concerted effort of the sovereignist movement to build bridges with voters "from-elsewhere."
24. On an anecdotal side note, and to acknowledge fully the reinscription in this paper of the binary of English Canada and Québec as two founding nations, I couldn't help but be struck by the irony that I completed this paper on the eve of what I used to call, when I lived in English Canada, Victoria Day, but which has been officially decreed by the Québec government "La journée nationale des Patriotes" in recognition and celebration of the rebels who took up arms against the rule of Queen Victoria. I don't think, therefore, that an analysis of Canadian and Québécois adaptations within this binary is entirely unjustified today, 170 years after the Patriot rebellions of 1837-1838.

25. Joanne Tompkins proposes one solution to the problem of "multiculturalism" — a conceptual shift to "polynationalism". Tompkins' neologism "polynationalism" would "highlight the intersection of the competing forces of nationality, nationalism, ethnicity, identity, and subjectivity more accurately addressing the interdependent relationship of theories such as post-colonialism and feminism with multiculturalism. This would also rectify the frequent placement of multiculturalism in isolation or in opposition to a mainstream national paradigm. Poly-nationalism would not pretend to unite disparate groups that have hitherto resisted nationalist stereotypes; instead, it would reconsider relationships in contested space" (131, n. 7). In the context of Canada and Québec, polynationalism would require a return by English Canada to the concept of "two founding nations," which is still prevalent in Québec and which was the underlying principle of the Confederation at the time of its inception.
26. This lack of alterity, or conflation of various forms of otherness under one banner, can be seen in the terms used to describe one's linguistic origin. In Québec, one is either a *francophone*, an *anglophone*, or an *allophone*. *Allophone* literally means "other speaker" and is the category into which all immigrants are lumped together. Hyphenated identifications (such as Irish-American, for instance) are not used in Québec.
27. Gender does not truly become a central concern of Québécois adaptations until the 1990s, particularly in Pierre Yves Lemieux's *À propos de Roméo et Juliette* (1989), which features an openly gay Mercutio in love with Roméo, and Normand Chaurrette's *Les Reines* (1991), which gives voice to the queens of Shakespeare's first tetralogy. None of these adaptations deals primarily with race, and class issues are always subsumed into nationalist issues since class divides tended to fall along linguistic lines until the effects of *Loi 101* began to change the workplace; even today the percentage of anglophones in Québec who hold a postsecondary degree (and presumably a higher paying job upon graduation) is noticeably higher than that of francophones.

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- Centre Des Auteurs Dramatiques: Quebec Plays in Translation. http://www.cead.qc.ca/eng/about_mission.html (http://www.cead.qc.ca/eng/about_mission.html).

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"Hamlet-Quebec discovers federalist duplicity cloaked in sovereignist colours." Photo courtesy of Robert Gurik.

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Rohinton Mistry's Family Shakespeare

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ABSTRACT | NOT WISELY BUT TOO WELL | THE DIVISION OF THE KINGDOM | NOTES | REFERENCES

ABSTRACT

This article examines the significance of Shakespeare in the work of Rohinton Mistry, especially *Such A Long Journey* (1991). Born in Bombay and emigrating to Canada in 1975, Mistry is a Canadian novelist who writes primarily about the India of his youth. His use of Shakespeare signals Canada's shared heritage with India as former British colonies, allowing Mistry to participate doubly in the postcolonial tradition of creative engagement with Shakespeare. It demonstrates, as well, that Canadian appropriations of Shakespeare extend beyond French, English, and native Canada, calling attention to Shakespeare's particular meaning and relevance within the large population of Indo-Canadians. Through Shakespeare, Mistry addresses the problems faced by contemporary urban Indians and Canadians alike: the trials and tribulations of immigration, the limitations and vulnerabilities of classic liberal multiculturalism and its cosmopolitan ideals, and the challenges of membership in a minority community.

Shakespeare is like Bombay. — Rohinton Mistry, *Family Matters*

Mr. Kapur loves his Shakespeare. In Rohinton Mistry's most recent novel, *Family Matters* (2002), Shiv Sena extremists attack and destroy Mr. Kapur's sporting-goods shop after he fails to replace the word "Bombay" on its sign with "Mumbai." Mr. Kapur laments, "Nothing is left now except to talk of graves, of worms, and epitaphs. Let us sit upon these chairs and tell sad stories of the death of cities" (Mistry 2002, 295). Richard II's expression of resignation at the moment when he realizes that he is to be deposed speaks to Mr. Kapur's own feeling of powerlessness against the rise of the Hindu right:

Let's talk of graves, of worms, of epitaphs,
 . . . Our lands, our lives and all are Bolingbroke's,
 And nothing can we call our own but death;
 And that small model of the barren earth
 Which serves as paste and cover to our bones.
 For God's sake, let us sit upon the ground
 And tell sad stories of the death of kings. (3.2.143, 151-56)¹

Sitting on the ground and telling old tales is one of Shakespeare's favorite ways to signify defeat. In *Richard II*, it is a dramatic, if undignified, gesture that reflects the king's love of fiction and fantasy. In *King Lear*, it is Lear's hopelessly optimistic impulse when he finds himself imprisoned with Cordelia: ". . . so we'll live / And pray, and sing, and tell old tales, and laugh / At gilded butterflies" (*King Lear*, 5.3.11-13). In each case, it is the gesture of someone about to die: Mr. Kapur will soon be murdered by the Shiv Sena.

Richard II resonates with Mr. Kapur's unrealistic optimism in the face of doom, as the shopkeeper seeks to preserve his vision of the possibilities of multicultural harmony in Bombay. When his employee Yezad, an observant Zoroastrian, suggests that he turn to "Indian sources" instead of Shakespeare, Mr. Kapur defends Shakespeare as the best way to express his hope that Bombay will remain a place of tolerance and inclusion: "Shakespeare is like Bombay. In them both, you can find whatever you need — they contain the universe" (Mistry 2002, 295). Comparing Shakespeare to Bombay (and not the other way around), Mr. Kapur associates Shakespeare with his beloved city that offers a home for everyone, a home that he is losing to nationalism and to the ideologies of racial and cultural purity that would have India remain a home only for some.

From his first collection of short stories, *Swimming Lessons and Other Stories from Firozsha Baag* (1987), to his most recent novel, *Family Matters* (2002), Mistry quotes Shakespeare, alludes to Shakespeare, and reworks Shakespeare. To a certain extent, Mistry's work is an extension of Shakespeare's longstanding association with British imperialism: To mention Shakespeare in an Indian context is, inevitably, to invoke the history of an English presence in India and to recall Macaulay's infamous "class of persons Indian in blood and color, but English in tastes, in opinion, in morals and intellect" (Macaulay 1952, 729). Yet Shakespeare appears in Mistry's work less as an icon of British imperialism, or as a source for colonial reminiscences, than as a shared frame of reference and inspiration for Mistry as an author and for his characters. Like Mr. Kapur, Mistry alters and adapts Shakespeare, creating new versions of Shakespeare's plays and famous passages that address his own concerns: namely, the Parsi community of late twentieth-century Bombay, or, as he puts it in an interview, "the lives of those children in the old world" (Hancock 1989, 143).

A novelist whose greatest inspiration lies in the domestic and the diurnal, Mistry uses Shakespeare to negotiate questions of home and of belonging, not only as a family member, but also as a member of a larger community. Through stories of life at home, he charts the increasing polarization of Indian politics and the demise of a progressive vision of religious and cultural coexistence: a vision that, as his novels show, is increasingly under threat. However, as a touchstone for the ideals as well as challenges of living in a multicultural community, Mistry participates in a

postcolonial tradition of creative engagement with Shakespeare that speaks not only to the India of his birth, but also to the Canada in which he makes his home. Born in Bombay in 1955 and emigrating to Canada in 1975, Mistry writes about India from the vantage point of Brampton, Ontario, a suburban community just outside of Toronto. Thus, while Mistry's treatment of Shakespeare is determined by India's specific history with the Bard, his novels also contribute to the distinguished tradition of Canadian Shakespeares.²

Germaine Greer made a notorious comment on British television about Mistry's magisterial *A Fine Balance* (1996): "I hate this book. It's a Canadian book about India. What could be worse? What could be more terrible?" Although mean-spirited, Greer's comment does acknowledge Mistry's status between cultures and countries. Indeed, Mistry may be considered doubly postcolonial, as he writes not from the former imperial center, like V. S. Naipaul or the early Salman Rushdie, but instead from another former colony. A secular and multi-ethnic Parliamentary democracy governs Canada, as it does India. One of the last members of the British Commonwealth to sever its formal ties with Britain, Canada has its own history of racialized oppression.³ The cultural and pedagogical legacy of what was once known as the British Commonwealth, Shakespeare highlights the "familial" relationship between India and Canada (which now has a South Asian population of roughly one million, half of whom live in the greater Toronto area).

As Mistry charts the rise of communal tensions and violence in Bombay — a city that envisions itself, like Toronto, as a haven of tolerance and inclusion — he uses Shakespeare to engage in an ongoing dialogue with his current Canadian home about the problems faced by these "world class" cities: the trials and tribulations of immigration, the limitations and vulnerabilities of classic liberal multiculturalism and its cosmopolitan ideals, and the challenges of membership in a minority community.

NOT WISELY BUT TOO WELL

India has long considered Shakespeare to be a member of the family. In his famous homage to Shakespeare, Rabindranath Tagore (who was able to recite whole scenes of Shakespeare from memory) insists that Shakespeare can "flood with light the mind of the whole world" (Tagore 1991, line 12).⁴ Tagore's evaluation of Shakespearean universality may sound old-fashioned, but his words suggest how, to use Ania Loomba's formulation, the "easy polarity between 'us' and 'them'" (Loomba 1997, 138) and the binaries of colonial education and postcolonial subversion are transformed into a register of inspiration and appropriation. When Tagore muses, "Shakespeare's plays have always been our ideal of drama. Their complexity, due to multiple branches of plot, . . . [has] attracted our mind from the very beginning" (quoted in Singh 1996, 138), he is judging Shakespeare not on how much India has to learn from him, but on what Shakespeare has to offer India. As in Canada, where Shakespeare has provided an artistic impetus as much as a model, Indian Shakespeares can be defined primarily by their heterogeneity. While we cannot discount Shakespeare's longstanding association with the history of British imperialism, it is important to acknowledge that this does not produce a static relationship between Shakespeare and India or Canada. Instead, this imperial

history produces a myriad of responses and transformations that elude easy classification as either emulation or subversion.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Parsi theater successfully adapted Shakespeare for popular consumption (see Gupt 2005, Hansen 2001, Luhrmann 1996, Loomba 1997, and Singh 1989 and 1996, pages 120-52).⁵ Beginning with the Oriental Theatrical Company, founded in Bombay in 1868, and then in theaters founded in Lahore, Delhi, and Calcutta, the Parsi theater constituted one of the primary means of access to Shakespeare in colonial India. It reached its height in the 1920s and 1930s and eventually played a major role in the development of Indian cinema. Although it drew upon the longstanding British tradition of amateur theatricals, as well as on the influence of touring Western theater companies such as the one dramatized in Merchant and Ivory's 1965 *Shakespeare Wallah*, the Parsi theater was anything but faithful to the Bard or to British culture. Following a Sanskrit rule against tragic conclusions, its adaptations of Shakespeare loosely followed the lines of the plays, often rewriting tragedies with a happy ending and interweaving indigenous songs and poetry into the outline of Shakespeare's plots. Treating Shakespeare not with kid gloves, but as just one of numerous available options and traditions, the Parsi theater brought together Hindus, Muslims, Jews, and Christians from all social classes, allowing dramatic art to emerge out of cultural mixture. Cutting across linguistic, religious, and class lines, this de-centered and pluralistic art form incorporated elements of the many participating cultures.

The Parsi theater continually revised, reinvented, and reinterpreted Shakespeare. As Kathryn Hansen explains, "The Parsi theater was not devised by the colonial rulers as a tool of 'divide and rule,' nor as a means of robbing the Subcontinent of its indigenous dramatic traditions. It was a hybrid formation that consolidated local expressive arts within a pan-Indian style of representation" (Hansen 2001, 60-61). Mary Louise Pratt uses the ethnographic idea of "transculturation" to describe the methods and means by which marginal or subordinate groups "select and invent from materials transmitted to them by a dominant or metropolitan culture" (Pratt 1992, 6); however, the Parsi theater transformed Shakespeare with an ease and sheer lack of reverence that transcends the binary of dominant and subordinate. As Loomba puts it: "Whereas [currently fashionable accounts of hybridity in post-colonial theory] emphasize the psychic dislocations between black skins and white masks, and the mimicry of colonial culture by colonized subjects, the performances we are considering here were not conducted with attitudes of reverence towards Shakespeare or Western theater, nor did they force the performers to abandon their own forms of acting" (1997, 119).

Yet for Mistry, who grew up in 1950s and 1960s Bombay, the Parsi theater was past its heyday and had been replaced by Bollywood cinema. Mistry's treatment of Shakespeare is thus bound up with what T. M. Luhrmann calls a "quintessentially Parsi" nostalgia: "the sense of the glories of the community's recent and distant past, the embarrassment about the present" (1996, 60), as the elite Parsi community, which enjoyed a favored position with the British, faced an identity crisis and decline in the years following partition. A touchstone, paradoxically, for both the Parsi theater's populist form of cultural hybridity and also nostalgia for the lost

status of the Parsi community, Shakespeare symbolizes the past glories and current difficulties facing the Bombay Parsi. The process of invoking at once the past and the present applies to Shakespeare in Canada as well, where Shakespeare's prior association with anglophone ascendancy is countered by the plentiful engagements with Shakespeare from multiple subject positions: francophone, First Nations, gay and lesbian, and allophone.

