

# "Dave, come on": Indigenous Identities and Language Play in Yves Sioui Durand's *Hamlet-le-Malécite*

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[See table of contents](#)

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“Dave, come on”:  
Indigenous Identities and Language Play  
in Yves Sioui Durand’s  
*Hamlet-le-Malécite*

MICHÈLE LACOMBE

Être ou ne pas être? C’est la question qui se pose à nous, peuples autochtones de cette Terre. Échapperons-nous à l’hyper-consommation? Notre défi est celui de la survie identitaire: ouvrir de nouveaux champs d’expression pour faire échec à la commercialisation de nos cultures. Notre but est de transmettre une maîtrise, une éthique, qui protège nos valeurs à travers la puissance visionnaire de l’art qu’est le théâtre. Nous souhaitons bâtir des alliances inédites avec les maîtres autochtones des arts de la scène partout dans le monde.

— Yves Sioui Durand<sup>1</sup>

**H**AMLET-LE-MALÉCITE, WRITTEN by the Huron-Wendat playwright Yves Sioui Durand in collaboration with Jean-Frédéric Messier, has not received much critical attention, although the still unpublished play script is available to the public from the *Canadian Adaptations of Shakespeare Project* website.<sup>2</sup> Daniel Fischlin’s own essay in the volume *Shakespeare Made in Canada*, which he co-edited with Judith Nasby, includes an overview of French and Indigenous adaptations of Shakespeare, but like the *Canadian Adaptations* database, it understandably represents an “English Studies” point of reference in talking about Québécois and Indigenous literary work. The book’s epigraph cites Voltaire’s comment on Shakespeare, whom he stated was “a savage who had some imagination. He has written many good lines — but his pieces can please only at London and in Canada” (Fischlin, n. pag.) The *Canadian Adaptations* website’s prominent positioning of this quotation from Voltaire on its home page suggests that the project is meant as a riposte to this cavalier statement; its appearance at the top of the page in the entry on Sioui Durand’s work, however, merits unpacking. The citation’s multiple ironies are not really considered

from the standpoint of “les sauvages,” as the introductory paragraph of Fischlin’s essay for *Shakespeare Made in Canada* demonstrates:

Shakespeare is arguably one of the great iconic artists of all time in any field, any historical moment, and any culture — a beloved “universal” figure on par with the authors of the Popol Vuh, the enigmatic scripture of post-classic Mayan civilization; with the Kemetic artists of ancient Egypt who adorned the pyramids with hieroglyphs that give eloquent testimony to the deep learning of that culture; with the Yoruba and other African rhythmatisers whose sense of metrics and spirituality gave birth millennia later to jazz; and with a small elite of great Western artists like Michelangelo, da Vinci, Dante, Bach, Beethoven, James Joyce, Louis Armstrong, among others. (Fischlin 3)

While such a comparison is meant to be flattering to the various oral traditions with which the bard is compared, the effect of this statement, despite its italicizing of the word universal, is to erase the different political and cultural contexts that contribute to the place occupied in Europe and the Americas by documents such as the Popol Vuh, artists such as Louis Armstrong, and foundational texts such as Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*. Sioui Durand’s *La Conquête du Mexique* (first performed in 1999 and then published in 2001), for instance, revisits colonial history from the perspective of the Aztec calendar, as used by a sixteenth-century Spanish author and missionary intent on converting “the savages” to Catholicism. Jennifer Drouin’s recent entry on *Hamlet-le-Malécite* in the *Canadian Adaptations* database is more nuanced, despite a few minor errors (Attikamek is not “the Native Huron language,” for example, but that of another, Algonquin First Nation).<sup>3</sup>

That “the great tradition” embodied by Shakespeare, as opposed to Cree and Algonquin oral traditions for instance, was taught to Native children in residential school is mentioned by both Maria Campbell (Cree-Métis) and Yvette Nolan (Algonquin-Métis) in the context of their own mothers’ education, which included such exposure to Shakespeare’s works. From the perspective of their different generations and different backgrounds, Campbell and Nolan go on to discuss their own reading of Shakespeare’s plays as these relate to Indigenous literature.<sup>4</sup> For the Huron-Wendat Sioui Durand, “adapting” Shakespeare is precisely about power relations; despite ongoing efforts at cultural reclamation, for instance, the Huron language has been largely displaced

by French, and this in a world where the English language, associated with the “universal” poetry of Shakespeare, also functions as a vehicle of globalization. In an article by Solange Lévesque that cites the playwright at some length, Sioui Durand makes it clear that *Hamlet-le-Malécite* addresses how other First Nations, like non-Native Canadians and Québécois, are not always well informed about the Malécites. He suggests that “il existe, parmi les Amérindiens, un racisme interne face aux Malécites, nation méconnue originaire de la rivière Saint-Jean, au Nouveau Brunswick. J’ai écrit cette pièce pour briser le silence, qui est un symptôme de la perte culturelle, la trace d’un échec politique et historique” (Lévesque).<sup>5</sup> In this sense, the theatre ambitions of his Malécite character Dave — to play the title role of *Hamlet* — ironically underscore a lack of self-knowledge symptomatic of a malaise that all too often does not find a voice in “Indian country.” In the author’s words, “[Dave] veut jouer Hamlet sans savoir qu’il est lui-même déjà Hamlet. Il réalise peu à peu que sa propre histoire l’a abandonné dans un monde marqué par des intérêts corrompus” (Lévesque).

Dave’s situation, while capturing the dilemma of his own people, also comes to represent that of several other First Nations in Quebec, including the Huron-Wendat nation to which the author belongs. For Sioui Durand, the value system underpinning a culture runs deep. It is something not readily recognized by the Quebec government, he argues, or by the dehumanizing, homogenizing forces of globalization when it comes to understanding or respecting the relation between Indigenous culture and spirituality. In this context, he asks some pointed questions about Indigenous identities today:

Comment être amérindien? Qu’est-ce que je veux devenir? Je ne me sens pas soutenu par le Québec sur le plan culturel. Les valeurs sous-jacentes à une culture sont profondes et se transmettent au delà des codes, des images de l’identité. . . . C’est le signal d’une disparition de l’humanisme accélérée par le rouleau compresseur de la mondialisation. Tout devient matière, ressource, argent. Pour nous, tout était réservoir de spiritualité; nous avions une conscience planétaire. (Lévesque)

