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The Location of Settled Diasporas: Atlantic Crossings and Shifting Homelands in Nova Scotian Fiction

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1.- Título de la Tesis	
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RESUMEN (en español)

Esta tesis es un estudio comparado de obras de ficción pertenecientes a las tradiciones literarias africana y escocesa en Nueva Escocia. Las novelas seleccionadas son *George and Rue* (2005), de George Elliott Clarke y *Chasing Freedom* (2011), de Gloria Ann Wesley como representativas del primer grupo; y *No Great Mischief* (1999), de Alistair MacLeod y *The Interpreter of Silences* (2006), del segundo. Otros textos relevantes, como *The Book of Negroes* (2007), de Lawrence Hill o *The View from Castle Rock* (2006), de Alice Munro también serán consideradas cuando el proceso argumentativo así lo requiera. El análisis crítico se centra en el concepto de la diáspora, un ámbito en el que estas obras se pueden enmarcar con facilidad. Sus líneas narrativas presentan elementos que están íntimamente relacionados con los intereses teóricos de los estudios diaspóricos, como son los movimientos migratorios, la dislocación y la construcción de identidades diaspóricas. El examen exhaustivo de las bases conceptuales de esta disciplina, que se lleva a cabo en la Parte I de la tesis, titulada "Historical and Theoretical Departures", demuestra que existen inconsistencias entre la definición de la diáspora y los factores que estas novelas presentan como "diaspóricos". Aunque se han abandonado las restricciones impuestas por el uso original del término, la Diáspora Judía, aún predominan las ideas de exilio y desplazamiento, se enfatizan las identidades híbridas y transnacionales y se considera esencial que los sujetos diaspóricos mantengan un contacto continuado con el hogar. Estas novelas, sin embargo, no contienen representaciones de una interacción prolongada con el hogar, y sus personajes no se ven altamente influenciados por procesos de migración o por identidades indeterminadas. Por estas razones, esta tesis tiene como principal objetivo el desarrollo de un nuevo concepto, capaz de acomodar las particularidades empíricas de estas manifestaciones diásporicas, el concepto de la diáspora asentada. La Parte II, titulada "Homeland, Settled Diasporas and Belonging in Nova Scotian Narratives", se compone de tres capítulos donde se lleva a cabo el análisis literario de los textos. Su estructura sigue una comparación transversal y, dando especial importancia a las perspectivas de clase social y de género, introducen los referentes contextuales en los que se sitúan las diásporas asentadas. Nueva Escocia, y no las territorios ancestrales de África o Escocia, emerge como el lugar de pertenencia y, de esta forma, las interacciones espaciales se leen en términos del "hogar". El resultado de esta reubicación del hogar es la necesaria revisión conceptual de una idea de la diáspora que opera exclusivamente en términos de no-pertenencia y dislocación. A través de este innovador giro teórico, la tesis proporciona un mecanismo heurístico con el que estudiar ejemplos diaspóricos como los observados en las novelas, además de ampliar los horizontes de esta transcendental disciplina.

RESUMEN (en Inglés)

This thesis is a comparative study of Nova Scotian fiction pertaining to the African and Scottish literary traditions. The novels selected are George Elliott Clarke's *George and Rue* (2005) and Gloria Ann Wesley's *Chasing Freedom* (2011) as representative of the former group; and Alistair MacLeod's *No Great Mischief* (1999) and Jean McNeil's *The Interpreter of Silences* (2006) from the latter. Other relevant texts, such as Lawrence Hill's *The Book of Negroes* (2007) or Alice Munro's *The View from Castle Rock* (2006) are tangentially addressed when required in the process of discussion. The critical analysis focuses on the concept of diaspora, a framework that can be clearly applied to these works. Their narrative lines present elements that are closely connected to the theoretical concerns with which diaspora studies engage, such as migration movements, dislocation and the construction of diasporic identities. An exhaustive examination of the conceptual grounds that this discipline provides, which is included in Part I of the thesis, "Historical and Theoretical Departures," demonstrates that there exist inconsistences between the definition of diaspora and what these novel portray as "diasporic" factores. Diasporas, even though their limits have expanded considerably from their initial source, the Jewish Diaspora, still rely heavily on exile and displacement, emphasise in-between and transnational identities and consider essential the diasporic subjects' constant re-creation and attention to the (imaginary) homeland. The literary works under scrutiny, however, do not contain representations of persisting interactions with the homeland and, as a result of prolonged settlement (both groups migrated to Nova Scotia in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries), they hardly display characters who are fundamentally affected by process of migration or in-betweenness. For these reasons, this dissertation has as its main objective the development of a new concept that may accommodate the empirical particularities of these diasporic manifestations, the concept of the "settled diaspora." Part II, "Homeland, Settled Diasporas and Belonging in Nova Scotian Narratives," is comprised of three chapters that elaborate the literary analysis of the texts. Their structure follows a transversal comparison and, with especial emphasis on class and gender perspectives, they gradually introduce the contextual referents where settled diasporas are situated. Nova Scotia, and not the ancestral lands of Africa and Scotland, emerges in these texts as a site of belonging, and spatial interactions are thus read in terms of the homeland. The outcome of this shift in the location of the homeland is a necessary conceptual reformulation of an idea of the diaspora that works exclusively through displacement and non-belonging. Through this innovative theoretical turn, this thesis provides a comprehensive heuristic mechanism with which to address diasporic examples such as those observed in the novels and expands the possibilities of a far-reaching discipline.

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Introduction

This dissertation is a comparative project between diasporic literatures of the African and Scottish traditions in the Canadian region of Nova Scotia. It focuses on contemporary fiction as the main object of analysis, following representational strategies and ontologies which, in connection to experiences of migration, displacement and settlement offer a unique perspective on diasporic narratives. The key texts chosen for this thesis are *George and Rue* (2006) by George Elliott Clarke and *Chasing Freedom* (2011) by Gloria Ann Wesley from the African-Nova Scotian tradition; and, from the Scottish-Nova Scotian, *No Great Mischief* (2000) by Alistair MacLeod and *The Interpreter of Silences* (2006) by Jean McNeil. The comparative analysis of these groups' writings emerged as an ambitious and rather broad research scheme in which to describe points of agreement and points of discrepancy between them, in their respective approaches to diasporic manifestations, in order to provide a comprehensive and balanced perspective of the heterogeneous landscape of Nova Scotia's diasporas. A more exhaustive reading of the texts under scrutiny reveals that, in spite of the severe differences, especially in historical terms, between the Scottish and African diasporas, there were regional parallelisms of an emphasis on roots, attachment to the land and the forging of a native identity that would cohere into the development of a new concept: the settled diaspora. The main aim of this thesis is the location and definition of this innovative concept, through a close reading of the texts mentioned above.

If the field of Canadian literature is, in international terms, still relatively underexplored, the sub-category of black Canadian literature is further neglected. This is in part due to Canadian literature's own marginal position as regards, especially, US and British literatures in education curricula and in part due to an ongoing centripetal force exerted by texts written by white authors, a tendency that is palpable in the Western world in general, and in Canada in particular. This lack of attention does not imply the absence of a rich tradition that incorporates a vast plurality of texts and approaches in terms of history, ethnicity, and aesthetics. The variety stems from an often neglected and ignored long historical presence of diasporic Africans in Canada. This history commences with Mathieu Da Costa, the first black man to have reportedly lived in Canada (Abdi, 2006: 50), and continues with subsequent waves of immigration through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries until the present day, most notably with

the arrival of Caribbean migrants in the 1960s (Mensah, 2002: 69). Despite this enduring tradition some of the earliest anthologies of black Canadian literature, such as *Canada in Us Now: The First Anthology of Black Poetry and Prose in Canada* was not published until 1976, and as David Chariandy notes "it includes writers not only of African descent but also of South Asian and First Nations descent" thus featuring "a few writers who might not identify themselves as Black today" (2002: n. pag.). The body of scholarship that focuses on black Canadian writing, while consistently growing, is fairly recent in its development and the texts that receive the most attention also tend to belong to a contemporary context. As regards Anglophone Canadian literature, Clarke records some of the earliest examples of African Canadian texts in his anthology *Fire on the Water* (1991), these being mainly spirituals and religious documents. While this was the predominant form of black Canadian cultural expression for most of the nineteenth century, the twentieth century saw the emergence of a very distinctive literary voice. Some of the most popular Canadian (or Canada-based) black writers include names such as Austin Clarke, Dionne Brand or M. NourbeSe Philip. The fact that these and other representative writers come from the Caribbean is the main factor that contributes to a generalised association between black Canadian writing and a strong Caribbean influence, despite the presence of such celebrated Canada-born writers such as George Elliott Clarke, Lawrence Hill or Wayde Compton. These writers share common concerns and literary strategies: as part of the African diaspora they reflect the conditions of trauma and displacement, and as part of a society which is predominantly white, they portray feelings of alienation and denounce the absented presence of blacks in Canada. However, the geographical and historical inconsistences among the internal groups that conform the rather shifty category of black Canadianness results in a variety of at times confronted interests and literary (and political) trajectories, with the ensuing complexity of a cohesive critical assessment (Walcott, 2001; Chariandy, 2002), which also makes it an intricate and fertile field of study.

The Scottish diaspora has a long tradition in Canada as well, and, as part of the mainstream of society, its literature has been much more widely celebrated and acknowledged. Early on, in the period of the first settlements and colonies, literature was very much concerned with migration: special emphasis was placed on the hardships and the adverse circumstances that led Scots to leave their lands in what can only be described as an act of exile. One example of this is the non-fictional account *The*

History of the County of Pictou, Nova Scotia, by Reverend George Patterson (1828-1901), in which he denounces the unfairness of the Scots' eviction from their lands and praises the skill of the pioneers who settled in Canadian territory (Vance, 2005: 161). Such themes were still popular at the beginning of the twentieth century, as the novels *The Man from Glengarry* (1901) and *Glengarry School Days* (1902) by Ralph Connor demonstrate. These novels, like the aforementioned *The Flying Years* (1935), still engage with the bravery of the first Scottish settlers and their forceful migration to Canada. A strong attachment to the mother country can be inferred from the choice of story material. Later, in the mid-twentieth century, Scots Canadian writers such as Hugh MacLennan or Margaret Laurence emerge, and with them, a change in perspective. MacLennan's *Barometer Rising* (1941) and *Each Man's Son* (1951) are both set in Nova Scotia, in Halifax and Cape Breton respectively. The main difference between these novels and the previous examples of Scottish diasporic literature is that the gaze now turns from Scotland to Canada. Canada is the main object of analysis in MacLennan's work; he deals directly with identity, not Scottish, but Canadian. A Scottish influence can obviously be perceived as part of the communities he represents, especially in the second, *Each Man's Son*, which explores the effects of the legacy of Calvinism in his protagonist (Zagratsky, 1998: 19). This new tendency towards asserting a Canadian identity coincides with a period of emerging Canadian nationalism, and it is part of a movement that aimed to promote and celebrate Canadian culture and values as markedly different from those inherited from Britain. MacLennan is a clear forerunner of writers such as Margaret Laurence, Alistair MacLeod or Alice Munro, all of whom belong to this last stage of diasporic writing which, rather than dwelling on the past in the homeland (when engaging with it at all), celebrating its glories or lamenting its loss, utilises that past to gain a deeper understanding of their present.

There is an extensive scholarship covering the historical and literary expansions of both the African and the Scottish diasporas. Of these, key works such as *The Black Atlantic* (1993) by Paul Gilroy, focus mainly on the Caribbean and American (i.e. United States) black struggles for emancipation and the self-definition of a collective identity. An examination of the development of the African diaspora in Canada is, in relative terms, a much more embryonic field of debate, as this geographical area is commonly unacknowledged in black diasporic maps. An opposite tendency can be

observed in studies carried out on the Scottish diaspora, such as *Transatlantic Scots* (2005), edited by Celeste Ray or *To the Ends of the Earth: Scotland's Global Diaspora 1750-2010* (2011), by Tom M. Devine, whose main locations are usually the settler colonies of Canada and Australia. However, while there exists a great amount of diaspora criticism of the respective traditions, there are virtually no works in which the literatures of the African and the Scottish diasporas are compared. The reason for this absence may be that the ontologies of these two diasporic lines, complex and heterogeneous in themselves, are, if understood from a general perspective, too separate from each other to be brought under the same prism. However, once the analytic framework is narrowed down to the specific geographical location of Nova Scotia, patterns of similarity emerge that provide an extensive ground for a contrastive evaluation of the ideas and predicaments put forward by these works of fiction. The establishment and development in a common environment for a prolonged period of time produces the appearance of certain analogies: the outward/Atlantic perspective and awareness of the sea or the concerns with economic depression and social differences and (im)mobility are only some of the most conspicuous. In the introduction to *Fire on the Water*, for example, Clarke proposes that "[i]t would be fruitful to compare Africadian writers with such anti-modern Atlantic Canadian writers as Ernest Buckler, Alistair MacLeod, and Antonine Maillet" (1991: 23), given the prevalence of this theme in Maritime literature. This dissertation focuses on those elements that may unite the African and Scottish traditions in Nova Scotia in order to assess potential approaches to a notion of diaspora that is dependent on protracted settlements such as that effected by these groups in the region.

Part I of the dissertation, "Historical and Theoretical Departures," divided into two chapters, comprises the contextual foundations upon which the reading of the texts is subsequently conducted. While there indeed exist coincidences between these literatures their differences still pose a considerable challenge in the development of this investigation. African and Scottish diasporas pertain, in many aspects, to completely opposed historical cosmologies. The intrinsic complexities and the intricacies of their relationship to the history of Canada and Nova Scotia is one of the main obstacles to be confronted in this dissertation. It is for this reason that the first chapter, entitled "Historical Context of the Region of Nova Scotia: An Introduction," is devoted to outlining a historical introduction to the province of Nova Scotia. While the texts

examined are all contemporary in publication, their narratives gauge periods of several centuries. This temporal dilation, together with the disparities in the histories of each diaspora, means that a close examination of the configuration and establishment of each of them in the provinces is essential for a thorough understanding of the complicated interrelations among the ethnic groups and between each and the land. The chapter is divided into sections that correspond to some of the major episodes through which the history of the province may be explored, paying special attention to those events and periods in which the African and the Scottish diasporas settled in the region. Thus, the first European contacts, the Loyalist period, the African and Scottish migrations, the process of Confederation and the current economic depression are presented as the main points in the chronology of the chapter so that, as a result, a brief but crucial notion of the key aspects of Nova Scotian history are provided, which is a most useful tool to recognise and interpret the multiple criss-crossing references that will surface in the literary analysis.

Chapter 2, "Relevant Aspects of Diaspora Theory: Applications of the Term and Conceptual Challenges," initiates a critical debate by exploring the development of the concept that provides the theoretical foundations for this thesis: the concept of diaspora. It was originally conceived to define the Jewish dispersion from their original homeland (Faist, 2000: 197); however, the emergence of pull and push factors that triggered migration movements, mostly from the end of the Second World War, and of relatively modern means of transportation and communication have resulted in the proliferation of diverse experiences of population displacement and/or dispersion. Following these global shifts, the use of the term has outgrown its initial and even its posterior metaphoric dimensions to refer to these social and historical phenomena of transnational mobility that have shaped and continue to shape the world. It is hardly surprising that, given the relevance of the contexts and practices that diasporas aim to define, the concept has undergone important epistemological transformations. Its strong connotations of exile and enforced migration have been gradually replaced by a generalised acceptance of volition and self-resolution on the part of the migrants that leave their homelands behind, especially thanks to the contribution of Robin Cohen in *Global Diasporas* (originally published in 1997). Diasporic discourses have also allowed the debunking of hegemonic conceptions of fixed and homogeneous identities, promoting the legitimacy of creole and hybrid forms of identity that originate from the

contacts between multiple cultures. Of great importance for the development of diaspora studies and for the purposes of this dissertation is the scholarship produced by critics such as Paul Gilroy (1993) or Avtar Brah (1996), whose works focus on the imperative exploration of race, class and gender differences and particularities within diasporic entities. In methodological terms, it becomes apparent from the choice of critical material that a postcolonial approach will be adopted in this study. Diaspora narratives have both greatly influenced and been influenced by postcolonial theory, especially as far as aspects of ethnicity, nation and transnationalism, hybridity and alterity are concerned. Furthermore, since the context in which the novels are analysed is a (post)colonial space, the utilisation of concepts and ideas on colonial apparatuses and the subsequent responses to them theorised by postcolonial studies is essential in this discussion. Along the same lines, a gender perspective is another fundamental methodological procedure, since one of the main concerns in this dissertation is to offer a balanced approach in which both masculinities and women's experience of the diaspora are equally represented.

As the contexts in which the diaspora can be applied expand, so do debates over its conceptual borders and pertinence. The close study of the novels that conform the core of this thesis reveals that the rather cacophonous relationship between the signifier of the term diaspora and the texts' contents called for an assessment of the concept of diaspora itself. To begin with, diasporas and diasporic identities are not limited to describing the reality of migrants, but that of their descendants too, since, as John McLeod points out "not all of those who live in a diaspora, or share an emotional connection to the 'old country,' have experienced migration" (2000: 207). This means that processes and patterns of settlement, as well as the transformations that the community undergoes in the hostland, are most important elements to provide an in-depth account of a diasporic group. However, the bulk of theoretical work dealing with this subject tends to focus on the stages of migration and mobility, emphasising an uprooted transnational and in-between identity (Gilroy, 1993; Cohen, 2008). This approach, which also implies a debatable permanent "otherness" of diasporic subjects in their country of residence, precludes the existence of diasporas whose presence in the hostland has been extended enough to develop a close-to-native identity. As Sharmani Patricia Gabriel indicates, "a distinguishing characteristic of many contemporary diaspora communities across the globe is their distinctive sense of themselves and their

identity as oriented towards the cultural present, not some lost or 'true' homeland" (2010: 342). The experiences of migration, settlement and collective identification portrayed in the novels at hand reflect this shift in cultural and identity orientation. From this definitional inconsistency comes the need to develop a concept that will both encompass and explicate these diasporic manifestations. This thesis focuses on the delimitation and location of *settled diasporas*, that is, diasporic groups that exhibit a strong sense of allegiance to their hostland nation-state and effect enduring investments, emotional and otherwise, in the land. Rather than replacing diasporas or representing an evolution from a more primitive form of diaspora, the concept of the settled diaspora seeks to advance and expand the heuristic possibilities of the term. The suitability and scope of the concept is tested and exemplified in the subsequent chapters, in which a close reading of the texts is implemented to that end.

The three chapters which develop the literary analysis are compiled in Part II, "Homeland, Settled Diasporas and Belonging in Nova Scotian Narratives." They follow a comparative structure: rather than devoting each chapter to the contents of each of the novels separately, the dissertation is designed as a transversal scrutiny, in which theoretical concerns and significant aspects are analysed simultaneously in the four novels, thus contrasting disparities and disclosing correlations. Chapter 3, "Legacies of the Homeland," constitutes a necessary first step in the identification of settled diaspora patterns within the texts, which is the description of elements that underscore the centrality of a diasporic ethos in the different narratives. The presence of the original homeland in the texts is identified in order to determine the diasporic nature of the African and Scottish communities in Nova Scotia. This approach follows a methodology where aspects that are distinctly connected to the homeland are divided into three categories: memories of migration and myths of the homeland and its histories; cultural elements such as rituals, ceremonies, religion, etc.; and language and aesthetic traditions. Thus, the homeland emerges as the space from which substantial cultural, personal and even linguistic particularities originate. In both the African and Scottish novels there is a clear presence of these categories that illustrate the characters' attachment to the homeland. As such, it could be prematurely concluded that the texts represent examples of diasporic writing in the traditional sense.

However, as will be seen in Chapter 4, entitled "The Emergence of Settled Diasporas," while there exist retrievable traces of the respective homelands, these are

not consistent or distinct enough to speak of the commitment and collective practices of identification that define diasporas. The chapter commences by offering an evaluation of the narrative strategies through which various spaces are represented in the novels. The examination of the characters' relationships to their Nova Scotian home and surrounding rural and urban spaces unveil a connection to the land that is not dissimilar to that displayed by native groups. The emergence of this rootedness to place, which is not without conflicts, leads to the creation of an equally problematic but firm indigenous identity. It is at this point that it is possible to discern the terrain in which the concept of the settled diaspora begins to function as an epistemological device, but its contours need to be carefully drawn. One of the most urgent questions that arises is whether it is really possible to talk about an indigenous identity in a diasporic group with clear alien origins. What are the risks of working in terms of indigeneity within a territory where there are discernible points of beginning (arrival to the land) for these communities? This chapter focuses on the conflicts that claims to a native mindset may imply and offers a detailed account of the dimensions and routes in which this form of identification operates. The undeniable attachment to the land that emerges in these groups as a consequence of prolonged contact and interactions with space on different levels is not exempt from obstacles. These are mostly racialisation for the Africadian peoples, in that hegemonic regulations of place and space based on racialised distinctions between self and other impede the forging of uncomplicated social relationships. On the other hand, Nova Scotia's long history of underdevelopment affects the protagonists in the Scottish novels: here, an older generation see the gradual disappearance of their traditional lifestyle, a predicament that is linked to the younger generation's ambivalent position, torn between the emotional pull of the past and the needs marked by modernity and globalisation. These characters fail to portray a straightforward feeling of belonging; they are represented mostly as displaced either in terms of class or in psychic terms, since even when they manage to move on from the underwhelming environment of the region they are overcome by guilt and anxiety about their in-between social condition. These are examples, in both diasporas, of the discontinuous and complex constructions of space as homeland that the novels bring forward. While there remains no doubt that these characters do not define themselves as (at least solely) African or Scottish, this is not the same as to affirm that a Nova Scotian/Canadian identity becomes readily accessible. The negotiations of such ambivalences and tensions are tackled in Chapter 4, taking into account the role that the

diasporic origins play in their manifestation. A vital part of this chapter is the contrast between the type of indigenous identity that can be observed in settled diasporas and that of Aboriginal peoples. This ontological and empirical differentiation is absolutely necessary in a context like the (post)colony of Nova Scotia, where the Mi'kmaq tribes were displaced from their ancestral lands, a process of obliteration that compromises the right of native populations to autonomy and sovereignty over territory. In order to fully determine the behaviour of settled diasporas it is essential to examine its relations to potentially conflictive forms of collective identification.

Finally, Chapter 5, "The Struggling for Belonging in Modern Canadian Society," provides different contextual vantage points from which settled diasporas may be observed, from the local to the global. Of special interest in this section are aspects of nationalism and belonging in the specific socio-historical background of Canada. While up this point such questions were only addressed from a specifically regional level, this chapter explores the role Canada's particularities as a nation-state. As a nation marked by (post)colonialism (and by neo-colonialism), and characterised by a complex and plural ethnic landscape, the definition of what Canadianness constitutes continues to be largely elusive. The attempt to establish a national framework in which to position settled diasporas commences by addressing the multi-directional connections between regionalism and nationalism in Canada. Regionalism is, especially in literature, the main mechanism through which Canadian literature is conveyed. Critics like Sabine Milz argue that "global and local consciousness have strengthened over the past decades, and national (in the sense of nation-state) consciousness has weakened" (2010: 13). Indeed, both global and local perspectives are very present in all the novels (with emphasis on the former); however, the texts' engagement with these articulations of collective identity also point to the relevance of identifying Canada as a nation. Canadianness remains an elusive signifier, and the question of its pertinence in a global context where the nation-state seems to be in decline needs to be considered. This chapter will register the means by which Canadian identity is challenged, superseded or reinforced. The chapter focuses, for this purpose, on extra-territorial identity markers, those of race, gender and class. While these aspects are analysed in general terms throughout the entire dissertation, they are here assessed in more depth in relation to institutional and socio-historical structures present in Canada as a nation-state. An example of these particularly Canadian constructions is the policy of multiculturalism

that has been adopted as official since the 1980s and which contextualises race and ethnicity in very specific terms. In what ways does this socio-political environment palliate or contribute to perpetrate processes of racialization? The novels reflect, to different extents and with different purposes, as this chapter will demonstrate, how these policies are implemented or how they fail to sustain a tolerant and egalitarian society as they are intended to. Together with this, gender and class as globally/nationally understood integrate the other two indispensable pillars that illustrate the different articulations of Canadianness and the place of settled diasporas within its boundaries.

In the midst of these uncertainties as regards the meaning of Canadianness, Cynthia Sugars maintains that "the absence of clear origins can be said to be something that defines the contemporary Canadian state," which "also contributes to a shared obsession with origins and ancestors" (2005: 179). This dissertation follows a series of critical and analytical steps, from the presupposed presence of a diasporic drive in the novels under scrutiny to the confirmation of a different type of diasporic manifestation, the settled diaspora. As entities in which the original homeland does not play a fundamental or highly influential role anymore, could it be said that these novels focus on anxieties of settlement rather than on anxieties of origin? Settled diasporas seem to emerge as a middle ground where, without completely losing sight of the ancestral homeland, nativist predicaments are closely addressed. This dissertation aims to test whether this new concept may in fact expand the borders of diaspora studies by providing further ontological and epistemological devices and directions.

Part I: Historical and Theoretical Departures.

Chapter 1: Contextualizing the Histories of Nova Scotia.

1.1. Early Configuration of the Colony

This thesis focuses on the contemporary literary production of writers from two ethnic groups in Nova Scotia: the Scots-Canadian and the African-Canadian. These two groups have been referred to as the Scottish and the African diasporas, respectively. In order to determine whether their literatures today are impregnated with the attributes traditionally associated to diasporas and their representation in literature, it is essential to explore the historical context in which these social groups have developed. This chapter offers a brief overview of the most relevant historical events in Nova Scotia (and the Maritime Provinces in general) from the late seventeenth century to the present day.

Before the arrival of the first Europeans, the territory known today as Nova Scotia was populated by diverse Aboriginal peoples, mainly by the Mi'kmaq Indians. French fishermen started to make sporadic trading contacts with them as early as the sixteenth century, although a permanent French settlement was not established until the following century. The colony of *Acadie* was first founded in 1604 in what today is the frontier between the United States and Canada, and was later moved to Port Royal (now known as Annapolis Royal) in the peninsula of Nova Scotia. After subsequent military campaigns from Britain and New England during the rest of the seventeenth century, the British finally won Acadia from the French in 1710. It was in 1713, through the Treaty of Utrecht, that the colony was renamed Nova Scotia (Brown, 2008: 2). The years that follow mark the beginning of the British colonial period, a presence that will gradually transform the land, affecting its Acadian inhabitants most immediately and, ultimately, (although the most drastic effects are not to be felt until the last part of the century) the Native population. This whole transformation process was slow, however, and it is necessary to distinguish between at least two periods in these initial stages of the settlement of the province. Although some critics reject the term "pre-Loyalist" for being "ahistorical" (Conrad, 1988: 10) or "biased" (Cahill, 1988: 120) the impact of the arrival of this group from 1782 onwards cannot be denied. Until then, settlers in Nova

Scotia, who included German and Swiss Protestants, British colonists and what are called New England Planters, were not very numerous and were still struggling to establish a firm basis for the colonisation of the land. It is for these reasons that it would be useful, if only for the sake of clarity, to establish a distinction between a pre-Loyalist period (from 1710 to 1782) and a Loyalist period (from 1782 to 1820), without demeaning the importance of the former but emphasising the transcendence of the latter.

In the pre-Loyalist period, and during the first decade since the British conquest of the province (which at this point included peninsular Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Cape Breton), most of the land was controlled by the Mi'kmaq, whose lifestyle depended on hunting, fishing and gathering. The Acadian settlements concentrated in the coastal areas of the Bay of Fundy, and their population was steadily growing to outnumber that of the Aboriginals in 1720. At this point in history there were few British colonists and they mainly occupied the area of Annapolis Royal (Reid, 2004: 674). During the first decades of the eighteenth century commercial and territorial relationships between Aboriginals and colonists were hostile at times, but overall, as John Reid explains, "Nova Scotia was characterized by an internal equilibrium by which disputes among Mi'kmaq, Acadians, and British could be accommodated with only sporadic violence" (676). In the decade of the 1740s, however, the situation started to change as military offenses between French and British forces intensified. Assaults such as the British occupation of the French city of Louisbourg in 1745 or the defeat of the British at the battle of Grand Pré in 1747 culminated in the construction and fortification of military posts; for this purpose, the city of Halifax was founded in 1749 as a bastion of defence. In this climate of rivalry between the two empires, the Acadians were targeted as potential betrayers by the British, even though they had declared themselves neutral since 1690 (Faragher, 2006: 86). It is generally sustained that the refusal of the Acadians to take oaths of allegiance to the British Crown was a decisive factor in the expulsion.[1] However, it is "with the inception of the Seven Years' War in North America" in 1754 that "the British authorities made the final decision to deport the Acadians" (Brown, 2008: 44). Thus, in 1755, under the direction of Nova Scotia governor Charles Lawrence and with the participation of the governor of Massachusetts, William Shirley, some 7,000 Acadians, who had been adopted as British subjects since

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[1] Brigitta Brown suggests that the Acadians did not take the oath because the British were Protestants (2008: 43); whereas Geoffrey Plank (1996: 23) and John M. Faragher (2006: 87) point out that the Acadians were not willing to take the oath because the British demanded for it to be unconditional.

1710, were expelled from their lands. This process of eviction, which came to be known as the *grand dérangement,* lasted for eight years and had catastrophic consequences for the Acadians, whose community was dispersed; entire families were separated, their lands plundered and burnt. As many as 10,000 Acadians were sent into exile to different parts of North America: Quebec, Maryland, New York, Louisiana; and some went also to Europe, to Britain and France mainly. Once the Seven Years War ended and the signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1763 granted that France ceded all their territories to the British, the Acadians were allowed to return, only to find themselves relocated to marginal areas, for their farming lands had been occupied by the New England Planters (Faragher, 2006: 83).

For most of the eighteenth century, excluding its last two decades (which mark the beginning of the Loyalist era), the presence of non-Native colonists (be it Acadians, New England Planters or British settlers) was not as destructive for the Native peoples as it could be thought. In terms of land occupation, the Acadians had established mainly in the Bay of Fundy marshlands, in a way that they did not invade the hunting and fishing lands of the Mi'kmaq (Faragher, 2006: 85). This undisturbed climate provided the basis for the continuation of a relationship of mutual reliance that both groups had maintained since the first colonial interactions the previous century. With the arrival of the British colonists and their patent superiority over the French Empire, the Mi'kmaq saw the necessity of establishing trading contacts with them. However, associations between Mi'kmaq and British were not as untroubled as those with the French. To start with, many Mi'kmaq had converted to Catholicism, the use of French as a common language to Natives and colonists was widespread, and some even adopted French names. Alongside this cultural proximity and an economic dependency on firearms and other supplies that undermined much of their self-sufficiency, the Natives created political bonds with the French, operating as their allies in their campaigns against the British. It is essential to understand that, as Patterson points out, the Mi'kmaq lacked a centralised structure and some bands disagreed on their allegiances and their strategic movements (1993: 27). However, the tensions between both empires resulted in frequent raids and hostilities between British and Mi'kmaq forces, especially during the 1740s and with the outbreak of the Seven Years' War (27, 31). Even so, British settlers understood the importance of negotiating with the Natives. Throughout the second half of the eighteenth century there were several attempts on the British side to establish

peaceful terms with the Natives, as is reflected in the 1752, 1754 and 1755 treaties (58). These negotiations culminated in the more successful 1760 and 1761 treaties, which were less concerned with the partition of land than they were with providing supplies and trading conditions. The reciprocity that underlay these exchanges was essential for both groups at this period in time: while the Mi'kmaq demanded the services of Catholic priests and "presents" in the form of provisions and firearms, to which they had been previously accustomed in their dealings with the French, the British needed the Natives' conformity to bring more colonists to the land (Reid, 2009: 89; 2004: 679). The truth is that, in spite of the settlement of New England Planters after the expulsion of the Acadians, the number of British settlers was still very inferior to that of the Natives, and, as Reid indicates "prior to 1782 – whether imperial officials sought to advance their cause in ways that were brutally oppressive, strategically astute, or both – colonization was limited to defined areas, and there was no inexorable advance of British power" (2004: 673). In this pre-Loyalist period, as Patterson and Reid imply, the Mi'kmaq still retained a great degree of autonomy, and, far from being mere victims at the hands of the French and British empires, they exerted a great political influence and established strategic contacts according to their own interests (Patterson, 1993: 27, 59; Reid, 2004: 672).

This is a period in which inter-cultural contacts between several ethnic groups are taking place; these contacts, however, are not based on relationships of equality, even when intervals of good-willing negotiations may induce to think otherwise. A period of demographic fluctuations and shifts in power and domination, this is the beginning of the establishment of a socio-political hierarchy. British and French colonists struggle to impose their hegemony upon a land that, although imagined as conquerable from an imperial perspective, was already populated by the time of their arrival. Aboriginal peoples in this period have ostensibly no trouble accommodating the presence of the newcomers, mainly due to their superiority in number. However, even as early as the seventeenth century, these cultural interrelations function as the first catalysts for the ill fate that the Mi'kmaq are to suffer later in the nineteenth century, for the presence of the Europeans shook the foundations of their self-providing economy, as they gradually became accustomed to depending on the supply-giving system imported by the newcomers (Patterson, 1993: 28). In spite of the attempts at maintaining a peaceful and diplomatic atmosphere, an underlying sentiment of suspicion and

animosity pervaded among the different ethnic groups in this initial part of the seventeenth century. By 1730 the colony was still sparsely settled by the British, who "stood at fewer than 100, almost all of them officers and enlisted men" (Plank, 1996: 27).[2] The preservation of friendly relationships with Acadians and Mi'kmaq answers to a strategic urgency stirred by this inferiority, rather than to the colonists' plural and tolerant mentality. These anxieties over strategic domination are perhaps best reflected on the importation of more than 5,000 Protestant immigrants in the early 1750s (the so-called "Foreign Protestants") to settle among Acadians in the hope of converting them to Protestantism (32); and on the brutal expulsion of this ethnic group following the failure of this assimilation scheme.