In Mistry's first short story collection, *Swimming Lessons and Other Stories from Firozsha Baag* (1987), Shakespeare functions as a talisman for the transcendence of linguistic, religious, and cultural difference. In "The Collectors," Dr. Mody hatches plans for his son to "acquire the best from the cultures of East and West, thrill to the words of Tagore and Shakespeare" (Mistry 1987, 82). His primary expression of cultural ecumenicalism, however, is stamp collecting: "I have many contacts in foreign countries. Because of my job, I meet the experts from abroad who are invited by the Indian Government. When I tell them about my hobby, they send me stamps from their countries" (88). Mocked by his son, the overgrown Pesi, Mody cultivates a friendship with the epicoene Jehangir, who eventually replaces Pesi in his heart. Through a mutual appreciation for philately, Mody's "affection for the boy developed and started to linger around the region hitherto occupied by grief bearing Pesi's name" (84). Years later, when Jehangir inherits Mody's collection, he finds it infested with ants and cockroaches, the priceless stamps transformed into "worthless paper scraps" (103). Mody's discovery of a surrogate son to replace the one he rejected constitutes only a temporary antidote for a long-term problem. When Mody dies, with his son in reform school and his marriage a shambles, his disintegrating stamp collection is, like his love for Shakespeare, a sign of his confused priorities, having rejected his family to form flimsy bonds with others.

While the idea of Shakespeare signals the limitations of cosmopolitanism in "The Collectors," in "Squatter" Shakespeare's *Othello* provides the terms for the confusion that surrounds the dream of immigration. This story portrays the difficulties of leaving the old world to seek one's fortunes in the new: "Squatter" denotes Sarosh's inability to accommodate himself to Western toilets. For Sarosh (who adopts the name Sid when he moves to Toronto), the trials of immigration are identified with the elemental process of excretion and with the infantilizing experience of toilet-training: "We find him depressed and miserable, perched on top of the toilet, crouching on his haunches, feet planted firmly for balance upon the white plastic oval of the toilet seat" (Mistry 1987, 153). After ten years of "squatting" in Canada — the idea of the "squatter" also suggests his feeling of homelessness — Sarosh/Sid decides to return to Bombay for good, convinced that he is fundamentally unsuited for life in Canada, "surrounded by vacuum cleaners and dishwashers and big shiny motor-cars" (155). And it is in a state of limbo, in an airplane taxiing down a Toronto runway, that Sarosh is able finally to do the deed. Having let go of the fantasy of complete assimilation, Sarosh accommodates himself, once and for all, to the Western toilet.⁶

Whereas cross-cultural contact is, for Shakespeare's *Othello*, experienced through the lens of sexual jealousy, what Sarosh loves "not wisely but too well" is the fantasy of Canada as a hospitable home. He adapts this famous speech from *Othello* to express his experience of failed assimilation during a brief visit to Bombay, in which

he discovers that India has, itself, become a foreign land. This is Shakespeare's version:

When you shall these unlucky deeds relate,
 Speak of me as I am; nothing extenuate,
 Nor set down aught in malice. Then must you speak
 Of one that loved not wisely, but too well;
 Of one not easily jealous but, being wrought,
 Perplexed in the extreme; of one whose hand,
 Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away
 Richer than all his tribe. (*Othello*, 5.2.337-44)

Caught between cultures, Sarosh identifies himself with Othello, who once defended a Christian who was beaten by a Turk, only to be, himself, "beaten" by the Venetians. Sarosh discards the "pearl" of India — family, friends, tradition — by emigrating to Canada in an effort to become, among other things, "richer than all his tribe," just as he subsequently throws away the "pearl" of opportunity represented by the West.⁷ Walking along Marine Drive in Bombay, Sarosh uses Othello's famous lines to express the pain of being a stranger, caught between two cultures and at home in neither:

When you shall these unlucky deeds relate, speak of me as I am: nothing extenuate, nor set down aught in malice: tell them that in Toronto once there lived a Parsi boy as best he could. Set you down this; and say, besides, that for some it was good and for some it was bad, but for me life in the land of milk and honey was just a pain in the posterior. (168)

The fantasy land of milk and honey (described in *Family Matters* as "not just the land of milk and honey, also the land of deodorant and toiletry" [Mistry 2002, 131]), has offered, not miraculous and succulent sustenance, but constipation. Prized above pearls, what Sarosh really loses is the genuine feeling of belonging to a community: a feeling that he neither achieves in Toronto nor preserves in Bombay. Yet immigration has become a "pain in the posterior" because of the pressure Sarosh places upon himself to assimilate totally into Canadian society, to "become completely Canadian" (155). This is Sarosh's error: He mistakes a particular detail concerning the performance of private functions as the determining feature of membership in Canadian society. In other words, as soon as he stops worrying about his own squatting, Sarosh is no longer just a squatter in Canada.

For Mistry, the trials of immigration are Janus-faced — as he puts it, "looking forward and yearning backward" (Mistry 1987, 258). His short stories reflect upon the challenges of immigration as well as the meditations upon home that inevitably occur while away from home. As Mistry ironizes the ideals of belonging, references to Shakespeare are tinged with a bitterness produced by the contrast between high hopes and dismal realities, and the pain occasioned by sacrificing home and family to individual aspiration. *Othello*, a tragedy of inter-racial love and cross-cultural conflict, serves as an apt point of reference for the distinctions Mistry draws, not only between the old world of India and the new world of Canada, but also between the old and new India. In *Such a Long Journey* (1991), a line from *Othello* plays a major role in Gustad Noble's involvement in a RAW (Research and Analysis Wing) money-laundering operation, based upon a scandal that rocked Indira

Gandhi's government in the 1970s.⁸ In a world of cynical corruption, Shakespeare looks back to the privileged life enjoyed by Gustad Noble's ancestors and lost after Independence: a simple, orderly, "old world" to which Gustad remains attached. At the same time, Iago's line, "put money in thy purse" (*Othello*, 1.3.330), resonates with the big-city ethos of selfishness and greed.

Following instructions sent to him in a letter by Jimmy Bilimoria, a family friend and retired army major, Gustad goes to a bazaar to pick up a mysterious bundle of rupees. He is instructed to meet his connection at a pavement bookstall which prominently displays *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*: "And just to be absolutely certain if it is the right one," advises Bilimoria, "open the book to *Othello*, end of act I, scene iii, where Iago gives advice to Roderigo. The line: 'Put money in thy purse' will be underlined in red" (Mistry 1991, 91). In *Othello*, when Iago advises Roderigo to "put money in thy purse," he means that Roderigo should take the initiative in pursuit of his desires: bide his time, disguise his intentions, and, specifically, sell off his property to fund his (and Iago's) trip to Cyprus. In *Such A Long Journey*, Iago's words have a more literal referent, as the volume of Shakespeare's works actually contains money. They suggest the heartless individualism demanded by the social and political chaos of 1971 Bombay, in which Gustad finds his old values to be of no use. No longer strolling through the book-lined corridors of his childhood memories, Gustad finds himself scurrying among the bookstalls of a filthy bazaar.

Like Shakespeare's Roderigo, the aptly-named Gustad (or "buddy") is eager to follow the instructions of his friend, although, unlike Roderigo, he manages to escape with his life. Bilimoria, however, is no Iago. Named for the famous Bollywood actor, D. Billimoria, Bilimoria is just another Roderigo, credulously following orders from the RAW that will eventually kill him. A Shakespearean proverb applicable to the ethos of 1970s India, Bilimoria's "Put money in thy purse" also recalls the names of villains from Christopher Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*. The name Bilimoria sounds like a combination of the Marlovian characters Pilia-Borza, Bellamira, and Ithamore. Moreover, Pilia-Borza has much in common with the Italian word for "cutpurse," *tagliaborza*. With the courtesan Bellamira (whose name means, essentially, "easy on the eyes"), Pilia-Borza extorts money from Barabas by means of letters relayed to him with the help of their servant, Ithamore. Barabas manages to poison the conspirators, but not before they have passed along information about Barabas's exploits to the governor of Malta. Gustad, similarly, receives his instructions in letters from Bilimoria, and he is expected to deposit the money in a bank account in the name of Mira Obili (an anagram for Bilimoria, but also an invocation of Marlowe's Bellamira), emphasizing the extent to which Gustad's involvement in his friend's scheme constitutes a form of procurement, even prostitution. "Obili" puns on the Latin *oblino*, to defile, as well as *oblatus*, something left behind or offered up, while "Mira" contains the obvious exhortation to see: see what is being, or has been, sacrificed or left behind.

Set in Venice and Cyprus — sites, like Bombay and Toronto, of great cultural and religious mixture — *Othello* fastens not only on the poignant sense of loss and disorientation experienced by the displaced yet heroic Othello, but also on the callous rootlessness of the Venetian expatriates. Paralleling *Othello*'s Cyprus with the

Malta of *The Jew of Malta* (another Mediterranean place with an unusual amount of ethnic mixture), *Such A Long Journey* draws on early modern sites of heterogeneity that resonate with the diversity of 1970s Bombay. As in "Squatter," when Sarosh uses a speech from *Othello* to express the impossibility of erasing cultural difference, when Gustad and Bilimoria use Iago and Roderigo as a point of reference ("Forget Iago's advice" writes Bilimoria, "Ten *lakh* won't fit in your purse" [Mistry 1991, 120]), their self-conscious participation in a Shakespearean paradigm manifests neither irony nor reverence, but comfortable familiarity. Mistry's characters have a relationship with Shakespeare that transcends the limits of allusion or appropriation. Instead, Mistry depicts, and reflects upon, the workings of a mentality that has assimilated Shakespeare totally and cannot but regard the world through Shakespearean paradigms. "Left behind" by the British, Shakespeare and Marlowe are used by Mistry as a common ground — used, underlined, read, shared.

THE DIVISION OF THE KINGDOM

Like his stories about the immigrant experience, Mistry's accounts of the political problems of late twentieth-century Bombay speak to the challenges of citizenship in Canada as well as India. They draw particular attention to the difficulties faced by the multi-ethnic and democratic traditions to which Canada and India continue to aspire. As a result, Mistry's Shakespeare has little to do with *The Tempest*, a play with a long and distinguished history of postcolonial adaptation. Instead, his Shakespearean frame of reference is tragic, sharing in the genre's interest in the political sphere: *Richard II*, a play that is tragic as much as historical; *Othello*, which concerns the victimization of an outsider; and *King Lear*, a play that sets family troubles off against a larger, national backdrop. *Such A Long Journey* parallels Lear's loss of power with the experiences of Gustad Noble and his family. As Mistry explores the violent disputes, rivalries, and betrayals that occur within a family framework, *King Lear*'s dramatization of the psychological as well as political results of "the division of the kingdom" (1.1.3) provides him with a pattern for addressing the social, political, and cultural questions of belonging that the Bombay Parsi community, and India as a whole, faced in the decades following partition. Yet as it moves, with guarded optimism, toward a positive resolution to these conflicts, *Such A Long Journey* participates in the Parsi theater's tradition of transforming Shakespearean tragedy by means of a happy ending.

Along with quotations from Rabindranath Tagore and Firdausi's *Shah-Nama*, an excerpt from T. S. Eliot's "Journey of the Magi" (a Bengali version of which was produced by Tagore in 1930) stands as an epigraph to *Such A Long Journey* and as the inspiration for its title: "A cold coming we had of it / Just the worst time of the year / For a journey, and such a long journey" ("The Journey of the Magi," in Eliot 1963, lines 1-3). According to tradition, the Magi who attended the birth of Christ were Zoroastrians: ancestors of the Bombay Parsi community who arrived in India in the tenth century, retreating from Muslim expansion. Like Gustad, Eliot's Magi miss the easy living they have left behind, "the summer palaces on slopes, the terraces, / And the silken girls bringing sherbet" (lines 9-10), yet they are, nonetheless, determined to make the journey and to bear witness and participate in the new world represented by the birth of Christ.⁹

... [T]his Birth was
 Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death.
 We returned to our places, these Kingdoms,
 But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation,
 With an alien people clutching their gods.
 I should be glad of another death. (lines 38-43)

Eliot's handling of the story of the Magi emphasizes the tragedy of being caught between cultures, even eras, and the realization that one can never go home. "The Journey of the Magi" relates to Gustad's sense of being caught between the old and the new India. It is the birth of an independent India that causes such "hard and bitter agony" for Gustad. The kingdom in which he is "no longer at ease" is 1970s Bombay, where an alien people, who figure not at all in his memories of membership in a political and social élite, clutch at the democratic gods of social reform and political equality. The world of his childhood, a world identified with the forms of cultural hegemony symbolized by Shakespeare and T. S. Eliot, is over, and what it stands for has been devalued and discredited.¹⁰

Like Lear, Gustad is a relic from a former age, his kingdom replaced by a new and brutal world order. Lear clings to an image of himself that is tied to the warrior-aristocracy; Gustad clings to memories of bourgeois prosperity. Both reflect upon the process of divestment: the bankruptcy of Gustad's grandfather's furniture business, "Noble and Sons, Makers of Fine Furniture," brought about the loss of his family's social and economic position. Gustad's attachment to the "few pieces" (Mistry 1991, 6) he was able to salvage are, like Lear's attachment to his retainers, an everpresent reminder of his former social and economic position. Just as Lear, who, confronting Regan about her dismissal of the knights and exhorting "O! reason not the need" (*King Lear*, 2.4.262), identifies his hundred knights with his former chivalric glory, the desks, bookcases, and books that remain provide Gustad with a modicum of comfort as he sits up late at night, tracing the onset of his insomnia to "the day when his father's bookstore had been treacherously despoiled and ruined." Gustad's disposal of Bilimoria's rupees over a series of "one hundred days" (Mistry 1991, 142) mirrors the dispersal of Lear's one hundred retainers from fifty, to twenty-five, and so on. Mistry maps the events of the novel onto this process of diminution: "In early August . . . with the twenty-seventh bundle of money" (147) comes Roshan's mysterious illness, and after the "thirty-ninth," at which point he will "be halfway there" (171), Gustad commissions a pavement artist to decorate the wall outside his apartment building.