If *Hamlet-le-Malécite* does not paint a pretty picture, it is important to remember that decolonization entails confronting past injustices and breaking present silences in the collective life of First Nations now living in those places referred to as Canada or Quebec, depending upon

one's political viewpoint. Before developing the script for *Hamlet-le-Malécite* in Montreal in 2004, Sioui Durand worked further afield with Aboriginal youth in the Atikamekw community of Manawan, in 1996 adapting Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* to tell some of the stories they wished to dramatize. Ondinnok Theatre's co-founder Catherine Joncas describes *Sakipitcikan*, based on *Romeo and Juliet*, as a play that examines the impact of Western culture on Indigenous world views. Besides making use of creation stories based on encounters between spirit beings that manifest as animals and humans, *Sakipitcikan*'s frank discussion of alcohol and of sexual abuse anticipates some of the themes further developed in *Hamlet-le-Malécite*:

With *Sakipitcikan* we chose to adapt *Romeo and Juliet* because it is a myth about tragic love and of adolescent passion and these two themes were the concern of the group with whom we were working at the time. From the original play we kept the two feuding families. The father of the first family is a Man-fish, a giant pike who is a familiar character in the Atikamekw legends. He's poor, he drinks a lot, he neglects his wife and his children. He's lazy and funny. He's the father of Shupshac and of Frog. . . . The father of the second family is a Windigo, a cannibal spirit. He's rich and always wants more. He drinks also and has an attraction to very young girls. He became a cannibal spirit because he was abused as a child by the priests at the boarding school. He's the father of Romeo. And these two men have detested each other since their youth. Effectively, at the moment of their marriage — a collective marriage as the priests celebrated them in aboriginal communities — at the moment of their marriage, they were both drunk and each married the woman destined for the other. (Joncas)

Like *Hamlet-le-Malécite*, this earlier adaptation of Shakespeare allows the actors and audience to address specific issues within the history of colonialism, rather than simply talking about universal themes, although these adaptations are also concerned with human psychology in any setting. This use of Shakespeare emerges as one of a number of strategies for confronting the past as part of a process of healing and cultural renewal, directed at different audiences; both plays call for social transformation and political change. In this sense, *Hamlet-le-Malécite*, while more narrowly focused on the contemporary situation of youth in Montreal and the imaginary community of Kinogamish,

reveals continuity with, rather than a departure from, Sioui Durand's early plays, which are also concerned with different mythological and historical notions of time in Indigenous and Catholic-Western cosmologies. *Le Porteur des Peines du Monde* (first performed in 1985, published 1992), translated into English as *The Sun Raiser* and performed in Banff among other locales, also uses creation stories to bring together — *faute de mieux* — different approaches of North American First Nations to inter-tribal or pan-Indian perspectives. Like *La Conquête du Mexico*, which makes use of writings by the linguist and missionary Bernardo de Sahagún, *Le Porteur des Peines du Monde* speaks to different moments in colonial and Indigenous history, including the present. As do *Sakipitcikan* and *Hamlet-le-Malécite*.

In *Hamlet-le-Malécite*, Sioui Durand turns to the late 1960s and early 1970s, a moment associated with the latter stages of the Quiet Revolution in Quebec and with left-leaning and liberationist social and political movements, more generally, in Europe and the Americas. Sioui Durand's version of *Hamlet* also alludes to Leonard Pelletier and the American Indian Movement, which in the play are associated with the youthful idealism of one of his followers, Tony Bear, a Malécite "warrior" and Gertrude's first husband. This earlier, more promising moment in Native history is juxtaposed with a recent past marked by instances of corruption, exploitation, and abuse on the reserve of Kinogamish, where Gertrude's second husband, Claudius, forges alliances with Laerte (spelled without an *s* in French). Laerte, for his part, exemplifies a new generation of "Indian" businessmen skilled at navigating government bureaucracies in a technologically defined universe. Dave, Tony Bear's son, experiences a range of problems and dilemmas — financial, political, moral, aesthetic — affecting disenfranchised youth in both urban and rural or reserve contexts. His pregnant girlfriend, Ophélie, dreams of happily raising her children with Dave, living modestly on the banks of the Kinogamish River, but is prepared to accept life in the city. She has a background in the world of theatre and film while Dave has worked in theatre and radio. Even in the city, Dave and Ophélie are not free from Kinogamish politics: they are subject to the machinations of "suits" (Laerte) and "goons" (Claudius), and haunted by the legacy of all too human "warriors" (Tony). Deeply affected by a sense of alienation from his Native identity, Dave's ambition is, quite simply, to play the role of Hamlet in a Montreal production of Shakespeare. Echoing Sioui

Durand's own comment on his play *Hamlet-le-Malécite* that "il veut jouer Hamlet sans savoir qu'il est lui-même déjà Hamlet" (Lévesque), Jennifer Drouin summarizes this aspect of the text: "As an adaptation of Shakespeare, *Hamlet-le-Malécite* works within a *mise-en-abyme*. Dave, who desperately wants to play Hamlet, is both the character Dave, the actor Dave Jenniss, and a Hamlet figure who does not recognize the parallels between his life and the plot of Shakespeare's play" (Drouin).

Dave's past life in Kinogamish catches up with him. Laerte and Claudius, who suspect that Dave is privy to the circumstances surrounding Tony Bear's death and who are bothered by his requests to produce and perform *Hamlet* in the Kinogamish community centre, come to visit him: "The spirit of Tony Bear seems to manifest itself in Claudius' [sic] backyard in the form of a bear carcass whose rotting smell signals the decrepitude of the community's new beer-swilling, porn-obsessed chief" (Drouin). As Laerte tells Claudius, at the time of Gertrude's wedding, "J' t'assez tanné de n'entendre parler de c't'ours-la, je vas passer avec mon pick-up a soir, pis on va aller te jeter ça dans rivière" (sc. 17). Laerte, who has always been attracted to Ophélie, although she is his sister, is jealous of Dave, who of late has ceased to look up to him as a role model. Gertrude informs Laerte that Ophélie is Tony Bear's daughter and thus Dave's half-sister, based on a telltale birth mark she has noticed. Tony Bear, like many of his generation, was the father of many children, not all of them known to him; as Dave tells Gertrude on her wedding day, "Tony Bear y'a pas mis les pieds dans maison depuis quinze ans, c'est l'homme le plus connu des femmes autochtones d'ici jusqu'à Saskatoon. Ce que j'ai jamais compris, c'est pourquoi tu t'es pas remariée avant" (sc. 6). In Dave's absence (he is busy rehearsing), Laerte and Claudius come to the city to inform Ophélie, now six months pregnant with Dave's child, that she is his sister, and this "knowledge" leads to her suicide.