In spatial terms, it is essential to emphasise that these cross-cultural connections both affect and are affected by the process of geographical transformation that is taking place in these centuries: the genesis and progressive shaping of the political boundaries of Nova Scotia as it is physically understood today, as a region within Canada. There is no better time in history to demonstrate the fictitious, artificial nature of regional boundaries than the colonial period. The advancing British Empire illustrates with its battles and negotiations, its treaties, its "taking possession" of different masses of land, tactically arranging them together under the same political centre or disengaging them from it, how there is nothing natural in the current distribution of the regional frontiers of Nova Scotia (or of any other region/nation for that matter). The geopolitical divisions that provide an imaginary structural stability in contemporary maps did not come to completion until well into the nineteenth century. From the arrival of the first Europeans until then, colonial expansion carried out by the different empires created, through land appropriation and settlement, towns, regions, and frontiers between them that were previously nonexistent. One of the perhaps most important or obvious distinctions that was not operating at the time is the separation between Canada and the United States, since none of the countries had been "born" yet. The British conquest of Acadia was therefore more a northward expansion of the New England border (Sage, 1928: 64), rather than the acquisition of an isolated portion of territory. Yet, the shape of the Maritimes was not ultimately decided with the Treaty of Utrecht, by which France ceded Acadia "'within its ancient boundaries'" (qtd. in Sage, 1928: 64). There was

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[2] Evidence on the exact number of British colonists remains inconclusive; Reid affirms that in the first decade of the century there were about 400 British settlers almost all of them concentrated in the town of Annapolis Royal (2004: 674).

certain confusion as to what exactly constituted the limits of the newly ceded territory. As Patterson explains, with the annexation of Acadia, "the British believed that they had won all of the territory of present Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and eastern Maine;" however "the boundaries with Massachusetts's Maine and Quebec remained vague" (1993: 32), which provoked disputes over land and the urgency for both empires to establish strongholds in their respective positions until the mid eighteenth century. Île Royale (Cape Breton) and Île Saint-Jean (Prince Edward Island) remained French until they were transferred to Britain by the Treaty of Paris of 1763. At this point, the colony of Nova Scotia was formed by the peninsula of Nova Scotia, present-day New Brunswick and the isle of Cape Breton (Prince Edward Island became independent in 1769). Other portions of land of what is Canada today similarly changed hands from French or American dominion to the British Empire by means of treaties or negotiations throughout the second half of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries (Harris, 2010: 728). It is important to observe that by then and until the American Revolution 1776, even though there were separate colonies and regions throughout all the British colonies of North America, in terms of economy (and it perhaps could be added, in terms of imaginary distribution), they were conceived as part of the same abstract continuum by the Imperial centre: "New England, the Middle Colonies, the Southern Plantations, Nova Scotia and Canada were all bound up in one commercial system" (Sage, 1928: 64). This notional uniformity comes to be disrupted with the American Revolution, which splits the territory into now two clearly separated political units. Migration of Loyalists to the Maritime Provinces by the end of the American Revolutionary War in 1783 generated the partition of Nova Scotia into three regions in 1784: New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Cape Breton. While New Brunswick remained as an independent colony, Cape Breton was re-annexed in 1820, thus materialising, one hundred years after its conquest, the geopolitical boundaries of present day Nova Scotia.

It is in this pre-Loyalist era that the initial war episodes and negotiation treaties leading to frontier transformations and changes in land possession occur. It is necessary, therefore, to emphasise once again the relevance of this formative period for Canadian history. Even though its course was thoroughly altered by the migration of Loyalists and settlers from the British Isles to Canadian soil by the beginning of the nineteenth century, to the point that it becomes necessary to demarcate these contributions within a

specific historical period, the importance of the first-contacts and early development years cannot be denied, especially for the region of Nova Scotia.

1.2. Arrival of the Loyalists

In the aftermath of the American Revolution, during the winter of 1782 and in 1783, thousands of Loyalists sought refuge in the colonies of British North America. Also known as "United Empire Loyalists" (Lower, 1973: 54) they sided with the British in the American Revolutionary War, opposing the independence of the United States from the British Empire. When the United States finally won the war, many of these Loyalists were exiled to other parts of the British Empire. Most of them settled in government-granted lands in Nova Scotia and Quebec. The exact number of migrants is difficult to determine, mainly because historians, when referring to the place of destination as "Nova Scotia," may be implying the territory that today is Nova Scotia, or what it was at the time, that is, the Nova Scotian peninsula and New Brunswick.[3] In any case, figures range between 15,000 to 20,000 Loyalists arriving in Nova Scotia and some 15,000 in present-day New Brunswick (Fellows, 1971: 106; Godfrey, 1993: 1). Other parts of Canada, mostly the Quebec area, also received influx of Loyalist exiles, although certainly in smaller numbers, from 5,000 to 10,000 (Godfrey, 1993: 1; Lower, 1973: 54). Those coming to Nova Scotia had done so from the port of New York, transported in fleets organised by Sir Guy Carleton. They arrived from all over the colonies of the newly formed United States, the majority of them from the northern and middle colonies.[4] There has been a discrepancy between past and present historians regarding their occupation and social class: traditionally Loyalists have been uniformly depicted as gentlemen, high-class citizens, almost aristocracy. This idea has been more recently debunked by twentieth-century historians. With those from the privileged classes came a majority of low-class people, discharged soldiers, farmers, etc. and most of them arrived "with virtually nothing" (MacNaught, 1982: 58). In addition to this variety in geographical and social backgrounds, it is essential to add the ethnic

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3 There are indeed some inconsistencies as to the figures and the way of describing geographical locations. While Jo-Ann Fellows (1971) and William Godfrey (1993) do make the distinction between Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, Margaret Ells (1934) speaks of "Nova Scotia proper" (107), which does not include New Brunswick or Cape Breton; J. A. Lower (1973) and Kenneth MacNaught (1982) mention Nova Scotia, but the high figures they provide (35,000-40,000 and 32,000 immigrants respectively), indicates that, in these cases, the designation "Nova Scotia" is intended to include present-day New Brunswick as well.

4 Of the 40,000 to 45,000 Loyalists that took refuge in British North America, Godfrey indicates that there was a 20% of British soldiers, whom he does not consider as "legitimate" American Loyalists. Of the other 80% of American Loyalists "40 per cent came from New York, 15 per cent from other middle colonies, 20 per cent from New England, and 25 per cent, black and white, from the southern colonies" (1993: 5).

component: apart from American, among the influx of Loyalist migrants there were as well British soldiers, Native and, central to this thesis, black refugees.

In the area of what would become New Brunswick, that is, around the Saint John River valley, the Loyalist population vastly outnumbered the one existing prior to their arrival. Such was not the case in the peninsula of Nova Scotia and Cape Breton, where there was already a population of 13,000 to 15,000 inhabitants (Fellows, 1971: 106; Godfrey, 1993: 1). It is not surprising, therefore, that many Loyalists started occupying relevant political positions in this region, and exerted their influence to create, in 1784, the colony of New Brunswick, independent from Nova Scotia and from the government from Halifax that they resented. Cape Breton was separated alongside New Brunswick by the British government, apparently on the grounds that a divided territory would be easier to handle (MacNaught, 1982: 58), but it was re-annexed later in 1820. The presence of the Loyalists was also decisive in the passing of the Canadian Act or the Constitutional Act of 1791, which formally divided what was then called Canada or Quebec into Upper Canada and Lower Canada, separated by the Ottawa River. It established the division between two provinces and their predominant ethnic populations (French-speaking in Lower Canada and English-speaking in Upper Canada); each was to preserve their respective legislation; representative governments, highly demanded by the Loyalists parties, where introduced in the colonies, although they were still largely managed by the British imperial centre (Lower, 1971: 57-58).

To compensate for their support and losses, Loyalist refugees were conceded land and livestock from the government, to settle in the British North American regions they were forced to migrate to. The amount of land granted depended very much on class, previous occupation, and the number of family members. Thus the head of a family would receive one hundred acres of land, plus fifty more acres for each other member in the family. Soldiers received larger allocations, according to their rank: "Non-commissioned officers were allowed 200 for themselves and the same family proportions as civilians; subalterns got 500, captains 700, and field officers 1,000, if they settled with their regiments" (Ells, 1934: 107). To this, MacNaught adds that "Legislative Councillors got 6,000 acres apiece and entire townships were granted to 'entrepreneurs' for speculative development" (1982: 66). In effect, however, the process of land granting was often long and confusing, difficulties and delays in the procedure

were usual, and sometimes people received less land than they were initially promised (or even no land at all, as it was the case of many black Loyalists). In addition to this, pre-Loyalist settlers had already occupied the most productive lands for farming and agriculture, so Loyalists, mostly confined to isolated, uncultivated areas, competed with one another for the best remaining land. Subsequent crop failures and harsh winters contributed to the obstacles Loyalists had to face when settling in Nova Scotia. The initial positive attitude and optimism accompanying settlement in Nova Scotia, which Loyalists had conceived as a "promised land," would soon fade into resentment due to these struggles, and by 1790 many Loyalists had started to move to other British colonies or back to the United States. Another factor that contributed to this dispersion was the exhaustion of the available provisions coming from Britain, and the fact that officers could still be receiving their allowances even if they resided outside of the Empire. The settlement of Shelbourne was to suffer this loss with the most intensity, since its population was largely based on Loyalist settlers (Godfrey, 1993: 5; MacKinnon, 1973: 50). This did not prevent the influx of Loyalists from significantly altering the demographic landscape of Nova Scotia.

While critics provide slightly imbalanced accounts of the course taken by British-Mi'kmaq interactions in the pre-Loyalist period (Patterson, for instance, chooses to focus on the warfare events, whereas Raid highlights in "*Pax Britannica* or *Pax Indigena*" the disposition on both sides to maintain diplomatic ties), there are no discrepancies among historians as to the deeply transformative and, especially for the Mi'kmaq, devastating effect of this new wave of immigrants. Where there had previously been little trouble between Native and non-native populations, due to the small amount of "foreign" inhabitants, the arrival of the Loyalists and of thousands of British settlers from the 1780s and up to the 1830s would provoke the irreversible decline of the Native communities. Above all, conflicts over land and encroachment constituted the main disputes, since settlers tended to occupy coast and riverbank lands for fishing, which were the areas around which Native bands established during spring. This was followed by the massive depletion of hunting game, on which the Mi'kmaq relied for survival in the winter months. The absence of a hinterland in peninsular Nova Scotia impeded their relocation to alternative suitable lands, which was not the case in New Brunswick, for instance. The Mi'kmaq's lifestyle and practices of subsistence were thus disrupted by the agrarian settlement that was invading the region during this

period. In spite of the efforts of personalities such as George Henry Monk, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, or French priest Jacques-Ladislas-Joseph de Calonne to protect Native lands, settlers continued to seize territories that were vital to their self-sufficient living. The Nova Scotian government began a program to set aside reserves of land for Native peoples, but even these "offered no immunity from further encroachment" (Reid, 2009: 87-88).

The former cooperative relationship of interdependence and reciprocity was abandoned, and the government of the colony only returned to the old diplomatic approach of the past for a brief period during the third Anglo-French War in 1793, and in the American War of 1812, for fear that the Mi'kmaq would ally with the enemies' armies (Upton, 1975: 5, 8). Overall, however, the Natives did not pose such a threat under these circumstances as they did up to the last third of the eighteenth century, and the promises of protection and present-giving made in the 1760-61 treaties were left unfulfilled. The Natives were forced to rely on charity or philanthropic initiatives for relief, which was only a short-term solution. The policy of permanent settlement of communities on land reserves and encouraging farming and agriculture kept failing (due to bad crops, poor lands, and territory appropriation by white settlers); and late attempts at establishing education programs such as the Indian Act of 1842 were equally erratic. By the time of the Confederation, the Mi'kmaq, who had been taken under the protection of the Crown, "were the poorest of the poor, classified as a group along with paupers and without basic civil rights" (Upton, 1975: 31). Contact with the massive influx of Loyalists and British settlers, whose mentality of entitlement proved catastrophic for Native peoples' habits, annihilated their populations so that by the 1860s their numbers had dramatically declined: only some 1,500 Aboriginals remained.[5]

The relevance of the Loyalists' role in the shaping of Canadian history, and more specifically of that of the Maritime provinces is remarkable: it meant an increase in population of three times the inhabitants there were before their arrival, the creation of new geopolitical frontiers and a drastic environmental transformation. Nevertheless, their contributions and, especially, their group identity have been at times exaggerated by historians to the point of acquiring mythical dimensions. MacNaught's assertion that

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[5] A report from 1866 shows a population of 1,400 to 1,800 people (Upton, 1975: 29), and in previous decades, through the 1830s and 1840s, their numbers dropped down to 1,166, so that "it was feared they would altogether disappear within a couple of generations" (Gwyn, 2003: 76).

"With the French Canadians, the Loyalists form indisputably the most basic historical ingredient of Canadian nationhood" (1982: 59), for instance, rather diminishes the presence and participation of other ethnic groups in the development of the different provinces and the nation's identity, such as the Natives themselves, the British settlers, or even the recent influx of immigrants of diverse origins.

Perhaps one of the most misleading stereotypes that tends to be emphasised is precisely the attribute of loyalty they are best known for. Apart from the fact that among those who were counted as Loyalists there were some opportunistic people with no political conviction or particular attachment to the British Crown, or those who were practically forced to migrate because they lived in areas mostly populated by Loyalists; once in the British North American colonies political disputes emerged that confronted groups of Loyalists with one another, and the poor conditions in the new regions soon arose a sentiment of bitterness against the British government, by which they felt betrayed (Wilson, 1984: 133). Neil MacKinnon argues in his paper "The Changing Attitudes of the Nova Scotian Loyalists toward the United States" (1973) that the initial hatred and animosity that Loyalists professed against American independence supporters gradually subsided and was re-directed towards the Nova Scotian government. The arduous task of settling the harsh lands of Nova Scotia is told in a heroic, almost legendary tone, not at all tarnished by the fact that this accomplishment was the cause of the near extinction of the Native populations. These inner contradictions are overlooked, more often than not, in favour of a uniform representation of suffering, self-sacrificing loyal exiles. Indeed the erasure of the identity differences among Loyalists is the main factor that contributes to the distortion of their image and projects an idea of a coherent, rigid collective. The aforementioned "fallacy of exclusively upper-class origins" (Fellows, 1971: 100), the diversity of geographical locations they migrated form, and other aspects such as religion and, essential for this thesis, ethnic background are rarely mentioned and should nevertheless be taken into account to gain a better understanding of the Loyalists' impact and its development in Canada.

1.3. First Black Communities

Black Loyalists constitute an important and interesting component within those who decided to support the British Crown in the American Revolutionary War, yet their

presence remains generally unacknowledged or, if anything, briefly mentioned. Only in the works of critics who specifically focus on this group is it possible to find detailed accounts of their experiences; otherwise black Loyalists are mostly excluded from theoretical texts dealing with the Loyalists from a more general perspective.

An essential point to understand the extent to which African studies in Canada are underdeveloped is the general assumption that slavery has never been practiced in Canadian territory. Most African slaves were traded to the great plantations of the Caribbean and the southern colonies of present-day United States, and the emphasis on the inhumane exploitation of slavery in these areas, as well as on the brutal conditions of the abduction and displacement of slaves from Africa, deviates the focus of academic attention from other forms of slavery such as those practiced in the colonies of New England and, indeed, in British North America. The absence of extensive plantations in these northern regions and the development of agriculture in otherwise small patches of self-owned farms is also a source of confusion, since the term "servant" was often used in place of "slave," albeit referring to people working in the same conditions of captivity and degradation (Winks, 1997: 37, 46). As some critics, such as Harvey Whitfield, have pointed out, the misconception of a slavery-free Canada contributes to a generalised discourse that conceives Canada as a tolerant, immigrant-welcoming society, in contrast to the racist and violent United States. Notwithstanding predominant assumptions that neglect the historical presence of blacks in Canada, since the 1970s and 1980s critics like Robin Winks, James Walker, Barry Cahill or George Elliott Clarke have devoted their work to unearthing the origins and development of its African communities, which includes of course the arrival of black Loyalists, but the practice and conflicts of slavery too.

For the most part of the seventeenth century and until the second half of the eighteenth century the few blacks living in Canada concentrated mainly in New France, where they were taken from the French West Indies to serve as slaves (most slaves in this period, however, were *Panis*, the name given to native slaves) (Donovan, 1995: 5). In the 1750s, New England Planters brought groups of slaves with them, to perform house-keeping and farming tasks. However, it is the migration of the black Loyalists in 1783 that constitutes the first significant wave of black people to the Maritimes, and the

origins, together with the second wave of slave refugees in 1815, of the Black community in Nova Scotia.

At the very beginning of the American War for Independence, General Washington banned the entry of black people in the army. However, in November 1775, Virginia Governor Lord Dunmore issued a proclamation offering freedom to those slaves owned by Patriots who agreed to swear allegiance to the British Crown during the conflict. After this, the enlistment of blacks, free or slaves, was permitted in the American side, and many did fight for independence. On the other hand, with a view towards emancipation in the British Empire, many slaves, alongside a few freeborn or manumitted blacks, remained in the British side. Some joined the army, becoming the Black Pioneers, and fought defending the British cause (Hope and Moss, 1997: 74, 75; Winks, 1997: 35). When the War ended in favour of the Patriots, black Loyalists were relocated, together with white Loyalists, to other British colonies. Some of them were transported to the West Indies, but approximately 3,000 blacks were sent to Nova Scotia.[6] That the British government did not have the end of slavery in mind when offering freedom to slaves who abandoned their Patriot masters is clearly reflected in the fact that slaves with Loyalists masters were not to receive such privilege and were indeed carried as slaves to their new destinations. The term "black Loyalist" is thus confusing from the outset, as defining a group consisting of people pertaining to as different backgrounds as freeborn American blacks and "freed" American slaves, travelling together with some 1,200 to 2,000 slaves owned by white Loyalist (Whitfield, 2007: 1981), whose presence and experiences are even more neglected than those of the black Loyalists'.

If the conditions white Loyalists had to face upon arrival to Nova Scotia were harsh, equally or even harsher were those faced by black Loyalists. Inefficient, unfair land allocation and segregation were, among others, the main obstacles to a manageable settlement. To begin with, "they received substantially smaller allotments of land than the white settlers did, and when the first company of 1782-83 reached Nova Scotia they found that neither land nor provisions were ready for them, despite promises that they

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[6] Once again figures vary from source to source, only slightly in the cases of Robin Winks (1997: 33), Joseph Mensah (2002: 45, 46), and George Elliott Clarke (2002: 73), all of whom establish the total amount of black Loyalists arriving throughout 1783 in 3,000 to 3,400 people. The exception is Margaret Ells (1934: 107), who posits the number of black settlers at only 938 people.

would receive grants in common with the loyalists and rations and seed for three years" (Winks, 1997: 35). Joseph Mensah goes as far as to affirm that more than half of the black settlers did not receive any land at all (2002: 46). The few lands that were actually granted to black Loyalists were concentrated near Halifax, in the area of Annapolis Royal and, especially, in Shelburne County. The town of Shelburne emerged as a Loyalist settlement, and indeed white Loyalists lived there with their slaves. Black Loyalists, however, established in a segregated community called Birchtown, situated a few miles away from the town. It is in this settlement that Methodist preachers Boston King and Moses Wilkinson, two great leaders of the later exodus to Africa, lived.[7] After the first decade of settlement both Shelburne and Birchtown were in decline, due to the aforementioned problems of poor land quality, conflicts over plots of land and crop failures, which impeded the production of the supplies necessary for the successful development of farming.

The discontent of black Loyalists was further reinforced by issues of discrimination and unfair treatment. Having given up any hope of flourishing as settlers in Nova Scotia, some 1,200 people (almost one third of all black Loyalists in the colony) left the region in what constituted a mass exodus to Africa. In January 1792 "four ships, nine brigs, and two schooners" (Winks, 1997: 72) departed from Halifax to Sierra Leone under the direction of Lieutenant John Clarkson. This journey was part of a project designed by the Sierra Leone Company, composed by Abolitionists whose goal was to resettle free slaves in Africa. A previous party of 411 settlers had already set off from England and arrived in 1787 in the Province of Freedom (62). After the failure of this first group's settlement, the Sierra Leone Company turned to the Black Loyalist community in Nova Scotia. Here, the wretched conditions most people had to endure contributed to a favourable reception of the idea. Black religious leaders, such as Boston King, Moses Wilkinson or David George, became influent figures in supporting and guiding black people in this enterprise. Once in Sierra Leone, the Nova Scotians, as this group was to be known, founded the city of Freetown and established a centre of Western culture amidst African territory. They "formed eventually an élitist élite in their new country, while, in Nova Scotia, blacks became underemployed, poorly educated wards of the state" (Clarke, 2002: 126).

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7 In his anthology of Nova Scotian literature (1991), Clarke includes the life of Boston King as one of the most influential figures of early black Nova Scotian writing.

An interesting debate has emerged around the figure of the Black Loyalist which carries a great political, ethical and academic burden. In his article "The Black Loyalist Myth in Atlantic Canada," Barry Cahill sustains that, since the outset of black Canadian studies in the 1970s, historians have conferred a mythical element on black Loyalists and their political decisions. He develops the idea that lack Loyalists were not or could not actually be Loyalist: rather they were "fugitive slaves who absconded from the rebels in order to secure their liberty at the invitation of the British military" (1999: 81), but were not really fighting against rebellion. At the heart of this ideology lie further ethical implications in that it constitutes the denial of agency to black subjects. As James Walker points out when responding to Cahill's article, black slaves acted upon political conviction, following their desire to achieve emancipation in the British colonies, when they abandoned their masters and fled to the British side (1999: 98). Yet, Fellows argues that the concept of "Loyalty" is to be defined as "loyalty to the king (monarchical government and colonialism), and loyalty to religion (usually, the Church of England) [...], loyalty was respect for the law, and the past as exemplified in the *status quo*" (1971: 101). If this is the case, it proves a hard task to couple Loyalist ideology to whatever political reasons moved black slaves to commit to the British cause. Black people's agency cannot be erased from the equation: it was out of their own determination that black slaves obtained their freedom, but it is even ironic to imply that they shared the white Loyalists' conservative mentality, when it was precisely by this conservative system that black slaves were taken to Nova Scotia alongside the freed ones.

Briefly following the exodus of Loyalists to Sierra Leone, in 1796 Nova Scotia was once again the destination of another group of Blacks, this time Maroons from Jamaica. They were 556 "troublesome" Maroons, exiled by the Governor of Jamaica, Lord Balcarres, after the last Maroon War. They did not stay long, for in 1800 they were sent to the same colony as the Loyalists before them (Winks, 1997: 78-95). After this removal, the second significant influx of African-Americans into the region took place during the war of 1812, with the arrival of the black refugees. The 1812 War was a conflict between American and British forces over trading conditions and territory, which ended in December 1814 with the Treaty of Ghent. Under similar circumstances to the War for Independence, the British once more issued proclamations of freedom to those slaves who joined the British lines, offering free transportation to the West Indies

or British North America as well. Hope and Moss affirm that some of the refugees taken to the West Indies were re-sold as slaves. On the other hand, there were blacks fighting on the American side hoping to eventually gain their freedom; most of them, however, where sent back to their masters by the end of the war: "Thus, both sides betrayed, to some extent, the blacks who enlisted in the hope of getting their freedom" (Hope and Moss, 1997: 110). Of the almost 3,500 slaves who fled their masters, some two thousand had been taken to Nova Scotia by 1818, most of them from the states of Maryland and Virginia (Whitfield, 2002: 33).

Winks describes the refugees as "a disorganized, pathetic and intimidated body who seemed unable to recover from their previous condition of servitude, their sudden voyage up the Atlantic to Nova Scotian shores, and their persistent lack of leaders;" in contrast to the black Loyalists, "who were proud in their sense of Loyalism, and the Maroons who were crude but vigorous in their military unity" (1997: 114). This downgrading portrayal becomes even more shocking given the account he offers of the many difficulties black refugees struggled against when attempting to settle in Nova Scotia. If those who had come before them had received poor lands, refugees were allocated even worse soils, and the first winters after their arrival "were unparalleled in their severity" (125). Winks also blames the refugees' settlement failure on their being used to milder climates and their inability to adapt to the cold, northern conditions. They soon became the goal of philanthropic acts of charity and education and agrarian improvement projects, but it was to no avail, since black refugees never prospered in the region. By this point, the refugees' story should sound somewhat familiar: although not coincidental in their origin, the Native peoples' and the black refugees' situations share similar patterns in their development. These are two ethnic groups whose lifestyles are completely disrupted, albeit under different circumstances, by contact with European colonisers. Once displaced and struggling to survive within the territory of Nova Scotia, there is an attempt on the part of the white society to rehabilitate them to a proper life through charity, relief and mainly through settlement programs. Upon the impossibility of those groups to succeed in said projects, the failure is then blamed on inherent deficiencies associated with their race (they are naturally lazy, ignorant or otherwise incompetent to carry out the designated plans for improvement); these representations, in turn, provoke sentiments of rejection and scorn on the white population, and, of course, they lead to conclude that it is the Natives' and blacks' own fault to have ended

up as the outcasts of society. The key to understanding this chain of events and the way that are depicted by present-day historians is that "most documents relevant to black history were created by the white colonial elite" (Whitfield, 2002: 30), a problem that may be extended to the parallel Natives' predicament. Their voices thus silenced in their own time, it becomes almost impossible to obtain an objective or balanced account of how things really happened. Were black refugees really a lazy and useless group? Or was their condition marked by the misery and discriminatory attitudes they encountered in their new home? Robin Winks mentions a series of external obstacles: the government was not prepared for their arrival, they received mainly rocky lands, whites were taking up most jobs, they were sent to poorly organised and segregationist schools. Yet, he refuses to see how these circumstances were the principal factors impeding their advance, and is willing to rely on reports that describe them as idle and uneducated.

Canada has been constructed as a "Promised Land" of opportunity for black people during the last quarter of the eighteenth and during the nineteenth centuries, a notion that has prevailed to the present time (see McKittrick and Woods, 2007, or Pabst, 2006). The discourse of freedom in the north was grounded on the fact that the institution of slavery was not enforced in Canada with the same severity as it was in America. In 1793, the Abolition Act was passed in Upper Canada, which ended slavery in the province. By 1800 "Nova Scotia had moved against slavery as an institution by judicial means" (Winks, 1997: 44). While it remained legal until 1834, after the Slavery Abolition Act of 1833 was passed in all the territories of the British Empire, by that time the practice of slavery in Nova Scotia was discouraged and limited from the legal institutions. Notwithstanding comparatively favourable conditions for slaves and slave refugees, the previous account of the experiences of black people in Nova Scotia evidence that life in the colony was not exactly easy for them. The process of settlement was indeed hard for all the groups that attempted to colonise its territories. However, among these "poor settlers," as they are often called, black people were the most wretched. From the outset they were discriminated against on racial grounds. As Whitfield supports, even though Nova Scotia was not a society whose economy depended on slavery, people were familiar with it, and it "reinforced status-conscious thinking which placed the black community at the bottom of the social ladder" (2002: 41). A segregationist mentality proved to be fatal for the welfare of black settlers in this period, for the hardships faced by the general population had even a more catastrophic

effect within an environment of discrimination and reject. The existence of blacks in Canada is therefore conditioned by the factor of race from the beginning, despite the narratives of tolerance and acceptance that circulated at the time in parallel lines.

1.4. Scottish Migrations

British migration to Nova Scotia commenced, as previously outlined, with the slow settlement of the colony, which initially took the form of government-assisted programs to establish militiamen in strategic areas, especially during the eighteenth century, when disputes over territory with the French were constant. In this context, the presence of the Scots was already very prominent. Paradoxically, Scottish soldiers from the Highland regiments in particular, who had fought in the battles against England before Union in 1707 and later in the Jacobite uprisings that culminated with the Scots defeat at Culloden in 1746, were among those who most fiercely combated against the French for the dominion of British North America and other areas of the British Empire during the eighteenth century. After these wars, many disbanded soldiers were relocated to the Maritimes. Similarly, many Loyalists who settled in this region after the American War of Independence were Scottish soldiers (Devine, 2011: 10, 11). From this point, Nova Scotia kept attracting immigrants from Scotland for decades. The Scottish migrations were far from uniform: for almost two centuries, people were driven out of Scotland and into Canada for diverse reasons and in sometimes very disparate circumstances.

The coming of the ship *Hector* to the port of Pictou in 1773 has gone down in history as one of the earliest significant arrivals of Scottish settlers in Nova Scotia. As Lucille Campey explains, the 190 passengers on board the *Hector* "had made a deliberate choice to emigrate and were certainly not victims of any expulsion" (2007: 3). Although some left Scotland fleeing religious prosecution, and despite the fact that agricultural changes meant lower wages and oppressive conditions for labourers, the period from the 1770s to 1815 was not stigmatised by the removal and impoverishment of thousands of people that came later. At this point, Scottish migrants arrived in Nova Scotia led by two main factors: the appeal of the timber trade and the news of favourable conditions that travelled to Scotland from families who had previously settled in British North America. During these years, moreover, there was a general atmosphere of resistance against migration. As illustrated by J.M. Bumsted "the British government, reflecting the articulated need of the ruling classes of Scotland in this

period, consistently and firmly opposed any loss of manpower through emigration" (1981: 73).

By the end of the eighteenth century, the greatest commercial company in British North America, the Hudson Bay Company, was chiefly run by Scots, originating mainly from the Orkney Islands. Not surprisingly these businessmen recurred to connections in Scotland and hired merchants and workers from the land of their forebears. The North West Company, the other outstanding Canadian trading firm, was from its conception equally managed by Highland Scots. By the time these two companies merged in 1821, Canadian trade had become almost exclusively a Scottish monopoly (Devine, 2011: 15, 16). Similarly, in the Maritimes, fur trade, and more importantly, timber trade, were dominated by Scottish entrepreneurs who turned to their fellow countrymen to appoint employees. As European timber taxes kept rising in the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries, Britain resorted to the cheaper alternative of British North American importations. Thus, in an economic arena ruled by Scots, transatlantic routes were created, connecting the Maritimes and Scotland, and several crossings took place every year, based on this trading activity. This favourable economic situation naturally attracted thousands of Scots. Ships that crossed the Atlantic carrying the highly demanded timber usually went back to Nova Scotia transporting Scottish settlers, after downloading their cargo at the British ports (Campey, 2007: 8; Devine, 2011: 93). In this period (1773 to 1815) some 6,500 Scottish emigrants settled in Nova Scotia and Cape Breton, which constitutes a 70% of all migrants who left Scotland during those years (Campey, 2007: 9, 10). These figures account for the important role both the timber trade and the prosperity of previously successful migrants played in the attraction of new settlers. In terms of settlement, at this early stage a pattern of population distribution could be observed, which similarly reflects the influence of these two factors. Timber trade is, in fact, the main cause of the sharp division that could be observed in Nova Scotia and Cape Breton as regards settlement patterns: whereas the western part of the peninsula was mainly inhabited by the New England Planters, Scots populated the eastern half and Cape Breton, clearing the land and falling timber (13). Quite consistently, Presbyterian Scots concentrated in the Pictou area, and later moved to the Cumberland and Colchester counties; Catholic Scots established mainly in the area of Antigonish, while the western part of the peninsula did not have any significant Scottish settlement. These patterns continued

well into the nineteenth century (60). The island of Cape Breton was initially protected against settlement by the British government, in order to preserve their mining resources. Nevertheless, since the 1790s, Scottish settlers, mainly Catholics, started to squatter in the island, entering through Pictou county due to these restrictions, so that by the time occupation was legal there was already a strong Scottish Catholic community. The first direct arrival from Scotland to Cape Breton, however, did not take place until 1802.

Migrants in this period, therefore, came from a variety of social backgrounds. Apart from the religious distinction of Catholics (from the northwest and the Western Islands) and Presbyterians (from the eastern Highlands and the Lowlands), there were people from the upper classes as well as labourers and farmers and people of some modest means. Merchants, lawyers, clergymen or colonial officers usually came from well-to-do families, often men who would not receive inheritance because they were not the eldest child; and a remarkable number of Scots or people of Scottish descent became influential politicians in the region. Although some migrants were fleeing prosecution, religious or otherwise, people who lived in extreme poverty were not generally to be found at this stage of migration, simply because the cost of a passage to the Americas was more than they could afford (Bumsted, 1981: 80). Geographically, migrants in this period originated primarily from the Highlands, as they were the ones feeling the pressure of the early agricultural changes and also because migration of skilled workers was forbidden in the Lowlands by the British government. In addition to these prohibitions, passenger lists show that, whereas whole Highland families used to travel together, it was individual migrants that departed from the Lowlands in general terms (67, 70).