Gustad's recollections of pre-1947 Bombay dwell not only upon the bankruptcy of his grandfather's furniture business, but also upon the loss of his father's bookstore, which "had once been the finest bookstore in the country" (Mistry 1991, 101). Mistry's identification of material possessions with cultural capital ("a small bookcase full of the right books," he muses, "and you are set for life" [103]) evokes the literate, cultured life of urban Parsis under British rule and recalls Macaulay's opinion that "a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia" (17). In an attempt to rebuild this old life in some miniscule way, Gustad's endlessly deferred project with his gifted eldest son,

Sohrab, is the construction of a bookcase to hold the few books that did not have to be sold. Gustad keeps his small collection locked in his grandfather's old desk:

E. Cobham Brewer's *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable* and the two volumes of Barère and Leland's *Dictionary of Slang, Jargon, & Cant*, the 1897 edition . . . Some works by Bertrand Russell, a book titled *Mathematics for the Millions*, and Adam Smith's *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* also stood on this shelf. (53)

A thumbnail sketch of contemporary reading practices, Gustad's library is comprised of the vestigial remainders of British literary tradition: phrase and fable, slang and jargon, quoted and anthologized, diminished over time. By contrast, economics and mathematics form the basis of the forward-gazing, technology-oriented, as well as notably pluralist future.

Gustad's books also reflect the career trajectory that Gustad envisions for his gifted eldest son. As Sohrab observes:

Daddy never made pronouncements or dreamed dreams of an artist-son. It was never: my son will paint, my son will act, he will write poetry. No, it was always: my son will be a doctor, he will be an engineer, he will be a research scientist. (Mistry 1991, 66)

Sohrab's artistic inclinations come to light in a childhood production of *King Lear*, his father's "proudest moment":

Sohrab, of course, was Lear, producer, director, costume designer, and set designer. He also wrote an abridged version of the play, wisely accepting that even an audience of doting parents could become catatonic if confronted by more than an hour's worth of ultra-amateurish Shakespeare. (66)

While Sohrab shares his name with a mythical Zoroastrian hero who fights his father Rustum, he also shares it with Sohrab Modi, a Bollywood star of the 1940s and 1950s who got his start as a Shakespearean actor in the Parsi theater and who filmed his adaptation of *Hamlet, Khoon Ka Khoon* (or, *Blood for Blood*) (Loomba 1997, 126-27). Sohrab's theatrical ambitions threaten Gustad because they constitute a throwback to the old days. They remind Gustad of his own unrealized dreams of a university education and flaunt the family's diminished circumstances; whereas a literary son may have been indulged in the past, the exigencies of the present demand more practical training.

Sohrab is unwilling to compromise his personal dreams to satisfy his father's unrealized desires, just as Cordelia steadfastly refuses to claim that she loves her father other than according to her "bond; no more nor less" (*King Lear*, 1.1.92). After a calamitous argument on the eve of Sohrab's acceptance into IIT, the Indian Institute of Technology, Gustad muses, "the boy is nothing to me now" (Mistry 1991, 53), replaying the vocabulary of Lear's banishment of Cordelia: "Nothing will come of nothing, speak again" (1.1.88). Banishing Sohrab, Gustad repeats his alienation from his own father, who passed him over for his younger brother, just as Gloucester disinherits Edgar for the younger Edmund,

. . . handing charge of the business to his younger brother, against everyone's advice. For Pappa hated being given advice. The brother had a formidable reputation for drink and for frequenting the racecourse. The speed with which he mortgaged the assets and fueled his vices was astonishing. Gustad's father emerged from hospital to the shambles of what had once been the finest bookstore in the country, and the family never recovered. (101)

Characters from *Such A Long Journey* thus take on different aspects of their Shakespearean counterparts at different times. If Gustad's father, deaf to benevolent, Kent-like advice, makes Gustad a latter-day Edgar, then Gustad's disinheritance of his elder son recapitulates the trials and tribulations of Gloucester.

Gustad's youngest, his daughter Roshan, reveres a blond, blue-eyed doll clad in Cordelia's conventional white dress.¹¹ King Lear's responsibility for Cordelia's death is also borne by Gustad, whose refusal to sterilize the household water leads to Roshan's life-threatening illness. While Roshan's mysterious affliction and the grotesque fate suffered by her doll at the hands of the mentally-ill Tehmul are consistent with Cordelia's status, throughout *King Lear*, as innocent victim and unwilling sexual pawn, she remains, throughout the novel, the apple of her father's eye (a favored status enjoyed, in *King Lear*, by the diabolical Edmund). However, in the tradition of the Parsi theater, *Such a Long Journey* ends more happily than *King Lear*, with a vision of fathers and sons reconciled, daughters who live, and a sense of a hopeful future for the Noble family.

However, the novel's happy ending comes at the expense of the brain-damaged Tehmul, who is at once the Fool and a kind of Cordelia. Like Lear's fool, Tehmul is Gustad's constant companion and perpetual nuisance, although his sketchy awareness of Gustad's involvement in the RAW scheme falls far short of the Fool's psychological acumen: "moneymoneymoneymoney. Somuchsomuchsomuchmoney" (Mistry 1991, 117). Tehmul's sexual violation of Roshan's doll ("there was no damage done, except that its pink legs and stomach and groin were sprinkled with gobs of dry and half-dry semen," [302]) actualizes the threat posed by Caliban in *The Tempest*, while his aggravating adoration of Gustad and singsong speeches recall Lear's Fool. As victim, however, Tehmul ultimately absorbs the tragic end that Shakespeare assigns to Cordelia when Roshan miraculously recovers from her sickness. Killed by stones flung by an angry mob, and transported, in Gustad's arms, away from the scene of his accident, Tehmul's death literalizes Lear's heartrending "O! you are men of stone" (5.3.256). Anticipating the plight of Om and Ishvar in *A Fine Balance*, the misfortunes of Tehmul offer an important insight into the reception and status of *King Lear* as a template for suffering.¹²

Yet Mistry's use of *King Lear* is not limited to domestic trials and individual suffering; the parallels that *Such a Long Journey* draws to *Lear* speak, as well, to the aftermath of Independence and Partition. *King Lear* opens with the king's announcement of his intention to "divest us both of rule, / Interest of territory, cares of state" (1.2.48-49) so that he may, like a Hindu *sannyasi*, "unburthen'd crawl toward death" (40). Placed within the context of Indian history, his intentions evoke not only Britain's withdrawal from India, but also the fall of the British Empire itself. The ensuing scenario, in which Lear divides "in three our kingdom" (36-37)

and Goneril and Regan take over the reins of power from their father, leaving the honest Cordelia unrewarded and exiled, resonates with the historical backdrop of India's war with Pakistan (which eventually resulted in the formation of a third nation, Bangladesh) and with Indira Gandhi's inheritance of her father's mandate. Mistry describes Jawaharlal Nehru's decline during the Indo-Chinese war in decidedly Lear-like terms:

His one overwhelming obsession now was, how to ensure that his darling daughter Indira, the only one, he claimed, who loved him truly, who had even abandoned her worthless husband in order to be with her father — how to ensure that she would become Prime Minister after him. (Mistry 1991, 11)

Highlighting the unusually close bond of Nehru and Gandhi, Mistry recalls Goneril and Regan's professions that they love their father "dearer than eyesight" (*King Lear*, 1.2.56) and with "true heart" (70). Of course, Cordelia points out the double standard: "Why have my sisters husbands, if they say / 'They love you all?'" (99-100). Thus, Mistry casts Nehru's relationship with the Chinese foreign minister Chou En-lai according to the model of Lear and Cordelia:

But everyone knew that the war with China froze Jawaharlal Nehru's heart, then broke it. He never recovered from what he perceived to be Chou En-lai's betrayal. The country's beloved Panditji, everyone's Chacha Nehru, the unflinching humanist, the great visionary, turned bitter and rancorous. From now on, he would brook no criticism, take no advice. (Mistry 1991, 10-11)

Similarly, Gandhi's dishonest policies recall the depravities of Lear's daughters, Goneril and Regan:

There was report after report of the citizen's generous support for the fighting men: about an eighty-year-old peasant who traveled to New Delhi, clutching her two gold wedding bangles, which she presented to Mother India for the war effort (some newspapers reported it as Mother Indira, which did not really matter — the line between the two was fast being blurred by the Prime Minister's far-sighted propagandists, who saw its value for future election campaigns). . . . Of course, in the newsreels, no mention was ever made of dutiful Shiv Sena patrols and motley fascists who roamed city streets with stones at the ready, patriotically shattering windows that they deemed inadequately blacked-out. Or the unlucky individuals mistaken for enemy agents and beaten up with great relish by personal enemies. (297-98)

Evoking Goneril and Regan's reign of terror, in which enemies such as Gloucester are abducted and beaten, this passage blurs the lines between the personal and the political, the familial and the national. The account of Shiv Sena patrols shattering "inadequately blacked-out" windows in this passage contributes to the prevailing set of images concerning darkness and light, blindness and insight, that tie *Such A Long Journey* to *King Lear*: Gustad, for example, preserves the blackout paper on his windows long after Nehru's war with China and refuses to see the unpleasant realities of Bilimoria's shady money-laundering scheme. And Dilnavaz, whose name means "light," sees how her husband finds "the darkness soothing after death's recent visitation" and encourages her family to grow "accustomed to living in less light" (11).

An Indian tale told with a Shakespearean plot in mind, *Such A Long Journey* situates the experience of a single family within ongoing national struggles, as India itself removes the traces of Britain's paternalistic form of control. While Soviet, Japanese, and Yiddish treatments of *King Lear* (among others) attest to the applicability of the narrative to a variety of cultural and historical contexts, the play's handling of family trauma and the hardships of the disenfranchised provide a particularly useful pattern for exploring contemporary Indian history. The parallel dramatization of familial strife and territorial division in *King Lear* provides a frame of reference for late twentieth-century Indian politics, from Independence and Partition to Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi, as the violent disputes, rivalries, and betrayals that take place within a national and international framework stem from a set of relationships between parents and children, spouses and siblings. While Mistry's insights into the problems faced by the Bombay Parsi community in the 1970s would resonate with any urban metropolis in transition, they speak directly to Canada, a country produced by the same kinds of territorial division and demographic dispersal that are charted in *King Lear*. They detail the political and cultural climate that makes characters such as Sarosh want to immigrate, outlining not only what is being left behind, but also what one would hope to find elsewhere. The novel acts, as well, as a reminder of the ubiquity of corruption and the fragility of peace: the latter, a blessing Canadians often take for granted. Most importantly, *Such A Long Journey* reminds us how other national histories become Canadian histories and are relevant to the Canadian experience. With the image of itself as a cultural "mosaic," Canada must embrace not only individuals, but also their background and baggage.

Mistry's *Family Matters* traces not only the last days of Mr. Kapur, the hapless shopkeeper, but also the journey toward death of Nariman Vakeel, a retired professor of English who is turned out of his house by his stepchildren. As Nariman laments to his grandson, named Jehangir (whose name recalls the title character in Umrao Ali's *Urdu Hamlet*):¹³

"To so many classes I taught *Lear*, learning nothing myself. What kind of teacher is that, as foolish at the end of his life as at the beginning?"

"What is *Lear*?" asked Jehangir.

Nariman swallowed the potato. "It's the name of a king who made many mistakes." (Mistry 2002, 190)

Nariman's conclusion: "So we tell the same story, over and over. Just the details are different" (197). While *Such A Long Journey* tells the same story with different details, it reveals how retelling a tale, both placing it a different context and relating from within a different context, can transform it profoundly, even turning a tragic ending to comic (in the divine sense). For an emigre writer such as Mistry, Shakespeare is not only a link to the past, but also a blueprint for the future.

Note: Thanks to Ananya Jahanara Kabir, Bindu Malieckal, and Terry Goldie for advice and inspiration.

NOTES

1. All references to Shakespeare are to *The Riverside Shakespeare*, edited by G. Blakemore Evans et al, 2nd edition. All further references will be incorporated into the body of the text.
2. See *Shakespeare in Canada: A World Elsewhere?* (2002), Ric Knowles, *Shakespeare and Canada: Essays on Production, Translation, and Adaptation* (2004), and the Canadian Adaptations of Shakespeare Project, available online at <http://www.canadianshakespeares.ca> (<http://www.canadianshakespeares.ca>).
3. The repatriation of the Canadian Constitution did not occur until 1982. The late Pierre Trudeau's remarks at the 1982 Proclamation ceremony apply a metaphor of family relationships to the colonial situation: "For more than half a century, Canadians have resembled young adults who leave home to build a life of their own, but are not quite confident enough to take along all their belongings" (Trudeau 1982).
4. The entire poem reads as follows:

When far across the sea your fire dawned, World Poet,
 England embraced you within her own horizon,
 Assumed your riches were hers alone;
 Kissed your radiant brow, but kept you entwined for a while
 In the branchy arms of her woods; cloaked you in mist
 In the flowery, grassy, dew-bright glades
 Where her woodsprites danced. Her island groves
 Did not at first rise up with hymns of praise
 To a Sun Poet. But slowly, hour by hour, century by century,
 Silently beckoned by Infinity, you left that horizon's lap,
 Climbed to blazing high noon splendor,
 Took your seat at the hub of all skies
 To flood with light the mind of the whole world.
 See then how, at the turn of an era,
 On the shore of India, joy at your glory rings out now
 Through the rippling, thickly fronded coconut-groves. (Tagore 1991)

5. See, in particular, Ania Loomba's excellent overview of the history of the Parsi Theater in "Shakespearean Transformations" (1997).
6. The myth of the Canadian cultural mosaic is the object of Mistry's satire, as well: the Multicultural Department of the Canadian government supports the invention of a device, Crappus Non Interruptus, designed "to ensure that ethnic cultures are able to flourish" (Mistry 1987, 160), for which Dr. No-Ilaaz of the Immigrant Aid Society offers the following gloss: "Ethnic is a polite way of saying bloody foreigner." However, CNI produces the now-classic postcolonial experience of "betweenness," preventing full assimilation, while, paradoxically, ensuring that the subject can never fully return home: "Once CNI is implanted, you can never pass a motion in the natural way — neither sitting nor squatting" (161).
7. Mistry here employs a passage from Shakespeare associated with a famous crux. Whereas the Quarto text reads "base Indian," some editors prefer the Folio reading, "base Judean," taken as an allusion to Judas or Herod the Great. In this context, the inconsistency underscores Sarosh's own identity confusion, while the term "base Indian" itself recalls the identity confusion between the old India and the new world "Indians" discovered instead of a Spice Route.