Dave discovers Ophélie's body in the bathtub of his Montreal "squat" on the opening night of *Hamlet*, in which he is to play the starring role. This is the focus of the opening scenes of act 1, and is revisited in the closing scene of act 5. Dave's answering machine sets the tone for the play in its entirety, with its abrupt, self-absorbed message: "Kwé kwé! Si vous vous êtes pas trompé de numero vous devriez savoir que ma première c'est ce soir pis que j'ai autre chose a faire que répondre au téléphone. A c't'heur, si vous avez quelque chose à dire, parlez" (sc. 1).

This message remains virtually unchanged by the final act, except that it now provides a phone number where tickets for his performance can be “reserved” (sc. 1).<sup>6</sup> In the opening scene, Ophélie slits open her veins, as Horatio leaves a voice mail message that everyone is waiting for Dave to show up at the theatre. In the final act, Laerte comes to Dave’s squat looking for Ophélie, at first unaware that she is dead. A brief tussle with Dave ensues, giving way to the following outburst by Laerte:

Moi, j’ai jamais su c’était qui mon père. Pis je veux pas le savoir, i [sic] peut rien faire pour moi. Quand je veux savoir qui je suis, je sors mon portefeuille . . . pis dedans y’a une carte que le gouvernement du Canada m’a donné, avec ma photo dessus, qui dit que je fais partie des première nations, ce qui me confère le même statut que les poteaux de téléphones et les parc nationaux. Qu’est-ce qu’i a à comprendre, là-dedans? (sc. 26)

Following Laerte’s exit (“Je vais te faire plaisir, Dave, je te dirai pas adieu. Kwé kwé”), Dave cites Hamlet’s famous soliloquy:

Voilà donc le pire des poisons, ces malheurs qui se perpétuent  
 Dans un monde rempli par la rage de génération en génération  
 Sans qu’on ne puisse rien n’y faire!  
 Et moi, je suis désormais père  
 D’un enfant qui ne connaîtra jamais le monde infâme qui fut le mien!

Ai-je encore le droit de désirer si ardemment  
 Ce qui me semble n’être une puissante illusion, cette chose si iréelle  
 qu’est le théâtre  
 Dont le jeu ferait de moi qu’un monstre pire que tout ceux-là?

Car tout ce que je peux être et que je suis  
 C’est Hamlet! Hamlet, le Malécite!

Et maintenant seul au monde debout devant ma conscience  
 Quel est mon courage?

Être ou ne pas être? C’est là la question!  
 Et me voici maintenant seul, avec le devoir d’y répondre! (sc. 28)

Shakespeare’s play addresses the question of suicide as a response to despair in the face of “the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune.” In *Hamlet-le-Malécite*, however, “être ou ne pas être” is a response not only to guilt and pain in the face of Ophélie’s death, but also to the quandary, for Dave, of whether it is preferable “to be or not to be Malécite.”



Dave finds himself unable to speak either as Hamlet or as Dave-le-Malécite. This fleeting moment of recognition situates Dave's personal failure within the context of colonizing powers over which he, like many First Nations individuals, has little control. He is subject both to the dictates of the cultural mainstream and the colonized mentality of his own Indigenous community, a mentality which has revealed itself in his fate. "The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune" when linked to the famous question posed by Hamlet, of whether "to be or not to be," suggests the possibility of assimilation or cultural genocide for the Malécite. The tragedy is that Dave is not yet able to imagine a third alternative to personal despair and collective memory loss, something which Sioui Durand, in this and his other plays, asks the audience to contemplate and to act upon.

At the precise moment Dave delivers his own version of Hamlet's soliloquy (moved from the third of the five acts of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* to the final scene of Sioui Durand's play), we hear Horatio's voice off-stage, looking for him after leaving many voice mails on his answering machine urging him to come to the theatre: "Dave, y'a cent cinquante personnes assises dans salle en ce moment qui lisent ton nom dans le programme. Dans dix minutes, la pièce va commencer. Dans vingt minutes, Hamlet entre en scène. Qu'est-ce tu fais?" (sc. 28). To which Dave replies, after putting the knife that Ophélie has used back in the bathtub, the last word spoken in the play: "J'arrive." The audience is left to assume that instead of committing suicide, he follows Horatio and will perform *Hamlet* after all. Jennifer Drouin offers the following interpretation of the ending:

Despite this sombre reality, Dave persists in his desire to play Hamlet, even abandoning Ophélie's dead body so that the opening night show may go on. . . . Faced with death, art is all that remains. . . . Through Dave's final commitment to perform Hamlet after Ophélie's death, the adaptation suggests that art may indeed be a healing medicine against suicide and what Sioui Durand calls "l'axphyxie culturelle." (Drouin)

While I agree that Sioui Durand's theatre, like much contemporary Indigenous literature, is about the importance of voice in healing and also in cultural revitalization, my own interpretation of Dave's final line, "J'arrive," is slightly different. Like Drouin, I assume that when Dave exits the stage, he in fact follows Horatio to the theatre, but I

am also reminded that the audience is never actually told this; we are left to draw our own conclusions. A number of possible outcomes can be imagined. My sense is that the ending, in keeping with the play's dark humour, is much more ambiguous. To insist that "the show must go on" contrasts with the unstated imperative, "this farce must end." As I read it, the play's structure leaves room for multiple meanings. Other ways of reading this conclusion range from understanding Dave's (and by implication the audience's) failure of catharsis as signalling the inability of Western theatre to adequately address the concerns and culture of Native people to understanding the failure of Dave/Hamlet as exemplifying the emergence of Indigenous storytelling through new theatrical traditions, including (but not restricted to) hybrid forms that coexist with traditional Indigenous art. *Hamlet-le-Malécite*, however dark its content and however deep its debt to Shakespeare, exemplifies a hybrid approach in its parody of Shakespeare. It relocates that parody within an Indigenous theatrical context that makes use of Indigenous languages and Indigenous storytelling techniques. But that language use is, in some instances, ironic, if not parodic. In this sense, the ambiguity of the play's conclusion reminds me of its no less ambiguous use of the Innu greeting "kwé kwé" on Dave's answering machine, echoed in Laerte's parting words.