By 1815 the circumstances under which migrants left their homeland had changed. The average migrant no longer travelled voluntarily, out of the impulse to look for better opportunities, or a better life in a land that offered more independence, both economically and culturally speaking. From 1815 to the early 1860s, there was a massive enforced migration: it was the poorest in society that went to the New World, not searching for fortune, but because they had been expelled from their lands or affected by famine. At this point, it is necessary to turn to the country of origin, to

Scotland itself, in order to analyse the socio-economic transformation that caused this traumatic exodus.

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the traditional agrarian system in the Highlands started to undergo a slow transformation process. The main factor in this transformation was the demand of wool which gradually increased with the growing industrialisation of British metropolises. The Highlands provided an ideal location for the raising of sheep, as the greatest part of the land was in the hands of a few (often absentee) landlords and farmers and cottars working for them did not have any legal rights to said land. This meant the possibility of removing these people in order to make way for the profitable activity of cattle-breeding, the practice that came to be known as the Highland Clearances. As early as the 1780s and 1790s there are records of evictions taking place in the areas of Argyll and Kildermorie (Grigor, 2000: 26, 27). Thus, crofters who had lived on these lands for generations had no choice but to find a place in the kelp industry on the coast or the islands, but many were forced to migrate. When the kelp market plummeted in the late 1820s, many impoverished families had to take the same course. As the sheep-breeding business intensified over the years so did the removal of crofters; often these expulsions were violent and brutal and, in consequence, acts of resistance began to rise in many areas of the country. Particularly fierce were those recorded in the region of Sutherland, where in the 1830s and 1840s the Clearances affected thousands of people, and which inspired John McGrath's 1974 play *The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black, Black Oil*, where the opposition of farmers in this area is portrayed.

The situation aggravated with the period of famine from 1846 to the 1860s caused by the potato blight. Although it was not as severe and death rates were not as high as those in Ireland, the famine did contribute to worsen the already impoverished conditions of thousands of families in the Highlands and Islands. This context of poverty and destitution provided the grounds for an acute distinction (which existed already but intensified in the nineteenth century) between the Highlands and the Lowlands in terms of racism and cultural constructions. While on the one hand the Highlands were beginning to be considered as a romantic and idyllic place, on the other, this territory and the culture of Celticity associated with it was receiving bad propaganda both from England and from the more industrially advanced Lowlands.

Highlanders were regarded as an ignorant, uncivilised people, their customs archaic and backwards, not suited to modernity. These "racial" differences both came to justify the violence with which land workers were treated and provided an alternative explanation on the generalised poverty in the Highlands, despite the work of philanthropic relief during the famine years.[8]

Contrary to the attitudes that prevailed in the years before 1815, emigration in this period was seen as the best solution to dispose of the surplus of the poverty-stricken population, and thus encouraged among landowners. This way, in the decades of 1840 and 1850 migration reached unprecedented levels. Most migrants were indigent, destitute people, affected by both the Clearances and the famine and it was not a voluntary migration: many families were forced to migrate during these years, as they "were offered the bleak choice between outright eviction or assistance to take ship across the Atlantic with their costs of passage covered" (Devine, 2011: 120). The depopulation of the Highlands was prompted by economic transformations and fuelled and supported by a racist mindset that opposed Celtic culture and values. This is the reason why the Clearances are often compared to a sort of genocide and are usually described as a process of ethnic cleansing (Ascherson, 2002: 185; Devine, 2011: 119). It is important to bear in mind that Scottish migration is by no means reduced to this period and the Clearances were not its sole catalyst. Expulsion and enforced migration are two episodes of a vast history of migration which extends into the twentieth century and was caused by many diverse demographic and economic reasons. From the 1860s and until the end of the nineteenth century, for example, it was no longer the Highlands, but the Lowlands that most people migrated from.

However it is from the period between 1773 and the 1840s that the Maritimes emerged as the most common destination of Scottish migrants, although by mid-eighteenth century the influx started to divert to Upper Canada. Having analysed the harsh economic context and the cultural prosecution in Scotland, it is no surprise that many of those enforced migrants chose to settle in a land that was familiar to them. In

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8 Once again, the presence of oppression based on or justified by racism strikes as tremendously familiar, as it resembles the previous examples in which both Native and Black peoples were similarly treated. In this case, the Highlanders' traditional ways of subsistence were disturbed, first with the annihilation of the clan system and the banning of Celtic culture in the eighteenth century and later with the agrarian transformation of the Clearances. Devine describes this conflict as "irreconcilable differences between the traditional values of Gaeldom and the prevailing ideologies of contemporary capitalism, improvement and social morality" (2011: 118). When the destitute people are unable to adapt and thrive in this imposed socioeconomic and ideological system the tendency is, as it was with the Natives and blacks of Nova Scotia, to blame this failure on racial inferiority rather than on the disruption caused by the imposition in the first place.

the 1830s the main economic activities in the country were agriculture and fishing, but above all, shipbuilding. This is as well the decade of the consolidation of the coal mines in Nova Scotia under the General Mining Association. This British investment formed part, as Samson and Samson suggest, of a new imperial mindset that did not focus on conquering land, but on developing settlements and obtaining profit instead. Not coincidentally (as they were designed partly as destination for the surplus population of impoverished areas in Britain) mining towns soon attracted workers, and a great deal were expatriated Scots, the poor farmers from the Highlands and their families, who had faced eviction and oppression back home (Samson and Samson, 1999: 15, 18). The appeal of job opportunities once again combines with the existence of previous communities of Scots in Nova Scotia, and especially in Cape Breton, where settlements of Highland Catholics were very significant; two factors that contributed to ease the trauma of displacement and the tough process of settlement.

Economic conditions, while definitely better than those they had left behind, were nevertheless not as prosperous as might be expected. It is important to bear in mind that these immigrants arrived in total destitution and, although they were generally supported by fellow countrymen, "the people of Nova Scotia had grown weary of having to subsidize the growing number of poverty-stricken immigrants who came to their ports" (Campey, 2007: 139). As it was difficult for them to acquire land, many of them resorted to land squatting, which complicated relationships with the Native peoples, since they disregarded the fact the territories they thus occupied had been appointed as reserves for the Aborigines or belonged to them in the first place. Further hardships affected these newcomers with successive crop failures that were particularly detrimental to the more recently settled and poorer families. Yet Cape Breton attracted great numbers of pauper migrants, particularly from the Western Islands, during the decades of the 1830s and 1840s, a time when conditions were more favourable in other areas of British North America, such as Quebec or Upper Canada. As Campey explains "it was the prospect of living in a home away from home, among people they knew, that drew emigrants to Cape Breton" (2007: 145). The value of community and the possibility of independence this land offered in a familiar, albeit harsh environment were the factors that kept attracting Highland migrants, if only until the second half of the nineteenth century, when the economic panorama of the Maritimes started its decline.

Scottish migration to the Maritimes is not, to sum up, a uniform or even unilateral movement. Families coming from different parts of Scotland and different cultural and social backgrounds established in certain areas of the region, and while an initial period of voluntary migration can be discerned in the years from 1773 to 1815, there is a second stage in which economic pressures at home literally forced people to migrate in outright destitution. Besides these distinctions, it is important to bear in mind that migration rates fluctuated over the years (rising in times of peace and economic depression or falling in periods of war and industrial surge); and alongside lower class immigrants there were people from the upper classes and entrepreneurs looking for opportunities and fortune in the New World. A complex exchange of raw materials, labour force, information and settlers weaved an intricate net of pull and push factors that influenced migrants' choices and shaped the settlement of Nova Scotia by this ethnic group.

1.5. Confederation and Economic Depression

Mid-nineteenth century was a period of crucial political changes in British North America. Nova Scotia was the first colony to obtain, in 1848, what was termed "responsible government." Even though it did not mean legislative independence, which was still tied to the British institutions, responsible government entailed a greater degree of control over political and financial issues. This self-reliance was achieved mainly through the contributions and initiatives of liberal politician Joseph Howe, whose Imperial organisation views involved more autonomy and decision power in the hands of the colonies (Murray Beck, 1968: 14). Ideas for provincial betterment derived from this newly gained self-determination included the much contested planning of a railway system, a project which would play a decisive role in the outcome of the forthcoming political turmoil. For these decades saw the conception and birth of the Canadian Confederation, the unification of all British North American colonies under one Dominion, a shift that was received with generalised opposition in the Maritime Provinces.

With the disintegration of the colony of Nova Scotia into three provinces and after the re-annexation of Cape Breton, political leaders in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick begun to approach the possibility of uniting the provinces under one legislature. Maritime union was indeed desirable, as Waite explains, because it would

reduce the expenses of maintaining three separate governmental institutions in such a small territory and, most importantly, because it would mean the removal of the customs duties that operated between the colonies at the time, promoting economic connections and easing trade relationships among them (1963: 4). The construction of an Intercolonial Railway connecting the Atlantic Regions with Canada, and whose design had been negotiated since the 1840s was another goal that would benefit from union. Consensus on Maritime Union was never reached, however, due to Prince Edward Island's refusal to relinquish its legislature and to disagreements on the financing of the Intercolonial, among other discrepancies. With the growing pressure of Canada's proposal for Confederation, ideas of Maritime Union gained strength, and a conference was organised in Charlottetown in 1864 to discuss it. It was at this conference that Canadians presented their conditions for Confederation, which contrary to all expectations became the focus of attention and completely overshadowed the question of Maritime Union (Waite, 1863: 23).

The merging of Upper Canada and Lower Canada into one province in 1840 (thereafter called the Province of Canada) was an arrangement that did not satisfy any of its parties. The clashing French and British interests could not be properly defended under such constitutional union. This was one of the main reasons that prompted them to form a coalition and aim for a British North American Confederation in which concessions on civil law and other legal and administrative issues were granted to Lower Canada (later Quebec), thus reaching a compromise that suited both groups (Whitelaw, 1966: 5, 21). The idea of Confederation somehow transcended political inclinations and opposition in Canada, since both liberals and conservatives supported its promotion with great enthusiasm. It was this enthusiasm which they tried to transmit to the Maritimes delegates at the Charlottetown conference. In legal terms, proponents of confederation insisted on following the British government as closely as possible. This was difficult to achieve, since the United Kingdom did not operate under a federal government to begin with, and therefore "the British constitution remained a will-o'-the-wisp, always luring but seldom guiding" (16). This emphasis on the British connection was nevertheless present at all times. With this in mind, it was suggested that local concerns would be addressed by each provincial government, whereas common matters would fall under the jurisdiction of the central government. The Legislative Council (later the Senate) would be formed by twenty representatives from

Upper Canada, twenty from Lower Canada and twenty from the three Maritime Provinces taken together (Waite, 1963: 15).[9] Financially, the central government would assume all the debts from the different provinces; in addition, the new government offered to finance most of the construction of the Intercolonial Railway. Initially, these terms appealed to the Maritimes delegates (if only Prince Edward Island opposed the relatively low representation it would have in the new government) and a second conference was organised at Quebec to take place a month later to further discuss these decisions, this time counting with the presence of Newfoundland.

The conditions proposed at the Charlottetown conference met with relative acceptance because they seemed to favour the Maritime's economic concerns: favourable taxations, the enhancement of Halifax and Saint John as major commercial ports and the opening of a continental market. By the time the Quebec conference ended, however, it was clear that this would not be the case. Through the Quebec Resolutions the shift in power and autonomy from the provinces to the central government became more apparent. The effect of this dramatic balance change is best reflected in the descriptions of some historians: anti-Confederates "feared that an overly powerful and financially profligate monster was about to be born in the banks of the Ottawa" (Smith, 2008: 2); opposition "came from those who believed that the Quebec plan would create a monster, an extraordinarily powerful and distant national government, a highly centralized federal union in which Maritimers would have limited influence" (Buckner, 1990: 24). In economic terms, the scheme to increase tariffs was starkly opposed by the market community, since this policy would raise the costs of production and also because much of the trade, ship-building especially, depended on exports (Forbes, 1983: 5). Indeed, the collection of taxes and customs duties, which would now fall in the hands of the central government, drained the Maritimes from their main sources of income (although this problem was to be compensated by the granting of subsidies, this measure proved not to be enough). Fear of higher taxes was one of the main reasons for opposition and the cause of Newfoundland's refusal to enter the union.

The Quebec resolutions were nevertheless passed on to the London conference which took place in 1866, and on July 1 of the following year the Canadian Confederation was established. It did so without the agreement of Prince Edward Island,

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9 Later, at the Quebec conference, this time with the participation of Newfoundland, it was agreed that the two Canadas would have twenty four seats each, the three Maritimes twenty four seats together and four seats would be granted to Newfoundland (Whitelaw, 1966: 18).

which did not enter the Dominion until 1873; and without Newfoundland, which remained independent until 1949. Elections were called twice in New Brunswick on the question of Confederation, the first of which resulted against it and the second in favour. In Nova Scotia, elections took place once the Quebec resolutions were irrevocable, but there too the general public expressed their resistance. In the face of this rejection, why, then, did the scheme succeed? There were actually certain circumstances which accentuated the need for a full-scale union in the British North American Colonies, and the external pressure from America was one of them. Political relationships were unstable due to the American Civil war, which meant threats of invasion and of ending the Reciprocity Treaty, a financially advantageous free trade treaty. On the other hand, the Fenian raids, coming from America as well but aimed at urging Britain to retreat from Ireland were another factor that prompted union and the protection and defence it entailed. Of special significance was the construction of the Intercolonial Railway, so much coveted by New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Finally, Confederation was supported from the British government, since a united Canada would be much easier to administrate.

In the years after union, some of the fears anti-Confederates harboured became a reality, although it is necessary to emphasise that external circumstances played an important role in the fate of the Maritimes. During the last part of the nineteenth century, these regions suffered an unprecedented economic depression whose effects would last until the 1920s, and which provoked a mass migration of its population. In the changing market from the traditional activities of "wood, wind and sail" for those of "coal, steel and iron" Nova Scotia, as well as the other provinces, struggled to participate in the incipient capitalist economy that was emerging in Canada. Its railway connections, the attempt at establishing manufacture industries and its advantageous position as winter port foretold a promising future for its economy. However, the decline of external markets and the westward shift of the central government prevented the success of its industrializing efforts.

In 1879 the government of Prime Minister John A. Macdonald established protectionist high tariffs on imported goods through the National Policy, in order to promote national production and consumption. This, together with the completion of the Intercolonial in 1876, stimulated the construction of several manufacture industries in

the region during the following decade. Across Nova Scotia, textile mills, sugar refineries and other industries were constructed in areas such as Amherst, Yarmouth and Halifax, even though, in general terms, agriculture, fishing and shipbuilding still dominated the region's market. These new manufactories were chiefly run by individual entrepreneurs who belonged to "traditional mercantile families" whose interests lied in "being of general benefit to the community at large" (Acheson, 1972: 7). In spite of initial optimism inspired by favourable policies and railway connections, industrialising efforts failed to attain the expected results. The entrepreneurs who controlled these factories did not possess enough capital for its management and relied on bank loans to obtain it. This meant that, in times of crisis both the enterprise and the bank would be affected by it (Acheson, 1972: 12). The problem of finances proved fatal in the long run, in that those industries whose costs could not be met were seized by Montreal investors. Authors such as Larry D. McCann have underscored the division in economic growth and production development that emerged between the centre (the heartland) and the Maritimes (the hinterland). According to this division, the market of manufacture products in the Maritimes remained marginal because it could not compete with those of Ontario and Quebec on a national level (McCann, 1979: 51). This uneven distribution helps explain why Halifax did not become a strong metropolis for Nova Scotia, a role that was taken by Montreal instead, up until the 1930s. To balance the instability of its continental market, the Maritimes relied on exports and its commercial relationships with Britain and the West Indies. When the demand of ships and timber declined in Britain, the delicate equilibrium was broken, condemning the region's economic prosperity.

The only business which was not dramatically affected by these external forces were the iron and steel companies, since the Maritimes had access to vast sources of coal. Thus, areas in New Glasgow and Sydney experienced a growing development of its towns, due to the expansion of coal mines and the establishment of iron and steel industries. As there was practically no competition in this field from other provinces of Canada, Nova Scotia remained the main provider of fuel to central cities. When the other manufactories were transferred to foreign control with the consolidation movements of the 1890s, steel and iron companies were still growing, some of them maintaining their local management (Acheson, 1972: 19).

Another factor that contributed to the economic depression in the Maritime Provinces were the changes in the administration of the Intercolonial Railway. Initially, the Intercolonial participated actively in the development of the region. Since it had been designed to improve connections and commerce between the Maritimes and the other provinces of the Dominion, its freight rates were kept much lower than those in the rest of Canadian railways. This way, transportation costs for local manufacturers were significantly reduced. Even when the Canadian Pacific Railway came to the Maritimes its rates had to be reduced in these sections of the line, to be able to compete with the Intercolonial's (Forbes, 1994: 13). The Intercolonial was dissolved in 1917 and absorbed into the Canadian National Railway in 1923, but even earlier than its termination its administration was no longer under local control. As the main reasons for this transformation Forbes includes "the crisis over railway over-expansion and the shift in political power westwards" (25). The loss of the Intercolonial's beneficial conditions was deeply felt, especially in the beginning of the twentieth century, when the economic depression of the 1920s struck this region much harder than the rest of Canada.

From the last decade of the nineteenth century, it became very apparent that the Maritimes were growing at a much slower pace than the central and western regions, its manufacture industries lagging behind in national production and its cities failing to develop into a powerful metropolis. Economic crises prompted people to migrate in the thousands to other parts of Canada (aided by new policies on free labour market), but especially to New England, in a very markedly rural-to-urban movement (see Brookes, 1976; Thornton, 1985). Underdevelopment was blamed on the federal government's neglect of their economic interests, and on its focus on the expansion and promotion of the west. To combat this diminishing political influence, the Maritime Rights movement, in one of the earliest examples of a cohesive regional unity, emerged to demand for subsidies and compensations. Stirring public opinion among the region's inhabitants, the movement, which included representatives from all spheres of society (from manufacturers and merchants to labourers and farmers), successfully influenced those political outcomes that were most favourable for their welfare (Forbes, 1975). Following this agitation, the Duncan Commission was appointed by the central government to study the Maritimes' demands for subsidies and equality of treatment. While some of Duncan's recommendations were rejected (specially resented was the

denial to provide a second ferry to Prince Edward Island), increased subsidies and reduced freight rates to stimulate development were approved by Prime Minister Mackenzie King. Through this achievement, Maritime Rights movement advocates "were able to halt for a brief period the erosion of their region's position and even to register a few modest gains" (Forbes, 1983: 21). The hopes aroused by the fleeting success of the united efforts of the Maritime Rights movement would be eclipsed by the difficult times lying ahead. The Great Recession of the 1930s and World War II, which affected the country as a whole, would hinder even more the region's growth.

1.6. Underdevelopment in the Twentieth Century

The region of Nova Scotia continued in this economic decline, alongside the other Maritime Provinces,[10] for the most part of the twentieth century. The post-war crash of the mining industry, and a slow and uneven process of urbanization (especially in comparison to other areas of Canada), contributed to the underdevelopment of these regions. Migration from, rather than immigration into Nova Scotia will characterise demographic movements in the second half of the twentieth century, in response to recession and unemployment. This economic climate will heavily influence the region's political and cultural identity. Usually read as the most conservative province in Canada, underdeveloped Nova Scotia is regarded as a "'backwater', 'excess', or even 'policy error,'" despite the efforts of many Maritime historians to emphasise its record of labour and left-oriented, community-based movements and projects (McKay 1998: 3). As a measure to counteract deflating economic tendencies, Nova Scotia eagerly invested in tourism industry, which has become one of the main sources of income in the region. The exploitation of tourism came hand in hand with a promotion of the historical heritage of Nova Scotia, which, as some critics point out, has emphasised even more strongly the sentiment of nostalgia and the atmosphere of anti-modernism and backwardness already associated to the region. Another side effect of the focus on tourism has been the coupling of Nova Scotia to Scottish culture and heritage, an identification that ignores for the most part other ethnicities which compose the demographic mapping of the region.

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10 The term "Atlantic Provinces" is also used, especially after the incorporation of Newfoundland to the Canadian Dominion, when the geopolitical region formed by Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland began to be known as the Atlantic Region.

After a brief period of prosperity and high productivity due to the demand of coal and steel in the First World War, the economy of the Maritimes collapsed when war exports came to a halt. During the 1920s, the coal and steel industries underwent a period of recession in which many mines were closed down and some of the most severe strikes took place. Deeply affected by this, and by the subsequent economic crisis of the 1930s, the provinces never fully recovered and lagged behind other regions in Canada in terms of development. Economists and historians, from liberal to Marxist theorists (see James B. Cannon's 1984 review essay "Explaining Regional Development in Atlantic Canada"), have attempted to explain the causes for the region's persistent underdevelopment for the most part of the twentieth century, and its inability to recover from these hardships. As aforementioned, members of the Maritimes' Rights Movement blamed the region's economic downfall on its neglect by the central government after Confederation. More recently and in a similar vein, some critics such as Barber or Frank, claim that federal policies have favoured central markets to the detriment of peripheral industries. In addition to unfair or uneven distribution of wealth, slow processes of industrialisation or the co-existence of pre-capitalist and capitalist modes of production have also been pointed out as causes for stagnation, especially in the case of industrial development such as coal mining and fisheries (Sager, 1987: 136). Finally, the very nature of the region's market, based on the export of staple products, was very much dependent on external markets and supply and demand cycles and was therefore subject to fluctuation in productivity.

Theories of urban underdevelopment have often been cited as causes for the Maritimes' economic decline. Acheson was one of the firsts to point out that the lack of a prominent, stable urban centre was a very detrimental factor in the early processes of industrialisation. McCann affirms that, regarding the Maritime urban panorama, "A fragmented, poorly integrated urban system and sluggish, underdeveloped town economies are the most apparent urban traits" (1988: 93). He goes on to explaining how working practices in which people alternated a rural residence and seasonal work with work in the urban settlements hindered urban development in the region. These practices survived until very late in the twentieth century which contributed to the reasons why "urbanization in the Maritimes region has always lagged behind the rest of Canada" (109). This does not imply that attempts to develop urban areas were non-existent in the Maritimes. In the decades of the 1950s and 1960s, and as part of a

broader period of urban development that affected other areas of Canada and the United States as well, Nova Scotia embarked in several projects of urban betterment and modernization. In fact, it is precisely as a consequence of one such urban plan of renewal and "clean-up" that one of the most relevant events in the history of black Nova Scotia (and, arguably, of black Canada) took place: the razing of Africville.

The community of Africville was established in the 1840s, mostly by the descendants of slave refugees who had been arriving in Nova Scotia since 1812. It was situated within the city of Halifax, in the southern shore of the Bedford Basin. From the onset, people in Africville struggled with land expropriation and the demolition of their homes to make way to a railway expansion as early as 1853, followed by encroachment of other services and industries as the city developed. The situation worsened by the second half of the twentieth century: "after a 1947 rezoning," the city, Nelson explains, "began to solidify plans to fully expropriate the lands for industrial use. In Africville's last decade, the city moved its dump directly onto the community's lands. Two years later, an incinerator appeared only fifty yards beyond the south border of Africville" (2008: 12). Under the beautification project initiated by city in the 1950s, this area was effaced on the grounds that it was a filthy neighbourhood (the city dump was actually given as one of the reasons for its removal), where police and fire services did not operate and with no water sewage. Community and self-reliance discourses clashed with discourses of betterment and integration from the urban planning sphere. However, as Nelson emphasises, the razing of Africville responded to notions of racial discriminations and control policies: "they studied and narrated Africville […] as a place outside society, fit only for the wastes and production processes of the mainstream, and dispensable when it grew too visibly polluted" (2008: 54). The process of relocation lasted for several years. Very few inhabitants did have the opportunities or the means to influence over the negotiations and decision between the City and the HHRAC (Health Human Resources Advisory Committee) affecting their community; and while some initially agreed to the proposed terms of evacuation and relocation, many were soon to regret their weak responses, as promises were broken, families scattered, and people left to strive against poverty, forced to rely for the first time in their lives on public welfare (Clairmont, 1992: 67-72).

The aftermath of the destruction of Africville saw "the emergence of new cultural, organizational and political responses among black Nova Scotians" (Clairmont, 1992: 74). Its ending helped to raise consciousness of what could happen to other black communities in Nova Scotia and other parts in Canada. It was also the catalyst of a "rebirth of Africadian literature" (Clarke, 2002: 109). A series of critical texts and works of fiction connected to this historical event sprung in Nova Scotia, recovering the unheard voices of the community. Recently, in 2010, the City of Halifax issued an official apology to Africville inhabitants and their descendants, where Mayor Peter Kelly affirmed that "The repercussions of what happened to Africville linger to this day. They haunt us in the form of lost opportunities for the young people who never were nurtured in the rich traditions, culture and heritage of Africville" (CBC News, web). While for some this apology represents a triumph, it is not enough for others; in any case, the fact that it took almost forty years to arrive to this point shows the extent to which the razing of Africville has played and still plays a central role as landmark of the struggle against racism in Nova Scotia.

Going back to post Second World War structural reformations in the province, the construction of the Canso Causeway emerges as a representative element of the shifting economic and political panorama at the time: rather than improving the transportation of coal and steel, the Canso Causeway, which connected the island of Cape Breton to the Nova Scotia peninsula, "helped to redefine Cape Breton as a premiere tourist designation" (Beaton and Muise, 2008: 40). The opening ceremony of the Canso Causeway in 1955, with its "March of the Hundred Pipers," was the culmination of two closely related movements: the promotion of Tartanism and the investment in tourism as the main source of income in Nova Scotia.

As early as the 1930s, the emerging tourism industry was already targeting Scottish culture and traditions as a vehicle to attract tourists into the province. The association of Nova Scotia with Scotland,[11] far from following a "natural" historical development, was created and crafted as a powerful economy-boosting mechanism, as McKay argues, mainly due to the efforts of liberal Premier Angus L. Macdonald, from 1933 to 1954 (1992: 9). The favouring of Scottishness over other ethnic presences in the province took various forms, from the promotion of Highland Games and other such

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11 In "Tartanism Triumphant," McKay carefully explains the point to which this association in misguided, since Scots were neither the true or only founders of Nova Scotia nor are people of Scottish descent the most abundant ethnic component in Nova Scotia's demographic landscape (1992: 6-8).

traditional activities to the invention of a Nova Scotian tartan in 1953. This process of essentialisation is even more clearly seen in Cape Breton, perhaps the most Scottishised of all Nova Scotian counties. Here, identification with Scotland acquired, not only a cultural or symbolical dimension; even geographical space was managed so as to resemble that of the "Mother Country:" "It was convenient that the island, much like Scotland, could be divided into a 'Lowland' industrial core, […] and a more pristine 'Highland' area consecrated with a national park and surrounded by the rural remnants of a Scottish diaspora" (Beaton and Muise, 2008: 56). One example of the ongoing exploitation of this apparently intrinsic connection is the Celtic Colours International Festival, a Celtic music festival celebrated in Cape Breton since 1997. Although the main attraction is the gathering of Celtic bands from all over the world, concerts take place across the whole island, so travelling through it following the marked trails, enjoying the natural surroundings and participating in the various cultural activities has become one of the requisite elements of the Celtic experience. As Ivakhiv posits, the "colours" stand for the autumnal hues the landscape acquires, which allows to strategically "extend […] the island's tourist season into mid-October" (2005: 117).

The consequences of wrapping Nova Scotia in tartan are manifold. Perhaps the most salient (and one of the most relevant for this thesis) effect is that, by thus imposing a cultural identity from government and financial spheres into the whole region, a neglect of the multiple identities that can be found in Nova Scotia inevitably occurs. In Cape Breton, for instance, the oversimplification of its demographic diversity obliterates its cosmopolitan possibilities, when hardly any mention is made in cultural discourses to its Acadian, English, German or Mi'kmaq populations (McKay, 1992: 12). Equally, this commodification has its repercussions on Scottish culture and traditions themselves. Scottish cultural values and identities are transformed, distilled until a consumable, profitable concoction is obtained. This commercially articulated version of Scottishness and Celticity is far removed from real needs and concerns, such as the disappearance of the Gaelic language in the province (McKay, 1992: 34).

One last relevant point about tartanism is that it perfectly fits the anti-modernity mentality that was emerging in Nova Scotia at the time. The expansion of tourism in Nova Scotia was, to a great extent, achieved through the promotion of the past, of historically appealing sites, the creation of heritage offices and commemoration events.

As McKay argues, these efforts respond to an anti-modernity sentiment that dominated a Nova Scotian middle-class whose nostalgia for a Golden Age led to the retrieving of whatever tokens could be salvaged from that better past (1993: 104). Scottish culture, with its idyllic evocation of tradition and rural peacefulness unsullied by modernity, was the perfect protagonist in this narrative of tourism-oriented history. In terms of identity, as Ivakhiv suggests, Scottish values have also been adapted to present-day demands, as "'Celcitity' has become a source of cultural identification among North Americans of European descent seeking exotic alternatives to the Anglo-Saxon 'norm'" (2005: 118).

Heritage and tourism industries seem to have taken over fishing and mining as the major economic activities in Nova Scotia, especially after the definitive closing down of most coal mines in Cape Breton in the 1960s. Nevertheless, with a currently stagnant economy, Nova Scotia remains still, with the other Maritime Provinces, one of the most underdeveloped regions in Canada. Unemployment and out-migration are constant threats. Whereas the Multiculturalism Act, introduced by the government of Pierre Trudeau in 1988, served to encourage the attraction of immigrants to other areas in the country, the prevailing concern in Nova Scotia has been precisely the outward flow of its population.

The lack of affluence of recent waves of migrants into Nova Scotia does not imply that multiculturalism is absent from the province.[12] On the contrary, as this chapter shows, Nova Scotia's population resembles a mosaic, much like the rest of Canada, formed by peoples from diverse ethnic origins. The particularity of Nova Scotia's multiculturalism is that, unlike most contemporary cosmopolitan spaces, multiple ethnic groups have co-inhabited the region for a long time. This is a central point for this thesis: while discourses on diaspora are fairly recent and mostly connected to migration movements that took place in the twentieth century (in its second half, in many cases), Nova Scotia has been harbouring diasporic groups since the eighteenth century. Colonial and postcolonial practices have regulated the relationships among these groups: as previously outlined, racial hierarchies have been established, space management policies enforced and strategies of cultural promotion applied, so that uneven patterns of entitlement and dispossession emerged throughout centuries of coexistence. Some, like the Scots, have been favoured over others, like the blacks or the

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12 A notable exception is the Lebanese diaspora that has lately established in Halifax.

natives, who have been erased or ignored. In dominant historical discourses, the essence of Nova Scotia is Scottish, its politics conservative, its mindset nostalgic and romantic. This thesis presents a series of counter-narratives that will contribute to vanishing those constraining attributes: the works of Alistair MacLeod, Jean McNeil, George Elliott Clarke and Gloria Ann Wesley, from the Scottish and African diasporas, feature voices that speak of the ambivalences, transformations and assertions that these diasporic identities have experienced through their three-century-long history in Nova Scotia.

Chapter 2. Relevant Aspects of Diaspora Theory: Applications of the Term and Conceptual Challenges.

2. 1. A Critical Review of the Uses and Transformations of the Concept of Diaspora

Diaspora discourses have proliferated in the last three to four decades. The word "diaspora" was originally used to describe the Jewish exile and sojourns, written with a capitalised spelling (the Jewish Diaspora); however recent appropriations of the term, metaphorical or not, may refer to a wide range of population scatterings, whose circumstances of displacement may be equally varied (Tölölyan, 1996). Deeply tied to globalisation phenomena, (changing political conditions, technological, transportation and communication advances which have set the bases for unprecedented migration movements) a great part of diaspora studies concentrate on post-second-world-war dispersals (Reis, 2004: 46). One of the main problems that theories of diaspora present lies in their exploitability: attention is constantly drawn to the fact that the possibilities of the concept as a descriptive device are currently being overstretched. In order to solve this predicament, critics such as William Safran (1991) or Robin Cohen (*Global Diasporas*, 1997) have attempted to establish certain limits to its applications. Another point of contention is the danger in diaspora discourses of homogenising the groups under scrutiny. For this reason, some critics have started focusing on the different identity markers present within the members of diasporas such as class, ethnicity or gender, as well as emphasising relational aspects between diasporas, rather than treating each one separately. Despite such difficulties, diaspora theories have proved a fruitful domain, and a useful framework in which to analyse recent demographic mobilisations in an increasingly transnational world.

Early references to the idea of diaspora were mostly made in connection to the Jewish Diaspora, in whose history the term originates. Alongside the paradigmatic Jewish Diaspora, the Armenian and Greek diasporas have often been cited as conforming to the classic model it proposes. According to Khachig Tölölyan (1996), editor of the journal *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies*, it was not until the end of the 1960s and beginning of the 1970s that a change in the field of diaspora studies began to take place: critics gradually departed from the Jewish paradigm to include other types of migration movements in the diasporic realm. This shift was

stimulated, Tölölyan sustains, by a series of demographic factors (massive migrations into Western countries); political transformations (such as the recent proliferation of diaspora organisations or the increasing activity of diasporas in their hostlands' policy-making); and, perhaps most importantly, by emerging discourses of transnationalism and multiculturalism in the academia, discourses which were themselves shaped by black civil rights and women's rights movements (1996: 20-27). It was in this socio-intellectual climate, Tölölyan argues, that "diaspora" emerged as an umbrella-term to cover a great number of dispersion instances, from exiles to labour migrants.