8. This scandal involved Sohrab Nagarwala, a retired Army captain who impersonated Indira Gandhi in a telephone call to the chief cashier of the State Bank of India, asking him to bring Rs 60 *laks* to him. After Indira's men denied the call for cash, Nagarwala was tried and, when he demanded a retrial, died suddenly under mysterious circumstances.
9. The poem forms part of Eliot's *Ariel* series, the title of which invokes *The Tempest* in a manner that resonates differently now, in the wake of a succession of postcolonial critiques and adaptations of the play, than it did at a time when Eliot was looking to Shakespearean romance for paradigms of spiritual regeneration.
10. Mistry presents this new kingdom through the eyes of "the old dispensation." The "wrinkled, old-woman dugs" of Peerbhoy Paanwalla, a "grizzled old man whose lips were perpetually reddened, doubtless from sampling his own wares," and who, from his vantage point outside the House of Cages brothel, "seemed more swami or guru than paanwalla" (Mistry 1991, 158), allude to Eliot's Tiresias, the "old man with wrinkled dugs" in *The Waste Land*, who, witnessing the typist's half-hearted affair, has "foresuffered all / Enacted on this same divan or bed" ("The Waste Land," in Eliot 1963, lines 228, 233-44, and 218). Like Eliot's Tiresias, Gustad Noble is "throbbing between two lives."
11. Echoing Lear's discovery of Cordelia's body, Roshan holds the doll in her arms, while she is, herself, held in her father's arms:

"Daddy! Daddy! I won the doll!"

He swept her up in his arms. "My doll has won a doll. But you are the prettier of the two, I am sure."

"No! That doll is much prettier, she has blue eyes, and fair skin, so pink, and a lovely white dress!"

"Blue eyes and pink skin? Chheel! Who wants that?" (Mistry 1991, 84)

12. Just as a childhood accident endows Tehmul with a child's mind and the body (and desires) of a man, so, too, does caste, an accident of birth, work alongside Indira Gandhi's forced sterilization program to prevent Om and Ishvar from enjoying the self-determining dignities of adulthood in *A Fine Balance*.
13. See Loomba 140, n. 30.

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Bardomania: Adapting Shakespeare within a Canadian Political Context

ROD CARLEY, CANADORE COLLEGE AND REP 21

ABSTRACT | ON ADAPTATION FROM A PLAYWRIGHT'S PERSPECTIVE | ADAPTING
SHAKESPEARE IN CANADA'S POLITICAL CONTEXTS | FURTHER CONTEXTS FOR ADAPTING
JULIUS CAESAR TO CANADIAN POLITICS | REFERENCES | ONLINE RESOURCES

ABSTRACT

In choosing to transpose Shakespeare to a modern Canadian political setting, Canadians articulate a history that is a relevant context for interpreting Shakespeare. As an instance of this sort of transposable history, the inherent drama of the Canadian political landscape of the late 1960s and early 1970s is a particularly good match for adapting Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. In this essay, Rod Carley, a protean adaptor of Shakespeare's plays, discusses his current work on an adaptation of *Julius Caesar* based on Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau, the FLQ (*Front de Libération de Québec*), and events surrounding the October Crisis of the 1970. In Carley's interpretation, Caesar is based on Trudeau and, in the transported setting, he is assassinated in Ottawa by members of the FLQ as an act of revenge in the wake of his handling of "Black October" — perhaps one of the most fraught moments in the last fifty years of Canadian politics.

*"How many ages hence / Shall this our lofty scene be acted over / In states unborn and accents
yet unknown."* *Julius Caesar*, 3.1.111-13

ON ADAPTATION FROM A PLAYWRIGHT'S PERSPECTIVE

There is only one reason to adapt a Shakespearean text to another setting, and that is to illuminate it more clearly for today's audience. The question to ask when adapting a Shakespearean text is, "Does the transfer work?" Only when the political, social, and historical elements of the original match with the new setting is your adaptation on the right track. The key is to find a new context for the original in which to explore its themes rather than imposing an externalized directorial concept that is often divorced from the actual text. Contexts are rooted

in the original text and serve as an overall blueprint to help a director and actors explore the text organically in rehearsals.

As a playwright seeking to diminish the gap between Shakespeare's world and our own, I find that by choosing an appropriate modern setting, it is easier for an audience to embrace "his" work, as they already have a sense of modern history to which they can relate. Because the visual is familiar, it is easier to get the audience to listen to Shakespeare's text and understand it. But one still has to find a modern setting that is removed enough from the immediate present so that it can serve as an analogy in a way that is not overly didactic.

It is the necessary care taken in editing Shakespeare's text when adapting that is crucial to the adaptation process as a whole. Shakespeare's audience was an aural one, capable of assimilating multiple images in a given speech at lightning speed. Today we are visually based — we can absorb thirty-five to forty edits a minute in a film or music video and think nothing of it. As a result, I try to be very careful in trimming speeches and dialogue so as to get at the key images without sacrificing the subtlety and nuances of the original writing. This process is akin to Shakespearean paleontology — remove the rock fragments of difficult or confusing text so that you reveal a clean bone of text from which a recognizable skeleton can be built. I also approach my Shakespearean adaptations with a cinematic eye. As a result, the theatrical techniques I employ rely heavily on design, itself an often forgotten aspect of the adaptation process. The visuals associated with the transplanted settings have to be in place to support and make the text speak comprehensibly.

When I was directing my adaptation of *The Othello Project* in Miami in 1998, which I found interesting in terms of being a Canadian depicting *Othello* in a very controversial American setting, I was asked by a reporter why we Canadians don't like Americans. I responded by saying, "It's not that we don't like you. It's just that we are not an egocentric nation. We study and appreciate many different countries' histories and cultures and in turn accept these cultures in our country. We don't see the world as being all about us. And because you believe the world revolves around you, you open yourself up to criticism and analogies from the rest of us. So in some ways we are observers of your world, or more actively put, we are interpreters and chroniclers." So, at the end of the day, as chroniclers of our times on the periphery of power, the Canadian perspective is very close to Shakespeare's.

ADAPTING SHAKESPEARE IN CANADA'S POLITICAL CONTEXTS

In choosing to transpose Shakespeare to a modern Canadian political setting, Canadians are articulating a history that is exciting and interesting enough to be used as a relevant context for interpreting Shakespeare. As an instance of this sort of transposable history, the inherent drama of the Canadian political landscape of the late 1960s and early 1970s is a particularly good match for adapting Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*.

My current work is on an adaptation of *Julius Caesar* that is based on Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau, the *Front de Libération de Québec* (FLQ), and events

surrounding the October Crisis of 1970. In my interpretation, Caesar is based on Trudeau and, in the transported setting, he is assassinated in Ottawa by members of the FLQ as an act of revenge in the wake of his handling of "Black October" — perhaps one of the most fraught moments in the last fifty years of Canadian politics. My adaptation involves both official languages of Canada and thereby addresses in a material way the linguistic duality that is so crucial to defining Canada's national sense of identity (and, moreover, a duality that played a key role in the events surrounding the so-called October Crisis). The October Crisis was caused by two terrorist kidnappings of government officials by members of the FLQ in the province of Québec, in October 1970. The kidnappings led to the short-lived use of the War Measures Act by Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, which saw the national Army deployed both in Québec and in the national capital of Ottawa.

The spirit of Caesar (Trudeau) that dominates my adaptation is associated with an exercise of supreme, sovereign power — much debated in Canada after Trudeau's unilateral declaration of what has been mistakenly called "martial law" to deal with the crisis expeditiously. When Caesar (Trudeau) dies, power is masterless, and as such, indiscriminately destructive. Each man, in his turn, tries to grasp the lightning that has been set free, and is fearfully transformed, until finally it comes to rest upon Octavius (Jean Chrétien, a Trudeau acolyte also to become a Canadian Prime Minister) who alone, by force of personality and through a legitimate succession, may wield power unscathed.

The idea for adapting *Julius Caesar* within a Canadian political context has been germinating for the past decade, since I adapted and directed a version of the play based on the JFK assassination for an outdoor festival in 1996. At the time, I also began researching newspaper and *Macleans* articles from the late sixties and early seventies concerning Trudeau, Québec, and the FLQ. What first struck me was how often Trudeau was compared to Julius Caesar by Canadian journalists — not just for his physical appearance, but for his self-created, emperor-like status in Canadian politics. He was more than Canada's pale imitation of and variation on JFK: Trudeau was an individualist at a time when that was what Canada badly needed in order to address issues of decolonization and proximity to the U.S. In the fifteen years and five months that Trudeau served as Prime Minister, he conjured up every emotion in the Canadian people except indifference.

Esteemed Canadian journalist Walter Stewart wrote an article for *Macleans* in June 1970, entitled, "Pierre Elliott Trudeau is the President of Canada," in which he put forth the argument that in the two years since his election victory of June 1968, Trudeau had come to exercise what was virtually the power of a president (Stewart 1970). He dominated the Canadian political stage — Trudeau was producer, stage manager, and matinee idol rolled into one. His predilection for a presidential style of government had won him unprecedented power. "No PM has ever made more of his muscle than Trudeau" (37, column 1). "We have a government by terror," announced one senior civil servant interviewed by Stewart, "The De Gaulle fist in the Kennedy glove" (p. 37, column 1). The hazard implied in the new power structure was that there really was no check on Trudeau beyond the threat of retaliation at the polls on some future date — a date to be

set, incidentally, by the Prime Minister himself, to his own best advantage. Politically, in other words, Trudeau was vulnerable. His power, his style, his once-admired romantic image were now making people nervous and edgy.

This political backdrop provides the context in which I adapt and explore similar thematics in *Julius Caesar*. Trudeau's governing style, his federalist view of Québec, and his handling of the October Crisis of 1970 had garnered him many enemies — many of whom were former political allies. Who was safe to trust? As a result, Trudeau isolated himself more and more. Likewise, Julius Caesar's governing style made many Roman politicians nervous to the point where he was assassinated. It is an easy leap of the theatrical imagination to see the plausibility of a scenario in which a revenging FLQ cell, for his application of the War Measures Act, might have assassinated Trudeau. This is the working premise for my adaptation of *Julius Caesar*.

The opening scene of *Julius Caesar*, involving the tribunes interrogating the plebians, will serve as prologue to the piece. Set in October 1970, this scene stages two RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) officers interrogating working class Quebecers in Montreal on the night the War Measures Act was implemented. The second scene jumps to late February 1971 in Montreal, with Trudeau/Caesar making his first public appearance since the October Crisis. The tone is similar to the near-separatist riot surrounding Trudeau at the 1968 Saint Jean-Baptiste parade in Montreal — an annual event associated with the nationalist, separatist movement in Québec. In this scene, it becomes clear that the separatists are more than *simply* "rankled" by the events of the past October.

The character of Brutus is based on René Lévesque. Lévesque was an ex-Liberal, who in 1970-1971 was leader of the MSA or *Mouvement Souveraineté-Association* (Sovereignty Association Movement), the most moderate of the four separatist groups then operating openly in Québec, not to mention such underground terrorist gangs as the *Front de Libération du Québec* (FLQ). Lévesque himself was a moderate among the moderates. A member of the Québec legislature, Lévesque had been spending his energy and risking his prestige to defend the rights of the English minority in a sovereign Québec. It's quite wrong to assume, as many English Canadians did, that Lévesque and Trudeau represented opposite extremes. In actuality, both he and Trudeau were fighting for their own definitions of a "just society." Indeed, to an English Canadian, Lévesque's words sounded quite convincing: "In my humble opinion, it is a question of simple justice. A nation is judged by its fairness to minorities. A free Québec must be a just society, a people serene and self-confident" (July 1968). But his words were heard in stony silence. Lévesque argued that he wasn't trying to make another Cuba and that he wanted to make the sovereignty issue as normal as possible, something to discuss between friends. He wanted Quebecers to be North Americans first, for Quebecers didn't feel themselves to be a French colony and more often defined themselves by their differences from the French and their similarities with North Americans.

But Lévesque's arguments fell on increasingly deaf ears, and his moral authority soon began to wane. If his moderate approach failed, if the English reaction was

too harsh, even Lévesque might be pushed into positions he would rather not accept. Certainly, by May 1969 the emotionalism of his speeches now touched a nerve among audiences. The strongest applause followed his attacks on Trudeau's notion of a "just society" — almost as if Lévesque were releasing a collective sense of guilt at having been swept away by Trudeaumania only a few months before. The parallels between Lévesque and Brutus are evident: they are men of private conscience and honor crossing the line by letting passion rule their reason. As Brutus leaves himself wide open to Cassius's advances and political manipulations, so does Lévesque to the more violent preachings of the FLQ.

This adaptation asks the Stanislavski magical question, "What if?": What if Lévesque's own frustrations with his failure at bringing sovereignty to fruition by moderate means led him to violate his moral principles and adopt a more violent agenda, one that might even include assassinating his newly perceived nemesis, Trudeau?

Cassius is loosely based on Pierre Vallières, author of the book *Nègres blancs d'Amérique* [translated into English as *White Niggers of America*], who joined the FLQ in 1965 and was generally considered the "philosopher" behind the revolutionary movement. The FLQ used propaganda and terrorism to promote the emergence of an independent, socialist Québec. It was founded in March 1963, when Québec was undergoing a period of remarkable change. As mentioned earlier, it was involved in over 200 bombings between 1963 and 1970, and in 1968 the FLQ began using larger and more powerful bombs, setting them off at a federal government bookstore, McGill University, the residence of Jean Drapeau (the infamous Mayor of Montreal), the provincial Department of Labour, and the Montreal Stock Exchange, where twenty-seven people were injured. In the fall of 1969, the movement split into two distinct cells: the South Shore Gang (which became the Chenier cell) led by Paul Rose (Cinna is based on Rose); and the Liberation cell, under Jacques Lanctot (Caska is based on Lanctot). Both of these Montreal-based cells claimed about twelve members.

It was Trudeau's performance in several crises in Québec that most endeared him to his admirers and provoked his adversaries. Just before the 1968 election, during the Saint-Jean-Baptiste parade in Montreal — a traditional time of nationalist expression (somewhat akin to the American celebrations round July 4) — Trudeau faced down bottle-throwing separatists in a symbolic gesture of his determination to oppose people who would break up the country. "I am trying to put Québec in its place," he said to cheers during that campaign, "and the place of Québec is in all of Canada." The magic lasted until October 5, 1970, when the *Front de libération du Québec* terrorists in Montreal kidnapped British diplomat James Cross. Their demands, communicated in a series of public messages, included the freeing of a number of convicted or detained FLQ members and the broadcasting of the FLQ manifesto.