Sioui Durand alludes to many other plays besides Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, directly or indirectly. For the Quebec theatre-going public, more familiar points of reference include Michel Tremblay's 1968 play *Les Belles-soeurs* and Michel Marc Bouchard's 1988 play *Les Feluettes*. Both Tremblay and Bouchard explore religious, sexual, political, and artistic repression in the period immediately preceding the Quiet Revolution of the 1960s. Tremblay's *Les Belles-soeurs* is widely known for its portrait of an all-female cast of "ugly" characters trapped in domestic drudgery and conventional morality; Bouchard's play, translated as *Lilies*, broaches the topic of sexual relations between priests and boys, clerical hypocrisy, and unjust incarceration in a prison, where, some years later, the play-within-the play and final confrontation takes place. In dialogue with Quebec theatre, *Hamlet-le-Malécite* draws on these previous plays among many other texts. But it also re-imagines a world in which the Indigenous communities such as Kinogamish seem to have lost touch with Native values and spirituality, storytelling and performance traditions, functional family units, and political sovereignty tied to

good governance. Like Tremblay and Bouchard, Sioui Durand employs theatrical techniques that are meant to shock the audience out of their complacency.

One such technique is the use of raw, provocative language juxtaposed with narrative and poetry borrowed from *Hamlet* (which are rendered in a standard French translation). Tremblay used a different but related technique in *Les Belles-soeurs*, a play with a no less ambiguous and satirical ending, turning to *joual* and to elements borrowed from Greek drama to talk about oppression in his characters' lives.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, in the opening scene of Sioui Durand's play, Dave refers to Claudius in no uncertain terms as "c'tostie de raclure de fond de tonne" and "grosse face de mammifère cosanguin." Witnessing Gertrude and Claudius's drunken revels, Dave swears at Gertrude: "Hostie de gang d'Indiens mal décolonisés, si tu savait comment c'est dur de pas vous haïr toute la crise de gang, des fois." To this, echoing a scene in *Les Belles-soeurs* where Germaine disparages her son's university education and highbrow cultural tastes, Gertrude replies, "C'est correct, Dave, on le sait comment t'es superieur à nous depuis que t'as étudié en ville" (sc. 6).<sup>8</sup> Later, when Dave informs Claudius (who is not familiar with the Shakespearean original) that he would like to put on Shakespeare's *Hamlet* in the Kinogamish community hall, Claudius does not hear *Hemelette*, the French pronunciation, but rather *Femelette*, and asks him, "T'es tu homosexuel, Dave?" (sc. 11). As a reader of Sioui Durand's text, for me, this is also reminiscent of Jacques Lacan's post-Freudian deconstruction of gender identities, language, and the phallus in his pun on *hommelet* ("little man") and *omelette*. While this kind of ribald word play is in keeping with Shakespeare's own text, in colloquial Quebec French, *homme lette* means "ugly man" as opposed to "pretty boy"; *femelette* rhymes with *feluette*, slang for a gay man. As Laerte says, "Hamlet? Dave, come on . . . Tu pourrais peut-être commencer par *Les Belles-soeurs* en Attikamek, c'est à peu près la seule langue dans laquelle ça pas été traduit" (sc. 11). Far from an exemplum of healthy self-esteem or positive family and community relations, these kinds of verbal exchanges underscore generational conflict and sibling rivalry. At the same time, Laerte's line implies that both Quebec theatre from the era of Quiet Revolution (*Les Belles-soeurs*) and Renaissance English theatre (*Hamlet*) fail to address the artistic and political needs of Kinogamish residents. The satire points to the need for an Indigenous theatre that

attacks corruption, affirms Native culture, and imagines a different future for aboriginal youth.

For some audience members, the play's volatile breaking of silences may be experienced as distressing rather than liberating, given its characters' transgressions of established codes of conduct. Discomfort of a different sort is often associated with strong language or taboo subjects for some members of the community. This applies to Indigenous as well as to Québécois audiences, although many of the cultural codes and contexts, and thus the transgressions, differ between these two groups. For example, when Gertrude finally allows Dave to retrieve Tony's military kit bag from Claudius's office, he finds among the mementos, clothing and books, a video of Leonard Pelletier, and a hash pipe. Wrapping himself in his father's scarf, Dave fills the pipe with some of his own marijuana. Contemplating the life of "Tony-le-hippie," at this point, he feels no pain: "Je suis triste de pas me sentir triste" (sc. 7). Quoting from his own French copy of *Hamlet*, "Ce ne sont là que des semblances," he turns to the video of Leonard Pelletier, who for Dave is a disembodied ghost from the past, now in prison, fleetingly caught on film. Dave's anaesthetized state is, on one level, understandable: he has lost his father, who was far from perfect, without ever having known him. Despite the scene's dark humour, the travesty of sacred bundles and ceremonial rituals, in the form of the kit bag and the hash pipe, would come across as disturbing to some viewers. It is symptomatic of Dave's difficulty in coming to grips with his father's mixed legacy, but also of several generations' experience of alienation and lack of connection to Indigenous cultural and spiritual knowledge.

In scene 16, however, Dave's attempts to come to terms with his father's and his own buried identity seem more promising. Still wearing Tony's scarf, and now holding the "rotting" bear's skull, he begins by reciting, in English, lyrics from Johnny Rotten's punk rock anthem "Religion" — giving a new twist to the well-known line from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, "Something is rotten in the state of Denmark" (1.4.90). Starting out mildly — "Stained-glass window keeps the cold outside / While the hypocrites lie inside" — Rotten's words, as cited, become more pointed, functioning as a thinly disguised critique of the residential school system designed to replace spirituality with "civilizing" Christian virtues: "Fat pig priest / sanctimonious smile . . . This is religion, cheaply priced / this is bibles, full of libel" (sc. 19). The

scene from Shakespeare's *Hamlet* that this mimics, in which Hamlet meditates on the death of poor Yorick, the king's jester, contrasts with Dave's words as he attempts to generate his own rituals for grieving his sense of identity loss as well as for avenging his father's death. It is worth noting that Claudius, in scene 17, commenting to Laerte about why the bear carcass still has not been taken away by a fearful Jean-Baptiste, disparagingly alludes to "superstitious beliefs" about a body without a head representing a bad omen: "Ben t'sais les vieilles croyances. I [sic] doit y avoir que'que vieille superstition sur le fait qu'un animal pas de tête, ça apporte les maléfices." Superstitions notwithstanding, Dave's song, although not in the Malécite language traditionally used for ceremony, is his own form of prayer, one not married to a Western or Christian world view:

MON PÈRE L'OURS!  
 Ah! . . . AH! . . . AH! . . . AH!  
 MON PÈRE L'OURS!  
 Ah! . . . AH! . . . AH! . . . AH!  
 MON PÈRE EST UN OURS!  
 Ah! . . . AH! . . . AH! . . . AH!  
 MON PÈRE L'OURS!  
 MON PÈRE L'OURS!  
 MON PÈRE EST UN OURS!  
 Ah! . . . AH! . . . AH! . . . AH!  
 MON PÈRE L'OURS!  
 ESPRIT DE LA FORÊT!  
 MAÎTRE DES ANIMAUX  
 RÉPONDS-MOÉ!  
 RÉPONDS À TON FILS DAVE!  
 DONNER MOÉ TA MÉDECINE!  
 Ah! . . . AH! . . . AH! . . . AH!  
 Ah! . . . AH! . . . AH! . . . AH! (sc 19)

The original working title for *Hamlet-le-Malécite* was in fact *L'Ours-tortue*, which would seem to make more sense, given many First Nations' description of North America as Turtle Island. (In the Canadian Adaptations entry this is translated as *The Bear-Tortoise*, although I prefer *The Bear-Turtle*, or the more mellifluous *Turtle-Bear*, with its ironic echoes of turtledove). For the moment Dave is on Indian time, beginning to reconnect, however partially, with his Malécite heritage. Does he fully understand what he is doing? In Sioui Durand's play, the

possibility exists for “bad medicine” here, as well as for Dave simply taking justice into his own hands. In the grave-digging scene, Shakespeare’s Hamlet picks up a number of skulls and playfully puns on their owners’ presumed identities while meditating on death as the great leveller, one that does not distinguish between honest men and corrupt politicians. A more or less secular “gravedigger’s” kind of humour is taken for granted in this passage from *Hamlet*. In Indian country, many Native people are Christians and some are secular; few follow traditional ways. Dave begins by recapturing the mood of the hippie culture of the 1960s and its rituals; one gets the sense, however, that a different reality asserts itself in this scene, one indebted to more ancient Indigenous customs, however misapprehended by Dave or by Tony Bear. Traditionally, in many First Nations, the bear is the animal associated with medicine and spiritual healing; in some clan-based governance systems, those who belong to the bear clan play an important role as the community’s protectors. Based on Sioui Durand’s script, and despite the well-intentioned failures and all-too-human blindness of both father and son, Johnny Rotten’s rock anthem and Dave’s own chant to the spirit of the bear represent Dave’s struggle to find a path of his own, somewhere between reviving ancestral knowledge and coping with the new realities of life in the city. Either way, this kind of activity is far from routine for Dave. While he continues to reach out to his father’s spirit from time to time, he experiences a melancholia and despair that he shares with that spirit: “Ca sers-tu encore a quelque chose, être indien?” is how he addresses “mon père l’ours” in scene 12.

The tragedy in *Hamlet-le-Malecite* is not that Dave fails to counter Claudius and Laerte’s political machinations, but rather that his ability to take guidance from Indigenous cultural values and traditions remain seriously compromised. Dave is not compromised by modernity — Indigenous culture has never been static — so much as by his youthful self-absorption, lack of self-confidence, and unease vis-à-vis hybridity. The problem is not that Dave is “too hybridized” — although he is certainly accused of this by others several times — but rather that he has not come to terms with his mixed-blood Malécite identity as a new kind of Indigenous identity. If Claudius and Laerte increasingly internalize the colonizer’s model of governance deep in Indian country, Dave struggles with the colonizer’s model of culture deep in the city. Early on in the play, Ophélie tells him that while she resents and resists being

exoticized by the movie camera's gaze, his problem is that he does not look Native enough to succeed as an actor, though he has a good voice. She nevertheless uses her connections in the theatre to help him, leading to Horatio's phone call offering him an audition. Her love for Dave and her uncertainty about him are complicated by awareness of his lack of insight: "Moi, je me fais souvent demander pour des tournages a cause que j'ai le look, *mais toi, je sais pas trop*" (sc. 4; emphasis added), she tells him. When they argue over her pregnancy, he claims that she misreads his own uncertain feelings as rejection of her, and she responds that — appearance aside — maybe he really is not Native enough, culturally speaking: "Je sais que c'est chien ce que je te dis, Dave, mais c'est pas de ma faute, depuis que je suis petite que j'entends que les Malécite, vous êtes trop métissés" (sc. 16). Dave, for his part, internalizes these reflections of himself. When Claudius tells him that "c'est pas très très Indien le théâtre en collants," and Laerte proposes something more "authentic" than *Hamlet* by way of community theatre, Dave's response, rather than defending the arts as a contemporary expression of Indigenous identity, is to condemn the commodification by cultural tourism of traditional teachings, and to categorize traditional ceremonies as belonging to those who look more Native than he: "je me vois pas vraiment expliquer le sens profond de l'épinette à des français, pis je pense pas que j'ai l'air assez indien pour verser l'eau ses roches dans le sweat lodge" (sc. 11). Here, he simultaneously disparages his own apparent lack of identity along with received notions of Indigenous identity.

Several commentators on contemporary uses of Shakespeare remind us that the line between adaptations and original work is not always clear-cut; the question of how Western art forms relate to Indigenous ones, I would add, is no less tricky. Drouin cites the program notes for *Hamlet-le-Malécite* in order to argue that Ondinnok's art is medicine, and that according to Sioui-Durand, "toute médecine est transgression" (Drouin). In this sense, while *Hamlet-le-Malécite* functions as an adaptation, it is also an original work that calls into question the very theatrical tradition that it invokes in order to talk about the challenges facing young urban Aboriginals. The play explicitly references the Montreal theatre scene as well as life in the imaginary community of Kinogamish; for me, this points to its metatextual, self-reflexive, postmodern status. When Dave interviews Ophélie, on videotape, in Kinogamesh, talking about the different kinds of acting work she has undertaken, she

expresses reservations about careers in both theatre and film for both of them, by parodically mimicking how “Indians” talk in Hollywood: “Moi allé leur faire Pocahontas qui court dans bouette en moccasin, non merci” (sc. 4). The nested stories of Dave the actor playing the role of Hamlet in a modern production of that play, Dave the private individual who embodies Hamlet as a kind of modern anti-hero, and Dave Jenniss, the Malécite actor playing Dave and in his own way collaborating on the script of the 2004 production of *Hamlet-le-Malécite*, further complicate matters.