John Armstrong's "Mobilized and Proletarian Diasporas" (1976) constitutes one of the earliest attempts at identifying diasporas other than the Jewish, Armenian and Greek. These he refers to as "mobilized" diasporas, and he includes within this classical group the German and Chinese diasporas. On the other hand, he defines the proletarian diaspora as "essentially a disadvantaged product of modernized polities" (393), that is, unskilled labour migrants such as the Algerians in France. His study, which is markedly class-based, emphasises the relevance of boundary maintenance, that is, the strategies and mechanisms that glue members of the diaspora together as a coherent collective. Despite his account of the experience of other groups, the Jewish Diaspora still exerts a great influence in the ways he deals with other mobilised, and especially with proletarian, diasporas, to which he denies agency and autonomy.

The Jewish paradigm also plays a central role in William Safran's survey. Safran's ground-breaking paper, "Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return," appeared in the first issue of *Diaspora*, and it provides one of the first solid definitions of the term. Notwithstanding his complaint that, in migration literature, "little if any attention has been devoted to diasporas" (1991: 83), it becomes apparent that, by the time he writes his article, critics have already begun to loosely apply the term. It is especially William Connor's broad definition, "that segment of a people living outside the homeland" (as qtd. in Safran, 1991: 83), to which Safran reacts when elaborating his six-point list of essential characteristics diaspora members must present in order to be considered as such:

> 1) they, or their ancestors, have been dispersed from a specific original 'center' to two or more 'peripheral,' or foreign, regions; 2) they retain a collective memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland—its physical location, history, and achievements; 3) they believe that they are not—and perhaps cannot be—fully accepted by their host society and

therefore feel partly alienated and insulated from it; 4) they regard their ancestral homeland as their true, ideal home and as the place to which they or their descendants would (or should) eventually return—when conditions are appropriate; 5) they believe that they should, collectively, be committed to the maintenance or restoration of their original homeland and to its safety and prosperity; and 6) they continue to relate, personally or vicariously, to that homeland in one way or another, and their ethnocommunal consciousness and solidarity are importantly defined by the existence of such a relationship. (1991: 83-84)

Safran's account of *sine qua non* conditions has been a constant reference for critics thereafter, with subsequent transformations and addenda.[13] These guidelines follow the Jewish model very closely in that they outline an exile-like experience of which trauma, loss and perpetual displacement are fundamental components. It is according to this framework that he conducts an in-depth comparative analysis of what he considers to be the legitimate diasporas: the Armenian, Maghrebi, Turkish, Palestinan, Cuban, Greek, contemporary Chinese and past Polish diasporas (84). Among those groups which do not qualify as legitimate diasporas, Safran cites the Portuguese in France and the Turks in Germany, because they have not migrated forcibly (85); or the Hispanic community in the United States, due to its rapid assimilation into the hostland (90). He is aware, however, that none of the many diasporas addressed totally complies with the Jewish "ideal type" (84).

Useful as it is, this attempt at encapsulating diasporic experiences into one fixed paradigm has proved too constraining. James Clifford highlights the fact that migrant communities are formed by complex groups whose identities may vary over time, as do their relationship to their homeland, their hostlands, and even to other members of the diaspora. These fluctuations also affect the ideal types of diaspora: "Even the 'pure' forms," he says, "are ambivalent, even embattled, over basic features" (1994: 306). For these reasons, according to Safran's proposal, some groups would appear as more diasporic than others, at different times in history, which calls for a certain degree of flexibility when it comes to using diasporic discourses heuristically. Clifford suggests that diasporas "mediate, in a lived tension, the experiences of separation and entanglement, of living here and remembering/desiring another place" (311). Thus, to

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13 Kim Butler, for instance, emphasises the transhistorical factor: "its existence over at least two generations. A group meeting [Safran's] criteria, but able to return to its homeland within a single generation, may more appropriately be described as being in temporary exile" (2001: 192). Robin Cohen's 1997 expansion of Safran's list will be tackled below.

the already present dimension of loss, pain and exile, he adds the "positive" condition of globality; the transnational condition of the diasporic subject is featured as central in this analysis. Indeed, it is in great part through Clifford's work that diaspora studies have tended to focus on its possibilities as a transnational frame of reference. This perspective, what Floya Anthias calls "postmodern versions of diaspora" (1998: 565), has been adopted by critics such as Paul Gilroy or Avtar Brah.

With Khachig Tölölyan, another key figure in the field of diaspora studies, the conceptual pendulum seems to swing back to the opposite side: rather than expanding previous conceptions, Tölölyan once more cautions about using diaspora as an overarching category, and he demands a more restricted application of the term, one that perhaps follows more closely the Jewish/Armenian/Greek paradigm. He denounces "the ease with which 'diaspora' is now used as a synonym for related phenomena until recently covered by distinct terms like expatriate, exile, ethnic, minority, refugee, migrant, sojourner and overseas community" (1996: 10). For Tölölyan, a sense of solidarity among diaspora members and a conscious investment in boundary maintenance are essential, and he thus distinguishes between ethnic communities and diaspora (albeit conceding that the line that separates these categories might be occasionally blurred): "an ethnic community differs from a diaspora by the extent to which the [former's] commitment to maintain connections with its homeland and its kin communities in other states is absent, weak, at best intermittent, and manifested by individuals rather than the community as a whole" (16). This distinction excludes groups that might be otherwise categorized as diasporas, such as the Italian-Americans, whose inconsistent display of transnational connections (remnants of cultural practices), he argues, are not enough to create a coherent, homeland-oriented collective. Thus, while he does not agree to the imposing model of the Jewish Diaspora as an ideal, exclusive type, he nevertheless suggests there is a need to maintain certain boundaries to an ever-expanding concept.

It is appropriate to introduce Robin Cohen's work at this point, as it intends to reach a compromise between those notions that cling on to the classic diaspora experience and those which use the concept to address almost any kind of dispersal. As he recognises in the second edition to his influential *Global Diasporas* (2008), a happy medium is to be met in order for the field to continue on its valuable analytical path: "Scholars of diaspora need to recognize the potency and ubiquity of the term, and to be

open and flexible to new experiences and uses, without neglecting the constraints that the history, meaning and evolution of the term impose" (2008: 18). While his appraisal is based on Safran's enumeration of basic features, thus maintaining the Jewish example in mind, Cohen's own defining list transforms some of the original points and creates new ones. He most notably adds "positive" features in diasporic communities (closely resembling Clifford's idea of the positive side to the diaspora equilibrium), among them a creative quality almost inherent to the transnational condition and a feeling of solidarity with co-ethnic groups in other countries. Cohen's further contributions include refining remarks, such as his proposal that, apart from sustaining a homeland, diasporic subjects may at times create the homeland altogether (6-7). However, his most significant contribution, what he calls his "most controversial departure from the prototypical Jewish diasporic tradition" (6), is the suggestion that, rather than exclusively originating under traumatic conditions, diasporas may also emerge as part of voluntary movements of migration.

The implications of altering this paradigmatic pillar in the formation of diaspora consciousness are manifold, as it affects the whole perception of the homeland, the process of detachment and/or maintenance of allegiances, as well as the identity of the group within the hostland's society. It is for these reasons that Cohen is compelled to conceptualise subcategories from the original pattern: he classifies diasporas into victim, labour, trade and imperial diasporas (6). Victim diasporas correspond largely with the Jewish standard (other examples he mentions are Africans, Armenians, Irish and Palestinian), and are those where enforced migration is involved in their conception (39). Labour, imperial and trade diasporas, on the other hand, were "generated by emigration in search of work, to further colonial ambitions or in pursuit of trade" (61). The category of labour diasporas (a concept that partly coincides with Armstrong's proletarian diasporas), includes for instance Indian indentured workers living in quasi-slavery conditions in different colonies (62). The most controversial group are perhaps the imperial diasporas, due to the (almost) unambiguously voluntary character of their formation. While he admits that other powerful nations came close to establishing imperial diasporas, only the British Empire qualifies as such, since it provoked a dispersal of peoples that was "marked by a continuing connection with the homeland, a deference to and imitation of its social and political institutions and a sense of forming part of a grand imperial design – whereby the group concerned assumes the self-image

of a 'chosen race' with a global mission" (69). Finally, the label "trade diaspora" includes those peoples such as the Chinese or Lebanese whose migrations follow mercantile purposes (84). There is an additional set of diasporas, termed "deterritorialized diasporas" by Cohen, whose defining points are not to be found in the original circumstances of migration, as was the case of the previous examples. Instead, what characterises these diasporas is precisely the absence of a territory-based homeland. He suggests that the Caribbean and African-Caribbean diasporas are "ethnic groups that can be thought of as having lost their conventional territorial reference points, to have become in effect mobile and multi-located cultures" (124), and therefore constitute a distinct category from those diasporas in which connection to a homeland is a central, representative aspect.

One of the obvious consequences of Cohen's expansion of diaspora typologies is the emergence of a plurality of groups, whose study is facilitated by this classification. The introduction of a voluntary element in discourses of mobility allows for the inclusion of postcolonial diasporas, that is, diasporas which feature migration movements (not always enforced) from the former colonies to the imperial centre or to other previously colonised territories. A set of specialised compartments also provide specific analytical tools that cover several central factors in the formation and development of this multiplicity of diasporic groups. Other writers have suggested similar conceptualisations, such as Michele Reis who divides diasporas along a temporal axis between Classical, Modern and Contemporary or Late-Modern diasporas (2004: 43); thus circumscribing the challenges that tackling vast groups of diasporas presents.

While diaspora scholars may diverge in the delineation of some of the features that characterise diasporas, most of the theories they propose coincide in the essential role of the homeland. Several points in Safran's list (some of which can also be found in Cohen's) are concerned with the homeland, not only as place of origin, but also as the place diaspora members long to return and in whose maintenance or betterment they ought to participate and invest. Tölölyan emphasises this link too, when he asserts that "Diasporan communities maintain contact with the homeland when it persists in identifiable form. Lacking that, they exhibit a communal will to loyalty, keeping faith with a mythicized idea of the homeland" (1996: 14). This last point is crucial, in that it acknowledges the existence of homelands which are not grounded in a given

geographical space. For Cohen, the malleability of the homeland "applies particularly to groups that have been multiply displaced, to those whose homelands are for all practical purposes lost to them, and to some religious communities;" and adds that "in a global age where space itself has become reinscribed by cyberspace a diaspora can, to some degree, be cemented or recreated through the mind, through artefacts and popular culture, and through a shared imagination" (2008: 8), which constitutes the bases for his deterritorialised diasporas.

The idea of a non-real homeland is perhaps best explored by Salman Rushdie in his collection of essays entitled *Imaginary Homelands* (1992). The diasporic condition of physical detachment from home implies a process of mental and narrative re-construction, even in cases where that home exists as an identifiable territory. The recreation of the homeland from the outside means that diasporic subjects "will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost; that we will, in short, create fictions, not actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands" (1992: 10). In traditional conceptions of diaspora, movement back to the country of origin was seen as contradictory, since returning home, however temporarily, is ontologically opposed to its inherent condition of "awayness," according to these views. These limitations are currently challenged by globalising changes, which involve faster means of transportation and communication. Diaspora theories are directly affected by these pressures and should be adapted to include the possibility of more immediate connections with and even periodical returns to the homeland. It must be taken into account that, even in such cases where intermittent returns are effected, and where images of the homeland are easily accessed, imaginary homelands may still be recreated, in the form of nostalgic projections of a better past or, in the case of second-generation migrants, for example, as fragmented memories and stories that circulate within their communities.

Globalisation and technological transformations are not only challenging classical notions of an imperative perpetual separation from the homeland: the very hegemony of the homeland in diaspora discourses is being questioned in this context. A group of postmodern diaspora scholars criticise the emphasis given to the homeland, and interrogate the extent to which it is essential in the formation of a diasporic identity. This is the case of Anthias, who, evaluating Cohen's classification, is concerned that "in allocating a group to one of the types, there is a reliance, essentially and foremost, on

the origin or intentionality of dispersal" (1998: 563). By basing the description of vast, complex groups solely on their relationship to the place of origin and the circumstances of its abandonment, Cohen is, according to Anthias, incurring in the homogenisation of those groups into a "natural and unproblematic 'organic' community of peoples without division or difference, dedicated to the same political project(s)" (563). Rather than focusing exclusively on the homeland as determining in the definition of a diasporic collective, Anthias proposes that diasporas are, to a great extent, affected by differences and points of divergence and are therefore constructed as spaces of syncretism and hybridity (655). Avtar Brah also decentralises the dominance of the diaspora by arguing that "the concept of diaspora offers a critique of discourses of fixed origins, while taking into account of a homing desire which is not the same thing as the desire for a 'homeland'" (1996: 180). This homing desire, she asserts, is historically contingent and both individually and collectively conceived and experienced (183).

The shift in perspective that critics like Anthias and Brah developed has been greatly influenced by the work of Paul Gilroy.[14] In his crucial book, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (1993), he reconfigures diaspora as a space in which it is possible to go beyond nationalist claims of a pure, essentialist identity. Gilroy's approach emphasises diasporas as transnational frameworks, in which "routes," rather than "roots" conform the pattern that joins diaspora members together. He both interrogates the "significance of the modern nation state as a political, economic, and cultural unit" and posits that diasporas and their transnational nature can be used as tools to transcend notions of ethnic absolutism associated to monolithic nationalisms (1993: 7). These concerns are voiced by Clifford when he affirms that "Diaspora exists in practical, and at times principled, tension with nativist identity formations" (1994: 308). The claim for authenticity that comes with being rooted in a place contrasts with the mobility which is necessary in any process of diasporisation. The construction of identity as homogeneous and delimited by national borders leads to the misconception that diaspora identities are invalid, since they do not conform to those hegemonic notions of a pure, grounded identity. In this sense, Gunew explains that diasporas have been demonised because "they signal the instabilities of hybridity, métissage, creolization, and 'contamination'" (2008: 7). Contrary to these notions, diaspora

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[14] As he deals primarily with the African diaspora, Gilroy's work will be analysed in more detail in the following section of this chapter.

scholars have conceptualised identity as fluid; in Stuart Hall's words, "a conception of 'identity' which lives through, not despite, difference; by hybridity. Diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformations and difference" (1990: 235). This approach enables diaspora discourses to accommodate the tensions between home and dispersion (Brah, 1996: 192-193), between the global and local spaces that diaspora members traverse.

As theories of diaspora increasingly draw attention to the plural, fluid aspects of transnational identities, particularities of ethnicity, class and gender shaping these identities become a focus of study. Because experiences of diaspora, while being globally enacted, are simultaneously anchored in specific localities and histories, these cross-cutting categories are to be fully explored in order to reach a nuanced understanding of diaspora formations and their shifting relationships with the homeland and/or the hostland. Braziel and Mannur, for example, point out that "class inflects, if not haunts, the formation of all these categories. To that end, class disrupts and complicates – often in productive ways – the intersections of race, gender, and sexuality" (2003: 5). Similarly, gendered experiences of diaspora, although arguably undertheorised, are incipiently transforming the field of migration studies. In this respect, analysing diasporas within a gender-oriented framework will provide insights to concerns such as "the ways in which immigrant women become acceptable and 'proper' national subjects through their relationship to domesticity and family" or to "the ways in which women are expected to perform femininity and embody gender" in diasporic contexts, as well as the possibility to include gendered constructions of the homeland (Snowden, 2008: 196). The diasporic self thus emerges as a complex subject, inhabiting several spaces of belonging, performing a transnational identity that negotiates an inherent hybridity and uprootedness with specific locations and political positionings.

As this review has made clear, there is a vast amount of scholarship devoted to the study of diasporas. Although short-lived (for this proliferation only started in earnest in the 1970s), the history of diaspora criticism has fluctuated between perspectives of restriction and perspectives of flexibility towards the definition of the term. The concept of diaspora has been appropriated from many discursive platforms, including the media, to signify experiences that far exceed its original meaning. This expansion in its deployment results, in Brubaker's words "in what one might call a 'diaspora' diaspora – a dispersion of the meanings of the term in semantic, conceptual and disciplinary space"

(2005: 1). Since such fundamental notions to the conception of the traditional diaspora as the primordiality of the homeland or the imperative conditions of dispersion are interrogated or even altogether transformed, a degree of concern understandably arises as to the potential loss of the meaning of diaspora for practical, analytical purposes. Still, far from being found obsolete, diaspora discourses are steadily propagated, which demonstrates how productive and necessary the term can be, especially in the field of postcolonial studies. Here, a particularly fertile ground accompanies the application of diaspora narratives, since, as David Chariandy posits, it is expected

> that diaspora studies will help foreground the cultural practices of both forcefully exiled and voluntarily migrant peoples; that diaspora studies will help challenge certain calcified assumptions about ethnic, racial, and, above all, national belonging; and that diaspora studies will help forge new links between emergent critical methodologies and contemporary social justice movements. (2006: n.pag.)

Such optimist statements should not, however, obscure the fact that diasporas are often accompanied by pain and adversities such as loss, discrimination and acculturation. These burdens are often encountered in diasporic communities though not always, and by no means, constitute the only defining characteristics; and it is within the diaspora framework that they can and should be explored, as well as the processes and strategies that diaspora members perform in order to negotiate and transcend them.

The present study takes the reading of four Nova Scotian novels as a starting point. These novels could be said to pertain to specific ethnic groups: an African background connects Clarke's and Wesley's novels to an Afro-Canadian or African-Nova Scotian ethnicity, while MacLeod's and McNeil's Scottish ancestry situates them within a Scots-Canadian or Scots-Nova Scotian group. These are only two of the multiple demographic divisions that compose the complex multicultural face of Nova Scotia's landscape, and whose formation and historical frameworks have been explored in the previous chapter. Scots- and African-Nova Scotians are, like most ethnic groups in the region, except for the native populations, marked by experiences of migration: in one way of another, these migrants left their homeland, suffered from displacement and experienced movement and the challenges of settling in a new land. It is for these reasons that applying concepts and discourses of diasporas is relevant to the analysis of the works under scrutiny and will conform the main methodological focus of this dissertation. As several passages and narrative techniques in the four novels can be

related to distinct diasporic experiences, the following two sections of this chapter will be devoted to the in-depth exploration of these diasporas, the African and the Scottish, both within a general, global context and in relation to the Canadian/Nova Scotian background at hand. However, the previous overview of the historical context and the subsequent close reading of the novels will demonstrate that, apart from diasporic factors, other tendencies related to settlement, the emergence of a nativist identity and the formation of a national consciousness are also fundamental parts in the ontological bases of these novels, since they belong to populations that have been long established in Nova Scotia. These tendencies, at large, disagree with the premises for the existence of diasporas as traditionally understood. Thus, the final section of the chapter will deal with a partial reconceptualisation of the idea of diaspora, which emerges both from its instability as a concept and from the particular historical circumstances surrounding the development of the African and Scottish diasporas in Nova Scotia.

2.2. The African Diaspora: From Roots to Routes and Back Again

Within the field of diaspora studies, the African diaspora has been one of the most widely addressed and also one whose particular dynamics have contributed to the development, understanding, and transformation of the concept of diaspora at large. One of the reasons for the centripetal force that the African diaspora exerts might be that it presents several challenges alongside its paradigmatic features; that is, even though its brutally imposed origins (slave trade and enforced labour) link it with the "ideal" exilic type of diaspora, the vast chronological and spatial dispersal that Africans and their descendants have been subjected to, scattered across multiple cultural and even linguistic territories, complicate their unification as one coherent group, while simultaneously opening ontological possibilities that can be applied to more general conceptualisations of diaspora. For the purpose of this dissertation, special attention will be paid to the often neglected presence of the African diaspora in Canada. Most African diaspora scholarship comes from and deals with analyses of its unfolding within the United States and the Caribbean. There are, however, specific historical and political circumstances in the Canadian context that need to be explored in order to contribute an exhaustive representation and understanding of the global dimensions of the African diaspora. The more localised experiences and discursive practices of black diasporans in Nova Scotia will be thoroughly addressed in this section, since the idiosyncrasy of the long-established communities of Africans and African descendants in this region shapes

them as salient and distinctive parts of the African diaspora, both in Canada as well as in a more general sense. The African-Nova Scotian novels that will be examined in later chapters reflect these particularities and will therefore be contrasted with different texts in the discipline of diaspora studies, texts which range from discourses of diaspora in general to those specific to the African diaspora case. The following section proceeds to introducing some of the most relevant aspects of diaspora theory that are to be applied to the narratives this dissertation focuses on.

Perhaps the most conspicuous aspect of the African diaspora lies in its origins. Unlike any other diaspora, its members were dispersed in one of the most violent ways possible, brutally transplanted from Africa to the American continent, to serve as labour force in the plantations of the incipient empires of the New World. While slavery had been practiced earlier in history, the slave trade of African persons was the first instance in which "race" was established as a legitimising signifier through which to systematically subjugate a section of human beings as well as to subsequently dominate and discriminate them on those same terms throughout post-emancipation history. These unique circumstances, as well as the magnitude of the slave trade scheme (which is usually associated to Anglo-Celtic realms, but which was key to Spanish, French and Portuguese colonies too), result in a powerful imprint on African diaspora identities, as Michael Hanchard suggests when he affirms that "if the notion of an African diaspora is anything it is a human necklace strung together by a thread known as the slave trade, a thread which made its way across a path of America with little regard for national boundaries" (1990: 40). It is also due to these tragic conditions that the African diaspora is often paralleled to the "ideal" Jewish model in that they share the foundational experiences of pain, loss and exile. For these reasons, the African diaspora has been read as a legitimate diaspora in traditional discourses such as Safran's, alongside the Jewish, Armenian and Greek; or in the more innovative account of victim diasporas proposed by Cohen.

The ease with which the African diaspora conforms to classical notions of diaspora is not without contestation. One of the points that could be, and is indeed, subjected to scrutiny is the anomaly of the idea of the homeland within context of African dispersal. The enforced nature of population movements, together with the political transformations that the continent underwent as a result of European projects of colonisation make it difficult, if not altogether impossible, to track the homeland of

dispersed peoples and, especially, their descendants, back to a specific local territory. Several social movements during early colonial times aimed at resettling former slaves in African territories. These "back to Africa" mobilisations were led "by whites who through colonization societies wished to remove the Negroes, this 'unnatural importation,' before they could become economically and socially dangerous" (Winks, 1997: 61). One of these early repatriations (quite literally, since almost half of the settlers were African-born) was the relocation of black Loyalists from Nova Scotia to the newly established Province of Freedom in Sierra Leone in 1792 (61). A similar project took place in the 1820s, with the resettling of two thousand blacks in the future state of Liberia, sponsored by the American Colonization Society (Skinner, 1993: 17). While these schemes were largely promoted by white authorities, there were instances of similar campaigns lead by black peoples: Martin Delany, one of the first black nationalists, advocated for the resettlement of former slaves in West Africa during the second part of the nineteenth century. The difference, however, is that, in contrast with previous attempts to relocate blacks to their "natural habitat," these emigrationist struggles sprung from a need and desire of autonomy and agency.

In subsequent generations the idea of returning to Africa as the ancestral homeland of dispersed blacks was central to the agendas of several black intellectuals and leaders. After emancipation movements, the struggle turned to the fight for civil rights and the recognition of citizenship of black peoples in the different societies where they resided. Systemic assaults, discrimination and subordination on racial grounds in these contexts contributed to a "sense of alienation from the nation-state" and to the appearance of a consistent "international African identity in the diaspora" (Davies and M'Bow, 2007: 19). Thus, the twentieth century saw the emergence of social and political activist movements anchored in a notion of solidarity among African peoples, both in the continent and in the diaspora. W.E.B. DuBois, a celebrated black writer and thinker, was a proponent of Pan-Africanism, an ideology that sought to unite geographically-scattered black communities as *part of a larger worldwide activity involving black people everywhere, with the various segments having obligations and responsibilities to each other*" (Drake, 1982: 453, emphasis in the original). Although these movements did not involve a specifically physical return to Africa, the intellectual, political and cultural gaze was focused on the continent and its development, especially as part of the efforts of emancipating African nations from

European governments in post-World War II independence struggles. "Back to Africa" activities gained strength with Marcus Garvey's establishment of the Black Star Line in the 1920s, whose purpose was to relocate peoples of the diaspora in Liberia, with the aim of returning to and improving on their long-lost homeland. Although these campaigns never reached full realisation, Garvey's efforts, especially the creation of the United Negro Improvement Association (also during the 1920s), and the spread of Rastafarianism, "played a massive role in giving future African leaders a much-needed psychological boost toward gaining the fight for independence" (Christian, 2008: 325). Indeed, Garvey's ideals exerted a great influence in Ghana's first elected president Kwame Nkrumah and his advocacy for an economically and politically united Africa. His concept of African unity was globally oriented, that is, it was also aimed at people of African descent living in the diaspora, on the grounds of essential commonalities inherent to all black peoples; a discourse that generated an enthusiastic response and gained a lot support from blacks outside Africa, who actively contributed to the Pan-African independence cause (Christian, 2008: 327; Hanchard, 2004: 142).

This history of activism and struggle comes to show that, although it is in the 1950s and 1960s that scholarship and discourses of the African diaspora begin to proliferate steadily (in part due to the impact of Pan-Africanism), some of its ontological constituents had been circulating for decades. A black consciousness, the belief in the commitment to common goals and the awareness of a shared historical, social and even cultural experience was felt within black communities scattered through the New World since the eighteenth century, in the ideas of figures such as, for instance, Olaudah Equiano (Patterson and Kelley, 2000: 13) Recent, postmodern African diaspora studies, however, have started to criticise and undermine notions of a unifying essence, tying together all peoples of African descent, regardless of their geographical, political, cultural or linguistic affiliations. While the most determining factor in defining a diaspora (as seen in the previous section) is normally the point of origin, the very existence of a homeland within the African diaspora is being questioned. Apart from the aforementioned geopolitical transformations in the continent, the challenges to proclaiming Africa as the rightful, ancestral homeland, especially of today's diasporans, are numerous. Judith Byfield suggests that "the notion of an African diaspora for which Africa was the homeland was not a natural development," since it "had to be socially and historically constituted, reconstituted, and reproduced;" and adds that "[t]his is most

apparent when one contrasts the development of a diasporic identity among African descendants on the Indian subcontinent, the Arabian Peninsula, and in the Americas" (Byfield, 2000: 2). Others, like Herman Bennet, point out that, in contemporary debates, "Africa simply constitutes a given, a place with a recoverable and functional past. A past that can be harnessed and positioned to fit various cultural, historical, and national agendas" (2000: 108). It must be added that a more recent black diaspora has emerged with post-World War II migrations from the former colonies to Commonwealth countries, especially from the Caribbean to Great Britain. The Caribbean diaspora, often coupled with the more global African diaspora, is thus doubly displaced (from Africa and from the Caribbean), which complicates the supposedly organic relationship of its members with Africa as a homeland. Similar arguments could be made for those African migrants who have voluntarily left the continent in search for opportunity and betterment in the West, and whose diasporic identity cannot be said to match that of those who were forced to leave their homelands via the atrocities of slave trade.

Postmodern diaspora scholars "contend that nationalist discourses (such as négritude and Afrocentrism) failed to combat racist binaries of good and evil, black and white – they merely inverted the categories" (Goyal, 2003: 5), and instead formulate the African diaspora in terms of hybridity and difference. With this tendency in mind, it might be argued that "[t]he widespread attack on essential identities and rigid, racial categories, together with the postcolonial celebration of hybridity and cosmopolitanism, would seem to confirm that racial consciousness and protest has little place in the social science or the social movement community" (Martin, 2005: 8). However, accounts of the African diaspora such as Paul Gilroy's Black Atlantic introduce a coherent analytical frame of reference which avoids both extremes of essentialist versus unfixed constructions of culture and identity. Gilroy's theories develop from the rejection of nationalism as a system which couples a particular culture with a particular nation in a fixed, hermetic and impenetrable way. These ideologies, reflected in and diffused by Enlightenment thinking, legitimise white supremacy in Western countries while asserting the impossibility for black people of belong to the nation as a historical institution. According to these views, race set blacks apart, not only as "others" but as subhuman. Modernity thus denied the place of blacks within allegedly universal values; as inherently inferior they were seen to possess no intellectual, cultural or aesthetic structures, nor the ability to produce and reproduce them. Amidst these limiting

ethnocentric impositions, the Black Atlantic emerges as "one single, complex unit of analysis" (Gilroy, 1993: 15) which aims to "transcend both the structures of the nation state and the constraint of ethnicity and national particularity" (19). By constructing the Black Atlantic as a cohesive geopolitical space, Gilroy achieves a double goal: one is to project a transnational framework which is pivotal in referential studies and in processes of the articulation of black diaspora experiences; the second is to debunk the appreciation "that modernity is the achievement of white, Euro-American bourgeois society and that the populations of the African diaspora therefore exist only in a relation of inessentiality to it" (Lazarus, 1995: 324). The relocation of the black subject in modernity is not without trouble. Drawing on Du Bois's notion of "double consciousness",[15] Gilroy articulates the presence of blacks as integral to modernity yet partly alienated from it; an articulation that results in a hybrid ambivalent identity underlined by constant shifts and transits.

The slave ship and the crossing of the Middle Passage act as political and symbolic starting points in the praxis of movement that accompanies the black diaspora thereafter. Outside of a rationale that posits identity as invariably fixed, natural and rooted to particular territories, the Black Atlantic relies on multidirectional crossings for the construction of identity. The black diaspora "is a chaotic, living, disorganic formation […] it is a tradition in ceaseless motion – a changing same that strives continually towards a state of self-realisation that continually retreats beyond its grasp" (Gilroy, 1993: 122). This paradigm, then, emphasises routes, as opposed to roots, as the main epistemological device of diasporic identity formations. Perhaps the most controversial aspect of Gilroy's proposal is that the questioning of ethnocentric nationalisms extends to discourses of black nationalism as well. Some contemporary forms of Afrocentrism, he argues, are based on the premise that there exists an essence that connects all black peoples together and which ignores "the conspicuous differences of language, culture, and identity which divides the blacks of the diaspora from one another, let alone from Africans" (34). These ideologies, although born from the struggle against racial discrimination, incur in the utilisation of the same logic implicit in Eurocentric racist principles. Even when, as is the case today, the concept of "race"

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[15] DuBois' original definition of double consciousness reads as follows: "One ever feels his two-ness,— an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder" (as quoted in Gilroy, 1993: 126).

as a biological differentiation between human typologies is no longer supported by scientific discourses, a similar absolutist reductionism is enunciated by substituting these for cultural discourses; therefore, restrictive binary oppositions are sustained in a reverse form, rather than transcended, as, in some cases, "[b]lacks become dominant by virtue of either biology or culture; whites are allocated a subordinate role" (191).

Gilroy's work thus opposes both essentialist and pluralistic constructions of race (for which blackness does not bear a defining potential) through the creation of a diasporic space that emphasises differences rather than points in common among its members. *The Black Atlantic* is a cartography of the African diaspora, written through the exploration of black intellectuals' lives (those of Martin Delany, W.E.B. DuBois and Richard Wright, among others) and their various engagements with transnational cultural and political activities. In this routing of black diasporic experience, Gilroy establishes blackness as the hybrid repository of the struggling intersection between movement and double consciousness.

Although definitely groundbreaking and compelling, Gilroy's work has received criticism on different accounts. One deficiency is the lack of attention to gender constructed experiences of struggle and development within the African diaspora. This is especially noticeable in his choice of "canonical" writers and thinkers, through whom he illustrates and expands each of his theory's points. Although black women, such as Phyllis Wheatley or Toni Morrison, are sporadically mentioned, he maintains throughout the book a masculinist focus by primarily resorting to the analyses of prominent black male figures and their work. Other concerns include that, in order to function as border-crossing methods, "the slave experience becomes an icon for modernity; and in a strangely magical way, the Middle Passage becomes a metaphor, anchored somewhere in a vanishing history" (Dayan, 1996: 7). Dayan argues that Gilroy operates at a symbolic level that cannot be empirically equated to contemporary realities of suffering and terror among black peoples in the diaspora. Finally, some scholars have pointed out the geographic limitations of the Black Atlantic project. Critics such Lazarus and Goyal object to the absence of Africa and of a dialogue with African intellectuals and they coincide that in his narrative modernity is restricted to the West, excluding from its participation both Asian and African contexts (Lazarus, 1995: 334; Goyal, 2003: 11). Also, the concentration on an Anglophone Atlantic basin contributes to an all too expanded United States centred discipline of slavery and race

studies, disregarding geopolitical and linguistic areas, such as Central and South America, whose equally active participation in slave trade makes them key components in the African diaspora.

