

# 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

"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.

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*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."<sup>1</sup> I reconfigure this effect in "hauntological"<sup>2</sup> 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,"<sup>3</sup> 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*.<sup>4</sup>

### 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.<sup>5</sup>

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*.<sup>6</sup>

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' archivizing 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.<sup>7</sup> 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.<sup>8</sup> 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."<sup>9</sup> 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 Nippissing, 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).<sup>10</sup> 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.<sup>11</sup> 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"<sup>12</sup> 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,<sup>13</sup> 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 *inhumane* 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 Eurocentric Canadian cultural 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," Leanore 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>.
  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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