Sioui Durand, who has been involved in programming for Aboriginal youth at Montreal’s École Nationale de Théâtre, explains that the idea for this play came to him while directing *Hamlet* at that school. Turning to familiar Western theatrical conventions, Ondinnok worked to develop, in concert with young actors, “une méthode de travail qui se base sur l’architecture psychique et spirituelle amérindienne, sur les traditions millénaires et sur des exercices formateurs qui a pour objectif de renforcer l’étudiant dans son identité et sa culture” (Charest). *Hamlet-le-Malécite* has thus benefitted from the input of the actors who come from a number of different Quebec First Nations. In particular, I wish to focus on the play’s use of Indigenous languages (as well as of colloquial and classical French and English), which is linked to the identity of these actors. My sense is that by working with a Malécite actor as well as with young people from a wide range of backgrounds, Sioui Durand counters and challenges assumptions about miscegenation and cultural loss that concern him and that are foregrounded in the play itself. He calls into question the prevailing belief that Quebec First Nations culture belongs to the past. Multiple languages figure prominently in all of Sioui Durand’s work; here, the play’s usage of Innu and Attikamek (the primary languages of some of the actors) as well as of contemporary and classical French and English points to the dynamic relation of language, identity, and power.

That the Malécite language is, to my knowledge, not used in the play underscores these power relations. The cast included members of Attikamek, Innu, Huron-Wendat, and Malécite Nations, both urban and reserve-based. Not all of these actors are familiar with English or, for that matter, with their Native tongue. But like Sioui Durand, they are intimately familiar with verbal playfulness based on intimate knowledge of subtle cultural codes, knowledge that extends to “reserve French” as a Native cousin to *joual*. These cultural codes include in-



jokes tied to specific Quebec First Nations linguistic and political contexts, as well as common or shared experiences. In scene 6, one set of exchanges is characterized by witty French-English code switching in a conversation between Dave and his friend Laerte, newly returned from France to attend Gertrude's wedding. A consummate translator, speechwriter, and conversationalist with a wide range of linguistic skills and styles — in short, a language broker — Laerte uses a form of colloquial French that freely imports English words and phrases such as “long time no see,” “jet lag,” and “wow, boy.” Wishing to know the reason for Laerte's latest trip to France, Dave asks whether it was “business ou plaisir.” Dave, still employed in radio work in Quebec City (a drunken Gertrude goads him about this, “Tu nous parleras de culture, de chanson francophone pis de ton émission de radio dans la capitale du Québec souverain”), mentions that he is considering looking for better-paying work in Montreal, to which Laerte responds, “Big city. Faire quoi?” When Dave mentions his interest in the theatre, Laerte instantly launches into lines quoted, in English, from *Hamlet* — to which Dave replies, “Wow! C'est hot. C'est quoi ça?” (sc. 6). When Dave admits that he does not understand much English, Laerte replies, in slightly more formal but still locally accented French, “Ah, mais c'est en anglais qu'i [sic] faut lire Shakespeare” (sc. 6). Similarly, when Laerte attempts to impress Claudius, a beer drinker, with his knowledge of French wines, which he has brought back by the caseload, he boasts that “même en France, tu vas juste voir des bouteilles comme ça dans les restaurant où Jacques Chirac fait ses lunches diplomatiques,” only to be met with the unwitting riposte, “C'est qui Jacques Chierac? [sic]” — a pun loosely translatable as “who [or what] is this shit?” (sc. 6). When caught off guard, it does not take Laerte long to slip back into old patterns of speech; getting wind of the bear carcass that someone dumped behind the house, he comments, “Heille, c't'u moi ou ça pus le yable ici? C'est quoi c'todeur-la?” (sc. 6). Throughout such passages, an uneasy tension exists between the adoption of Western cultural norms and Indigenous resistance to those norms, a tension that plays itself out at the level of the text's language use.

As a character, Laerte plays double duty as someone who speaks the colonizer's language with ease and who resists that perspective in his own language use; in this capacity, he reminds me of another “translator” and language trickster, Elijah Whiskeyjack in Joseph Boyden's

novel *Three Day Road*. But Laerte is not the only character that uses language in this way; it is a feature of the play's language use in general. Puns abound throughout and, as in Shakespeare, are rarely innocent. Ophélie, several months pregnant with his child, announces to Dave in scene 16 that "ça fait longtemps que j'ai eu hâte d'avoir ma malédiction." Given that *malédiction* and *maléfice* are phonetically tied to *Malécite*, it is not overreaching, I think, to suggest that the play's title also puns on the words *mal icitte*, or "hurt here" in common Quebec parlance. Where "here" is can be explained in relation to both Indigenous and Western locales and world views: Dave, no less than Laerte, seems disconnected from the "heart-knowledge" that remains a vital part of the "good mind" in the belief systems of Native people, wherever they happen to live. Gertrude, once supportive of Tony Bear in his quest for social justice for his people, has also lost touch with this heart-knowledge; as she explains to Dave, at one point, she simply got tired. While Ophélie has kept in closer touch with that knowledge, it seems that her circumstances allow her scant opportunity to put it to work to help anyone, including herself.<sup>10</sup> The *malediction/maléfice/Malécite* association, like the ways in which Sioui Durand plays with Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, suggests a measure of self-referentiality supported by other techniques, such as the moment when stage hands, while changing sets between scenes, enact a darkly satirical vision of what lies beneath *Hamlet-le-Malécite's* citational practice. As they ritually remove the blood-laden bathtub containing Ophélie's body between the first two acts, on the way, out one of them casually presses the "play" button on Dave's VCR, a telling gesture. Dressed as medieval rats, these stage hands recite choice bits from *Hamlet* in Atikamekw.

If I were to use critical frameworks borrowed from English-Canadian literary theory (as opposed to Québécois or Indigenous critical frameworks) to describe this self-reflexive quality, I would turn to the Canadian literary critic Linda Hutcheon, one of the theorists cited by Gerald Vizenor in *Manifest Manners: Narratives on Post-Indian Survivance* (1999). In her book *A Theory of Parody: The Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms* (1985),<sup>11</sup> Hutcheon argues that parody ranges from literature that mimics in order to contest, to literature that mimics in order to celebrate: "parodic art comes in a very wide variety of tones and moods — from respectful to playful to scathingly critical" (Hutcheon xii). She adds that "because its ironies can so obviously

cut both ways”, “it will always be ideologically suspect to some” (xii). Because parody can shift from one mode to the other with little or no notice, a type of double-voiced discourse that multiplies meanings it is, at least for Hutcheon, characteristically postmodern.