The narrow geographical scope of the Black Atlantic theory is also the main obstacle to its application to a Canadian context. There is a constant grievance among black Canadian scholars that "there ain't no Canada in the Black Atlantic". One of Gilroy's tasks is to bring into the black diaspora equation the often neglected European (British) vertex, in order to route diasporic experiences within the triangle space created through joining it with the US and African vertexes. This process, in turn, ignores Canada (as occurs with the rest of the American continent) as a diasporic enclave. George Elliott Clarke attests to this when he writes that "[t]o open Paul Gilroy's signal work […] is to confront, yet again, the blunt irrelevance of Canada to most gestures of diasporic inclusiveness. [...] Canada, as subject space, is patently absent. He never registers it as a site of New World African enslavement, immigration, emigration, anti-racist struggle, and cultural imagination" (2002: 8, 9). Canada's absence from discourses of the Black Atlantic can be, if not justified, explained by its pervasive absence from several other discourses concerning black history, culture and politics. Territorial proximity to the US has proven to be pernicious for Canada when it comes to the assessment of black presence within its borders, for the US occupies a central and absorbing privileged position in narratives of slavery, racial discrimination, anti-racism struggles and black culture and politics. In these dynamics of juxtaposition Canada emerges first as a slave-free haven and later as a non-racist, tolerant and immigrant-accepting nation.

The claim that slavery was never practiced in Canada (or, rather, British North America), although historically inaccurate, was, and still is to date, widely accepted (Riddell, 1920). Slaves in British North America were first made among Natives (known as "panis") and it was not until the end of the seventeenth century that black slaves were imported in significant numbers (Mensah, 2002: 45). In the Maritimes, evidence of the existence of slavery can be found in several records and documents, such as wills, an act of the General Assembly from 1762, reward offerings for runaway slaves, advertisements, etc. Loyalists brought slaves with them to Nova Scotia (which included New Brunswick) and to Cape Breton (which constituted a separate province then) after the American Revolution, and even then there were already slaves in the

provinces, pertaining to the New England planters who had arrived some twenty years earlier. As Whitfield explains, "the line between slavery and freedom in late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Nova Scotia was fluid and contingent" (2010: 11), and even those black Loyalists that had arrived as officially free could eventually be forced back to slavery. This legal instability is one of the difficulties in ascertaining the exact number of slaves that lived in the Maritime provinces, to which must be added the ambiguous designation of "servant" often used to refer to slaves (24). Another reason why slavery in Canada received little attention within contexts of slavery studies is perhaps the nature of work and labour activities performed by the slaves. Again, in contrast with the large plantations of the Caribbean and the southern American states, in Nova Scotia, as well as in New England, "slaves had to possess various skills that made them useful in numerous tasks ranging from domestic service to menial agricultural labour" (28). Antislavery movements commenced in Upper Canada in 1793 with the passing of the Act Against Slavery; in the other provinces, although it was not officially abolished until 1834, slavery was legally discouraged and seldom practiced by 1800 (Winks, 1997: 99). Documents attesting to slavery activities, however, were to found as late as the 1820s (110).

The conjunction of these factors (ambiguous records, the absence of plantation slavery, its early abolition) was translated in the emergence of Canada as a land of freedom and safe haven for runaway slaves (Compton, 2010: 15), especially in contrast with the abusive and oppressive conditions endured by black people in the United States. The breach between a benign philanthropic Canada, liberator of slaves, and an evil United States, responsible for the whole slavery apparatus and racist atrocities is further dilated with the narrative of the Underground Railroad. The much publicised Underground Railroad consisted of a series of passages and networks operating during the nineteenth century, through which fugitive slaves, aided by abolitionists, could reach the northern cities of the US and, eventually, the territories of the British colonies (Winks, 1997: 233). As critics have pointed out, Canada's "celebrated history of offering asylum to escaped slaves lends itself to widespread Canadian self-perceptions as antiracist, especially relative to the overtly racist United States" (Pabst, 2006: 119; see also McKittrick, 2006; Bakan, 2008). In national narratives terms, the comparatively smaller scale of slavery, coupled with its role in the Underground Railroad system,

obscure or altogether erase realities of slave practices and racial discrimination and result in a distorted and historically imprecise self-image.

The myth of a tolerant Canada is perpetuated in more recent times through the official adoption of a policy of multiculturalism in 1971, in an announcement made by Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau. This movement, later reinforced in the passing of the Multiculturalism Act in 1988, established that "while Canada had two official languages, it had no official culture, and that no ethnic group took precedence over another" (Jansen, 2005: 25). The application of this policy would mean the facilitation of immigration and the granting of an effective citizenship status by which peoples from all ethnicities would integrate into the larger Canadian society with equal rights and provided with access to education, work, etc. Integration, rather than assimilation was promoted, in tune with the conceptualisation of Canada's ethnic landscape as a mosaic (as opposed to the US melting pot). Official multiculturalism thus contributed to the long-standing idea of Canada as a welcoming country, free of prejudice and racism. Reality, however, does not quite coincide with the theory, as scholars have observed. Jansen points out that the policy was in great part directed to people of European descent, who constituted the majority of Canada's ethnic groups (2005: 26). British and French cultures are implicitly established as the foundational cultures, while other ethnicities or races are considered anomalous minorities that have to be dealt with. While immigration is officially appreciated, for visible minority immigrants "the reality upon arrival is rejection, exclusion and marginalization from the social, economic and political domains of Canadian society," which prompts the questioning of "whether or not the Multiculturalism Act has actively promoted the equality of all Canadians, beyond delegitimizing racial discrimination" (Elabor-Idemudia, 2005: 58). Racial minorities to which multiculturalism is directed, are constructed and read as not real Canadians, as it "promotes symbolic ethnicity, commodifies cultures, reinforces cultural stereotypes, and serves as an ideological ploy to depoliticize social inequality" (Mensah, 2002: 227).

The current emphasis on progressiveness, acceptance and tolerance impregnates the fabric of national identity narratives, and once again, the promulgation of these narratives eclipse the history of overt racism that clashes with them. Prior to this political shift, during the first three quarters of the twentieth century, immigration policies were very restricted: immigrant officers encouraged the arrival of "superior

stock" migrants, that is, people from European ethnicities, as they were seen to be "more assimilable than immigrants of colour" (Elabor-Idemudia, 2005: 63); other ethnicities were not considered desirable as potential Canadian citizens. In fact, at this point, racism was not only directed to non-white peoples, "there were degrees of whiteness, ranging from the preferred Northern Europeans through to the less preferred Southern Europeans and to those constituted as non-White" (Kelly and Wollen-Taffesse, 2012: 180). These strict selective procedures, which limited the arrival of almost all non-European migrants, were occasionally disregarded in order to bring immigrants into the country as labour force, such as the hiring of West Indian blacks to work in Cape Breton mines during the First World War (Mensah, 2002: 70). Later, with the labour force shortage prompted by the Second World War, these measures were once again loosened in order to admit the much needed cheap labour (Elabor-Idemudia, 2005: 64). However, permanent residence was not part of this economic and demographic design, and workers were expected to return to their countries of origin once whatever task they came to do was completed. To this history of systemic racist immigration policing, which is somehow disguised with today's receptivity, is to be added the erasure of other-than-white ethnicities with a long-standing presence from national narratives. One obvious example are the Native populations of Canada, relegated to some of the worst conditions of social marginalisation, living in reservations with little access to education and other basic services.

Another of these absented presences is the black population. Black history and stories are at time paradoxical in their very existence. As Pabst points out, chronicles such as the Underground Railroad and their subsequent readings of Canada as a safe haven for refugee slaves, acknowledge black presences within national geographies; simultaneously, Canada's white ethnocentrism erases these acknowledged presences (2006: 113). As hegemonic notions of race are negated through an emphasis on tolerance and pluralism, experiences of racism and the very reality of blackness disappear. As Walcott puts it, "blackness in Canada is situated in a continuum that runs from the invisible to the hyper-visible" (1997: 36); it is trapped between the forceful eradication of its history and its necessary role in national benevolent identifications, thus narrated as an "absented presence." This wilful oblivion results in the emergence of a covert type of racism that is normalised, as ethnicities become central to national spaces and blackness is pushed to their margins (Peake and Ray, 2001: 181). A case in

point would be the aforementioned razing of Africville. As Jennifer Nelson (2011) has argued, the destruction of this neighbourhood is an example of space management on racial grounds. Tina Loo (2010) remarks that the City was following a program of slum clearance (in accordance to a more global urban renewal wave that swept other cities of Canada and the US), and that the ultimate, well-intentioned goal was the integration of its inhabitants within Halifax's society. Yet, the notion of Africville as a slum was produced and reproduced from white spheres through years of neglect. However sympathetic the motives of some of its participants, the removal of Africville meant an irreparable loss for black Canadian history and communities.

This is not, however, the only episode in which black presences are displaced or erased. In *After Canaan*, Wayde Compton explores the lack of representation of blacks in the city of Vancouver. He does so by writing a work of recovery, structured around Hogan's Alley, "a sub-neighbourhood in the East End/Strathcona area that was destroyed by the construction of the Georgia and Dunsmuir viaducts, the completed first steps of a larger freeway plan that was ultimately stopped" during the 1960s and 1970s (2010: 84). Although populated by people from other ethnicities, it is often considered as a "racially black-identified space" (98). Much like Africville, Hogan's Alley had been represented as a slum in white mainstream discourses; reconstruction plans reached Vancouver too, and in the attempt to renew that part of the city, another black community disappeared, one whose roots go back to black San Francisco migrants from the 1850s. Rinaldo Walcott mentions, in addition to these acts of invisibilisation, "the long and now broken silence in St. Armand Quèbec, concerning the slave cemetery that was almost ploughed over" and "the changing of the name of Negro Creek Road to Moggie Road in Ontario in 1996" (qtd. in Peake and Ray, 2001: 183).

Resisting and rewriting these manoeuvres of obliteration has become a central task for black scholars. George Elliott Clarke devotes a great part of his work, both as a writer and as a scholar, to the recovery of black culture, more specifically black literature, in Nova Scotia, and to securing its place within the broader field of (black) Canadian Literature. As this dissertation focuses on Nova Scotian literature, Clarke's approaches will be essential to unfold the development of the African diaspora in the region, both theoretically and on a symbolic/representational level. His two-volume anthology, *Fire on the Water* (1991) retrieves fiction and non fiction by black Nova Scotian writers. The first volume includes three parts named "Genesis," which

comprises excerpts from eighteenth and nineteenth century writers; "Psalms and Proverbs" which "is a selection of oral and literature (*orature*)" pieces (Clarke, 1991: 9); and "Acts," which collects samples by writers born between 1901 and 1945. The second volume comprises works written by authors born between 1936 and 1971, in a section entitled "Revelation." This anthology is a collection of what Clarke calls "Africadian" literature. "Africadia" (a combination between "Africa" and "Acadia") is a term coined by Clarke to refer to a portion of black Nova Scotians, more specifically to those relating to "an ethnocultural archipelago consisting of several dozen Black Loyalist- and Black Refugee-settled communities (including some in and about the Halifax-Dartmouth metropolitan region), whose foundings date back to 1783 and 1815 respectively" (Clarke, 2002: 107). Africadian literature could be said to originate in 1785, with the publication of John Marrant's *Narrative of the Lord's Wonderful Dealings with John Marrant, a Black*. Early texts took predominantly the form of sermons, spirituals, hymns and other types of religious literature. Religion has exerted (and still does) a great influence on Africadian writers, which is one of the reasons why the layout of *Fire on the Water* echoes biblical nomenclature: "History," writes Clarke in the introduction to the anthology, "in these pages, becomes a secular bible which furnishes illustrations of the assertion of Black identity and the attainment of spiritual liberty despite oppression" (1991: 12). As this quotation also reflects, religion was a vehicle of resistance. It was the means through which scattered settlements formed coherent communities and from where political consciousness and the awareness to fight racial discrimination arose. The affluence of religious texts and the comparatively small number of published works of fiction in the period between the end of the eighteenth century and until 1974 finds its historical explanation in "the emigration of the Black Loyalist intellectual élite, including George and King, to Sierra Leone in 1792 (in quest of a more genuine liberty than was available to them in Nova Scotia); the *dégringolade* of the remaining Africadians into a diabolical poverty; their pointed disbarment from education; and the promulgation of anti-black stereotypes" (Clarke, 2002: 109-110). Africadian literature was thus populated by these spiritual forms of cultural expression throughout much of its life. The demolition of Africville in the 1960s, however, marked a turning point in its history, after which a renaissance of Africadian literature can be recognised. This episode triggered the production of literary works of fiction such as those by David Wood, Charles Sanders, Maxine Tynes or Frederick Ward (Moynagh, 1998: 21, 24, 25). Post-Africville narratives are born from a

renewed awareness of a common identity; and, as a reaction to a modernity-fostered act of obliteration, they take a nationalist and anti-modern stance. It is precisely through anti-modernity and national conservatism that Clarke links contemporary secularism to the religious past of Africadian literature (2002: 122).

In terms of diasporic discourses, it is important to emphasise the dedication to nationalist principles that these forms of cultural expression harbour. Africadian literature is articulated around a connection to land, it is regionalist in its concerns and it forms and transforms identity through the affirmation of roots to the very specificity of the region of Nova Scotia. This regional and national tendency sharply contrasts with current diaspora, and more specifically, African diaspora narratives, in which mechanisms of mobility, fluidity and transnational, multifocal points of view receive most scholarly attention. In this context, it seems that "in donning nationalist clothing African-Nova Scotian literary resistance is opting for an outmoded fashion" (Moynagh, 1998: 15). However, a nationalist approach is necessary in reading Africadian and also African Canadian literatures. Taking a nationalist stand is first of all a form of resistance: it is one of the strategies black Canadian writers may use in order to recover erased black histories and restore them to their place within a wider Canadian history. Tracing back a genealogy through the exploration of black history and tradition, and through delving into archival layers of black Canadian cultural expressions is an important task, because, as Clarke puts it, "it [is] vital to be able to say – to report – *We are not the first*" (2012: 3; emphasis in the original). Since a deracialised Canadian national identity and politics of multiculturalism define black presence in Canada as a recent phenomenon, the historical, enduring and long-established existence of black communities needs to be recalled and voiced. Finally, indigenous aspects of black Canadian peoples should not be ignored, as they contribute to the construction and delineation of other manifestations of black Canadianness (Clarke, 2012: 4).

This attention to indigeneity is criticised by some scholars who argue that this process of national identification as intimately related to a long-standing history and genealogy in a particular place is essentially an exclusionist claim to authenticity, in which national belonging and identity are legitimised in ethnocentric terms similar to white hegemonic ones (see Walcott, 1999: 15; McKittrick, 2002: 30). Rather than articulating African Canadian identity through nationalism, Walcott proposes to use a transnational, diasporic frame of reference. He points out that "genealogy is always a

problem for *diasporized* peoples. These peoples […] are produced within a context which is always troubling and disturbing in relation to belonging to a singular place – that is a nation" (1999: 14). Black Canadians, as part of the African diaspora, which is defined in terms of hybridity, are not to conform to a homogenising national identity where there is no room for a fluid identity. McKittrick observes that there exists a certain risk in privileging narratives of lasting, historical communities, since it may lead to the conclusion that "those black women and men who were 'here first,' since Canadian settlement commenced, and the generations that followed these specific communities, have carved out the 'real' black Canadian spaces" (2002: 30), creating, within black Canadian groups, new spaces of entitlement and disempowerment.

To affirm that a national experience is not compatible with a diaspora experience is to deny that settlement and national discourses are essential components in diasporic identity formations. In the debate between Walcott and Clarke, that is, routes vs. roots, it is important to bear in mind that these are two sides of the same coin. To allow more influence or importance to one does not mean that the other becomes irrelevant. Black Canadians are not a homogeneous group, they are "a fragmented collective, one fissured by religious, ethnic, class, and length-of-residency differences" (Clarke, 2002: 15). In this sense, black Canada behaves as a *mise en abyme* within the African diaspora, replicating its plurality and its discontinuities. It is precisely for this reason that a nationalist experience is not more authentic, nor less valuable than any other in the myriad of refractions that emanate from the prism of black canadianness. Walcott himself, when arguing for the existence of multiple black Canadian ethnithities, acknowledges different strategies of belonging to the nation: "a Conservative nativist, nationalism *à la* George Grant (George Elliott Clarke); an assimilationist (Cecil Foster); a Black separatist (Odimumba Kwamdela); discontinuous diasporic identification (Dionne Brand); and a radical democratic reformist (M. Nourbese Philips)" (1999: 17).

The abundance of (trans)national identifications in the African Canadian context responds to social and political pressures. Canadian racist and exclusionist national discourses and practices may "hinder the meaning of being black in Canada and re-inscribe an ambivalent sense of belonging for many black folks" (McKittrick, 2002: 30). When black histories are erased and civil rights denied belonging becomes a struggle. However, while black Canadians might be forced to an in-between position, there is also the possibility, as Clarke proposes, of claiming and embracing Canadian

roots, instead on dwelling on ambivalence. These crisscrossing routes of identification, apart from being conditioned by Canadian racist hegemonies, reflect the vast array of black histories and geographies in the country. They demonstrate that, despite their absence from both dominating Canadian and African diaspora narratives, there is indeed a strong, prolific and complex black Canadian presence.

2.3. The Scottish Diaspora: Ethnic Choice, Settler Ambivalence and Authenticity

Delving into the field of the Scottish diaspora is a difficult task. Although there is a considerable amount of scholarly material (from *The Scot Abroad* [1864]; to *Transatlantic Scots* [2005]; or *To the Ends of the Earth: Scotland's Global Diaspora 1750-2010* [2011]), most of it deals with Scottish migrations in connection to the imperial project. Because the Scottish diaspora originates within a process of imperial expansion, it is not easily accommodated to conventional ideas of diaspora, to the point that its very existence is even denied. In order to validate its study and heuristic potential, it is necessary to analyse the factors that contribute to its formation, namely, the establishment of settler societies and Scotland's own internal colonial relationship to England, as well as class, ethnic and gender divisions, within a broader diasporic framework. This section will focus on the development of the Scots as ethnic group in the geopolitical context of Canada, and particularly in the region of Nova Scotia, where the idea of the Scottish diaspora and a Scottish-derived identity have gained substantial relevance in historical, political and cultural terms.

One of the first steps in approaching the Scottish diaspora is to determine whether it is possible to refer to such concept in the first place. If the traditional model of diaspora were to be followed in order to identify its existence, a Scottish claim would be decidedly incompatible. A fundamental requisite in Safran's account (as well as in other widely accepted definitions) is the enforced, often traumatic conditions under which dispersal is triggered. This ideal framework of origins ties in with the paradigmatic Jewish Diaspora and is common to those generally termed "legitimate" diasporas such as the African or Armenian ones and it contrasts with Scotland's histories of migration. Although Scotland has been a nation of emigrants for a long time,[16] it is through participation in the territorial conquest of the British Empire that

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[16] Devine (2011: 125) mentions that migrations to Scandinavian countries were frequent from medieval times; also, pre-empire migrations to England were common.

Scottish population effected greater dispersal movements. In general terms (exceptions will be examined below), these movements were not enforced; rather, they took place mostly voluntarily, responding at times to socio-economic push and pull factors but normally in the pursuit of fortune, renown, or simply economic betterment. Despite this willing or deliberate drive, it is undeniable that the scattering of Scottish peoples constitutes one of the vastest geographically, as well as being historically enduring. The significance of migration records, together with the maintenance of some cultural and, to a lesser extent, political connections between points of settlement and the homeland provide the grounds for attempting the inclusion of Scottish voyages within a diasporic framework.

As mentioned above, Cohen was one of the first critics to refer to a category of "imperial diaspora," thereby moving away from models of exile and establishing an alternative set of conditions under which diasporas may arise. To the extent that empire formations imply a massive movement of population, leaving a homeland behind and forming subsequent, lengthy communities in a new land, it would be possible to talk about a diasporic experience within these contexts. Although, as Cohen explains, "the bulk of British emigrants left because new opportunities – land and work to be blunt – were available in greater measure than in the British Isles" (2008: 69), account must be taken on the state's own interests in investing in and promoting, sometimes to the point of coercion, migration of its surplus population:

> The poor rates and overpopulation would be relieved and idlers, vagrants and criminals would be put to good use abroad. Once established, the principle was extended to other parts of the British Isles. Scottish crofters, troublesome Irish peasants, dissident soldiers […] were all shipped out in pursuance of the idea that they were of greater use overseas than they were at home. (Cohen, 2008: 69, 70)

In this light, the voluntary aspects of British imperial migrations may become blurred in certain cases. One instance of population management practices which resulted in violence and dispossession were the Highland Clearances. As explained in the previous chapter, this was a process of agrarian transformation through which people were expelled from the lands they worked and lived in (but which they did not possess) by the land owners, in order to make way for sheep. Cottars (as the workers were known) were thus cleared from the lands they subsisted on so that their labour could be replaced by the more profitable activity of cattle breeding. This development combined with

increases in population, which prompted migration, sometimes by forceful means. Due to the pain and loss that accompanied the Clearances and the massive depopulation of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland that it provoked, this episode is sometimes described as genocide (Basu, 2007: 200), and the process of eviction and subsequent migration are associated to exilic displacement.

These reasons for and conditions of dispersal can easily be linked to traditional notions of diaspora, and in discourses of Scottish migration movement the presence of the Clearances is prominent indeed, as is reflected in early diasporic songs and ballads, as well as in contemporary Canadian novels. An instance of a narrative which portrays a feeling of banishment and exile is the popular song "The Scarborough Settler's Lament" (Glendenning, 1974),[17] which adopts the voice of a Scottish migrant who moved to Canada, presumably after the Clearances. Significantly, this song is quoted in David Chariandy's novel *Soucouyant* (2007), which addresses present-day migration from the Caribbean to Toronto. The song and its evocations of a distant homeland are here deployed as a vehicle through which to connect these two experiences of displacement and migration, which otherwise diverge in chronological, geographical and socio-historical terms: both the Caribbean and the Scottish diasporas share the experience of exodus and the longing for home that are essential in early paradigmatic descriptions of diasporas. Thus, the Scottish diaspora is seen to digress from the voluntary drive of imperial diasporas and to enter the realm of victim diasporas. The difficulty with this incursion is that, as Basu has put it, the Clearances are generally "misidentified as the foundational trauma of the Scottish diaspora, a myth in which the Highlanders [...] suffered a genocide, were expelled from their ancestral homeland, and were forced to live in slavery and exile overseas" (2007: 200).

While the experience of the Clearances affected families of crofters and had a tremendous impact on the history of Scotland, it is not to be deemed as the sole cause for Scottish migrations and diasporic episodes. As explained in the previous chapter, Scottish migrations took place over several decades and people displaced by the Clearances should be counted as only a portion of the total Scottish diaspora population. Most people affected by them left Scotland during the nineteenth century (the decades of most intensified migration being those between the 1840s and the 1860s); however, it is during the 1920s, in the period between the two World Wars, that Scottish migration

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[17] The original estimated date is circa 1840.

reached its peak, when, as Devine estimates "over 363,000 Scots left for the USA and Canada" (2011: 85). Another essential factor to be considered when associating the Scottish diaspora to the victim paradigm via the Highland Clearances is ethnicity. This phenomenon of agricultural transformation was localised in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, and even though Scottishness is frequently equated with the Highlands (in the diaspora as well as in the homeland), this overgeneralisation neglects the fact that, in ethnic terms, a large number of Scots migrants were not Highlanders, but came instead from the Lowlands. In the geographical, as well as imaginary divide between Highlands and Lowlands, the latter is associated to progress, civilization and Anglicised forms of socio-cultural practices. In this context, it is easy to forget that the Lowland regions were poverty-stricken too, since, as Devine points out in one of the few accounts of the Lowland Clearances, "[o]ver 100 years before the Highland Clearances, the advance of the commercialized sheep farms in the deep south of Scotland was causing widespread depopulation" (1999: 129). However, in this case, displaced crofters did not have the dire need of migrating to other colonies of the Empire, as in this period job opportunities still proliferated in cities and emerging industrial towns (Devine, 1999: 150). Migrations from the Lowlands to overseas destinations took place in significant numbers from the last decades of the nineteenth century, a movement that was largely prompted by the search for opportunity and economic expansion, rather than by oppression or coercive measures from the government to manage overpopulation rates, as was the case in the Highland Clearances (Devine, 2011: 89).

It is the Highlands, however, that play the central role in terms of national and diaspora identity formations. The process of identification between Scotland or Scottish identity and a Celtic or Highland model, starts in Scotland itself. It is a process that originates in the late eighteenth and consolidates during the nineteenth century, partly through the literature of romantic Scottish authors such as Sir Walter Scott and Robert Burns (see Harper and Vance, 1999; Ray, 2005). Here, the Highlands of Celticity, bagpipes, tartans and clans is romanticised in an idyllic, pre-Culloden Gaelic-speaking rural society. In the diaspora context, Celtic imagery and traditions are donned as the authentic expression of Scottishness. The Scot is thus mythologised as a decidedly masculine figure, a noble and resilient "race;" represented in cultural contexts as "stoic Highlanders, usually old men, grimly and heroically facing their displacement in the face of relentless rational progress" (Vance, 2005: 160). The following extract from

Margaret Laurence's book of essays, *Heart of a Stranger*, demonstrates the extent to which the myth of the Highlander appeals to and is actively embraced by Scots-Canadians:

> as a child I was extremely aware of my Scottish background. No one could ever tell me whether my family had been Lowlanders or Highlanders, because no one in the prairie town where I grew up seemed very certain exactly where that important dividing line came on the map of Scotland. I *decided*, therefore that my people had come from the Highlands. In fact, they had not, but Highlanders seemed more interesting and more noble to me in every way. (2003: 114; emphasis added)

The adoption of this particular ethnicity ignores complex internal disparities among Scottish migrants: Highlanders and Lowlanders came from different socio-historical backgrounds, presented different patterns of settlement (as shown in the previous chapter in their territorial distribution in Nova Scotia), and, accordingly, they developed in different ways in the colonies.

The resulting exaltation of Scottish heritage, the celebration of Highland Games, Tartan days or bagpipe parades is seen by some critics as a series of sentimental paraphernalia which has no real connection to Scotland as the cultural and geographical homeland to these diasporic manifestations of Scottish tradition. According to Richard Zumkhawala-Cook, for instance, these "reenactments, performances, and 'life-like' icons" such as the ones mentioned above, "[stand] at a distance from any version of Scottish life evident beyond the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries" barely recognising "the presence of a contemporary and developing culture within Scotland" (2005: 112, 113). It is for these reasons that, even when the presence of imperial diasporas is admitted, the Scottish diaspora is not always acknowledged as "real" or "authentic," as it lacks a deep concern for the historic and current political and social situation of the homeland from its members. Critics such as Armstrong, for instance, allude to the inconsistence of a Scottish diaspora when he mentions that "a diaspora is something more than, say, a collection of persons distinguished by some secondary characteristic such as, for example, all persons of Scottish names in Wisconsin" (1976: 394). The absence of commitment to a contemporary Scottish reality and the sporadic cultural manifestations, which are deemed to be shallow and/or counterfeit, sometimes position the Scottish diaspora outside the necessary discourse of authenticity.

While for some this loose and often manufactured connection is not enough to constitute a Scottish diaspora, others, such as Paul Basu, have sought to demonstrate and justify its existence. For this, he follows Cohen's list of essential characteristics diasporas must present, which he systematically explores, contrasting each of its nine points with the Scottish case. Basu utilises Cohen's framework because it allows for the possibility to include migrations that stemmed from the pursuit of economic betterment; however, he also recognises the "victim" side to the Scottish diaspora by referring to the Highland Clearances and their implicit violence as a partial catalyst for Scottish migration. Basu acknowledges the equation between the Highlands and the homeland for diasporic Scots, and although he recognises that this association sometimes verges on caricature, he concedes great importance to the fact that cultural movements, reenactments, revivals, ect. are taking place nowadays (and since the nineteenth century), bringing diasporans together for their celebration. He also mentions that, for many diasporic Scots, "the homeland becomes imagined in multiple ways and the contestation of authenticity forms a significant counter-discourse" (2007: 20). As Basu's own thesis focuses on the exploration of physical acts of return to the homeland, he emphasises Cohen's fifth point, according to which these movements are frequently and sometimes collectively organised in diaspora contexts. Interestingly, out of Cohen's nine-point list, it is point seven (and point nine to a lesser degree) which is more difficult to accommodate to the Scottish diaspora. According to its premises, "diasporic populations generally experience antagonism and legal or illegal discrimination in the host countries in which they have settled, and may even become the objects of violent hatred" (2007: 22); especially when compared to marginalised ethnic groups within mainstream societies, Basu admits that "difficult to describe people of Scottish descent in the USA, for instance, as either an ethnic minority or victims of ethnic discrimination" (22). A general identification among diasporic circles with Highland conditions of deprivation, victimhood and relative inferiority is invoked here to avoid this contradiction. While this controversial solution is only partial, (since a voluntary identification with a minority without suffering the real consequences of marginalisation does not imply a situation of rejection within a host society), Basu legitimises the existence of the Scottish diaspora by alluding to the pervasive presence of the homeland (namely, Scotland, but more specifically, the Highlands and Islands) in the diasporic consciousness. When dealing with internal complexities and contradictions, he cites the diverse readings of the signifier "Scottish Highland

diaspora:" "Scots as exiles banished from ancient homelands, as pioneer settlers civilising savage places, as agents of British imperialism, as perpetrators of displacement in the homelands of others. Such are the apparent incompatibilities which yet seem to cohere in Scottish diasporic identity" (2007: 17).

In the light of this analysis, it is clear that Basu's account (as well as those of other defenders of the Scottish diaspora) posits the Highlands and its associated cultural, historical, and even linguistic realms at the centre of a Scottish diaspora identity. Although this is a limiting approach, in that it leaves little room for the exploration of alternative (Lowlands) experiences of migration and settlement, it is evident that the Highlands and Celticity resonate as the most outstanding and recurrent patterns of Scottish diaspora identification. Within the definition of Scottish diaspora, then, two essential elements should be distinguished: the element of contingency and the element of ambivalence.

As reflected in the above-cited passage by Laurence, a diasporic identification with Scotland often implies the adoption of a more specific set of cultural and ethnic values, those of a Highland ethnicity. While in racial terms Highlanders are associated with a Celtic "race" and Lowlanders with a Saxon/Teutonic "race," these divisions are not clear-cut, and supposedly fixed racial boundaries are at times manipulated and crossed in the Scottish context itself, where national identity as a whole is generally equated to Celtic culture. This coupling is most conspicuous in romantic evocations of Scotland and lies at the heart of a nostalgic myth of Scottish nationalism. The Scottish diaspora is influenced by those same myths and romanticised versions of the Highlands which shape the image of Scottish identity, and the adoption of Celtic cultural patterns is also widespread in this realm. Ethnic contingency is further supported by the recent shift in racial studies which posit that race is not biologically sustained and, therefore, what was previously conceived as a naturally marked, fixed category is revealed to be in fact related to rather flexible, artificial factors, such as socio-cultural variations. When the biological imperative is removed, the appropriation of an ethnic identity may acquire a voluntary quality; in this fashion, some groups may choose to identify with more than one ethnicity, or may adopt a symbolic one (Ray, 2005: 23, 24). As Celeste Ray explains, what should be emphasised "through discussion of empowered ethnic groups (contrasted with disempowered ethnic categories), of ethnogenesis, of emergent and resurgent ethnicities, of convenience and symbolic ethnicities, is that such identities

are flexible and permeable" (24). Moreover, the cultural practices that result from this ethnic flexibility should not be radically relinquished as not valid or inauthentic, as critics such as Zumkhawala-Cook have proposed. [18] Rather, their socio-cultural potential, as well as their emotional value, should be acknowledged; again to cite Ray's words, "we cannot dismiss the very real sense of fellowship and community provided to hyphenated Scots in the hundreds of thousands through local, regional, and national heritage organizations, regular gatherings, and print literature" (31). Following Ray's and other critics' perspective (see, for instance Hague, 2006), Scottish dispersals emerge as a significant diasporic space, even when it is one characterised by ethnic choice where some of its members may not trace a clear genealogic line back to the "mother country."

A second trait of the Scottish diaspora that need to be explored is that of ambivalence. It is pertinent in this respect to address Scotland's own ambivalent situation regarding its southern neighbour. The relationship between England and Scotland is often compared to that between a colonising centre and its colony. As some critics have noted (see Rodríguez, 2007: 67), the application of postcolonial perspectives to the definition of Scottish socio-cultural identities has been widely contested, especially when the fact that Scotland was an active participant in the British Empire colonial project is taken into consideration. However, critics such as Berthold Schoene argue that, when addressing the British Empire, it is necessary to make distinctions within what constitutes the geopolitical entity called Britain, since "many Welsh, Irish and Scottish people perceive themselves as citizens of colonised nations which neither represent fully equal constituents of Great Britain nor independent member states of the Commonwealth" (1995: 108). Arguably, Scotland maintains a marginal position in relation to England, both in political and in cultural terms. Historically, Highland cultural practices, the clan system and the Gaelic language were supressed for decades after the eighteenth-century Jacobite risings, a harsh period that culminated in the violent Clearances. Celts were considered an inferior and barbaric race, and even when their presence was no longer deemed a threat to English political projects, still Celtic traditions were either ridiculed from intellectual elites or

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[18] In *The Invention of Tradition* (1983), Hugh Trevor-Roper explores how supposedly ancient Scottish traditions, such as the wearing of tartan, are indeed of recent invention. In the light of this analysis, is it safe to condemn these practices as meaningless or inauthentic? If such Scottish cultural elements may be contested in their very site of origin, then their appropriation within diaspora contexts does not necessarily undermine the existence or the relevance of the Scottish diaspora.

transformed, in a process known as "Balmoralisation," into romanticised commodities during the nineteenth century.