The manifesto, a diatribe against established authority, was read on Radio Canada, and on October 10, the Québec Premier, Robert Bourassa, offered safe passage abroad to the kidnappers in return for the liberation of their diplomatic hostage. But on the same day, a second FLQ cell kidnapped the Québec Minister of Labor

and Immigration, Pierre Laporte. On October 15, Bourassa requested the assistance of the Canadian Armed Forces to supplement the local police. Trudeau was defiant when asked how far he would go to fight the FLQ, saying "Just watch me." On October 16, Trudeau and his Justice Minister, John Turner (himself a future Canadian Prime Minister), proclaimed the existence of a state of "apprehended insurrection" under the War Measures Act.

Canada, truly, had come of age.

FURTHER CONTEXTS FOR ADAPTING *JULIUS CAESAR* TO CANADIAN POLITICS

The Canadian army took over the streets and authorities had unlimited powers of search and arrest. More than 450 Quebecers were swept into jail without formal proceedings: editors, singers, intellectuals, unionists, even a piano tuner. Trudeau's response rankled the separatists and civil libertarians, but proved to be one his most admired acts in the public opinion of English Canadians. Of the 450 people arrested, 150 were "suspected" FLQ members. On October 17, the body of Pierre Laporte was found in a car trunk near St. Hubert airport. In early December 1970, police discovered the cell holding James Cross, and his release was negotiated in return for the provision of safe conduct to Cuba for the kidnappers and some family members. Four weeks later, the second group was located and arrested — subsequently to be tried and convicted for kidnapping and murder. "What if," however, this second group wasn't located and they subsequently raised the stakes of their terrorist activity by making Trudeau a target of revenge?

After the crisis, the Federal Minister of Justice in 1970, John Turner, justified the use of the War Measures Act as a means of reversing an "erosion of public will" in Québec. But over time came a profound questioning that challenged the wisdom of the action, particularly revelations made in the 1971 book *Rumours Of War*, by columnist Ron Haggart and civil rights lawyer Aubrey Golden. They reconstruct, moment by moment, what happened to four Quebecers that night in October. These facts, in my adaptation, further fuel the fire for FLQ retaliation towards Trudeau.

The remaining conspirators in *Julius Caesar* tie in with their 1970s counterparts as follows: Trebonius is a female university student and a radical who has previously bedded both Caesar and Mark Antony, Decius Brutus is the political insider in Trudeau/Caesar's Cabinet, and Metellus Cymber is a member of the Black Panthers working with the FLQ in Québec. (The Black Panthers recognized the FLQ as another minority group fighting oppression with violent means and backed the FLQ by providing weapons and other forms of support — and it must not be forgotten that one of the key philosophical forms of positioning for Québécois radicals was as the "white niggers of America.") The other possibility for Cymber is to make him a Cuban radical supporting the FLQ, for he is the one who arranges their safe transport out of the country after the assassination. The character of Caska, as well as being loosely based on Jacques Lanctot, also serves as the teamster/union connection in the piece — especially important given the powerful socialist impetus behind the drive to separation.

Marc Antony is based on the previously mentioned Federal Justice Minister John Turner who, in 1970-1971, at the age of 39, was the dashing young man of the new Liberal machine. His image was immaculate. It combined gravity (he was once a respected corporation and trial lawyer in Montreal), playboy cool (this is the man who whirled Princess Margaret around a dance floor), and guts (as demonstrated by how he hung in, to the end, during the 1968 Liberal leadership convention in the face of overwhelming 'Trudeaumania' associated with 'Trudeau's leadership charisma'). It was believed by the political journalists of the day that, if John Turner could not push through the long overdue reforms to Canada's judicial system, then no one could. Turner was quoted in *Macleans* as saying:

The *idea* of justice is an absolute. We move towards the absolute with limitations. I'll be trying to move us forward. I think that the Trudeau administration will be noted for its reforming and revising of some of the inequalities existing between citizen and citizen, as well as the relationship between the citizen and the state. This involves a reworking of the Bill of Rights. There should be an early reform on bail and detention before trial.

In *Julius Caesar*, Mark Antony speaks of honor, yet incites the plebians into a violent mob at Caesar's funeral, and he himself reveals his own true expediency and private ambitions. Turner's speech on judicial reform is in direct contrast to his actions in this adaptation — which is also true of Mark Antony in the original.

In terms of the triumvirate that is formed in the play after Caesar's death, Mark Antony joins forces with the easily-handled Lepidus, based on Québec Liberal Premier Robert Bourassa, who was perceived as weak, unimpressive, a failure in his handling of the October Crisis, and merely a mouthpiece in Québec for the Federal Liberals; and Octavius Caesar, the personification of impersonal rule and the only legitimate successor to Julius Caesar. He outplays Mark Antony and Lepidus and is Emperor by the play's end. Octavius is based on the young, personable Jean Chrétien, who was part of Trudeau's inner sanctum. As Canadian politics unfolded in the ensuing years, Chrétien did indeed become the new Caesar of the Liberal party and Canada (serving as Canadian Prime Minister from 1993 to 2003).

One of the briefest, but most powerful, scenes in *Julius Caesar* is when Cinna the Poet is mistaken for Cinna the conspirator and is torn to pieces by the enflamed mob. I found a fascinating contemporary touchstone to this scene in the *Montreal Star's* Friday October 16, 1970, edition: "Police . . . this morning detained 163 persons in the Montreal and Québec City area and in Rimouski. They have picked up Michel Garneau, a poet, a friendly and articulate man I knew last year, when I worked with him at the CBC. Garneau is a terrorist?" Ironically, Garneau was to go on to become one of Québec's most talented adapters and translators of Shakespeare, and someone who was to work with Robert Lepage on an acclaimed series of tradaptations.

In my adaptation, after the funeral oration the conspirators escape to Cuba and are eventually gunned down by the Canadian and Cuban military, playing on Castro's well-documented close and sympathetic relationship to Trudeau. Castro may very well appear in the final scene — if only because this might be the first

Shakespearean adaptation in which Fidel makes an appearance. The tent scenes in acts 4 and 5 of the original text are being adapted to the Cuban jungle setting.

Julius Caesar will unfold in both official languages of Canada. Scenes with the separatists will be primarily in French; the funeral orations take place on Parliament Hill in Ottawa. Brutus blunders by speaking in both French and English, whereas Mark Antony knows he is playing to an English-speaking majority and governs himself accordingly to achieve his objective. (It is an English-speaking mob that eventually goes on the warpath.) I believe this adaptation of *Julius Caesar* to be relevant to contemporary audiences, Canadian or otherwise, for a number of reasons. In the wake of recent world events after the Air India bombing of Flight 182 in 1985 and, of course, 9/11, it is important to examine acts of terrorism in different historical contexts. The separatist debate still exists and will most likely continue (however muted in its current phase in Canada). Trudeau is a worthy Canadian icon for this kind of artistic interpretation — to date, he is the only Canadian Prime Minister truly to have caught the imagination of the international community. The events of the early '70s are now distant enough in Canadians' past to serve as a working analogy for other political situations, other analyses that hindsight allows. Canada's political history is complex and needs to be voiced onstage. Shakespeare is perhaps never more alive and accessible than when adapted to new contexts that make new meanings of his work possible. Finally, in terms of my being a mid-career artist, I feel that the adaptations I now create must reflect the politics and issues of the day, with an emphasis on Canadian story-telling — hence, the *Julius Caesar* project.

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"I Cannot Heave My Heart into My Mouth"

JUDITH CLARE THOMPSON, UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH

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ABSTRACT

"I Cannot Heave My Heart into My Mouth" is a personal account by renowned Canadian playwright Judith Thompson of her experiences adapting and directing Shakespeare for inner city children in Toronto, from grades four through six over the past seven years. The essay explores the process of adapting Shakespeare for youth as one of explosive healing, empowerment, as well as a joyous and searing investigation of the self.

"Things won are done. Joy's soul lies in the doing." — *Troilus and Cressida*, 1.2

"Action is eloquence." — *Coriolanus*, 3.2

How Performing in a Shakespearean Tragedy Gave Them the Courage to Come to School

I

With the biggest white-out blizzard in ten years raging outside, I held my first Shakespeare meeting for the June 2007 *Midsummer Night's Dream* at Palmerston Public School in Toronto. This was like a joke about the pathetic fallacy — the zero visibility being where all of us, including me, begin with each Shakespeare production, and the bright warm June of performance time representing the clarity and joy we hoped to finally reach. There were about sixty kids, ranging in age from nine to twelve, all, naturally, wanting to play Puck. They sat in a circle and read through several scenes, with only a few lines each. Despite the dramatic range of reading ability, from the mortifying to the Stratford-ready, each child would have a role in the play; the three or four readings I held would help me determine which role was suitable for which child. It would not be helpful to children to give them something they couldn't handle, but I am also careful not to give all the

biggest roles to the kids who are clearly gifted with language. This can be quite painful for me, like a soccer coach deciding not to always play her most talented players, but I know it is the right thing — I cast three to four kids in each principal role, and each time I have found it essential to have a balance of those who play Shakespeare easily and quickly and those for whom it is an uphill struggle. More often than not, at the risk of sounding pious, the gifted learn more from the struggler's journey to triumph than the struggler learns from witnessing the sustained excellence of the "gifted." This process has never been about the most professional kid's Shakespeare I could produce (and with the kids I have seen, that could be easily done), but has only ever been about guiding children through a life-changing, thought-freeing, language-expanding process that empowers, heals, and transforms at the emotional roots, and, while we are at it, trying for the best show we can put on.

Although drama teachers and parents have been doing some version or other of Shakespeare with kids for hundreds of years, doing this in Toronto, Ontario, Canada in 2007 makes this process seminal. According to the U.N., Toronto is currently the most ethnically and culturally diverse city in the world, and this multicultural breadth has been well expressed in our Shakespeare productions. Challenges and opportunities abound, and the rich diversity of the cast has always made the process that much more rewarding. At the blizzard meeting, the children wrote down their names, emails, and special talents, which means anything from juggling to Middle Eastern belly dancing to singing to speaking Cantonese or Greek. As a director, I use every tool I am presented with, and the extraordinary talents that the children bring with them are theatrical gold, compensating for the inevitable learners' stumbles.

Leslie, a single mother of a boy in grade six, walked me home. In a state of great excitement, she told me that she had made herself a promise last year that she would help us in any way we needed despite a hectic schedule, because, she said, not only did her son Jack have a great time doing Sir Andrew Aguecheek in *Twelfth Night*, but "it literally changed his life, Judith, it made him understand he had a right to BE, that he EXISTED in this world, he belonged, and he has been talking of nothing else since last summer. He almost DIED when he woke up with laryngitis; he thought you might not cast him." I answered that, of course Jack would be cast; I have never turned any child away from my Shakespeare productions. I eschew the whole idea of auditions for children: All children can perform Shakespeare. The problem always lies with the adult's reverent and fearful attitude to the text, not with the children. And anyway, I told her, even if Jack hadn't been able to speak the language, it has NEVER been about the most professional production we could do; it has been about finding the Shakespeare in every child, and creating the most fascinating, enlightening, deeply therapeutic, lasting, and rocking production that we can. And I know that is what we have done.

Over the last five years, I have adapted and directed *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *King Lear*, and *Twelfth Night* in two elementary and one middle school in Toronto, Ontario with a company of anywhere from forty to sixty children, aged six to thirteen. I've worked with an enormous range of children — from the "gifties" (children designated as gifted by the school system) and children with an astonishing natural facility for Shakespeare, violin, baseball, physics and just about everything else, to the persecuted "loser" who couldn't raise his eyes from the floor or speak above a mumble. The repressive social hierarchy in which we live in North America begins to form in elementary school and rapidly becomes nearly immutable. Having three older children who had already been through school, I saw my Shakespeare work as emergency socio-educational work. If social patterns established in school are not disrupted by a life-changing event such as a play, they may become engraved — which means, for many kids, being permanently disabled.

As a playwright, I am drawn to extreme characters, and children are human beings in a blessed state: The music of their souls is in their voices, and the light of their beings is still in their eyes; by grade eight the music and light begin to fade rapidly, so the right time to intervene is in elementary school. I have worked with a head-banger with a genius for math, but zero social skills, who wanted to be a King; I have worked with children whose mother or father had just died, others with a parent coping with cancer. I have worked with an Iraqi refugee whose extended family was trapped in Baghdad, as well as a West Indian Canadian "brainiac" with borderline Aspergers Syndrome who fell in love with Malvolio's yellow stockings and big green cape and discovered that he had a comic genius that earned him a standing ovation; the Italo-Canadian girl with the beautiful voice and smothering mother who wanted to turn the Shakespeare experience into a franchise and make lots of money until her daughter showed her that the value of the experience was not something that could be spent. There was the girl whose mother was transitioning from female to male and whose father was stalking them (people who didn't know her thought she was a boy, and while she wanted to be cast as a female, she would only wear pants and cried when a skirt was mentioned); the electrifyingly talented brother and sister twins with two Mums who had recently divorced; the boy who needed a psychiatrist to speak to him every morning before he could go to school; and Z., who disrupted, yelled over and over that he was BORED, insulted me and everyone else, and threatened to walk out at dress rehearsal because he wanted to go on a field trip to the ROM (Royal Ontario Museum); the shy, almost mute, Chinese Canadian girl whose mother had been a celebrated classical actress in Beijing. I have gently guided, cajoled, walked out of rehearsal, and even yelled, ironically, begging them to be quiet, until I had no voice — each time I have at one point despaired and prepared to shut down the show, each time the children came through, and each time the show has been a raging, blazing, extraordinary success.

So, a snowstorm on the day of the first meeting is fitting.

Each time, the process of working with children on Shakespeare has revealed to me a layer of meaning in the plays that I had not seen before, partly because several of the children were already, at eleven years old, more knowledgeable about the details and names and dates of the plays than I was — I personally dive more deeply into the world of a play every time I work on it and find moments and insights I had not discovered previously — and partly because, in answer to the parents' questions, I needed to determine why doing each play would be somehow educational or enlightening for the children.