Gerald Vizenor, like Hutcheon, is indebted to Mikhail Bakhtin’s notion of dialogism; he is also well-versed in Chippewa trickster discourse. Vizenor remains canny about how postmodern literary modes are positioned in relationship to the colonial inheritance on the one hand, and Indigenous narrative stances on the other hand. Parodying the title of Jean-Paul Lyotard’s *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (1979), he identifies “four postmodern conditions in the critical responses to Native American Indian and postindian literatures” (Vizenor 66). The first is “heard in aural performances; the second is unbodied in translations; the third is the trickster hermeneutics of liberation, the uncertain humour and shimmer of survivance [sic] . . . [and] the fourth is narrative chance” (66). Arguably, the first three can be detected in Sioui Durand’s play, as well as in a reading based on Indigenous rather than Canadian or Québécois critical contexts. The fourth is suggested in a reading of the structure of *Hamlet-le-Malécite* that interprets it as playing with the audience’s expectations of narrative logic in Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, but also with Western notions of time and history more generally. Such an approach reconfigures the nature of the play’s irony.

In keeping with Hutcheon’s idea of parody and especially with Vizenor’s notion of “postindian survivance” [sic], I think of *Hamlet-le-Malécite*’s dialogue with Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* as a complicated dance, one that moves back and forth between a Western theatrical world, in which *Hamlet*’s relevance to contemporary Indigenous politics is evident, and an Indigenous theatrical world, in which its relevance to contemporary Indigenous art forms is challenged as much as it is affirmed. In this sense, I see *Hamlet-le-Malécite* as a play that simultaneously appropriates, parodies, and displaces Shakespeare in a new form of Native literature. This approach to developing contemporary Indigenous theatre need not be mired in the artistic concepts and practices of Western canonical texts to make effective use of those texts. In addition to parody, the play also makes use of pastiche or collage, as evident in its cobbling together of excerpts from texts as diverse as Johnny Rotten’s punk-rock lyrics and Hamlet’s soliloquies. Such a pastiche — when it takes things out of context or presents them out of their

normal sequence — can also function as postmodern parody. “Mad Ophelia’s” song following her father Polonius’ death in act 4, scene 4 of *Hamlet*, for example, resurfaces in Sioui Durand’s text in scene 5 as a faithful French translation, sung (in Innu, we are told) at the closing ceremony of Gertrude’s wedding to Claudius. Such translations of “stolen” songs and relocated speeches is layered, and recalls *Hamlet-le-Malécite*’s complicated narrative structure, which both imitates and plays with *Hamlet*’s storyline in ways also consistent with postmodern art. For instance, in scene 5, Claudius applauds Gertrude’s song and immediately uses the occasion of his wedding to launch, as chief, into a lengthy political speech to his community. When Gertrude’s turn comes to applaud, he continues to speak at some length in Atikamekw, his “Migwesh” finally giving her the signal she is looking for.

Similar language play in the political speeches is foregrounded in Claudius and Laerte’s subsequent visit to the “bureau de développement économique du secrétariat aux affaires autochtones du Québec.” On this occasion Claudius, relying on his “representative” Laerte’s superior language skills, claims to know little French; he also badly needs a cup of coffee. Here, a capsule history of Kinogamish’s relations with the Crown in relation to forestry and hydroelectric development is given, in which development is not challenged so much as partnerships are requested, in keeping with “les valeurs traditionnelles autochtones” (sc. 8). But the chief, in Laerte’s words, is also looking to the future: “Depuis quelques années, l’industrie récréo-touristique a fait naître de façon spectaculaire plusieurs régions du Québec laissées pour compte par la chute de l’économie industrielle.” Kinogamish thus wishes, claims the chief, to market its ecological heritage, envisioning in the form of cultural tourism a different future from the destiny of “région fantôme.” As Dave comments, upon hearing similar rhetoric when his proposal to put on *Hamlet* in the Kinogamesh community hall is rejected, “Bourgeois de tous les pays, unissez-vous. Les casques de plumes sont cinquante dollars canadiens ou 20 euros” (sc. 11). Laerte’s hidden agenda and long-term plan involves benefitting from the damming of rivers for hydroelectric power and marketing bottled water to French citizens. He calls it selling liquid gold to an increasingly thirsty world; this satirical fantasy of delivering unsafe drinking water to the colonizers points to First Nations’ experiences of unhealthy byproducts of hydroelectric develop-

ment projects. This undermining of a culture associated with life on the land is of concern to Sioui Durand:

Le nomadisme était le mode de vie autochtone; depuis la Convention de la Baie-James, on a cessé d'être des propriétaires. C'est très grave, car la culture autochtone est dépendente du territoire, enracinée en lui [sic]. . . . On a été normalisés sans que la transmission se fasse. Nos conditions de vie se sont améliorées, mais on a perdu notre spécificité. Une espèce d'omerta règne au sein des communautés. L'art n'a plus sa place; or on ne peut s'approprier un territoire qu'à condition de pouvoir l'imaginer. (Lévesque)

Laerte as trickster is altogether too clever, seduced by his own words, and by the politician's understandable, necessary, and even laudable work on behalf of new forms of community economic development as these relate to prevailing definitions of cultural sovereignty. Does his invocation of the fact that this submission to the Quebec government is taking place on Martin Luther King's birthday, for instance, not prove his sincerity as well as the justice of his cause, helping to clinch the deal? Once again, "Laerte entend un tonnerre d'applaudissements dans sa tête"; he hears similar loud applause in his head when he recites from *Hamlet* for Dave's benefit a little earlier in the play. Like his language use, the theatricality of Laerte's various gestures, as well as his self-aggrandizement, are also reminiscent of Trickster or Elder Brother. In its own way, Laerte's double-voiced discourse also speaks to Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition*, a work originally commissioned by the Quebec Council of Universities to address the impact and role of new technologies and invoked by both Hutcheon and Vizenor. Lyotard's famous book was originally published in 1979 as *Les problèmes du savoir dans les sociétés industrielles les plus développées*. There is no little irony in the fact that a book now known as a seminal articulation of the challenges posed to master narratives by postmodernism finds its origins in the project of a Quebec government preoccupied — one could even say obsessed — with Quebec society's belated need to come to terms with modernity. This irony is suggested by Vizenor's critique of how academia tends to privilege social science discourse, which for him contrasts with contemporary Indigenous culture, literature and language use, both inside and outside the academy. While Dave remains relatively unenlightened as a postindian warrior, Sioui Durand's own language use effectively captures Vizenor's understanding of postmodern parody.<sup>12</sup> That Sioui

Durand bemoans the impact of liberal ideologies on First Nations populations and lands, and of mass culture's impact on First Nations culture, is evident from his many comments, even as he also playfully acknowledges and celebrates Indigenous engagement of contemporary popular culture. *Hamlet-le-Malécite*'s preoccupation with mass media, which has had an undeniable impact on both theatrical innovation and the modes of communication of Indigenous youth, is counterbalanced by the ways in which Sioui Durand's Indigenous theatre uses French (and English and Spanish) as well as First Nations languages to tell stories about our relationship, in the Americas, to the mixed legacy of Western and Indigenous language systems and technologies. Such Indigenous theatre is of necessity hybrid in form, but no less Indigenous for all that.