However, the assertion that this process of marginalisation was exclusively perpetrated by England negates the internal complexities of Scotland's national identities; complexities which may challenge the association between Scotland and a permanently and unilaterally subjugated colonised space. While at one end of the spectrum Highland culture and traditions have been first nearly annihilated, and later downgraded or appropriated into conveniently romanticised myths by English political measures and from English cultural spheres, it must be acknowledged that this alienation was also exerted from within Scotland itself, from the Lowlands. The geographical, as well as cultural division between the Highlands and Lowlands of Scotland, has a strong, long-standing presence in the collective imaginary; and as Cecily Morrison explains, "Highland and Lowland identities came to be defined in opposition to one another, described as Celtic versus English" (2003: 6). The Anglicisation of the Lowlands and the subsequent internal displacement of Celticity in cultural and racial terms adds to the ambivalence of Scottish identity. Interestingly, Schoene compares the paradoxical situation of the Lowlands with that of Canada:

> the Lowlanders' historical complicity in English imperialism, as well as their ensuing contemporary postcolonial predicament, conspicuously reflects that of the white settler colonies of Canada, Australia and New Zealand, who now likewise find themselves in a double-bind situation of being at once erstwhile coloniser and contemporary (post-) colonised. (1998: 59)

The colonial space is thus a unique standpoint from which to further consider this ambivalence and its repercussions on the formation of a Scottish diaspora, since settler colonies such as Canada are at once the scenarios where colonial perpetration took place and the territories where exiled Scots established. Exile literature reflects the aspect of the Scottish diaspora that most closely resembles traditional, victim diasporas, whose members are forced to migrate and who maintain a strong connection to their homelands. Apart from the aforementioned "The Scarborough Settler's Lament," Murray Pittock mentions other examples of poems or songs in which exilic nostalgia features as the main theme, such as "Jessie's Dream." In this case, it is a Scottish girl who, exiled in Canada, cries for her lost homeland. Interestingly, as Pittock mentions in his analysis, the images evoked in the poem are those of a Highland territory and home,

even when the song is originally from the Lowlands, which again demonstrates the pervasive connection between Celtic ethnicity and an ideal Scotland. The suppression of the Jacobite movements and the subsequent eradication of Highland culture, together with the Highland Clearances and a political and cultural process of "otherisation" from England, which arguably continues until the present day are all factors that contribute to the legitimisation of the Scottish diaspora. Literary works dealing with exile, loss and the longing for home both recreate and are supported by these historical components.

However, as Pittock mentions when dealing specifically with the Jacobite uprisings, "the exilic experience did not voice a consistent political critique because it was often conflated with the actions of Scots exiled only temporarily and voluntarily in order to pursue imperialist aims rather than to fly a hostile British state" (1991:72). The often invoked episodes of the Highland Clearances cannot account for the entire mass migration from Scotland to the colonies from the eighteenth to the twentieth century. This migration was in great part a voluntary movement, which contradicts some of the bases of diasporic ontologies. Nevertheless, discourses of suffering, overcoming difficulty and, to a certain extent, of victimisation are perpetrated in narratives of settler and pioneer experiences. These are the narratives of settlement in the place of destination of migrant communities, which constitutes an integral part in the formation of diasporas. Settlers, or pioneers, to use the less semantically neutral term, were glorified in different ways. They were brave men (and this has to be emphasised, as women are largely absent in these accounts), who conquered the wilderness under terrifying conditions. As Cowan explains in her review of British migration to Canada, settlers

> could not at first combat the climate, the intense heat and cold, the severe winter chill and the summer ague, the effects of the new foods, the malaria and the mosquito, the stark loneliness in the dark little opening in the thick woods. Lives were lost from accidents and disease, but before the period ended, cleared farms were widespread and many roads had been cut in all the colonies. (1978: 16)

In the praises of colonisation projects, class divisions and living conditions in the country of origin are often overlooked and fused into the portrayal of the noble conqueror; it is the deeds and accomplishments in the New World that are relevant when assessing the value of settlers' triumphs, and not the circumstances that set them in motion. These are people who left everything behind and took the opportunity to

forge a new, better life in "virgin territory" and with their sacrifices brought civilisation to the remote, savage corners of the Empire.

When dealing with Scottish pioneers, the connotations of courage, toughness and grandeur became even more obvious. Scots were brave and tough, they certainly possessed the right character to survive and succeed in their colonising enterprises. Not only did the fact that some of them have suffered under the Clearances and an inter-colonial English rule make them admirable, they were also naturally prepared for the difficult tasks lying ahead, as Campey points out: "Highlanders did succeed, not due to any practical skills which they brought with them, but because of their toughness and ability to cope with isolation and extreme hardships. When it came to hard conditions and remoteness there was no better training ground than the Highlands and islands of Scotland" (2007: 9). In the survival of the fittest of colonial settlement, the rough environments of Scotland translated into a biological advantage for Scottish migrants (especially in similar climates like Nova Scotia's), who demonstrated their strength and intrepidness by gradually and steadily developing towns and dominating the colonial business world. This gives rise to an often mentioned dimension of the Scottish diaspora: alongside the victim Scot another figure emerges, the hardworking, self-made man whom Basu calls "the Enterprising Scot" (2007: 16). Recent publications such as *The Mark of the Scots* (1996) by Duncan A. Bruce, *How the Scots Invented the Modern World* (2001) by Arthur Herman, or *How the Scots Invented Canada* (2010) by Ken McGoogan, celebrate the contributions that noted Scotsmen have done to different areas such as economy, science or literature through history. One of the points these works emphasise is the presence of people of Scottish descent all over the world, and how Scotland's great migration movements have made possible the construction of, for instance, the societies of the United States of America or Canada. Proliferation of this literature means the culmination of the exaltation of pioneers and their role in constructing the foundations for modern day nations.

In these narratives of extolment, the consequences of the pioneers' arrival are rarely mentioned; there is indeed a necessary obliteration of the peoples who populated the lands which were to become settler colonies. Aborigines are either not mentioned or included in these discourses as the ignorant "other," the unruly savages who need to be enlightened in the values of Western civilisation. The violence that often came with settlement does not feature prominently in accounts where pioneers are treated as

heroes, not does the fact that most of the land that British towns were founded upon in these colonies was taken by force. In Nova Scotia, as mentioned in the previous chapter, land was supposedly traded through peaceful negotiations and treaties; however, on several occasions, settlers ignored the agreed conditions and invaded territories that belonged to the Aborigines. Land-squatting was a common practice that destroyed the living patterns of Native peoples, who were then forced to adopt Western habits. The implicit and often masked brutality that accompanied the formation of the settler colonies has led critics like Johnston and Lawson to utilise the term "invader-settler" "to emphasize the violence that the single, ostensibly benign, term 'settler' concealed" (Johnston and Lawson, 2005: 362).

The role of the heroic settler is thus destabilised when the presence of the indigene is recognised. The obliteration of indigenous peoples results in "the trauma and anxieties of (un)belonging that haunt settler culture" (Herrero, 2014: 89). The settler subject is trapped between two contradictory planes: perpetrating violence on the one hand is necessary to the settlement project; there is at the same time a consistent disavowal of that violence, for its acknowledgement threatens the legitimacy of the imperial enterprise. Furthermore, Lawson suggests that settler societies form a Second World "caught up in between two First Worlds, two origins of authority of authenticity: the originating world of Europe, the imperium, as source of the Second World's principal authority; and that other First World, that of the First Nations, whose authority the settler not only effaced and replaced but also desired" (2004: 158). Thus the settler struggles between perpetrating, asserting or translating a colonial enterprise and searching for the privilege of authenticity that can only be enjoyed by the native population. It is due to this desire of constructing an autonomous national narrative, coveting an indigenous position while being held by values which are not authentically their own that it can be said that settlers are simultaneously coloniser and colonised subjects.

In the case of the Scottish settler, this results in a condition of double ambivalence. Scottish settlers' role as colonisers may be read as a contradictory act of oppression because it is perpetrated by the oppressed. Scots in the imperial contexts are doubly colonised: as Scottish subjects with respect to England and as representatives of the Empire in the peripheral colonies as opposed to the centre of the Empire. This may be the reason why the Scots' participation in the development of colonisation is

emphatically asserted from some sectors, as a way to regain the desired authority and authenticity which Lawson posits lies at the heart of the settler subject's trauma.

The Scottish diaspora is mostly a product of these political and historical circumstances.[19] Even after critics such as Cohen attempted to expand the applications of the concept of diaspora by adding the category of "imperial" or "trade" diasporas, which eliminated the restriction that only those migrations that had been enforced or not voluntary could result in legitimate diasporas, the Scottish case still needs to be carefully assessed. The binary imperial/victim, if interpreted as mutually exclusive, is not suited to holistically define Scottish migration. Any of these apparent opposites, if taken in isolation, neglects an important part of Scottish history that resists the homogeneity of its diaspora. Victim and imperial (even trade) diaspora contexts have coexisted or succeeded each other throughout long periods of Scottish exodus. To this plurality, it has to be added that the Scottish diaspora, as part of a settler society, presents the ambivalent, in-between situation of a collective that struggles for authenticity and indigeneity, often by means of eradicating the Native populations of the colonies they were to settle. This diaspora is also marked by an internal colonisation on the part of the more powerful England (and, to a certain extent, the anglicised sections of Scottish society) which results in a national identity that constantly defines itself against the forces that attempt to other it. Highland traditions, at times mythified, transformed or even invented, together with Celtic culture and distinctively patriarchal values have been adopted as the main national sources of identification. It is from these traditions that Scottish diasporans, even centuries after leaving the homeland, configure their own identities. The Scottish diaspora is therefore shaped by ambivalence and the influence of a manufactured culture and national identity, in which choice plays an important role. This combination, which is at times read in terms of inauthenticity, is enough to guarantee the existence of a strong, relevant and long-lasting connection between an extensive diaspora and its homeland. Another important factor in the creation and enactment of a Scottish identity that cannot be overlooked in this chapter, is the strong unifying tendency which obscures the multiplicity of Scottish identities and how these are lived in the homeland and in the diaspora. Therefore, when dealing with questions of authenticity and its absence in the Scottish diaspora it is necessary to

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[19] The part of the Scottish migration whose destination were England and other European countries is not involved in the alluded creation and development of settler colonies, where most of the Scottish diaspora established and which is the main focus of this study.

acknowledge this diversity. While some segments may declare their allegiance to a Scottish ancestry in superficial ways, this does not mean that the vast population of Scottish descent that choose, as Scots, a hyphenated identity should be defined as an inauthentic diaspora. Scottish traditions are often appropriated and paraded with no other purpose than to attract tourism or for a group to fashionably declare themselves "ethnic;" however, while the existence of these practices needs to be acknowledged, this is not the same as to deny the realities of a Scottish diaspora that is in multiple ways engaged with Scottish culture and traditions. The various routes of ethnic identification and diaspora maintenance that emerge in the Scottish context will be explored on a textual level through the study and application of diaspora approaches to the Scots-Nova Scotian novels at hand.

2.4. Settled Diasporas: Challenging the Homeland, Movement and Victimhood.

This chapter has covered the evolution and some of the most relevant aspects of the concept of diaspora, as well as its applications (or lack thereof) to the two particular instances of diaspora with which this study is concerned, the African and the Scottish diasporas. Throughout this overview, issues or inconsistencies concerning the concept of diaspora and especially the relationship between the concept and its material manifestations have emerged. The appropriation of the concept of diaspora as a descriptive and metaphoric device in narratives of migration has rapidly grown in the last decades. The main objection to this process of generalisation is that diasporas materialise into vastly different experiences which are influenced by historical, ethnic, gender, religious, generational, class and other variables. Is it possible or even appropriate to conflate the identities of a Senegalese woman living in Portugal today and of an Irish man who migrated to the United States in the nineteenth century under the same ontology? Can the same criterion be applied in order to study such exceptionally diverse experience of migration and settlement? The metaphoric value of the idea of diaspora, which reflects on displacement, (un)belonging and the interaction of cultures and ethnicities, certainly appeals to different migration groups and can be applied to the various stages of the translocation process; this is the reason why its heuristic use is so widespread. However, some of its foundations need to be reconstructed so that diasporas may perform at more specific levels. As Brubaker points out, "If everyone is diasporic, then no one is distinctively so. The term loses its discriminating power – its ability to pick out phenomena, to make distinctions. The

universalization of diaspora, paradoxically, means the disappearance of diaspora" (2005: 3). This section will analyse these and other incompatibilities between the theory and the pragmatics of diaspora, and will attempt to introduce a new term, the "settled diasporas," through which some of these tensions will be negotiated.

The fundamental indicators of the existence of diasporas, that is, the pervasive presence of the homeland, the focus on movement and the status of permanent victimhood, do easily correlate to newly formed diasporas, but become harder to retain as generations of diasporans succeed each other and reside in the hostland for hundreds of years. New concepts and a new vocabulary need to be developed in order to accurately portray the experiences and the cultural, social and political productions of these collectives. In this dissertation, the limits of the concept will be disclosed by showing the existence of non-diasporic, quasi-diasporic or semi-diasporic spaces and its all-encompassing nature will thus be corrected, not by further expanding it or by creating new subcategories, but by partially transforming and reformulating it. The main focus of this study is, therefore, the creation and delimitation of the concept of "settled diasporas" which will be adapted to these particular diasporic manifestations that, mainly due to their longevity, fall out of the scope of the term "diaspora" as traditionally understood.

The most imperative factor to deal with is perhaps the pressing role of the homeland, since it is constantly invoked in most fiction and non-fiction works. The preservation of the idea of the homeland may not be possible a few generations after settlement. Although it would be very difficult (and indeed it is not the goal of this study) to determine exactly how much time should pass until the homeland no longer holds a strong grip on diasporans' identities, it is certain that first-generation migrants are much closer to the "mother country" than third- or fourth-generation migrants, who perhaps do not receive the appellative "migrant" anymore, since the experience of migration is too distant to form a significant part of any defining attributes. One distinctive feature of settled diasporas is, therefore, that they maintain loose relationships with the homeland; that is, it is harder to find in settled diasporas an active economic or emotional investment in its maintenance, and even connections with it may be sparse. Due to geographical and temporal distancing, not only are these connections neglected, but the constant desire for return is made both materially impossible and altogether abandoned as a collective purpose or ultimate goal. This unconstrained

relationship with the homeland can be observed in both the African and the Scottish diasporas, albeit in different terms and for different motives.

The central role of the homeland is a quandary in the definition of the African diaspora. While the African diaspora is usually considered one of the traditional or legitimate diasporas, many critics have pointed out its particular relationship with the homeland. As has been explored earlier in this chapter, it is nearly impossible to locate a specific homeland within the vast continent of Africa for those who were taken as slaves to the New World. This lack of precision is not only geographical, but most importantly, cultural and linguistic, and therefore, movements that promote the maintenance or a return to the homeland have taken the form of Pan African projects. The location of the homeland becomes further complicated with a wave of migration that took place from the second half of the twentieth century, from the Caribbean to other parts of America, Great Britain (and other ex-imperial centres such as France). For these black communities the relationships with the homeland are not merely dialogical, they become multilogical. Is the homeland to be considered the Caribbean (a complex set of cultural landscapes that can hardly be reduced to a single, homogeneous matrix), Africa (again to be questionably considered holistically as one source of cultural identification) or both? It is easily understood, in the light of these divergences, that the African diaspora is called "black diaspora" sometimes interchangeably; or that the Caribbean diaspora is referred to as "Afro-Caribbean" diaspora. As Gilroy and others propose, rather than attached to a fixed geo-political location, the African diaspora originates from a sense of collective distinctiveness, that may have been set in motion through forceful otherisation "us/whites" vs. "them/black" in the hostland. Cultural, historical and social bonds are then what ties African diasporans together, and not the existence and preservation of a physical homeland where they aim to return. Cohen solves this conundrum by including the Caribbean and African-Caribbean (although not the African) diasporas in the aforementioned "deterritorialized diasporas," in which "the recovery of the homeland has been deferred indefinitely and displaced by newer centres of religious, cultural and economic achievement" (2008: 138). In this dissertation, rather than conflating all these diasporic contexts into a separate category within the idea of diaspora, it is proposed that some of the complex and diverse groups of African diasporas be analysed under the self-contained notion of the settled diasporas. As the literary analysis of African diaspora writing in Nova Scotia that follows in the

subsequent chapters will demonstrate, the "newer centres of religious, cultural and economic achievement" may be those of the hostland itself, thereby neutralising the influential position of a homeland outside of the territory of residence. Historical circumstances and social transformations, together with spatiotemporal and psychological distance from the original homeland lead some parts of the African diaspora to cease to be diasporas and to behave like settled diasporas instead.

Moving on to the Scottish diaspora, it is easy to see that for many of its members, the connections to the homeland are not direct and they rarely involve socio-political action and/or awareness. The ambivalence of Scottish history, together with the arbitrariness of some of the aspects that define groups of Scots abroad result at times in the dismissal of the very existence of this diaspora. In this context, it becomes even clearer how allegiance to the hostland has replaced gradually and almost completely a close attachment to the homeland, to the point that it could not be said that Scots living today in the United States or Canada do not feel at home, or that they consider their homeland to be somewhere else. Scots-Canadian communities may, therefore, be described as settled diasporas, as groups in which there is only a lax or symbolic connection with the homeland, which is partly the consequence of a doubly ambivalent relationship to an imperial centre, as has been explored earlier in this chapter. Needless to say, Scots were among the pioneers who "conquered" the land and established settlements in the colonies, which means that from the start their migration movements involved the purpose of creating new homelands, of dominating the supposedly virgin, empty territory and to mould into communities that initially followed imperial planning but which would eventually develop into independent societies. However, there is a reason not to absolutely disengage individuals of Scottish descent from the diasporic ontology: even though connections to an actual Scotland may seem too dim (and even, to some, inauthentic) there is still a disposition to identify with the ancestral past and to adopt at some level, however superficial, an identification with Scotland. In settled diasporas, the homeland does not disappear completely; it is still the source of some cultural and social values and features that are incorporated into the lives of settled diasporans in one way or another.

Another controversial point for settled diasporas is the emphasis on movement, the importance of the journey. Diasporas are inevitably propelled by movement and the lives of migrants are marked by wandering and displacement. Some, especially in this

era of globalisation where connections are immediate, live quite literally in between, frequently journeying back and forth from and to the homeland. The identification between diasporas and motions is the strategy that Gilroy uses to deviate the attention from roots to routes; and thus the routes function as metaphors for the fluidity of the diasporic subject, they are the antidote to fixed identities, to essentialisms and biological determinisms that are based on geographical locations. Metaphoric uses, however, are sometimes exceeded and the aspects of movement and fluidity seem to be embedded as part of every diasporan's identity. This is controversial on the one hand because it borders on the prescriptive; on the other hand, it promotes the notion that fixed locations and fluid identities are not compatible. The shifting identities of diasporan peoples seem to be conferred to them through the acts of journeying and moving, but fluctuating patterns also occur in fixed locations. Individual (and collective) identities are dynamic by definition, and this is the same for diasporans who constantly travel and move between cultures and for cultures which are attached to a particular place and are considered native. Settled diasporas seek to combine both in an apparent contradiction: fixity and fluidity. It must be taken into account, that this conflict of terms is actually the lived reality of most human beings. In settled diasporas, the fragmentation of identities is acknowledged and explored from the vantage point of physical motionlessness, of continuity and permanence. In this sense, settled diasporas respond to the fact that migrations are not perpetual movements and that destination and settlement are fundamental parts of diasporas. Settled diasporas are creole, hybrid cultures (bearing in mind that every culture is hybrid to some extent) but the difference with how traditional diasporas are understood is that settled diasporas do not live this hybridity from a suspended, in-between position, but from a position of rootedness, of an extended relationship to place.

As mentioned above, the African diaspora is often articulated in terms of routes, a shift in concept mediated by Paul Gilroy in the *Black Atlantic*. The element of the Middle Passage plays an important role in this construction, as a moment of rupture and permanent translocation that is forever revisited and re-enacted in African diaspora subjects' art and culture. The aspects of settlement of this diaspora, however, are not so widely explored. This dissertation emphasises that roots need to be carefully examined in this context, for they provide some relevant distinctive features among the diverse black communities. Contrary to the opinions of critics such as McKittrick and Wood,

who believe that "identifying the 'where' of blackness in positivist terms can reduce black lives to essential measurable 'facts' rather than presenting communities that have struggled, resisted, and significantly contributed to the production of space" (2007: 6), exploring black geographies may actually contribute to discerning the different patterns that have emerged within black culture, which is often read as monolithic and one-sided. Considering the African diaspora as a single unit may lead to the denial of its internal divisions, and rooting black identities in concrete spaces could reverse that process. For instance, in dealing with the relationship that black Nova Scotian have forged with the land they inhabit, new dimensions may be added to the multiplicity of black identities and cultural manifestations within the African diaspora, without necessarily neglecting the complexity of these constructions at all levels, that is, historical, political and sociological. Likewise, even though some parts of the African diaspora may be identified as settled diasporas, due to their rootedness to place, this should not be extended to the African diaspora as a whole, as there are collectives within it whose trajectories will position them in a fluid, cosmopolitan or multi-local ontology.

In the Scottish diaspora, on the other hand, it is easier to discern the influence of roots and the static. As settlers in Canada, the Scots are imagined as part of the myths of the nation and one that is fundamental to the articulation of national identity, i.e. the myth of origins. Pioneers are the embodiment of beginnings, the towns they founded, the communities they formed are the heritage of Canada and this was considered (and arguably is still today considered) as the true and legitimate roots of the nation. There is, therefore, a clearer association between Scottish groups and attachment to a particular land, and it is for this reason that many Scottish diaspora communities are easily described as settled diasporas. In this case, the risk is precisely to incur in the essentialising tendency to homogenise space, to join a certain ethnicity to a certain geography in a way that legitimises its possession and that confers the right to that ethnicity to exert hegemonic power over others who allegedly do not belong in that same space. The task of this dissertation is to destabilise this notion, to demonstrate that ethnicities of European origin should not and cannot be, through prolonged contact to space, constructed as homogeneous and superior. These cultures are hybrid, especially in postcolonial contexts, and Scottish settled diasporas are an example of ever-changing identities which incorporate different influences and elements from diverse specific

geographies and histories. A second reason to scrutinise the Scottish diaspora as closely adhered to a particular place in terms of the originating narratives of said place is that these mythologies are constructed in a markedly masculine way. Both Scottish national identity and the role of the Scot as pioneer (in Canada and elsewhere) are imagined as masculine; female experiences, struggles and realities are neglected or overtly erased. The idea of the settled diaspora aims to provide a conceptual context in which to include a gender-balanced approach to the processes of migration, settlement and cultural and identity transformations.

Finally, to conclude with the overview of the defining points of settled diasporas, the question of victimhood needs to be addressed. In a context where diasporic subjects are not so directly influenced by migration and their traumatic (or not) circumstances, and for whom the hostland has begun to function as homeland, it is hard to imagine how victimisation enters the equation. Settled diasporas seek to move away from sacrifice and suffering as inherent experiences to diasporic ontologies. Although, of course, race, class and gender struggles cannot be ignored, these may be analysed as indirect consequences of migration movements and diasporic phenomena. Moreover, while a painful and traumatic origin may be an unavoidable part of certain diasporas (and this turs out to be not only a central constituent of their identities, as is the African example, but also constructive channels of cultural production) the imperative suffering in the hostland society that is so clearly related to the Jewish model is not so in settled diasporas. Akenson points out that a traditional conception of diaspora, in which conflict in the hostland is so prevalent "places *a priori* restrictions on the historical process by precluding the possibility that a diaspora community may evolve from a feeling of alienation towards one of affiliation with the host society" (1995: 383). Reiterative marginalisation and alienation would hinder the construction of hybrid societies that celebrate cross-cultural contacts, so offering an alternative to everlasting hardships for diasporas is one of the tasks of the conceptual corpus of settled diasporas.

The reversal of victimhood is the most controversial point to apply to the African diaspora, but perhaps the most urgent too. A history of violence, trauma and suffering marks black diasporic communities and that is the reason why critics such as Cohen include it the category of "victim" diasporas; and it is also the basis for Gilroy's comparison between the African and the Jewish diasporas. Violence and

marginalisation have taken place not only in the early stages of its long history but throughout more recent episodes as well, which extend to the present day. This oppression and the ensuing struggle for freedom and civil rights ought to be acknowledged as central to the collective identities of African diasporas. At the same time, this prolonged history of agony and strife should not be the only defining patterns of these groups. By dwelling on victimhood, the African diaspora is exposed to essentialism from the outside, but also from within. It would, thus, be valuable to analyse the pivotal role of black communities in the spaces they occupy, to unearth erased histories that tie them to place and to assert their belonging, in order to counteract the neglect and marginalisation to which they have been subjected as a consequence of unequal, hegemonic articulations of race and space.

Conversely, the Scottish diaspora has struggled to find episodes in its history that would confer it a degree of authenticity, and although the Highland Clearances provides some, it cannot be said that the Scottish diaspora as a whole pertains to the group of traditional, victim diasporas. Perhaps one particularity that most clearly sets it apart from other diasporas is that it does not conform to Safran's propositions that true diasporans are not accepted within the host societies (1991: 83). Since Scots belong to the mainstream of settler societies they find it almost impossible to abide to this requirement. This approach was limiting to ethnic minorities because it denied the possibility of belonging; it equally limits the possibilities of those who belong to identify as diasporans or as partly so. Consolidating the context of the settled diaspora allows for the inclusion of groups who are fully adapted to the hostland, groups that belong to it, even though their consciousness may remain attached to a distant originating past, which is usually reflected in certain aspects of their socio-cultural development (such as the transmission of stories and histories, the adoption of religious practices, and/or diverse cultural manifestations, be it musical, literary, culinary, etc. among others). This is not the same as to affirm that the process of establishing in the new land is equal for all groups. Clearly, factions such as the Scots have "felt at home" more readily through the enforcement of oppressive social systems of domination that privileged white races and excludes all others, who, in turn, will struggle to settle and belong in the hostland, due to this continuing negation of entitlement and authority.

There are limits to what the concept of diaspora is able to cover. Migrant communities maintain different and complex relationships with their homeland and

hostland and they undergo transformations which are historically contingent and influenced by class, gender and religion; they merge, evolve, they settle or move and turn into whole new societies. The sole concept of diaspora cannot account for all these unpredictable variations, and so new conceptual areas have to be designed. The notion of settled diasporas seeks to describe communities of migrants who, firstly, do not maintain strong and active relationships with the land of origin, are not necessarily involved in its economic betterment or political concerns, and do not wish to return permanently; secondly, they are defined by settling and permanence, rather than by border-crossing and nomadism (which does not imply the fixity of their identities: settled diasporas combine non-moving subjects with shifting identities); and finally, there exists a desire and an actual possibility for these groups to belong in the hostland, which often becomes the new homeland. The attainment of these characteristics often comes with establishment in the host society for a prolonged period of time, but not necessarily. It is true that those diasporas that have been settled in a nation for more than three generations will more easily adopt a settled diaspora behaviour than those of recent formation, but there may be instances in which first generation migrants choose to rapidly assimilate into the host society and to sever their connections to their former homeland. Moreover, not all diasporas that have existed for centuries have developed into settled diasporas: indeed, many stay loyal to their homelands, maintain significant relations with it and they do not cease to think their home is outside their place of residence. This demonstrates that settled diasporas are not a next step of, an improvement on, or an evolution from diasporas. They are related but separate entities, one is not the necessary and impending result of the other. It must be emphasised that neither are settled diasporas a sub-category of diasporas that can be included in a classification like that between victim, imperial, or trade diasporas. The circumstances that make a diaspora victim or imperial crosses through the notion of settled diaspora, that is, some settled diasporas may have originated as victim diasporas (as is the case of the African diaspora) or as imperial diasporas (such as the Scottish diaspora). This concept moves away from the study of originating causes of migration and focuses on conditions of settlement and the formation of new ontologies in a hostland that gradually becomes homeland.

It could be pointed out that settled diasporas are not in any way related to diasporas, to the necessary element of elsewhere, and that its object of study are migrant

collectives who gradually transform from foreigners into natives. Indeed, if much of what means to conform a settled diaspora is a product of living in a place for an extended period of time, then the conclusion could be reached that these peoples eventually become native. Clifford asks precisely the question "How long does it take to become 'indigenous'?" when distinguishing between diasporic and native identities, and goes on mention that "it is clear that the claims to political legitimacy made by peoples who have inhabited a territory since before recorded history and those who arrived by steamboat or airplane will be founded on very different principles" (1994: 309). Settled diasporas do draw on native and indigenous premises in that attachment to land and sentiments of belonging are similar to those displayed by native populations. However, it would not be possible to disregard the diasporic dimensions of these subjects. On the one hand, migration and its history form part of their genealogy and it is an episode that may be addressed through different personal, cultural or artistic paths; on the other hand, the fact of coming from elsewhere means that traces of that original culture, religion, language, etc. are going to remain and to influence their development, even if it is in a more moderate manner than in traditional diasporas. It could be said that settled diasporans have seen the "homing desire" (Brah, 1996: 180) fulfilled, by creating new homelands to which they fully belong, while maintaining at the same time tokens and traces of their former homeland.

The subsequent chapters in Part II, "Homeland, Settled Diasporas and Belonging in Nova Scotian Narratives," will analyse four works of fiction by Nova Scotian writers, and through their scrutiny some of the hypotheses that have been formulated will find an empiric realisation and demonstration. With ethnicities so diverse as the Scots and blacks, of diasporic nature and coexisting for centuries in the region, Nova Scotia's unique multicultural environment provides the ideal grounds for a balanced evaluation and confirmation of the existence of settled diasporas. The analysis of the four novels (*George and Rue,* 2005, by George Elliott Clarke; *Chasing Freedom*, 2011, by Gloria Ann Wesley; *No Great Mischief*, 1999, by Alistair MacLeod; and *The Interpreter of Silences*, 2006, by Jean McNeil) will be arranged into three chapters. The first one will explore how these works reflect the act of remembering migration and how these groups retain stories, memories and cultural elements from their countries of origin. In the second chapter the focus will be directed towards histories of occupation of the new territory and process of settlement and how these are unearthed and translated into

fiction. The last chapter will broadly examine the final product, i.e. the settled diaspora, the combination of diasporic and native tendencies. It will pay special attention to how these tensions are resolved in a global world and, more specifically, in the multicultural context of Nova Scotia and Canada as a whole. Variations of class, gender and race will be addressed in more detail in this chapter, since these elements affect how cultural transformations are internalised and enacted. A preliminary reading of these four novels has resulted in the necessary incorporation of a diaspora theory context to the analysis of these texts. The main purpose of this thesis remains to further identify the areas in which diaspora discourses fail to describe the realities represented in the novels. Taking the presence of the homeland, the process of settlement and the formation of a settled diaspora into consideration within the fiction of different ethnic groups of migratory origin will aim to demonstrate if the creation of a new diaspora-related concept, the concept of settled diasporas, is justified and will indeed be productive and applicable to other similar cases.

Part II: Homeland, Settled Diasporas and Belonging in Nova Scotian Narratives

Chapter 3: Legacies of the Homeland.

3.1. Retrieving Memories of Genealogies and Migrations.

The purpose of this chapter is to identify, in the four novels that conform the target of this dissertation, elements and patterns that belong to the homelands of the two ethnic groups under scrutiny, namely the African Canadian and the Scots Canadian. These elements and patterns may be in the form of memories, stories/histories, rituals, tokens, language, tradition, values, cultural practices or other products. The extent to which these are retained needs to be explored, since it is one of the fundamental factors in the articulation of diasporic and native identities. Settled diasporas, while exhibiting features of native subjects are connected through different trails to the land and culture from which they originate.

This chapter follows those trails and their representation in Nova Scotian fiction and it is divided into three sections. The first, entitled "Retrieving Memories of Genealogies and Migrations," deals with recollections and narratives of the homeland and the process of migration, and how these are modified, revisited and altered. Here, the novel *No Great Mischief* features prominently, since it most directly tackles this part of the diasporic experience. The traces of migration, however, can be discerned in all four novels. The two works pertaining to the African diaspora, for example, are products of the Middle Passage split, and its effects are assessed in this section. Other novels considered are Lawrence Hill's *The Book of Negroes*, or *Island*, a collection of short stories by Alistair MacLeod, whose involvement with memories and stories of migration and the homeland will contribute to throw light on the importance of their preservation for the settled diaspora subject.

A second section, entitled "The Representation of Cultural Vestiges and Heritage Circulations," is concerned with cultural elements and practices of a wide range, from religion to music, traditions and habits. It is essential to pinpoint which cultural signifiers have been imported from the homeland, and to analyse how and why they have survived through the generations. Connections to the homeland form part of the tension between the "awayness" that characterises diasporic subjects and the immediacy and the present which pervades in native ontologies. Their presence and

influence at a symbolic and representational level will allow us to understand how these collective identities are articulated in (settled) diasporic terms. It is relatively easy to find in all four novels (perhaps the exception being Jean McNeil's *The Interpreter of Silences*), remnants and traces of the original cultures. Culinary and musical practices are prominent in both African-Nova Scotian novels. *No Great Mischief*, again being the one whose narrative line runs closest to the mother country, preserves several rites, customs and values, the clan family organization being one of the most salient.