II

Of primary importance to me is that the process of rehearsing and performing a Shakespeare play moves learning from a tedious, demoralizing passivity to an empowering, galvanizing ACTIVITY. Passive learning is only successful for a minority, but all creatures learn by doing because the doing is empowering; the learners own the process and feel that they are creating it for the first time, rather than being receptacles. What is learned passively is soon forgotten; what is learned by doing stays forever.

For example, when a few concerned parents chastised me for choosing *King Lear* rather than a comedy, I told them that not only were the comedies not funny to me and not funny for children (much of the humor is *Animal House* or *American Pie* lewd and stupid), but in my opinion, they had little to say about what matters in the lives of children, especially the diverse group of young Canadians that would be presenting the play, which included not only children who were third, fourth, and fifth-generation Canadian, but also new immigrants and even refugees from the transition houses down the street from the school.

King Lear is a celebration of children. Contrary to popular perception, I told the surprised parents, it is not about old age and dying, but about children — their absolute honesty without regard for consequence (Cordelia's "I cannot heave / My heart into my mouth" [*King Lear*, 1.1.91-92]) and their breathtaking capacity for divine forgiveness (both Cordelia with Lear and Edgar with Gloucester at the Dover Cliffs). This divine forgiveness is a sharp reminder that none of us deserves our children, and some less than others. Lear is not an exceptional older adult; he is only one of the many shallow, selfish, egotistical, greedy, driven adults who do not deserve the children they have. Our children, the play argues, are our only hope, and we must learn from them. That is why the play is profoundly empowering for children to play. The theme of disguise is made for children: Edgar becomes Poor Tom, a persona in which he can rant and rave and hop around and live like an animal; Kent becomes the loyal servant Caius, so that he can stay with Lear, who is too solipsistic to recognize him (this latter reminds me of my daughter's friend, whose estranged father didn't recognize her when she was his cashier at a Loblaws supermarket).

It was Winter 2001. My daughter was in crisis. Eleven years old, with two charming, clever and lovable little girls below her and two surly, brilliant, and

often cruel teens above her, she was the middle child, different from all the others. She was flailing, almost drowning at the smart bilingual, alternative school in which her sibs had thrived. Her classmates were brainy, athletic, inventive, good-looking, and brutally judgmental, blatantly contemptuous of anyone who could not keep up. They were cookie-cutter conformists, ostensibly taught to be kind and inclusive, but they had read the subtext of the adult lectures and quickly understood that beneath the pious instruction was this reality: In actuality, they had license to be manipulative, exclusive, vicious, strategic, ruthless, and unrelentingly cruel. As long as they held bake sales for hungry children in Africa and marched in support of the Kyoto Accord with their parents, it didn't matter that they were engaged in psychological torture at school on a daily basis.

Most of them were reading *Harry Potter* by grade two or three. My daughter, although extremely insightful, bright, and funny, has a learning disability. She couldn't really read well until she was in grade five; she couldn't confidently tell time until grade six and did not learn her timetables at all in elementary school. She was always, ALWAYS one of the two or three not invited to birthday parties, even by our old friends. I phoned one of these friends once and begged them, with my voice shaking, to please include our daughter. They didn't seem to understand what devastation their negligence had caused. It was a painful, awful time, but persecuted kids are heroic, and our daughter refused to change schools. Her choice was based on a combination of hope that she would be able to make things better, some awe-inspiring bravery, and a bit of the conviction that the devil you know is better than the one you don't.

I felt shameless rage at her cruel schoolmates, and even more at their ignorant, uncaring parents. Why couldn't the other kids see what a gentle, kind, insightful, joyful, funny as hell, generous, life-affirming creative ball of fire she was? I wanted them to applaud her bravery in facing both very challenging academics and cruel and judgmental peers. I wanted them to see that she was capable of great things, things that they would have lots of trouble with, such as . . . playing Shakespeare. After all, Shakespeare is about heroism, bravery, and struggling with adversity. His characters are often fighting for their lives, their dignity, and their convictions, just as my daughter was.

I knew that my long-suffering, partly learning-disabled daughter would swim powerfully and easily in Shakespeare's turbulent waters. She was extraordinarily intuitive, often seeing truths that the rest of us missed. She had a superb sense of rhythm and idiomatic English, she always chose the most luscious, onomatopoeic words, she was a person living in the PRESENT, and despite what she had been through, acted without self consciousness when on stage or in front of a camera. (She was very photogenic for that reason, also, whereas many kids tighten their faces under scrutiny and become someone else.) My daughter had also shown magical powers of insight from a very early age and could see through the masks that people wore. She was the child who shouted out that the emperor had no

clothes, often speaking painful truths. The juicy sound of the words, the flow, would fill her and move her along in the play, like a rushing current — and so I volunteered to direct *Hamlet* at the school. It was essentially a rescue mission for my daughter and all the other outsiders.

When people asked me WHY I had undertaken such an enormous and stressful project, I gave them the secondary reason I was doing this. I said it was because it was my turn to give back to the school. And this was absolutely true. I had never been on the parent council, as I was decidedly not a committee person, nor been one to decorate the gym or drive the baseball team around. I had been a nursing, working mother for almost thirteen years. I still had fairly young children, but I knew it was time for me to step up and make a serious contribution. My teaching schedule at the University of Guelph allowed me to take an hour and a half, twice a week, for four months, with a full ten days or so in June, to direct *Hamlet*. My university supported and encouraged us in lending our practice to the community.

As far as my daughter went, my hunch was correct. After some resistance and a few stumbles, she rose to the challenge, flourished, and triumphed as Gertrude. She would never allow me to explain the meaning of her words to her, as I did to the others — she protected her instinct and had faith that she would sense, or "FEEL the meaning," as an eight-year old actor said to me recently, rather than knowing it through analysis. She fell into the words, spoke the words, absorbed them into her body, filtered them through her personal experience, and then suddenly understood everything to be probably the most powerful actor on the stage. She fell into her words as Ophelia had fallen into the brook:

There is a willow grows [aslant] the brook
That shows his hoary leaves in the glassy stream
Therewith fantastic garlands did she make
Of crow-flowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples . . . (*Hamlet*,
5.1.166-69)

But long it could not be, but that her garments, heavy with their drink, pulled the poor wretch from her melodious lay to "muddy death."

This was the outsider speaking to her classmates, telling them through Shakespeare that they had driven her, like Ophelia, to despair — that even though she may have appeared to be happy (just as Ophelia sings old songs whilst she is drowning), she was dying. She pointed out that they had watched her losing her wits and drowning in sorrow just as dispassionately as Gertrude had watched Ophelia. But most importantly, my daughter had not disappeared under the water as Ophelia did — she had survived and now risen above their persecution by leaving behind her old, sweet, naive victim-self in the stream. Now she was powerful, able to shape words into eloquence, with an articulate distance. They couldn't make her cry or feel badly about herself anymore. She was a Queen.

The ascension and empowering of my daughter and a few other outsiders was, for me, the most gratifying result of the experience of doing *Hamlet* at Hawthorne School. There was the girl I mentioned earlier, whose mother was in gender transition from lesbian woman to man. This girl was usually mistaken for a boy, and although she wanted to play Rosencrantz as a female in the play, she cried when the costume designer brought out a dress. Naturally, we allowed her to wear a kind of feminine costume with pants. This child was in the process of discovering the difference between physiological gender and gender performance. Her work on the role undoubtedly helped her think more clearly about her struggle with gender. Are Rosencrantz and Guildenstern concerned friends, or traitors? Did they betray Hamlet, or themselves? Was her mother "betraying" her gender or doing what was right and true, following her instinct? Was she herself a loyal friend to herself, or a traitor? Was she "two-spirited," just as Rosencrantz and Guildenstern seem to be one friend in two bodies? Did they deserve their punishment? Was the process of working on my adaptation of *Hamlet* a pedagogical exercise? Yes, because pedagogy is less about attaining, than analyzing and using, information and because it is always about the discovery of the self as an agent in the world.

Before rehearsals began, I needed to write my adaptation. This performance couldn't be more than one hour and forty-five minutes or so, and *Hamlet*, is a three-and-a-half hour play. *King Lear* might even be four hours, and *Twelfth Night* is almost as long. In each case — with the exception of *Macbeth*, which needed very little adaptation at all in the writing — my adaptation consisted of lots of trimming and of building textual bridges to make sense of what was left. I have only had to actually write about twelve lines myself for this bridge building. I felt no need whatsoever to make the language simpler, to make the context of our own city or neighborhood recognizable, or to identify the characters with familiar figures. When working with children, I feel, it is important that the costuming be period, and never modern. Children need the distance of the language and the costume. They need to travel to another world to know their own world.

With each play, I began by typing out the play to see where I might need to cut or slightly revise for children aged nine to twelve. I was determined not to modernize the language — I had never seen this succeed. I had seen several children's Shakespeare adaptations and found all of them problematic. There was the director-friendly one in which there is one narrator, who is the best child reader, and the play itself is compressed to about forty-five minutes. Each character only needs to memorize about four of five lines of Shakespeare, with much of their lines being introduced (e.g., "and Romeo sighed and said, 'she speaks!']"). Although this is a convenient way of dealing with kids who have soccer games and swim lessons and no time to memorize or rehearse, I did not feel I had seen the play. I felt instead that I was watching a recital of a diluted, distorted retelling of the play. I decided that the kids were going to do Shakespeare — a shorter version, yes, but not diluted or sanitized.

The task of editing is simple with Shakespeare. Whole sections slide out with great ease; in *Hamlet*, for instance, the entire Fortinbras story line, although significant for helping adults understand the socio-political context of the play, is really not very important for kids aged nine to thirteen — or, I should say, because I was interested in the play from a psychological perspective, Fortinbras just didn't need to be there, and we didn't miss him at all. The lengthy speeches about the history of the conflict between Denmark and Norway, his whereabouts, and his intentions all disappeared without a discernible effect.

Another aspect that is easy to cut is Shakespeare's tendency to give us twenty-five examples or illustrations of a point where one or two will do. I would narrow the examples to one or two so that the actor could memorize the lines, understand them, and feel clever. I immediately cut the many lewd and vulgar lines and speeches, which meant cutting much of what Hamlet says to his mother in the closet scene — in fact, some of my favorite lines in the play:

Nay, but to live
In the rank sweat of an enseamed bed,
Stew'd in corruption, honeying and making love
Over the nasty sty . . . (*Hamlet*, 3.4.91-94)

I also had to cut almost all of what the Fool in *King Lear* says, most of the jokes between Sir Toby and Sir Andrew Aguecheek, and much, much more. There is a lot of tugging and topping and country matters in Shakespeare. I would have to be the one to explain the material, so I cut it rather than risk embarrassment or offense.

I did not cut any of the violence. Why? Because nothing animates a ten to twelve-year-old boy like a sword. Many of the boys who couldn't speak up or look anyone in the eye and had absolutely zero expression in their faces burst into beautiful life when given a sword and trained in a swordfight. The most delightful moment of our *King Lear* was probably the moment when Cornwall orders Gloucester's eyes to be taken out. I had Goneril and Regan each pluck out an eye and hold it aloft as if it were a ruby. At that moment, though it is not in the text, I had Edmund appear downstage and the three of them, along with the choir, began singing the song that the brilliantly talented Ben Stein had written as a setting for Edmund's speech, which concludes, "Stand up for Bastards," while the evil sisters joined Edmund in a brief, but sexy, formal dance. Because I not only kept the eye-yanking scene but exaggerated it, it took on a gleefully cartoonist aspect that made the action not just palatable, but fun for the kids. And my hope is that as they get older, when they read about torture, they may be able to truly absorb the lesson that hunger for power must never be under-estimated; it enables those afflicted by it to cut off all empathy with terrifying ease and to cause others to suffer horribly. They will reflect and see through the comic surface I provided in a way they were not ready to or able to when they were actually doing the Shakespeare. Other moments of violence, such as when Queen Gertrude drops dead from the poison drink meant for her son or when

Polonius is mistaken for Claudius and killed behind the arras, demonstrate the point that violence, particularly revenge, will always touch the innocent; the Toronto Boxing Day 2006 gang shooting of the fifteen-year old innocent bystander Jane Creba was prominent in my mind when imagining this scene.

Is it harmful for a twelve-year-old girl to play Ophelia's mad scene? To play "madness" (as opposed to truly experiencing mental illness) is a joy for a young actress, a release from all the common sense that is suffocating their fire and their creativity. Their eyes can be wild again, they can move their bodies in strange, jerky, ungraceful ways and twist and turn, screw up their faces, rub dirt all over their pretty dresses and pretty faces, and let their hair go wild, and crazy, and knotted; best of all, they can say what is forbidden, be disrespectful to those they have been taught must be deferred to (the Queen), and tell the truth: "My father is dead because of YOU!" It is a safe madness because it is manufactured. I am confident that at some point, possibly months or years after the production, the actress playing Ophelia will understand that strange behavior is not to be ignored. As Willie Loman's wife, Linda said in Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, "Attention must be paid."

I knew that in a way, expecting these sixty-odd kids to perform Shakespeare with three hours a week of rehearsal for a few months was like expecting them to all train for the four-minute mile or to learn a new language over the next few months. I wanted them to walk onto the stage as if they owned it, to gain control of their voices and bodies to communicate an idea, to understand multiple points of view (do we ever know Shakespeare's point of view?), to know the earthshaking, head-turning power of words, and to understand that each of them has the potential to communicate thoughts just as powerfully, poetically, and persuasively. I knew that I did not have time to explain everything in the play, as it was all we could do to just get through the play a couple of times, nail down the blocking and the most fundamental meaning of each scene. But what I learned from experience is that in the process of immersion, most of the children came to understand what they were saying. Of course, I would shout out the meaning quickly, and their parents would help them, but ultimately, they had to feel it in their bodies. Cleopatra pleads with the poisonous asp on her breast to hurry up and kill her: Untie "this knot intricate," she pleads (*Antony and Cleopatra*, 5.2.304-5). In elementary school, the "knot" that is the children's lives is rapidly forming, but they can still trace the knot to its beginnings and start over. I don't need to explain this to them, I don't have the time, and very few of them would understand even if I did explain it. The same few fully absorb the meanings they NEED to absorb, no matter how difficult the language, just by being in the play.