Finally, I would like to address the question of language in the *Canadian Adaptations of Shakespeare Project* website when talking about plays such as *Hamlet-le-Malécite*. It is not my intention to disparage such projects, which make accessible important and very useful resources. It is to the credit of its editors that information about important unpublished plays such as this one are in fact discussed at length in the *Canadian Adaptations* project. That said, it is important to revisit such materials from a number of vantage points, some of which are not necessarily consistent with Euro-Canadian criticism, whether published in French or in English. On the one hand, the *Canadian Adaptations* website states that "there is no little irony in that the word *Maliseet* in Mi'kmaq refers to someone who has trouble expressing himself and that Hamlet in this First Nations context is associated with this symbolic resonance." On the other hand, it identifies *Wolastoqiyik* as the name that the Maliseet Nation sometimes uses to refer to itself. Sioui Durand's *Wulustek*, first workshopped in 2007, turns to the fictional Malamek First Nation; based on an original idea for a play developed by Dave Jenniss, it uses as its title the Malécite word sometimes translated as "the beautiful river" in reference to the Saint John River. This river's watershed and tributaries, extending from Maine to New Brunswick to Quebec, forms the traditional Malécite/Maliseet homeland; the play explores, among other topics, how the Canadian forestry industry has affected Maliseet people who still live on the banks of the Saint John River in New Brunswick. That Quebec-based Huron-Wendat and Malécite directors and actors such as Sioui Durand and Jenniss are engaging in this kind of collaborative work to reclaim marginalized

identities is laudable. The symbolic use of Malécite and Huron-Wendat Nations as shorthand for evidence of the ravages of assimilative forces is challenged by such work, as it is challenged by the work of organizations such as the Mi'kmaq-Maliseet Institute in Fredericton and by related projects in a number of First Nations communities. Plays such as *Hamlet-le-Malécite* and *Wulustek*, theatre companies such as Ondinnok, and community-based Huron-Wendat and Malécite-Maliseet language revitalization projects collaborating with university-based programs, are, in my view, not only vital but deserve our careful attention and unwavering support. Finally, we need to pay greater attention, in literary circles, to the fact that such projects inevitably emerge from French-language no less than English-language contexts north of the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel, and in Spanish as well as English contexts south of that divide.

## AUTHOR'S NOTE

I dedicate this article to the memory of my father, Raymond Armand Lacombe (1928-2010), a beloved teacher of Shakespeare who was proud of my own interest in Indigenous literatures.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> "Sakitpicikan," *Canadian Adaptations of Shakespeare Project*.

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.canadianshakespeares.ca/a\\_sioui.cfm](http://www.canadianshakespeares.ca/a_sioui.cfm).

<sup>3</sup> In the world of regularly updated, altered, and deleted website entries, attribution of quotations can be difficult to trace, if not regularly downloaded, printed, and archived. The *Canadian Adaptations* website has been updated since I first undertook this research; I have attempted to reference materials when and where possible.

<sup>4</sup> Maria Campbell briefly discusses her relationship to Shakespeare in her autobiographical text, *Halfbreed*; Yvette Nolan's comments about her own relationship to Shakespeare is discussed in Sorouja Moll, "The Death of a Chief: an Interview with Yvette Nolan," an article reproduced in the *Canadian Adaptations of Shakespeare Project*, 2006. See the "Spotlight on Canadian Aboriginal Adaptations of Shakespeare" link in the *Canadian Adaptations* website: [http://www.canadianshakespeares.ca/spotlight\\_main.cfm](http://www.canadianshakespeares.ca/spotlight_main.cfm).

<sup>5</sup> Sioui Durand, collaborating with the Malécite actor Dave Jenniss, who played the lead role of Dave in *Hamlet-le-Malécite*, has since produced a second play about this First Nation, *Wulustek* (2008).

<sup>6</sup> Note that in French the word *reserve* functions as a noun, as in "my home reserve" and also as a verb, as in "reserve a ticket," but it does not carry the meaning that the expressions "I have reservations about that" or "he is a reserved young man" possess in English.

<sup>7</sup> Critics have noted Tremblay's adaptation of techniques borrowed from Greek comedy in *Les Belles-soeurs* (for example, in features such as the "Ode to Bingo") and he is known to have adapted Aristophanes's *Lysistrata* for the Quebec stage.

<sup>8</sup> This echoes the following line from Tremblay's play: "You wouldn't recognize my Raymond. He's changed something awful . . . ever since he started college. Walks around

with his nose in the air like he's too good for us, speaks Latin at the dinner table, makes us listen to his crazy music all day long" (30).

<sup>9</sup> One is reminded of Claudius's line in *Hamlet*, "Oh my offence is rank, it smells to heaven" (I.3.4.36).

<sup>10</sup> This adaptation of *Hamlet* cries out for a reading of how women's strength has been undermined by Western notions of gender identities and gender roles. See, for instance, Ophélie's comment to Dave in scene 16 about her pregnancy (one of several such observations): "Tu parles comme si j'avais abusé de toi, s'est toi qui devrais jouer Ophélie. Ça paraît que c'est pas toi qui est pogné avec ça." Gertrude also lets slip similar feminist comments from time to time.

<sup>11</sup> Here, Hutcheon's book on parody is more useful to me than her subsequent publication *A Theory of Adaptation* (New York: Routledge, 2006), which is primarily concerned with movement between genres, such as the adaptation of fiction into film. In the very brief section on "Indigenization," *A Theory of Adaptation* mentions the adaptation of Tomson Highway's plays for the Japanese stage (152), but Hutcheon's comment on how stories travel (153) largely restricts its use of the word "Indigenization" to refer to non-Native works and adaptation contexts.

<sup>12</sup> See his chapter "Postindian Warriors" in *Manifest Manners: Narratives on Postindian Survivance*.

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