The last part of the chapter is entitled "Traces of Linguistic Vehicles and Aesthetic Values," and it explores linguistic inheritances and speech forms, and how these affect both psychological and aesthetic dimensions of the artistic productions. This section focuses on whether the language spoken in the place of origin is the same as that spoken in the territory of settlement and, in case it is not, on what mechanisms and strategies, if any, settled diasporans used in order to incorporate these language variations. In both Scottish novels there are invocations of the Gaelic language and its gradual suppression, a loss that is often metaphorically applied in other aspects of the characters' experiences of absence and defeat. The African novels, while not explicitly mourning the disappearance of the African languages, employ and sustain a particular black vernacular, with distinctive lexicon and idioms. Special emphasis is made on orality as vehicle for the transmission of knowledge and stories, and on the ways in which this form of expression is translated into writing and confers the novels distinguishing aesthetic values.

Throughout these three sections, relevant aspects of gender will also be considered as a cross-cutting category that may affect and adopt the shape of any of these manifestations. Gender roles and inherited ideas of femininity and masculinity will be approached through the four novels along each of these sections in order to provide an account of experiences of migration and the transmission of cultural values that includes both male and female perspectives. As regards the Scottish novels, the different male and female roles assigned to family members will be explored as one social practice acquired from the homeland. Conversely, a novel like Wesley's *Chasing Freedom* portrays challenges to traditional ideas of passive women, as the female protagonist adopts the most prominent role in the process of settlement. Finally, in *George and Rue* different models of masculinity can be found, some of which abide to inherited notions and some that dispute them.

Thus, memories and narratives, cultural praxis and linguistic traces are the parameters chosen here to analyse the connections between scattered peoples in the (settled) diasporas and their homelands. As regards terminology, the word "homeland" will be employed to refer to the point of origin of either ethnic group. While subsequent chapters will demonstrate that, for settled diasporas, the homeland is more likely to be associated with the hostland, at this early stage in the development of the thesis, vocabulary from traditional diaspora theory will be used for the sake of clarity. Therefore, homeland, as it does in the field of traditional diasporas, is understood both in territorial and in extra- or non-territorial terms as the originating place/culture. For the Scottish diaspora the homeland is identifiable, geographically and physically, as the country of Scotland (even though its temporal dimensions may be altered, as will be shown in this chapter). For the African diaspora, the homeland is a cultural framework which is closer to the idea of the Black Atlantic, composed of cultural fragments from Africa, but also from Europe, the Caribbean and the United States. This chapter is dedicated to one of the extremes in the axes that encompass the diasporic space. This originating extreme, while not always physically present is revisited and re-enacted in multiple ways and to determine which ways and to what extent is fundamental to construct a solid definition of settled diasporas.

Migration in the African diaspora is different from any other migration in history: thousands of African men and women travelled between continents; however, they did not actively move on their own volition, they were moved, they were transported in deplorable conditions. The crossing of the Middle Passage, the breach between worlds is often invoked as a powerful experience whose ever-present print has influenced African diasporans for generations to the present day. Writers such as Dionne Brand, of Canadian and Caribbean background, transform this trauma into the embodiment of in-betweenness, a space that destabilises notions of origin and leads to a state of unbelonging that later becomes voluntarily accepted. What she calls the "Door of No Return" is an impossible reality, the Middle Passage is a lived history for slaves that becomes a metaphor for elusive origins: "The door signifies the historical moment which colours all moments in the Diaspora. […] The door exists as an absence. A thing in fact which we do not know about, a place we do not know. Yet it exists as the ground we walk. […] The door casts a haunting spell on personal and collective consciousness in the Diaspora" (2001: 24-25). Alongside the Middle Passage comes the figure of the

ship as a metaphor for movement and dislocation. Within the Black Atlantic, Gilroy conceives ships as "mobile elements that stood for the shifting spaces in between the fixed places that they connect. Accordingly they need to be thought of as cultural and political units rather than abstract embodiments of the triangular trade" and continues to argue that they "[provide] a chance to explore the articulation between the discontinuous histories of England's ports, its interfaces with the wider world" (2003: 64). The Middle Passage and the ship, thus re-contextualised articulate some of the dimensions that compose the multifaceted origins of the African diaspora.

In the New World African peoples were scattered through the land, thus creating a new true diaspora. Two main features distinguish this diaspora, which are a direct consequence of the atrocity of its originating circumstances: one is the lack of direct contact, for most people, with the homeland at a level other than continental, after the crossing of the Middle Passage; the other is the distribution of the diaspora across territories that differed from each other in linguistic, socio-political and cultural practices. Slavery meant a clash and mixture of cultural systems, a forceful syncretism that marks the African diaspora. This syncretism, this creole nature is most patent in areas where there was an extended practice of slavery, such as the Caribbean or some Southern American States. In "In Praise of Creoleness," Bernabé, Chamoiseau et al. address this hybrid condition as follows:

> We declare ourselves Creoles. We declare that Creoleness is the cement of our culture and that it ought to rule the foundations of our Caribeanness. Creoleness is the *interactional or transactional aggregate* of Caribbean, European, African, Asian, and Levantine cultural elements, united in the same soil by the yoke of history. (1990: 891, emphasis in the original)

The hybrid dynamics that distinguish cultures such as that of the Caribbean are the same that lie at the foundations of the African diaspora. They determine the existence of the Black Atlantic even when Gilroy himself dismisses vocabulary such as "creolization" and "syncretism" as semantically insufficient to describe it (2003: 62). The homeland and motherland in the African diaspora cannot literally be so, it is never solely physical and material land; instead it is an extra-territorial unit, made up of complex and fractured histories, moments and convergences that are mapped through a maze of multidirectional routes. As such, pinning down what constitute the parts of an African-Nova Scotian identity which are rooted and routed in this vast and slippery source is an

arduous task. In the novels *George and Rue* and *Chasing Freedom*, however, certain elements and narratives may be discerned which help materialise this nearly unattainable homeland.

Clarke's novel narrates the story of the Nova Scotian Hamilton family. It fictionalises the lives of the two sons, George and Rufus, who committed the murder of a taxi driver in 1949 in New Brunswick. The narrative line focuses primarily on the background of the boys: their ancestors arrived in Nova Scotia in 1812, with the post-civil war wave of fugitive slaves from the United States; their father, Asa, "was the fifth-generation Hamilton in Nova Scotia, and the third-generation to call Three Mile Plains home" (2005: 10). The story develops in Nova Scotia and later in New Brunswick; the Maritimes during the mid-twentieth century form the chronotope of the novel. The diasporic web in which these characters are caught is visible through explicit and implicit allusions to inherited ethos and traditions. This fictional history is connected to the distant past through a continuous line that ties the lives of the Hamilton family to the horrors of slavery: "What neither Asa nor Cynthy knew was how much their personal destinies were rooted in ancestral history – troubles. Their own dreams and choices were the passed-down desolations of slavery. African Nova Scotia and, specifically, Three Mile Plains were the results of slave trade and slave escape" (2005: 14). As Brand explains in *The Door of No Return*, "Black experience in any modern city or town in the Americas is a haunting. One enters a room and history follows; one enters a room and history precedes" (2001: 25); the origins of the African diaspora both outlive and affect the lives of its members, they cannot and should not be forgotten. In this novel, a genealogy of destitution, poverty and disenfranchisement, "an apocalyptic genealogy" (Clarke, 2005: 26), runs through the generations of African Nova Scotians, carrying from the first ancestors to cross the Atlantic the trauma of enforced displacement and slavery practices.

The novel's story, as part of a wider history that contains it, is itself a permanent re-enactment of that legacy. This juxtaposition to the historical origins and the development of the African diaspora is explicitly addressed when the narrator describes how

> [t]he Negro – Coloured – people came from black slaves freed by redcoats down in Maryland and Virginia, then transported, like convicts, to "New Scarcity" during the War of 1812. […] They arrived just like two thousand black others who came with nothing to

> nowhere, were landed with indifference and plunked on rocky, thorny land (soon laced with infant's skeletons), and told to grow potatoes and work for ale. (14)

These concise lines chronicle the process and circumstances in which black people moved to Nova Scotia and portray the beginnings of their turbulent relationship to that land.

Absent from Clarke's novel is the period of ancestral life in Africa or a description of the moment of violent abduction. The story has a particularly contemporary flavour, so only briefly is the subject of slavery and migration mentioned, and always connected to the geographical area of the United States / the American continent. A pure and undisrupted African consciousness is too distant from the Hamilton family's time, and for these reasons experiences previous to those in the New World are not recorded in this work. An account of this segment of the history of the diaspora is given in meticulous detail in Lawrence Hill's 2007 *The Book of Negroes*. Although this novel does not belong to the literature of Nova Scotia or the Maritimes strictly speaking (since its author is an Ontario-based writer), the northern Atlantic location plays an important part in the story it narrates. *The Book of Negroes* is the embodiment, in the form of a historical novel, of the routes of the diaspora; a mapping of the Black Atlantic, even in a wider sense than Gilroy's proposal, because the narrative line that encompasses the multiple Atlantic crossings includes Canada (then British North America) where Gilroy fails to acknowledge it. Aminata Diallo's story begins in Africa, in the pre-diaspora, where she is abducted at 11; she is separated from her family and taken through land in a three-month journey to the coast, where she is put on a slave ship carrying her and other black men and women from different points of the continent to be sold as slaves in the New World. She lands first in a plantation in South Carolina and is later sold to another one in Charles Town. After moving to New York with her owner, Aminata manages to escape and eventually joins the group of black Loyalists who are granted freedom and land in Nova Scotia during the American Revolutionary War. The title of the novel is in fact borrowed from the name of an official document in which the names and a brief description of black Loyalists who were transported to British North America were taken down. Once in Nova Scotia she settles in Birchtown, the black community adjacent to the town Shelburne; facing brutal assaults and racist abuse from the white population, and after her daughter is kidnapped by the family she worked for, Aminata leaves Nova Scotia with the more than a

thousand blacks who travelled back to Africa with the purpose of settling the colony of Freetown. When this proves to be a failure (conflicts with the inhabitants of Sierra Leone make this idyllic return to Africa an impossibility) she travels one last time to England, in order to contribute to the abolition of slavery by telling her story.

The beyond-cyclic journey of Aminata is a fictional recording of a diasporic life. Its uniqueness resides in that it includes very specific and very precise memories of the homeland, which does not take the form of a nation-state, but of an everyday life with her family in her small town, Bayo. For most part of the novel, Aminata yearns to return to her origins, to her village. Her homeland, however, does not exist in the maps she can find in the houses where she is enslaved: "I felt cheated. Now that I could read so well, I had been excited by the prospect of finding my own village on a map. But there were no villages – not mine or anybody else's. […] This 'Mapp of Africa' was not my homeland. It was a white man's fantasy" (2010: 229, 230). Pain and loss, physical and psychological, accompany her in her multiple crossings; at the same time, the frustrated return to her treasured homeland turns her into a transnational/translocated subject, an unsettled being who learns to adapt to and appropriate to her advantage the environments she encounters. Nova Scotia is represented in the story as one of the Atlantic harbours, a piece in the imperial scheme where she temporarily resides, where she finds hope and freedom at first, but also a degree of exploitation and violence that compel her to migrate once more.

The arrival of the first significant wave of black migrants to Nova Scotia took place as depicted in Aminata's story: the resettlement of black Loyalists. While the Hamiltons come from a later group of migrants, Clarke engages with this episode in the history of black Nova Scotia through his opera libretto *Beatrice Chancy* (1999). Set in Nova Scotia in 1801, it is a drama that portrays the life of Beatrice Chancy, the daughter of a white Loyalist and a slave woman. Her father and owner rapes her when she expresses her will to marry another slave, and she then murders her father, for which she is condemned to be hanged. Beatrice's story draws attention to a passage of the history of Nova Scotia that tends to be forgotten, the practice of slavery. Moynagh writes that "[n]ot only is literature Clarke's chief medium for cultural memory work, it is also arguably his medium for, as it were, communing with the dead," a communion that is most apparent, as she points out, in this work as well as in *Whylah Falls, The Execution Poems* and *George and Rue* (2002: 99). Clarke's stories recover layers of the

history of Nova Scotia that are erased from mainstream records, and in retrieving buried pieces of knowledge and lost memories connects past and present.

In *George and Rue*, one aspect in the lives of the brothers that resonates with echoes from the trauma of slavery is their relationship to their father. Asa is a violent and abusive man who often mistreats his wife and son. On one occasion, the narrator describes how, after striking his wife with a hickory stick for taking a five dollar bill from him to buy new clothes for the children, aged six and seven at the time, he proceeds to whip them as well:

> He cut up his boys too. They crawled under the kitchen table to escape; Asa seized slow ankles and hauled em out. He'd cut em good on their nakedness, *like an overseer striking a slave*. […] He was a patriarch who felt commissioned to destroy his family. […] The boys had to be abused like beasts, just whipped and slapped and kicked and punched and beaten, so they'd knuckle under and be *quiet niggers*. (2005: 28, emphasis added)

Violence is an untold story, a legacy passed down from generation to generation, and victims become perpetrators in the process. The authoritarian male figure, in performing his duty as patriarchal head of the family, assumes the role of the master/overseer of the plantation, who feels the need of putting his children (who, mimicking the language of the oppressor, are addressed as "niggers") in their rightful place.

In this contrapuntal symmetry, Clarke denounces some of the psychological and physical consequences of a history of more than two centuries of poverty and destructive oppression. Stories and histories of migration and slavery, central in the definition of African diaspora identities, are thus reflected in this novel in corrupted inheritances of brutality and scarcity. Hill's novel, while addressing this migration process from a closer and narrower scope, places the protagonist in an itinerant position, and the consequences of her journeying and struggle resonate on a much more global scale. In contrast, Clarke's works constitute an archaeology of pain which connects ancestral and contemporary experiences from the African Nova Scotian diaspora by delving into some of its most traumatic and enduring imprints.

Wesley's novel *Chasing Freedom* revolves around the life of a young black Loyalist girl and her struggle to live a dignified life as a free person in Nova Scotia. There are numerous allusions in this novel to both past and present times dominated by slavery and racism. Freed slaves live in constant fear even in Nova Scotia, as slave

hunters may apprehend them on the grounds of being runaway slaves. When the protagonist, Sarah, and her grandmother, Lydia, witness the murder of a black man at the hands of a slave trader, she exclaims "'What good is freedom, Ma'am, if all we can do is live in fear? It's not right that we get treated this way, not here'" (2011: 4). Like Aminata, she has herself suffered the experience of working as a slave, in the Redmond plantation in South Carolina. Wesley's story accounts for the events that took place during the Revolutionary War: how Sarah's father flees to join the Black Pioneers and fight the Patriots; how the Redmond plantation master is shot, the rest of his family, as well as the slave foreman and overseer escaping and leaving only the slaves behind; how these are taken by ship to New York and from there, after their names are recorded in "The Book of Negroes," to Nova Scotia. In Hill's novel, the first crossing of the Atlantic, the fateful bridge of the Middle Passage, is depicted as a traumatic, dreadful episode, and Aminata travels by ship again in her subsequent journeys, from Charles Town to New York, from there to Nova Scotia, from Nova Scotia back to Africa and finally from Africa to England. In *Chasing Freedom*, the ship is a recurrent figure as well, both as means of transport and as space that triggers psychological anxieties. While Sarah herself had not been taken from Africa, her grandmother, like the protagonist of *The Book of Negroes*, suffered the experience of abduction and removal, the memories of which recur in this northward voyage: "As Sarah fastened her arms around Grandmother's shoulders, she imagined the flow of memories the old woman must have of another Atlantic voyage. There were no chains this time and neither were the men and women separated, but true feelings of horror revealed themselves on the old woman's face" (2011: 23). For blacks in the African diaspora in Nova Scotia, ship crossings of the Atlantic acquire ambivalent meanings, as they may represent trajectories towards a wretched life in the New World and towards the possibility of escaping it in the northern territories.

Once settled in the black community of Birchtown, Sarah leaves her everyday life as a slave behind. However, this newly gained freedom and independence often seem little more than an elusive mirage, as her life in the British colony very much resembles her past slave life: "To Sarah's torment, gunshots, smoke, wailing, murder and Boll weevil Carter [the overseer] were as much a part of her life in Nova Scotia as they had been on the plantation" (9). The disappointment is such that she even expresses a feeling of longing for her time at the Big House in the plantation, which she identifies

with her home: "'I never dreamed of such a dreadful place. There are days I yearn for home.' […] 'I miss having chores and good food – sweet potatoes, melons, peanuts and greens, and I miss the music and dancing. Such fun. And the sermons and singing at the camp meetings, too'" (2005: 29). This comes to demonstrate that the situation for blacks in Nova Scotia was not untroubled. Even those who managed to escape slavery still suffered abuse and extreme poverty, as promises of land and supplies went unfulfilled. Living conditions in Birchtown were unbearable enough for the main character to utter sentiments such as those quoted above.

Wesley's novel offers a unique female perspective of slavery and survival through her main characters. The story of Lydia, Sarah's grandmother, parallels that of Aminata's in Hill's work, in that they both went through the Middle Passage, were forced to work as slaves and both their children were taken away to be sold as slaves. Back in the Redmond plantation, Lydia's body and sexuality were abused and exploited for profit; she was used as a "breeding slave," which meant that the children she was coerced to bear with Cecil MacLeod, the foreman of the estate, were stolen from her. A passage in the novel focusing on Lydia connects her memories of the homeland to her female "slave" body; because she actually experienced life in Africa she can connect her own corporeality to the memories constructed around her body:

> On an early October evening, she sat soaking in the washtub. She looked at her feet, all lumped up with corns and bunions, swollen and rough. She remembered a time when her feet danced to tribal rhythms and ran along the banks of the Niger. She also recalled the long march to the West African coast to board a slave ship. Her slave's feet had travelled thousands of miles in all her years, sometimes covered, sometimes bare. (64)

She traces routes through her body, deconstructing it into segments on which she focuses and to which she attaches particular actions and experiences. When analysing her face "the hollows in her cheeks, the winkled brow, the sagged pockets of fat along the jaw" she reflects, "[h]ow many times had her mouth endured the slaps and spit of the overseers?" (64). After this description she proceeds to observe her hands, "all puffed up, chapped and rough like tree bark from chores and lye" (64). The dismembering of her corporeality into isolated entities acts as a narrative strategy through which Lydia's identity is holistically constructed. All of her disassembled parts amount to the signifier that defines her, the slave. Her body is the body of a slave, and it does not even belong to her: "All these years, her body has served others. It has known

the work of a man and a woman, the cut of the lash and the forced bearing of children, but never the tenderness of love" (65). The unavoidable presence of her body obscures her own sense of self, which is invaded by the images of slavery reflected in her abused and expropriated physicality: "She stared back at the wall and mouthed the name given to her by her mother: *Abena*. The name was in a place beyond her memory. 'I have lost the way to go home,' she whispered" (65). As first generation "migrant," Lydia is capable of actual recollections of a homeland and of the pain of slavery, although later experiences of slavery and suffering threaten to eclipse them.

Stories, histories and memories of migration are portrayed in these novels with different purposes. As part of the cultural production of a wide African diaspora, these works engage with the events and episodes that constitute its agitated origins, which are not always associated to the physical homeland of Africa, but rather address decisive episodes in their genealogy, such as the experiences of the crossing of Middle Passage and the suffering of slavery. Hill's *The Book of Negroes* replicates the routes of the Black Atlantic through the fictionalised life of a slave woman; her itineraries create a map that conflates imperial domination and oppression, trauma and loss and struggle for freedom and civil rights. Clarke's and Wesley's fictional accounts are more locally focused, but in many respects their concerns can be applied to the African diaspora in a broader context. They involve the construction of historical memories of black Nova Scotians' ancestors, and they deal with experiences that are very similar to those tackled by Hill (or by Toni Morrison in *Beloved* or by Harriet Jacobs in *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*). Clarke's works are historical milestones that overlap with Wesley's novels, unearthing stories to retrieve lost genealogies. Bringing to light memories of migration and slavery, especially in a nation where these facts are denied, is essential to establish the foundations of an African Nova Scotian diaspora that is as much marked by its present as it is by its past.

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

In the works of Scots-Canadian writers in Nova Scotia, the representation of the homeland follows different mechanisms, mainly due to the fact that the homeland, Scotland, can be physically identified with a nation that has been preserved almost identically to its current form since the time of migration; and because displacement for Scots did not entail the same degree of violence and brutality, even on those occasions

when people were living in extreme poverty and were coerced to abandon their homes. In contrast to the African diaspora, Scottish migrants have direct access to their ancestral culture and history and some of them are able to trace their genealogy back to the area within Scotland from where their forebears migrated. In contemporary fictional diasporic accounts, such as MacLeod's and, to a lesser extent, McNeil's novels, these allegedly accurate and empirical episodes are often distorted and mythified, and various subjective interpretations of objective events arise. These, Sharon Selby argues, "continue to be more than nostalgic reminiscences of a lost homeland. Rather, they have been an essential element of living memory for more than two hundred years, and have been embedded in perceptions of the unfolding present to become a determining factor in the way in which modern Scottish-Canadian identity has continued to evolve" (2008: 1). The echoes of Scottish memories and culture acquire a markedly Highland ethnic hue and, therefore, references to and readings of the Highland Clearances, as well as of Gaelic language and traditions abound in these works.

Set in Cape Breton, in a rural community that is predominantly of Scottish descent, *No Great Mischief* engages with a number of aspects from the homeland: it directly addresses episodes from Scottish history that are somehow relevant for the lives of the protagonists and relates stories and memories of migration. It was explained in previous chapters that the Highland Clearances have been often used as the foundational cause for Scottish migration and the origins of the Scottish diaspora at large. While it is implausible to support that the vast volume of Scottish migration that has taken place through the course of three centuries is to be attributed to this sole motive, it is certain that a segment of the scattering of population originated through such experience. It has to be mentioned that, while some diasporans may be unable to discern their family's date of migration or place of origin, MacLeod is able to legitimately trace back his ancestors to people who migrated from the Isle of Eigg, situated in the North West of Scotland. According to him, most of the people of Scottish descent currently living in Cape Breton are related to migrants from the Highlands:

> When people from Scotland went over there, they went to a large extent in family groups from individual islands, like Eigg, and intermarried, and carried with them the whole body of whatever it is that people carry with them – folklore, emotional weight. [...] So that if you look at my ancestry and my wife's ancestry, there's no-one who's not from the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. All of our ancestors bear those names [...]. In 1985 this is still who

we are. And that is why there is this felt affinity on the part of those who emigrated for those who remained. (Nicholson, 1985: 92)

The novel arguably follows a pattern similar to the one the author describes as his own background. Alexander MacDonald narrates in the first person the story of his family, clan Calum Ruadh, from a contemporary stance, focusing mainly on his parents' death, his and his brothers' work in the mines, the lives of his grandparents and his brother Calum's current alcoholism and money problems. At several points in the narrative, however, Alexander reflects on the world of his distant ancestors, on how and why they abandoned Scotland and migrated to Nova Scotia. As he recounts in his adulthood the story his grandfather told him when he was a child, he acknowledges with postmodern self-consciousness that "[t]here are some facts and perhaps some fantasies that change with our own perceptions and interests" (2001: 17). With the space-time distance that stretches from the origins of a diaspora and their present-day members, objective history and subjective memories are conflated in these accounts of ancestral experiences, blurring the lines between fact and fiction. As Alexander explains, Calum Ruadh and his second wife, together with their extensive family of six boys and six girls (a symmetry that suggests a mythical or legend-like distortion of reality) had to abandon their home in Moidart, in the eastern coast of Scotland. "Anyone who knows the history of Scotland," adds Alexander, "particularly that of the Highlands and the Western Isles in the period around 1779, is not hard-pressed to understand the reasons for their leaving" (17-18). Although the Clearances are not explicitly mentioned, it is easy to see that the reasons he refers to are related to this episode. Later on, when one of Alexander's brothers goes to Scotland, upon meeting a man in a train and explaining he is from Canada, the man answers: "that's where a lot of people went after it all happened. I have probably more relatives there than I have here. Too bad about it all" (243). Again, the Clearances are not mentioned, but it can be deduced that "it" refers to the process of eviction, especially when this passage is compared to one of MacLeod's short stories, significantly entitled "Clearances." Here, a similar scene involves the protagonist, a Canadian man, meeting a Scottish man on a train to the Highlands. The man comments "you are from Canada? You are from the Clearances?" (*Island*, 2002: 419), assuming an inherent connection between the Clearances as cause, and Canada as destination, of displacement. The protagonist of this story is visiting Scotland to see the land of his ancestors, and he bitterly reflects:

Where once people had lived in their hundreds and their thousands, there now stretched only the unpopulated emptiness of the vast estates with their sheep-covered hills or the islands which had become bird sanctuaries or shooting ranges for the well-to-do. He saw himself as the descendant of victims of history and changing economic times, betrayed, perhaps, by politics and poverty as well. (2002: 420)

In all these cases, while there is no direct mention or detailed account of an experience of the Clearances by people who were present at the time, MacLeod clearly connects them to his characters' current context, as part of their genealogy and history.

Apart from alluding to these processes of agricultural and economic transformation as the reasons why the characters' ancestors migrated centuries ago from Scotland, he also provides a fictional account of their journey. The narrator in *No Great Mischief* tells how the family's dog, out of loyalty, swam after the boat that was carrying clan Calum Ruadh to the ship, and was thus taken to Nova Scotia as well; he depicts the terrible voyage in which Calum's wife, Catherine, died of the fever; and their arrival, when Calum started crying after they reached land. Alexander, as a child, is surprised when he hears about this reaction, and enquires about the reasons why the clan leader, a strong man who had arrived at the land of opportunity would cry in those circumstances. His grandfather answers: "'He was […] crying for his history. He had left his country and lost his wife and spoken a foreign language. He had left as a husband and arrived as a widower and a grandfather, and he was responsible for all those people clustered around him" (2001: 22). As part of a settler collective, clan Calum Ruadh are not described as entrepreneur people, ready to plunder an empty territory, or to achieve glory and fame moved by greed. They are instead portrayed as a humble family, people who lived in poverty and had little choice but to abandon the land they called their home and make a new life in a foreign space to which they did not belong. In this sense, displaced Highlanders such as Alexander's ancestors are more easily connected to the ontology of victim diasporas, to migrants who painfully mourn the loss of their homeland, similar to the ones reflected in "The Scarborough Settler's Lament," rather than being identified with ruthless conquerors or with the role of oppressor/coloniser.

The blending of and alternation between personal perceptions and historical fact is a key element to understand the strategies MacLeod uses to intertwine the past and the present of his diasporic characters. In different passages of the novel, the narrator

engages with historical events from the mother country, Scotland, and he does so mainly through the figures of his two grandfathers. The personalities of these characters are almost antagonistic: Alexander's maternal grandfather, referred to merely as "Grandfather," is a sober, sensible man, described as "exceedingly careful" (30), meticulous, concerned with pulchritude and neatness. "'He is so clean, he makes you nervous,' said my other grandfather, who, while he had a great affection for him, was a very different kind of man" (31). Indeed, Alexander's grandfather on his father's side, whom he, in contrast, addresses as "Grandpa," could be described as a carefree, jovial man, fond of drinking and music. It is Grandfather who is more aware of the different versions that history may provide, and who throughout the novel is troubled by the conciliation of both. He often revisits and reflects upon passages of history concerning their ancestors in Scotland. At a point in the novel, he discusses with Grandpa the different perceptions or interpretations that could be given to the battle of Killiekrankie. At times, he imagines the members of clan MacDonald returning from the battle "in the splendour of the autumn sun [...] Coming with their broadswords and their claymores [...] Singing the choruses of their rousing songs" (83, 84). This version, which pleases Grandpa, clashes with the more pessimistic view of the Highlanders coming back from these battles, not boastful and triumphant, but "thinking of the dead they left behind. [...] carrying home their wounded [...] saying 'Well, this better be worth it. Somehow'" (84, 85); and he continues, much to the annoyance of Grandpa: "'When I think of them in this way [...] the sun does not shine in the fall on Rannoch Moor, but instead it is raining" (85). One of the questions that should be asked at this point is why is it so important for these characters (as well as for Alexander) to delve into history books and discuss events that have taken place centuries ago in a distant land? The answer may lie in that both grandparents and the narrator see themselves closely connected to these ancestors that populate Scottish history books, despite the vast separation that exists between them, both in spatial and in temporal terms.

To further prove the relevance of allegedly objective and unbiased history for the present personal situation of the novel's character, the meaning of the title itself is provided by Grandfather. During the assault of Quebec, commanded by General Wolfe in 1759, it was apparently thanks to the intervention of a MacDonald, who tricked one of the French sentries, that the British Army could ascend the cliffs in the Plains of Abraham, led by the Highland soldiers. In Grandpa's mind "They were first because

they were the best [...] I think of them as winning Canada for *us*. They learned that at Culloden" (101). Grandfather deconstructs this idealised and sentimentalised vision Grandpa has, by complicating the "facts" for him and adding that "At Culloden they were on the *other side*. [...] MacDonald fought *against* Wolfe. Then he went to Paris. That's where he learned his French" (101). Indeed, Wolfe had fought against the Highlanders in 1747 in Culloden, after which many of them had to flee to France, because they were considered rebellious traitors. Following that episode, the British Army offered them the chance to fight for Britain against the French in North America (see Baer, 2005). General Wolfe appears to have been suspicious of the Highlanders and he wrote in a letter that he had used them because "They are hardy, intrepid, accustomed to a rough country, and no great mischief if they fall" (219). Alexander and his family, as descendants of Highland families in Cape Breton, see themselves as part of this same bloodline; but in this passage the myth of the warfare heroes is dismantled and an image of a people who have been used for the purpose of those in power takes its place. The narrator thus explores episodes from his distant ancestors' lives, through stories and memories of migration and through the study of history books and their different versions and interpretations. These mechanisms are essential for him to understand and negotiate his parents' own death, his brother's deplorable situation and the feeling of guilt he harbours for escaping poverty and scarcity in Cape Breton, thus avoiding a repetition of Calum's fate.

In contrast to *No Great Mischief*, McNeil's novel *The Interpreter of Silences* arises from a background that is not so closely connected to Scotland and Scottish history. Set in Cape Breton as well, this work narrates a passage from Eve's life, a woman who returns to her father's house after hearing about his health problems. Eve, oppressed by the backwardness of the place, had abandoned Nova Scotia years before in order to live what could be defined as a cosmopolitan lifestyle. When she goes back to her home town in Cape Breton, she finds that the house next door has been rented by an American man, Noel, for the holidays; they have a brief affair which ends after the death of Eve's father, and she eventually returns to life with her husband and daughters. The influence of Scottish heritage in this novel is subtle, but it still plays a relevant role as one of the multiple ways in which Eve interprets the space of Cape Breton, her father's and her own identity. Both characters, Eve and Noel, are caught up between the global (which they experience through their respective jobs, she as jewellery designer

and he as journalist) and the local, that is, the town in Cape Breton where they temporarily reside. The island, however, has different meanings for each of them: for Noel it is a remote, idyllic place where he finds peace and rest; for Eve it is a space replete with memories, a suffocating, isolated place of whose poverty and underdevelopment her father is both a witness and a victim. In her desire to escape it, which is momentarily placated by Noel's presence, she often invokes Scotland as the original land of her people, using the same episodes as *No Great Mischief* to better understand her present situation.

Once again in this novel, the Clearances are alluded to as the cause for the migration of Eve's ancestors. The question of origins arises in a conversation between Eve and Noel:

> "'I've been meaning to ask you, he began, what is your family's story?'
> 'Their story?'
> 'Their origins, how they came to be here.'
> 'Oh. That. We don't really know. My ancestors weren't the sort of people to keep genealogical records.'
> 'What kind of people is that?'
> 'Illiterate people. Poor people.'" (2006: 117)

With her answers, Eve tries to emphasise the difference between her and Noel, the contrast between the reality of poverty and his American eagerness to commodify the past. She therefore mentions that there are no written records of her family's history; this knowledge, must come from oral tradition and the passing down of stories, since she next mentions that "[s]ome had been evicted from their land in the Clearances; I don't think they wanted to come here at all. It took people a couple of generations to realize they really were here, forever" (117). The episode of the Clearances again confer the circumstances of her family's displacement with a halo of victimhood, and it creates an image, as in MacLeod's account, that moves away from the prototype of the ambitious coloniser. This is further reinforced by Noel's reaction to this piece of information, which he compares to the lives of contemporary refugees and people who are forced to abandon their homes, people he has encountered in his job as journalist:

> "'That sounds familiar.'
> 'Does it?'

He nodded. 'I've worked with internally displaced people. Often they're ashamed of having been compelled to leave, as if it were their fault.'" (117)

The experience Noel is referring to is one that is usually associated with Modernity and with present-day political shifts that affect peoples in underdeveloped countries; yet, the simile is established with migration movements that took place centuries ago, and within a collective whose dispersal is not always acknowledged as a real diaspora. This implies that segments of the Scottish diaspora, such as those narrated through the stories by MacLeod and McNeil, may be identified with current episodes of enforced displacement thus behaving more closely as victim rather than imperial diasporas within the spectrum of Cohen's categories. However, McNeil introduces an element at this point that differs from MacLeod's description: whereas the first Calum Ruadh feels pain and fear upon landing in Nova Scotia, McNeil attaches other emotions to the experience of migration, those of guilt and shame, as Eve declares that "'It's true, they did seem to feel ashamed of something, the older generation, my father's uncles. But it was unspoken, I could never figure out what it was, exactly'. She thought of the sleek dark animal she had seen in the eyes of her relatives, like a scavenger disappearing around a corner. That is what it had been: shame" (117-118). This is actually a sentiment that can be recognised in both novels; both main characters, Alexander in *No Great Mischief* and Eve in *The Interpreter of Silences* feel guilty about their attempts to move on, to leave behind the precariousness of Cape Breton's economy and life standards and to aim for material growth and successful careers. In a cyclic recurrence of circumstances and emotions, Alexander and Eve are compelled to repeat their ancestors' decisions: to abandon their poverty-ridden homes and to forge a new and better life somewhere else, with an ensuing feeling of loss, shame and guilt.