III

And since you know you cannot see yourself
 So well as by reflection, I, your glass,
 Will modestly discover to yourself,
 That of yourself which you yet know not of. (*Julius Caesar*, 1.2.67-70)

This is my leap of faith, and it has always been rewarded. Youth learn that the English language offers us infinite choice, of words extant and words that can be created, as Shakespeare, of course, created so many: radiant, zany, accused, barefaced, countless, courtship, exposure, fitful, fretful, gloomy, disgraceful, lonely, monumental, and thousands more. Phrases like "household word," "melted into thin air," "cold comfort," "heart of gold," and "flesh and blood."

When a kid gets a word "wrong," other kids are very quick to jump in with "THAT'S NOT A WORD." And it is a very short leap to "that's not a thought." Children become so terrified of opprobrium they won't think out of the carefully constructed box, because to jump out of the box is to jump into otherness, which is an undiscovered country. Death, for Hamlet, is "the undiscover'd country, from whose bourn / No traveller returns" (*Hamlet*, 3.1.78-79). That speech might be aimed at children aged nine to twelve. Like Hamlet, they are on the precipice of action; before asking if they can play soccer, for instance, they think through the consequences, and sometimes, the specter of rejection stops them cold: "Thus conscience does make cowards of us all, and thus the native hue of resolution is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought" (3.1.82-84). Words, words, words. Shakespeare is full of phrases that one wears like amulets that stay in the throat and lodge in the soul, phrases that pry our eyes and our minds open. This is when language becomes like the Force in Star Wars. It is there to be used, if one stumbles on the way. I wanted the kids to encounter that Force. I felt it was the most powerful tool I could humbly give them.

Each time I have directed a Shakespeare play, there has been a particular phrase from the play that became the unifying theme of our production. The theme of the Hawthorne *Hamlet* was a phrase I came across while adapting the play. In act 2, scene 2, Hamlet says: "I could be bounded by a nutshell, and count myself a king of infinite space — were it not that I have bad dreams" (2.2.254-56). In the middle school *Macbeth*, the unifying phrase was:

Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
 Clean from my hand? No, this my hand will rather
 The multitudinous seas in incarnadine,
 Making the green one red. (*Macbeth*, 57-60)

This latter made sense in working with twelve to fourteen-year olds because the play explores the resonating power of choice. When we betray our own ethics and do what we know to be wrong, we are haunted forever, and there is nothing that can remove our guilt. When children reach grade seven, we begin holding them responsible for their actions. And if they make the

choice to behave unethically in grade seven, the consequences are felt for a very long time. And in *King Lear*, our talismanic speech was:

Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,
That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,
How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides,
Your loop'd and window'd raggedness, defend you
From seasons such as these? O, I have ta'en
Too little care of this! Take physic, pomp,
Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel,
That thou mayst shake the superflux to them,
And show the heavens more just. (*King Lear*, 3.4.28-36)

This speech was the centerpiece of our production. Toronto has an enormous homeless population, many of whom freeze to death every winter. Most Torontonians have learned to ignore or step over the homeless, who sleep right on the downtown sidewalks. We do not ask them into our homes. We do not demand that they be taken care of. They are a nightmare that we have still to confront. Ben Stein set this speech to music. It was sung beautifully by the whole cast at the beginning of the play and at the time of the speech, and by the end of the play, the cast had a deep understanding of its meaning. In *Twelfth Night*, I would say the governing line was: "I have unclasp'd / 'To thee the book even of my secret soul" (1.4.12-13). When I read the above phrases, the earth stops turning for a moment. The blood rushes to my head and in my temporary madness, I feel I fully understand each play.

The quote from *Hamlet* — "I could be bounded by a nutshell, and count myself a king of infinite space — were it not that I have bad dreams" (2.2.254-56) — spoken in the largest sense to the earth, the tiny planet in the unimaginably endless universe, and in a slightly smaller sense, to living in Canada, to being an artist in Canada — when we do well here, we dream we are Regent of Our Arts, but the reverse is the nightmare attitude of other Canadians who believe you haven't made it unless your plays are on Broadway or your life is in Hollywood. The line speaks to the small-town Ontario where I grew up, every innocuous coffee shop and Dairy Queen and downtown corner saturated with meaning, at one time the most important place on earth to the school neighborhood (which is essentially a village within the city of Toronto, a diverse, welcoming, artistic village), to the classroom itself, to the smaller social groups, to the home, the kitchen, to the self: I could be bounded by a nutshell and count myself king of infinite space . . . were it not for my bad dreams.

The bad dreams can be interpreted in many ways; one interpretation is the prison of reputation, a particular evil in school. If someone is pegged as a nerd in grade one, the tag seems to stay on and on. Kids are imprisoned by their reputations in school, the culture of their families, and always by their inherent otherness — their "original sin," to use a Catholic term — and in the case of differently-abled kids, chubby kids, and visible minorities, by their obvious differences. Their iron-clad reputations are established the moment

they walk into the school. And if they don't break out of that prison of reputation, such as the one theatricalized by Jean Paul Sartre in his play *No Exit*, they will be pushed deeper and deeper into that particular hell; and often their attempts to break out are manifested in drug use and violent, misanthropic behavior.

Each group of kids allows me to see the play in a unique light and to interpret the play through their lives and their voices. In a later *Hamlet* production, a boy whose mother was going through treatments for breast cancer performed the part of Hamlet. Memorably, the closet scene, in which Hamlet's anger is manifest, was possibly an outlet for M.'s anger at the disease that was attacking his beloved mother, pulling her away from him, just as Claudius, a destructive, metastasizing force, is pulling Gertrude away from Hamlet. *Hamlet*, then, is about something different for every child that performs in the play. And so, for other plays, other characters.

In *King Lear*, Carol, a very shy, first generation Chinese Canadian girl, played Cordelia. Her mother, a once-famous actress, was extremely critical and would denigrate all her performances. Carol was terrified of her mother's judgment. When she uttered the famous lines, "I cannot heave my heart into my mouth" in response to King Lear's demand that she praise him and eloquently express her filial love in order to earn a portion of his land, it was a moment of true epiphany for Carol. Her mother might not have made the connection consciously but from my point of view, Carol saying to her mother that she would not and could not be what her mother wanted her to be and that she would respectfully, fearfully, but adamantly be herself, whatever the consequences.

A significant part of the success of these Shakespeare productions is the music that has been composed for each of them. In the first production, a teacher who happened to be a brilliant musician improvised, with some guidance and direction, underneath the action of the play, as well as, of course, during the transitions. He sat in on a few rehearsals, and I would suggest, for example, that he play under a certain speech, and always between scenes; he caught fire and brought an amazing energy and emotional power to the piece. The students let his responses flow through them so that there was a synergy. He was responding to the Shakespeare musically, and that guided the children in their own response. Subsequently, two composers, Bill Thompson and Ben Stein, who also had a child at the school, created brilliant and awe-inspiring music, set to Shakespeare's words, for the children to sing. For example, Hamlet's "To be or not to be" speech, first spoken by Hamlet, was then sung by the complete choir to a melody created by Mr. Thompson. The singing of this song to a memorable and emotionally loaded melody saturated the children's consciousnesses. They understood the meanings layered into the speech in a way that I don't think they ever could have done without the music. The choir sang approximately twelve to fifteen songs for each play, and the children were humming the songs all summer long.

Before I decided to do *Hamlet* at Palmerston School, I did a practice run — the first Palmerston Enrichment Cluster — a couple of hours a week with ten to twelve children working towards a ten-minute presentation for enrichment night. I decided to ask each child to bring one or two lines from Hamlet's "To be or not to be" speech translated into their own ancestral language. We had TEN languages represented: Cantonese, Hindu, Norwegian, German, Gaelic, a Ghanaian tribal language, Greek, Italian, French, and Arabic. We painted the phrases in each language on huge sheets of white paper and put them up all over the gym. I chose the speech because all the exquisite words, the slowly evolving argument with the self about the nature of death, move towards the revelation that self-criticism and over-thinking blunt impulse and skew instinct. This is something that children need not just to hear, but to believe. In this case, Hamlet's impulse is to end his life, and he declares himself a weakling for not doing so, but I discovered that the children tended to disregard this feeling and move directly to the revelation that it is a good thing to just ACT — that ACTING is positive and life-affirming, and that thinking too much equals doubting oneself. On the other hand, if your impulse is NOT a good one, start thinking and you will think and talk yourself out of it. So like an optical illusion, Hamlet's most famous lines work both ways, and kids know this.

From the beginning, I had to work on their voices. Projection, or fullness of the voice, is a very slow process. Children who have been taught that their voice, their opinion, their feelings don't matter, whether through outright criticism, intimidation, fracturing of the family, brutal siblings, or just living in a crazy grown-up world, have tiny, strained voices. All I can do is help them begin the process of freeing their voices, and thus strengthening their selves. Working on a Shakespeare play with kids has always been, for me, a psycho-therapeutic process rather than a lesson in entertainment or high culture. In fact, it is quite out of character for me to choose to work on Shakespeare. Although I am, like every other drama nerd, besotted with his sublime poetry, earth-shaking insights, and deep compassion for the underdog, I am very disturbed by his classism, sexism, racism, empire-boasting, and British jingoism. We never really can be sure of his political positions, but we do know that he couldn't have survived without the endorsements of royalty and the ruling class and therefore had to pander to them in one way or another. Kate's final speech in *Taming of the Shrew* comes to mind, as do the dreadful portraits of Caliban in *The Tempest* and of Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice*. No matter how progressive directors and actors try to spin these characters, the intentions of the author are clear.

So why would I choose to do Shakespeare with children? I do avoid the problematic plays I have mentioned, and I look at the work the way I looked at the fairy tales I read to my children. Somehow the larger, psychoanalytic value of the stories, which are usually about the triumph of the undervalued (with the help of loyal friends), outweighed the possible harm done by a little girl reading about cruel stepmothers and girls whose dreams are totally fulfilled by a Prince kissing them back to life from a coma. Shakespeare is the same. The searing insights, the unparalleled use of the English language,

and the character movement all add up to a positive. And somehow, the distance the kids have to travel to understand and utter Shakespearean language gives them a theatrical strength that contemporary language does not.

IV

James, 11, had to talk to his psychiatrist every morning in order to find the strength to get dressed, go to school, and face his tormentors. James spoke in a strange, formal manner, was persnickety, knew just about everything, wore his hood and his coat zipped up to his chin even on warm spring days, and would hold his hand up for twenty minutes in a rehearsal and then when I stopped rehearsal to call upon him, would remark that there was a piece of lint on my sweater. He was decidedly uncool; the other kids steered clear of him in my presence, and out of my presence, apparently tormented him. It took extraordinary bravery for James to come to school, like going into an enemy camp. But he loved drama, especially Shakespeare, so his parents brought him to the first meeting and offered to help. They were very caring, even hovering over him. He read very well, but with a hugely comical exaggerated theatricality. I decided NEVER to say the word "subtle" with James because after the joyless, dead, hesitant readings of so many of the others, his full understanding of the meaning, his love of words, his exuberance and life, although way, way over the top, was a joy. We were doing *Hamlet*, so naturally I cast him as Polonius: wise and yet foolish, a devoted family man, always thinking, always strategizing and yet walking foolishly into dangerous situations; an acrobat with words, sometimes skipping, sometimes falling on his face. His famous "to thine own self be true" speech, although slyly mocking parental advice, happens to be very good advice, and the best advice for our James, who was an imploding, emerging, terrified self in danger of twisting permanently in on himself and shutting the door on his boundless potential. When James played Polonius, he began to see himself as not only an expert on Shakespeare, which, being a gifted kid, he was (he pointed out many things that I missed in the text and understood every reference, the historical background and so forth), but also as a wise parent, someone who, although lovably goofy, was respected by his son and daughter, both played by the most popular kids in the school: "Give thy thoughts no tongue, nor any unproportion'd thought his act. . . . Those friends thou hast, grapple them unto thy soul like hoops of steel . . . Above all, to thine own self be true" (*Hamlet*, 1.3. 59-78).

Z., 9, a "giftie" about two feet tall, was an excellent reader of Shakespeare, but completely unmanageable, rude, disruptive, and prone to repeating bizarre phrases over and over; he became Edmund in *King Lear*. There were many times I considered asking him to withdraw for the sake of the other kids, but I decided to persist. He told me that he would not be at the dress rehearsal because his class was going on a field trip to the ROM (a hugely popular museum in downtown Toronto) and he didn't want to miss it. I told him that he had signed a contract, and that this was unacceptable. His mother was called and came to the school. I pleaded with her and tried to

explain the importance of a dress rehearsal, not just for Z. and me, but for all the cast members. I said that I would happily take him to the ROM myself, the next day. His mother glowered at me and yelled, claiming it would destroy him not to go on the field trip. I said that if he didn't come to rehearsal, he was out. He came, the mother staring daggers at me, Z. sobbing hysterically. As soon as we stepped into the rehearsal room (the gym), I handed him a large plastic sword that someone had bought at the Dollar Store, and he was transformed. Forgetting all about the field trip, he threw on his beautiful velvet cape, jumped on stage, and began Edmund's famous "Stand up for Bastards!!" speech. As the choir sang the song that our brilliant composer Ben Stein had made from the speech, Z. pirouetted and did stage leaps around the stage with his cape and his sword, bowed when given a stranding ovation, and then ran offstage to find his mother and sit on her lap for the rest of the performance so that he wouldn't disrupt the rest of the show. From then on, he would be on time and show respect for others.

I cannot but react to the kids through their finding Shakespeare in these unexpected ways. When I saw Z. connect to the text, I knew that there was hope for him — a will, a balance, a driving need to burst out of his imprisoning body and reputation. Grade school and high school and Shakespeare are all about honor and reputation. Hermione, in *The Winter's Tale*, says:

For life, I prize it
As I weigh grief, which I would spare: for honor,
'Tis a derivative from me to mine,
And only that I stand for. (*Winter's Tale*, 3.2.42-45)

Our reputation is our imprint upon the earth. When the kids have performed Shakespeare brilliantly, they leave a magnificent footprint in the here and now. And whatever may happen in their lives, that imprint cannot ever be taken away from them. In *Twelfth Night*, Orsino says to Caesario (Viola): "I have unclasp'd / To thee the book even of my secret soul" (*Twelfth Night*, 1.4.13-14). That line speaks to me about the process of artistic creation. When the kids let even a smidgen of their secret souls into the role they are playing, great acting happens, even if technique is almost non-existent. *Twelfth Night* is a play about the revealing of our true selves, our souls, apart from our bodies. Viola says to Olivia: "Make me a willow cabin at thy gate / And call upon my soul within the house" (1.5.268-69). Sebastian, after meeting Olivia and feeling her love for his twin aimed at him, says:

This is the air, that is the glorious sun,
This pearl she gave me, I do feel 't and see 't,
And though 'tis wonder that enwraps me thus,
Yet 'tis not madness. (4.3.1-4)

Twelfth Night is also a play about the ecstasy that is love, about the undeniable, undefinable power of love. Sebastian is conceding that love is somewhat like madness, but is asserting that it is not madness. Nothing is

more real or more urgent. And, indeed, just because a grade-five crush is pre-sexual, does not make it any less intense than adult romantic love.

R. came running up to me, frantic, at a rehearsal: "Sorry I haven't memorized all my lines because my mother has insomnia because her boyfriend broke up with her, and she's going to lose the house, and she wants to get back to her first boyfriend, the one I really liked but he isn't returning her calls, so she was up all night crying in my bed, and I have to take care of her." She was only ten, and her mother was only twenty-six, and despite all the stresses in her life, R. was a dazzling Olivia, playing the brilliantly witty, hyper-organized, in-control person she may have wished her mother to be. J. and K., twins who have two mums who subsequently separated, played Viola and Sebastian. In *Twelfth Night*, a play about the construction of gender disguised as a gentle romantic comedy, Olivia is head over heels in love with Viola, Viola loves Orsino, Orsino loves Olivia, and Antonio loves Sebastian — this is a very gay play! Sadly, even in the most progressive communities, in a country where gay marriage is now legal, within elementary school culture, the word "gay" still produces giggles. The twins, although popular, were not about to scold or lecture anybody. It was the process of learning and performing the play that stopped all the giggling. The twins were affirmed and empowered by performing the twins in the play.

The Malvolio story line in *Twelfth Night* is sometimes played as pure comedy, but I have heard of productions in which Malvolio is so deeply humiliated by the bullying that he hangs himself. In fact, a student at our school did try to hang himself after an anti-bullying workshop. This tells me that the workshops are worse than useless; they are dangerous. Doing this play, by contrast, gives us sharp insight into the process of such humiliation, which is an everyday occurrence at school. In the beginning, we are on the side of the teasers because Malvolio is a self-important boor. When the teasing turns to false representation and physical humiliation, we then see the ugliness of the event and feel empathy for Malvolio. The playing out of this nasty journey teaches children in a way that no twenty-minute "just say no to bullying" presentation ever could. They see clearly that what began as essentially a flirting, bonding experience for Maria and Sir Toby and Sir Andrew has become a living hell for the object of their fun. They had successfully othered or objectified Malvolio and therefore treated him as if his life was worthless. This is the very chilling subplot of what seems like a benign comedy about mix-ups in love.

The kids rarely articulated what they had learned. But I absolutely know that they have. My nine-year old daughter, who has been in three of the productions, told me that although some of the kids didn't really understand what they were saying, even after I explained it, eventually, after doing it enough and being a part of the whole, they all could "feel what it means"; she looked at me and repeated, "They FEEL the MEANING." They don't need to put what they feel into words.

Not yet.

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Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation*. New York and London: Routledge, 2006. xviii + 232 pp. ISBN (hardcover) 0-415-96794-5. ISBN (paperback) 0-415-96795-3.

Linda Hutcheon is a marvellous definer and synthesizer. Her works on metafiction (1980), parody (1985), postmodernism (1988), and irony (1994), among many others, have offered indispensable, far-reaching, and nuanced discussions of key terms and concepts of the contemporary literary and theoretical landscape. *A Theory of Adaptation* (2006) similarly looks at a term much bandied about, but not always appreciated: the widespread phenomenon of narrative elements overflowing the boundaries of their generic forms, morphing into other structures, or taking up residence in new material environments.

Shakespeareans, of course, recognize the appropriation of existing texts as a time-honored aspect of Shakespeare's own creativity, and readers of *Borrowers and Lenders* know only too well that the transformation of Shakespeare across nations, cultures, languages, genres, and media has in recent years reached flood proportions, with an accompanying rise in the study of such transformations. Such readers, who share the sheer pleasure Hutcheon takes in all sorts of adaptations and her desire to rescue them from the denigration they regularly encounter, are therefore not the primary audience for *A Theory of Adaptation*. They do not need to be convinced that adaptations are "second without being secondary" (Hutcheon 2006, 9), though they can appreciate the author's impulse to offer a coherent account of this phenomenon. In the context of the present issue of *Borrowers and Lenders*, the case of Canada — where, it can be argued, it is through adaptation that Canadians have encountered Shakespeare — offers a lens through which to consider the usefulness of a general theory of adaptation and its relationship to the specificity of Canadian Shakespeares.

Hutcheon's reach is extensive. In keeping with her task, she is purposefully inclusive, insisting on the pervasiveness of adaptation and pushing her discussion to embrace a full range of genres and media with examples that come from many countries, languages, and cultures. She does not follow adaptation into the hidden crannies of allusion and citation that, with respect to Shakespeare, Richard Burt calls Schlockspeare — "mass media-

driven ephemera of the trivial and discardable," including such things as advertising, cigar brands, gift wrapping, greeting cards, shopping bags, T-shirts, beer labels, rubber duck bath toys, or business management guides (2002, 15, 5). She does, however, insist upon going beyond the more frequently discussed relationship between movies and novels to examine the to-ing and fro-ing among "videogames, theme park rides, Web sites, graphic novels, song covers, operas, musicals, ballets, and radio and stage plays" (Hutcheon 2006, xiv), including even historical enactments and virtual reality experiments. This broad reach, as the present issue of *Borrowers and Lenders* suggests, is perhaps especially unsurprising in the Canadian context (out of which Hutcheon writes), where the ongoing Canadian Adaptations of Shakespeare Project (CASP) and the "Shakespeare — Made in Canada" exhibition (January-June 2007) embrace not only written and performative modes of adaptation, but also the computer game *'Speare* and other popular culture forms.

For Hutcheon, adaptations are interpretive and creative acts that retain the aura of the adapted text and contain within them a palimpsestic doubleness. They are "deliberate, announced, and extended revisitations of prior works" (Hutcheon 2006, xiv), not replications or reproductions, but rather repetitions with variation. Embracing the postructuralist redefinition of textuality that insists on the intimate interpenetration of the adapted text and the adaptation, she refuses to prioritize an "original" and resists the hierarchizing of genres and media. In addition, the motives of adaptation are complex, and the pleasures of its reception many. Hutcheon therefore insists upon considering adaptations *as adaptations* (an italicized phrase that frequently recurs), even though those unfamiliar with or unable to recognize the adapted text in the adaptation can still appreciate the adaptation as an autonomous work. She also discusses adaptation as not only a product, but also a process of interaction and negotiation with the adapted text. Such an approach to adaptation will be familiar to readers of Richard Burt (2002), Christy Desmet (1999), Daniel Fischlin and Mark Fortier (2000), and many others who have, in more narrowly focused work, developed its theoretical and practical implications at greater length and in greater detail than Hutcheon is able to do, given the extensive reach of her book.

To impose some order on this wonderfully proliferating mass of material, Hutcheon engages the task she has set herself in an interrogative mode. In the organization of her book she draws upon the familiar journalistic questions, each of which is used to define and map a part of the total field she examines: What? (Forms), Who? Why? (Adapters), How? (Audiences), Where? When? (Contexts). Such parsing of adaptation and isolation of its elements in individual chapters allows her to cast her net wide and put multiple forms of adaptation side by side, though it also lends itself to fragmentation, with frustratingly brief descriptions of the formal elements of multiple examples and discussions of different aspects of a single adaptation appearing in different chapters. By way of compensation, three sections under the rubric "Learning from Practice" offer more in-depth discussions of successive adaptations. In the chapter on Forms, she

considers adaptations of Herman Melville's *Billy Budd* as a Broadway play, as a film version of the play, and as Benjamin Britten's opera; in the chapter on Adapters, she focuses on treatments of the historical narrative of sixteen Carmelite nuns from Compiègne, France who faced the guillotine in 1794 as an epistolary novella, as a film scenario that eventually resulted in the film *Dialogue des Carmélites*, as a stage play called *Dialogues des Carmélites*, and as an opera by Francis Poulenc; and in the chapter on Contexts, she discusses the multiple incarnations of the Carmen story.

It is in the juxtaposition of different kinds of adaptation that the originality of Hutcheon's approach lies. For example, Chapter 2, called "What? (Forms)," describes the gamut of moves to and from and between print, performance, and interactive forms. For the confines of genre and medium, Hutcheon substitutes a seemingly simple division of adaptations according to what she calls their modes of engagement — telling, showing, or interacting, a concept she revisits in greater depth in the chapter on Audiences. Such a formulation excitingly implies a sensorium of adaptational experience, potentially a rich field for further research. There remains much to be learned about the physiology and psychology of reception, and what it is about different modes of engagement that contributes to the different experience of an adapted text and its adaptation. Shakespeare scholars are well placed to contribute to this discussion, especially with respect to the specificities of theatrical performance, which is more multi-channelled than Hutcheon is able, in a brief space, to acknowledge. As Daniel Fischlin and Marc Fortier write, "Theatrical adaptation is an intertextual apparatus, a system of relations and citations not only between verbal texts, but between singing and speaking bodies, lights sounds, movements, and all other cultural elements at work in theatrical production" (2000, 7).

Most theories of adaptation, according to Hutcheon, assume that the story (the *fabula*) is the common denominator. Hutcheon, of course, recognizes that adapters may well select narrative fragments or such individual elements of an adapted work as characters or themes on which to focus, and recognizes as well differences between different genres and media and the importance of motives of adaptation and contexts of creation and reception. Nevertheless, perhaps due to lack of space, her privileging of narrative elements, even in the extended "Learning from Practice" sections, tends to flatten out the sense of how adaptations, especially theatrical adaptations, communicate. Also, her focus on story leads her to exclude from her definition elaborations of elusive but important resonances, which she dismisses as "spirit," "tone," or "style" (Hutcheon 2006, 10) as well as, citing Marjorie Garber (2003, 73-74), such things as sequels and prequels: "There is a difference between never wanting a story to end . . . and wanting to retell the same story over and over in different ways. With adaptations, we seem to desire the repetition as much as the change" (Hutcheon 2006, 9). In the case of a Canadian work such as *Harlem Duet*, a "rhapsodic blues tragedy" written by Djanet Sears to "exorcise [the] ghost" of Shakespeare's *Othello* and "[to explore] the effects of race and sex on the lives of people of

African descent" (Sears 1998, 14), it is "change" — the story that Shakespeare didn't write — that offers a necessary reflection on the one that he did. Sears imagines for Othello a first wife named Billie (Sibyl) whom — in scenes set in 1860, 1928, and contemporary Harlem — he leaves for a white woman, of whom we only see "brief glimpses of a bare arm and a waft of light brown hair" (47). In addition, *Harlem Duet* accomplishes its cultural work not only through its very remote riff on the "story" of Shakespeare's play, but also through complex musical arrangements of blues, jazz, and gospel music, voice-over readings of documents such as the American Declaration of Independence, the Emancipation Proclamation, or Langston Hughes's poem "Harlem," and the voices of Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, and Paul Robeson, among others.

While the necessarily brief treatment of individual works inevitably disappoints, I particularly enjoyed the sections in which Hutcheon gets down to the nitty gritty of adaptation. In Chapter 3, which focuses on Adapters, for example, she disentangles the complexity of relationships and roles in those forms of adaptation — such as film, television, and stage performance — that are of necessity collaborative, discussing, in the case of film, the contributions of screenwriter, composer, designer, cinematographer, actor, editor, and, of course, director. I found fascinating her discussion of the legal constraints upon adaptation and the relationship between adaptations and copyright law. And I found refreshing her willingness to swim against the critical current in reinstating intentionality as central to the process of adaptation:

The examination of the different versions of the nuns' tale . . . suggests that the political, aesthetic, and autobiographical intentions of the various adapters are potentially relevant to the audience's interpretation. They are often recoverable, and their traces are visible in the text . . . [A]daptation teaches that if we cannot talk about the creative process, we cannot fully understand the urge to adapt and therefore perhaps the very process of adaptation. We need to know "why." (Hutcheon 2006, 107)

By situating Shakespeare adaptation in a broader field, *A Theory of Adaptation*, which cites Shakespearean examples only occasionally, reminds us that Shakespeare is not always "Shakespeare." In the case of the complex postcoloniality of Canada and Québec, however, one might ask whether Shakespeare can ever not be "Shakespeare." As Denis Salter has written, "For postcolonial actors [and one might say the same of postcolonial readers and spectators], Shakespearean texts are not value-free, atemporal, transcendent masterpieces that can yield up their meanings through direct and transparent . . . readings" (1996, 114). Indeed, Irena Makaryk suggests that we "categorize the hundreds of adaptations of Shakespeare as distinctly Canadian examples of what is 'mainstream': a text that simultaneously both embraces and rejects classical literary models, a text that is both here and elsewhere" (2002, 37). In Canada, and especially in Québec, where language — and in the case of English, Shakespeare — has been perceived as an

agent of power, and where thinking about national identity remains a recurring preoccupation, adaptation participates in the combination of resistance, accommodation, and negotiation that characterizes Canadian cultural life. Shakespeare adaptations in Québec, such as Robert Gurik's *Hamlet, prince du Québec* (1968) or *Les Reines* by Normand Chaurette (1991), and in Canada, such as Sears's *Harlem Duet* (1998) or Ann-Marie MacDonald's *Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet)* (1990), have created their own canon because they have, of necessity, engaged the iconic status of Shakespeare. As Hutcheon trenchantly concludes, "Adaptations disrupt elements like priority and authority . . . But they can also destabilize both formal and cultural identity and thereby shift power relations" (2006, 174). While her general study cannot replace more focused and contextualized studies, it usefully reminds us that Shakespeare adaptation is part of a broader cultural phenomenon.

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