These Scots Nova Scotian novels address stories and memories of the homeland as a way to establish connections with the present time of the diaspora. Cynthia Sugars says about *No Great Mischief* that it is "a work that circles around the contradictions of chance, destiny, origins, and genealogy by evincing a kind of ambivalent compulsion for repetition linking past with present" (2008: 133), a statement that could also be made about McNeil's novel. Like the African-Nova Scotian novels, they suggest the existence of a continuous line that binds the lives of the ancestors and the first migrants to those of Eve, Alexander and their families. In Clarke's novel this line is made patent through the repeating of traumas, violence and poverty, an inherited legacy of

marginalisation and oppression. In MacLeod's and McNeil's stories, on the other hand, both main characters occupy a position that is privileged enough to give them the possibility of distancing themselves from the modest background they belong to, and from the constraining space of Cape Breton. However, as Eve and Alexander are compelled to return to this space, reflecting upon the memories about their Scottish forebears is a means to realising that this escape may not be ever fully effected. While they both confront memories from the past, the homeland as a referent of origins exerts in *No Great Mischief* a centripetal force to which its characters are drawn in powerful ways; in comparison, this force is more subtle in *The Interpreter of Silences*, which barely mentions historical events from the homeland, and even alludes to the lack of written record about the family. However, the following analysis of further tokens and traits Eve inherits from Scotland will reveal the latent attachment she has to her roots.

3.2. The Representation of Cultural Vestiges and Heritage Circulations

This section is concerned with cultural elements that can be identified as translated from the homeland. This is a broad and sometimes ambiguous category which includes specific productions such as music or food, but may also take the form of customs, traditions and rituals and even other, less tangible components such as psychological conduct or a particular mind-set. This last part may be the most contested in terms of the definition of individual identity, since stating that psychological dimensions are affected by the impositions of collective cultural structures and patterns may be read as cultural or even biological determinism, especially when cultures are associated with specific geographical spaces. Whereas the location of memories and stories of the homeland are more clearly associated to a specific domain (even when the African diaspora dwells in a context that avoids geographical fixation) the identification of the origins of cultural productions is more opaque, since culture is not a static entity; rather, it is constantly transforming itself, following multi-directional paths which diverge from, converge into and criss-cross each other. Narrations of and about the homeland are situated invariably in the past, even in those cases when the homeland is not territory-based, since the experience of migration necessarily precedes that of settlement in the hostland. When it comes to isolating and scrutinising cultural elements, the past merges into the present, as social, political and aesthetic values change with time and through contact with other cultures. However, as will be shown through the following literary analyses, there are certain attitudes, reactions and psychological traits that may be unequivocally traced

back to a repetition of practices and habits that are originally developed and performed in the homeland. One interesting aspect of the comparison between the African and the Scottish diasporas is that they each represent different perceptions of how culture is created and transmitted: the African diaspora deals with culture and identity in terms of hybridity and fluidity, whereas elements from the Scottish culture are often associated with the static and the permanent. Indeed, the novels from the African diaspora do not (or not only) feature cultural aspects pertaining uniquely to an African context, as it is almost impossible to identify a pure and unified notion of African culture. Gilroy summarises the perils of consolidating the various cultural manifestations within the African diaspora with the following question: "How are we to think critically about artistic products and aesthetic codes which, though they may be traceable back to one distinct location, have been changed either by the passage of time or by their displacement, relocation, or dissemination through networks of communication and cultural exchange? (1993: 80). To forge such an essential, overarching criterion would, on the one hand, be a simplistic reduction of a complex array of internal divisions; on the other hand, more specific territorial targets would be required in order to define where in Africa certain patterns belong, a task made impracticable by the devastating uprooting effects of slavery. Rather, African-based traditions and products are transformed in the crossing of the Atlantic and through the process of transculturation that takes place when contact with the New World is established. Hybridity thus becomes the decisive factor in defining cultural heritage within these novels, which portray a creole and multi-layered body of analysis. In contrast, Scottish cultural items are more easily associated to one geographical space and are usually considered as pure and static, an impenetrable entity that is wholly transmitted and preserved from generation to generation from its original conception. Here, the questions that need to be asked are whether these inheritances are as accessible and unalterable as they claim to be, if spatial-temporal interferences may influence people of Scottish descent to favour some over others and whether this alleged purity is challengeable in any way and with which consequences.

From the Afro-Canadian universe of *George and Rue*, the diasporic cultural element that resonates most clearly is music. In *The Black Atlantic*, Gilroy introduces music as a mechanism through which black diasporans both participate in and resist modernity, as an element of cultural expression through which to express emancipatory

desires and denounce racial subjugation (1993: 76). It accompanies the African diaspora from the times of slavery: "[m]usic," he says, "becomes vital at the point at which linguistic and semantic indeterminacy / polyphony arise amid the protracted battle between masters, mistresses, and slaves" (74). Clarke utilises music in *George and Rue* as an emotional and aesthetic dimension that parallels and contrasts the dominant element of violence. The work is essentially the story of a crime perpetrated by the two brothers, who killed a taxi driver by striking him on the head with a hammer. Of the two brothers, Rufus is portrayed as the cunning one throughout the novel: "Everyone in Fredericktown knew George was a rascal, but no killer. But Rue? He was bloody trouble from the start" (161). Out of the two, he is the one who commits the murder; also, he is the one with a talent for music.

Early in the novel, the narrator describes Rufus's first encounter with a grand piano he finds in an abandoned house when he is thirteen: "The piano was elegant ebony, a being once pulled to the door of the Reverend Ohio States's home by ox-team. Music became Rue's consolation. While Asa turned to booze, Rue turned to art" (40). Through music, Rue creates a space where he can temporarily escape the realities of his wretched home, of his relationship with his parents and with people in the town. The instrument itself, the black and white physicality of the piano, also provides a symbol for an impossible racial communion, a metaphor that briefly alludes to the topic of illicit inter-racial sexual relationships: "He had no training, but he had temper. Alone, he'd bash those playable keys; alone, he'd admire the gorgeous congress of Negro and Caucasian keys, so capable of beautiful intimacy here, but not in Three Mile Plains, not in Nova Scotia. In the rest of the world too, such couplings were secret and brutal" (40). The music that Rufus thus produces in the margins and for no audience but for himself becomes an intangible transnational territory where a sublime rooting and routing of his life in Nova Scotia, his own and his ancestors' anguish, and other known and unknown musical and poetic productions from the diaspora converge:

> The unheard-of melodies – strange – that Rufus hammered out on that piano were the Nova
> Scotian discovery of jazz and blues, if anyone had heard and said 'Amen'. Bothered by
> inexplicable longings that cut through his bowels like hot water, he tried to follow memories
> of radio tunes that came out of black women's redemptive mouths. He'd heard Bessie Smith
> – big, brown, brassy Bessie and all her blues about oversexed coffee grinders and jelly rolls
> and generators. […] The piano became his confessional, his brothel, his hospital, his church,

his army, his canteen, his library, and his school. It was refuge from a lust-busted-open shack on Panuke Road. Rue loved to feel and hear his fingers striking handsomely against a half-playable keyboard […]. He transmitted, without knowing it, all the lovely Negro poetry of the United States. He hammered out his broken-hearted genealogy in each phrase torn from the rotting heart of half a piano. Too, Bessie sang on, her voice black with pain – or black with a writhing, sweaty pleasure. (40, 41)

While these actions are situated in a pre-globalisation era setting, music nonetheless has the power to connect and bring together cultural manifestations that belong to different geographical traditions in the African diaspora, a merging that is made possible through the parallelism that is established with the art of Bessie Smith, underlain, as Rue's music, by personal and historical pain, and through allusions to jazz and "the Negro poetry of the United States," as part of public cultural productions, and to ancestral genealogies as part of a private realm. It must be emphasised that Rue's release of ancestral pain through the act of piano playing and the creation of music is clearly linked to violence. The roughness of his performance can be perceived through a language that is highly charged with connotations of destructiveness; words like "bash" and "strike" are used to describe Rue's playing, and most importantly, the verb "hammer" is employed twice in the paragraph quoted above, which has a special symbolic significance for the contents of the novel, a hammer being the tool with which Rue commits the murder of the taxi driver. At this point in the novel, such vocabulary becomes an omen, a presage for the tragedy that is yet to come, and, in subsequent chapters, parallelisms between music and violence abound, and the association between pressing the piano keys and wielding a hammer intensifies. Later in his life, when he starts working as a piano player in a brothel in Halifax, the owner wonders at how "Rue beat the keyboard like he was knockin out a motherfucker's brains. Most pianists felt a tune; Rue hammered em out" (66). On a different occasion, when he is arrested for robbery in Fredericton, New Brunswick, Rufus ponders about music while he is in prison: "Of course, there was no piano – busted or otherwise – to think of playing. Rue dreamt hammers hitting strings forcefully. His music was hammer hammer hammer hammer hammer hammer hammer, a stammering thud thud thud thud thud" (97). When the brothers are finally planning their assault to rob Silver, the taxi driver, it is this subconscious connection between a piano and a hammer that moves Rufus to choose the latter as a blackjack (108). By this point, the simile is consistently established so that the reader is easily led into the reversal of the repeated comparison in the culminating scene

of the crime: "The hammer bit into and took away a cleft of ear too, like a hungry dog dragging down a pig. The hammer thudded against the skull with the same lasting tone of piano hammers striking strings" (127). Where the rest of the novel addressed a piano and compared it to hammers, here, through metonymic focusing on one of the piano's structure components, the hammer and the act of killing with it are compared to the instrument, thus transposing the recurrent simile.

In the African diaspora, music is one form of cultural expression that is often signalled to convey political as well as individual racial struggle. It is a transnational, shared realm to which the complex, particular and distinct black cultures that compose the diaspora contribute. Dealing with blues and its role in the black arts movement, Adam Gussow maintains that "[a]t once functional, collective, and committed, the blues foster a continuing revolution of black spirit, excavating and purging despair – rather than surrendering to it – on a daily basis" (2006: 233). This novel portrays an appropriation of music that is in tune with the applications described by Gussow. Rufus' melodies certainly originate from a place of struggle; they bear the burden of poverty and marginalisation, an imprint which is transmitted as infuriated reaction. In the social background of cruelty, pain and agony in which Rufus in immersed, his sublime emotional materialisations take the shape of violent music performances. Clarke skilfully connects the collective and dialectic mechanism that music is for the African diaspora and adapts it to George and Rufus' lives and experiences through the image of the hammer: the hammer both as metaphor for the demolishing reality they must endure and as the real instrument which conclusively becomes the means of the murder for which they are condemned.

Chasing Freedom revolves around the lives of black settlers in Nova Scotia, and one of the most salient cultural elements found among black Loyalist, which they brought from the US, is religion. As Christians, this religion does not come directly from Africa but is gradually acquired from a European background. The adoption of Christian religious practices is complex and wide-ranging, since the trajectories black communities took when it came to converting to one particular doctrine depended on social and geographical factors. Noel L. Erskine points out that, during slavery in the Caribbean, religion was not preserved in its pure European form; instead, as it was altered to suit the needs and rituals of slaves, it became a syncretic entity where European and African elements coexisted: "Africa provided the frame of reference for

faith and culture. In the African church there was a theology of spirit; they believed the divine suffused all reality and that healing included the physical and spiritual realms. All of reality was considered divine and the bearer of the holy. During the era of slavery most Black churches throughout the Caribbean were African churches" (2014: 2). Even when black religious manifestations were mostly regulated by the owner of the plantation, a black church emerged "as a source of spiritual comfort and opportunities for social expression, and as an escape from the drudgery and abuse of everyday existence" (Durant, 1995: 84). To the intricacy of religious branches and the different paces at which they were spread among black peoples in the vast territories that endorsed slavery, must be added the generational factor. First-generation slaves would mostly arrive in the New World with a theological affiliation other than Christian, whereas second- and third-generation slaves were born into a background in which Christianity would be the only faith allowed. In the novel *The Book of Negroes*, for example, Aminata comes from a Muslim family and remains so all throughout her life, even if she does conceal it for the most part and at some points of despair succumbs to losing her beliefs. In contrast to this very specific allusion to differences in faith, in *Chasing Freedom* the character who has come from Africa, Lydia, does not mention any religious traditions from her life there. Nonetheless, she is described as a believing woman, even though she practices a very particular form of faith in that she disapproves of singing or dancing, which she considers sinful, as a means to demonstrate devotion: "My religion is between Lydia and the Lord" (42) is how she rationalises her faith. Even though her practices do not match those of the rest of the community, Lydia still uses her faith as a mechanism through which to endure the brutality of slavery and the pain of marginalisation and oppression in Nova Scotia: "If you lost your step, you would fall down and get left behind. And no one would care. You had to hold on. You had to believe and trust that if you fell, God would find you" (83).

For the most part, historically, black Loyalists "were Baptists, Methodists, or Anglicans, and missionaries of all three groups worked among them. A few Negroes were Presbyterians and Roman Catholics when they arrived, and the Anglicans and Catholics won a small number of converts," according to Winks (1997: 53). Lydia's faith is described as firm and inward-oriented, but the rest of the community of Birchtown participated in Methodist rites, in which they found freedom and consolation. Cedrick May argues that one of the factors that contributed to the spread of Methodism

among black groups was that it "authorized emotionalism and enthusiastic preaching," which "appealed to the African and African-descended peoples living in North America who recognized Methodism as a style of worship compatible with traditional forms of worship they had brought with them from Africa" (2004: 556). This confirms that religions were not inherited as fixed structures and enacted or imitated without variations. Creolisation is also present in the development of worship in African-American churches, as "African descended people incorporated traditional African practices into the developing Methodist traditions" (May, 2004: 556-557). The protagonist of *Chasing Freedom*, Sarah, participates of this amalgamate of traditions and beliefs; while she is walking to a Methodist gathering, she describes the role of the church and how services were organised: "It felt good to be on her way to the Methodist camp meeting in the clearing. Throughout the colony, worship services were being held in every corner. There were plenty of ministers coming to Birchtown to preach to the desperate souls" (55). Later, she refers to the influence and the cathartic effect of religion and of these reunions, celebrated in the margins: "A large crowd milled about in the clearing. It was the only place where the Negroes could legally gather, a place where they were free to let themselves laugh, sing and dance. It seemed all of Birchtown was in this place of healing" (56). Indeed, religion remained one of the most crucial institutions in the development of an African-Nova Scotian identity. Later, in accounts of the destruction of Africville, the African Baptist Church is often mentioned as the heart and soul of the community, and it is in fact the only building that has been reconstructed to commemorate the existence of this neighbourhood, after decades of people's protests and demands to the City of Halifax (Loo, 2010: 42; Nelson, 2008: 129). In cultural terms, the presence of literatures and narratives relating to theology abounds in the African-Nova Scotian tradition. This is certified in Clarke's anthology, *Fire on the Water* (1991), whose first volume includes a selection of these texts, among which are to be found excerpts from preachers' autobiographies, hymns, psalms and spirituals. Such texts constitute one of the few cultural productions to flourish in an African Canadian context before "the liberalizations and immigrations of the 1960s" (Clarke, 2012: 46). *Chasing Freedom* offers a glimpse of how former slaves retained and translated their religious practices to the colony of Nova Scotia after migration, a process that would acquire great relevance as the church and religious associations proliferated and formed one of the main sources of social support and assistance for

black communities in Canada, as well as being one of the few repositories of cultural expression to which black people had access.

Earlier in this chapter, specific aspects of women's experience of migration and the homeland were analysed, mainly through their psychological and physical impressions on Lydia's memories and body. As the narration mainly focuses on female characters, the exploration of a gender perspective of diaspora affects also what could be termed as emotional inheritances, as well as gender roles and patterns of behaviour that are deeply marked by the slave society they come from. It is again the character of Lydia, whose life was affected by countless diaspora-related adversities, who best reflects the consequences of gender abuse and impositions. While assisting her daughter-in-law during labour, Lydia cares for her in a loving, warm manner which makes Sarah jealous and angry for a moment: "For a second, she caught a strange look in Sarah's eyes. The girls was studying her intensely with a look of loathing. She knew the reason and felt guilty for withholding such tenderness from the young one. She knew it was another custom, a slave's way of avoiding attachment" (38). In the plantation, being sexually abused and having her children taken from her, Lydia is forced to suppress her feelings and distance herself from her beloved ones as a survival strategy. For this reason she is not used to being compassionate to her granddaughter; Sarah, in turn, finds it hard to witness Lydia showing affection for another person. Thus, grandmother-granddaughter emotional relationships and interactions are regulated by the slave system in which they were trapped. A similar situation takes place later on in the novel, this time involving Beulah, Lydia's daughter-in-law, who has recently suffered the loss of her husband. The narration in this case adopts the point of view of Fortune, Sarah's father, who observes the woman's restraining from revealing her sorrow: "Fortune understood her silent grief, knew it was difficult for her to connect rightly to her feelings. She had trained herself to hold emotions back because crying was a sign of weakness. A weak slave made good sport for an overseer" (82). These are instances in which racial and gender subjugation goes beyond the physical and social realm and affects the emotional articulations and affective interactions of the female subjects. While all slaves were treated like property, in the case of women, not only are the ownership of their bodies denied to them, but in some instances they were also alienated from their emotional territories.

While these patterns of gender domination and oppression abound, there are also a few representations of gender roles which indirectly empower the female subject. This is particularly the case when Sarah reflects on the question of marriage: "Girls as young as twelve and thirteen married in order to have earnings, inheritance and property. By the age of eighteen or twenty, an unmarried woman was called a spinster. But that was white folks. Those girls had something to gain. Marriage brought few benefits to a young Negro girl" (76). This statement emphasises the need for women to marry as one of the only means to achieve a respectable social position at the time. Double discrimination on black women, in terms of gender and race, results in the absence of that urgency, which in Sarah's current context translates into an opportunity for freedom. This way, inherited gender roles are actually used in a subversive way, a practice that will be analysed in more detail in the following chapter, which will focus on social and cultural transformations in the land of settlement. For the most part, however, women in this novel have to struggle against a stark gender discrimination from a patriarchal system, greatly accentuated by the particularities of slavery and its invasion of bodily and emotional performances.

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Of the four novels analysed in this dissertation, it is again *No Great Mischief* that most thoroughly reflects a cultural milieu that is easily associated to the homeland. Arguably, the Scottish influence on the novel's characters rules several aspects of their lives and plays an essential role in their decisions and reactions as well as in their perception of the world. The cultural elements that can be found in this fictional account vary from Catholic religious rituals to the celebration of Ceilidhs and gatherings accompanied by Celtic music and a tight clannish organisation that is meticulously preserved and whose laws every member of the family abides by. Aside from material productions, then, cultural inheritances also invade the territory of psychology and individual identity. The portrayal of such an identical cultural ontology to that of the original homeland sometimes gives the illusion of a static environment that is constantly repeated through history without variations, of an untouched and undisturbed translation of culture from the original to the present chronotope. One of the goals of this study, in subsequent chapters, is to determine whether this transmission is really effected without modifications and to identify whether there are any changes or elements of difference that may have been incorporated through the crossing of borders and the passing of

time. A first step, however, is to establish the cultural elements belonging to Scotland that will be the focus of further scrutiny. Another point that needs to be clarified is that both novels from the Scottish-Nova Scotian tradition include references to a Highland ethnicity and most of the cultural aspects that belong to Scotland do indeed come from a Highland and a Celtic background, a tendency in the Scottish diaspora as a whole as well as in popular national representations of Scotland that has been addressed in the previous chapter.[20]

Alexander MacDonald's world contains several features from Catholic Highland Scotland. Music is one of these pervasive and easily recognisable elements: his Grandfather plays the fiddle on various occasions and songs, often in Gaelic, are sung by the family and the whole community. Even songs that may have not originated in Scotland but were composed in Canada after migration are created following a Scottish fashion. These songs are present throughout the whole novel, from the beginning when the two brothers' spontaneous singing acts as a preamble to Alexander's story (13-14); to references to gatherings of people in a neighbour's house (60); or as part of the background of the family's daily life, moulding them to their own moods: "And then we all began to sing […] shouting out the name of the places as far as we could see them strung out along the coast; trying to change what was perhaps intended as a lament into a song of happiness and joy at our own homecoming" (108). This pool of songs and music is for the family a common language, a shared knowledge that brings people together and often a symbol for unity and belonging. Critics like Jonathan Dembling maintain that Cape Breton can be credited with "preserving cultural forms – in particular music and dance – that in Scotland have either disappeared or greatly changed," to the extent that "some Scottish musicians and dancers have embarked on a project to 'repatriate' these traditions, arguing that they are more authentic than anything surviving in Scotland itself" (Dembling, 2005: 180). This phenomenon could be defined as a process of cultural fossilisation. According to this perspective, Cape Breton, as territory of the Scottish diaspora, is constructed a sealed space detached from the erosive and transformational effects of time, or from the syncretism that may result from the contact with other musical manifestations, and becomes an isolated vessel of

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[20] It is challenging to find examples of Scottish diasporic writing which do not feature an overt Highland ethnicity and engage with Celtic music, the culture of bagpipes and tartan or Highland games, which are some of the most commonly mentioned cultural referents. One of the few examples is the work *The View from Castle Rock* (2006), by Canadian writer Alice Munro, where she explores her genealogic lines which go back to Lowland Scotland.

cultural authenticity which is devolved to Scotland in an atypical reverse sequence of legacy and inheritance transmission.

Another way in which cultural continuity works is through the figure of the family, clan Calum Ruadh, which functions as a coherent structure at the background of the novel. The names inside the Clan are repeated cyclically so that Alexander and Calum, even Catherine MacDonald bear the same names "of the previous generation and it is expected of their descendants that they will replace those whose untimely death has left a vacancy down the pit, or on the fishing boats" (Omhovére, 2006: 55). Not only are the names repeated but physical traits as well: invariably, the hair colour of all the descendants of Calum Ruadh is red or black and there is a tendency to have twin brothers in the family. These characteristics of the Clan as a group seem to absorb each of its members' individual identity who are primarily defined by such traits and their belonging to the Clan, rather than by their own distinctiveness. The homeland thus affects identity in the form of names and cultural traditions; biology, as inherited genealogical traits that mark the body; and finally in psychological terms. As Jane Urquhart puts it "[b]y associating memory with blood and body, MacLeod suggests that emotion is biological and genetic and can never, therefore, be connected to that which is ephemeral or casual" (2001: 41). Moral values attached to the clan system dominate the plot of the story. Phrases like "always look after your own blood" or "blood is thicker than water," are repeated throughout the novel acting as leitmotifs that give coherence to the narration; they are usually uttered by Alexander's Grandmother, as valuable pieces of family wisdom which almost have a commanding quality. These imperative, recursive litanies move family members to look after and help each other, and their ingrained message is the main reason behind Alexander's decision to work in the mines with his brothers after their cousin's death in? an accident.

While these examples of cultural legacies seem to suggest an intact preservation and exact replica of the homeland's cultural structures in the diaspora, there is a passage in the novel in which it is the homeland that is portrayed as static, a Scotland frozen in time: the moment when Alexander's sister, Catherine, effects a return to Scotland, not an imaginary but a physical return. Walking in a beach in Moidart, the land of her ancestors, she is confronted by a woman, and the following conversation takes place:

"You are from here," said the woman.

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"No," said my sister, "I'm from Canada."

"That may be," said the woman. "But you are really from here. You have just been away for a while." (147)

The woman happens to be part of clan MacDonald, and she recognises Catherine instantly, without even talking to her, as "really" being from Scotland. Catherine accompanies the woman to her house, where she meets other members of the family and they all begin to talk as if they really were relatives who had not seen each other for just a few years:

> We talked without stopping for about five minutes, although it might have been for a longer or shorter time. I don't know. And I don't even know what we said. The words themselves being more important than what they conveyed, if you know what I mean. And then all of us began to cry. All of us sobbing, either standing or sitting on our chairs in Moidart. (150)

There is a mutual and almost silent understanding; a mystical halo surrounds the scene of the gathering. The reader is given the version of the story of Calum Ruadh's departure from the other point of view: that of the people who waved good-bye from the shore. An untouched and pristine tradition has been preserved in both sides of the Atlantic: the retelling of the same myths, the use of the Gaelic language and the same physical traits, (the woman asks if they "still have the red hair" (151) and if there is still the tendency to have twins) so that each part functions as a mirror image for the other. The dynamics of cultural transmission and conservatism imply a suspension of all change and transformation, a stop in time at the moment of migration that seems to affect both Scotland and its diasporic territories.

When dealing with Scottish cultural legacies in these novels it is essential to take into account the particular situation of Nova Scotia in relation to the use of Highlandism/Scottishness. As discussed in the first chapter, Nova Scotia maintains a strong, essential identification with Scotland in cultural terms. In *The Quest of the Folk*, McKay indicates that this tendency is framed within a broader movement of antimodernism which seized the region at the beginning of the twentieth century, a "scepticism about 'progress' and fear that unprecedented social and economic changes were destroying the possibility of 'authentic' experience" (1994: 31). From this antimodernist mentality ensues the need to create "authentic" cultural referents, to construct a simple, idealised lifestyle which promotes values from the past, and which

becomes the trademark of the province. The notion of a stable, changeless Scotland fixed in the past was rather in tune with this ideal, pre-modern pastoral hue with which the image of Nova Scotia was tinted. Far from following a constant and coherent tradition of cultural expression from the beginning of its colonial history, the exaltation of Scottish heritages only commenced during the 1930s and 1940s, mainly as the result of premier Angus MacDonald's efforts to conflate both a Celtic or Highland identity and the profits of tourism (McKay, 1992). Scottish traditions, music, the celebration of Highland games, the creation of a Nova Scotian official tartan or the naming of the Cape Breton Highlands National Park were carefully crafted, paraded and designed for commercial goals in a context "in which tourist impressions were no longer left to chance, but were constructed through public and private institutions" (McKay, 1994: 34). As "[t]he tourism market is predisposed to essentialism, particularly that tied to the reproduction of ethnic imagery" (34), the transmission of Scottish cultural elements is thus regularised to adapt to one of the region's most powerful industries. Scottishness in Nova Scotia becomes naturalised (Mckay, 1992: 9), a common-sense combination that is supported by the ruling image of a rural society that unfolds peacefully in the margins of modernity's cultural corruption and individual alienation. In contrast to the marketing exploitation of Scottish legacies, their portrayal in MacLeod's and McNeil's novels follow different principles. They both picture these cultural inheritances associated, not to the idealised and simple life that is sought after in tourism projects, but to working class communities or families who face the realities of the region's poverty, unemployment and outmigration. Here, Scottishness is not represented as a fashionable ethnicity to be consumed or momentarily donned; it is part of the characters' genealogy, a part that is, paradoxically, gradually disappearing as generations go by. The protagonist in these stories endure and react to both the appropriation of specific cultural forms and the extinction of others.

The prevalence of Scottish symbols and token in Nova Scotia's diverse sociocultural contexts is represented in *The Interpreter of Silences* through brief allusions to these contents:

> The grandest of the houses were long ago turned into craft shops. As a child she had spent many hours drifting though the living and dining rooms of these wide-hipped houses of former gentry, fingering seals sculpted out of stone sporting little caps of Nova Scotia tartan,

polished sand dollars, owls carved from driftwood and oven mitts in the shape of lobsters. (41)

Or later, when she is driving through her town at night she mentions that "[t]here is a sort of theatre, of dinner-theatre ilk. *Discover our Heritage*" (182, emphasis in the original). These references conjure up the region's investment in heritage and tourism-oriented memorabilia which is the focus of McKay's study in *The Quest of the Folk*, and among which are to be found, of course, pieces adorned with the tartan of Nova Scotia. While this passage is neutral in tone, there is a later hint at the presence of tartan which opens the way for discussions of cultural appropriation. On visiting an old friend for the first time since she left, Eve describes her home as follows: "On the floor were the same rugs Celyn had woven fifteen years before, with tartan patterns. Neither Celyn nor Bob had a Scottish background" (29, 30). The narrator's comment on her friends not having Scottish ancestry and yet participating of Scottish cultural symbols reflects to what point traces of Scottish traditions have been spread and adopted by Nova Scotia's inhabitants. A celebration of Highlandism does not necessarily imply an actual genealogical belonging to this ethnicity.

These portrayals of Scottishness are superficial in comparison with MacLeod's insistently Highland background, and they mostly reflect the direction that Nova Scotia has taken in the representation of its self-image rather than dealing with how cultural remnants affect her own self. While the economic and social background of the two novels seems to be quite similar, as they both portray working-class families in a semi-rural environment, Scottish ancestry does not prevail as extensively in Eve's life as it does in Alexander's. The main connection she establishes between her individual identity and her Scottish/Celtic past is through the figure of her father, Alistair. Her inheritance is more one of character, disposition and (as in clan Calum Ruadh, with their mix of red-haired and black-haired relatives) physical appearance, a biological, rather than a cultural legacy:

> His father, her grandfather, had been called Black Donald on account of his dark eyes and hair the colour of squid ink; he was one of the True Celts, her father had told her. These were dark-haired people, small in stature, quick and flexible. They had an untidy, macabre sense of humour and didn't like to be crossed. According to her father, who had heard it from his own father, their people were good on the sea and more comfortable in the company of animals than that of people. There had been plenty of her father's sort of man

on the ragged western isles of Scotland, but the New Country was so much more brutal in its seasons. The small dark Celts were replaced by hale Viking Scots from the east coast, the crafty English, the almost supernaturally tough Irish. Her father might be a holdout, a remnant, of the earlier, delicate men. (2006: 67)

According to this description, her family line belongs to an ethnic group (the idea of "True Celts," thus spelled, contributes to emphasising the "authenticity" of this tribe) that is hard to find today in Nova Scotia due to displacement by other peoples. Her father is one of the last of his kind, a fisherman who sees for himself that his craft deteriorates as the eels he used to fish for a living are now almost extinct. In fact, the narrator uses this strategy to convey a similar message to those transmitted through MacLeod's narratives: to denounce the disappearance of Nova Scotia's rural and organic communities, to draw attention to "the embittered struggles and defeats surrounding both the mining and fishing industries in the Maritime provinces" (Hiscock, 2000: 60), whose decline is accelerated by globalising forces. In *No Great Mischief*, the character who embodies this endangered community and its cultural practices is Alexander's brother Calum; in *The Interpreter of Silences* it is Eve's father. In both, there seems to be a biologically determining factor which is traced back to Highland ancestors: individual crises are aligned with a familial and ultimately an ethnic inherent struggle to adapt to changing social patterns. Interestingly, in Scotland, a link between a particular "race" (ethnic group), the Celts, and the disappearance of socio-economic structures and cultural movements is often established. As Morrison points out, after the battle of Culloden in 1745, "the carrying of guns, the wearing of kilts (the traditional garb, although not as we know it today), and the playing of bagpipes were outlawed in an attempt to stop further military advances and to destroy the distinctive Celtic culture," a prohibition that resulted in an emphasised "Celtic otherness" (2003: 6). Metaphorically, the situation of "original" Celts in the homeland and that of present-day diasporic Celts in Nova Scotia can be aligned through repetitions in these novels that range from recurrent visible ethnicity markers in the character's visible appearance to persistent cultural practices. The "True Celts" are recreated in the diaspora as an ethnicity that finds itself on the verge of extinction. McNeil conveys this sense of a fading identity by means of different strategies: through the figure of his father, who belongs to a segment of Highlander peoples who are now scarce in Nova Scotia and through the portrayal of a waning economic activity that had previously supported an important sector of the society of the Maritimes.

A close reading of these texts allows us to discern some of the cultural aspects that each of these traditions have incorporated from their respective homelands. In the case of *George and Rue*, the most salient element is music, often emphasised by scholars as a mechanism that contributes to the unity of the African diaspora; *Chasing Freedom* contained the relevant practice of religion and the preservation of creolised Christian faiths, as well as several allusions to inherited gender roles. As occurred with the recreation and re-enactment of memories of the homeland and of past experiences, the reiteration of these cultural elements are inevitably linked to episodes of slavery and the experience of racial marginalisation in both novels. Continuing with the Scottish diaspora, *No Great Mischief* presents a vast array of cultural productions that are directly associated to Scotland, among which are music and a tight and organic family structure; in contrast, *The Interpreter of Silences* offers dimmer cultural connections to the homeland, but they can be observed in terms of the conflicts with cultural appropriation by heritage movements in the region and through references to genealogically received personality traits. Both Scottish novels point to a perceived fixity in the reception of culture and traditions from the homeland, even while this is briefly challenged through criticism towards the appropriation of these traditions for economic purposes. It must be highlighted that despite the fact that these four novels belong to different (sometimes opposed) sociocultural and even historical backgrounds, in each of them cultural elements work on a psychological level. The cultural factors and expressions analysed in this chapter do not merely affect material or physical performances: collective patterns influence the characters' behaviour, their emotional reactions and the development of their individual identities, each novel in a different way but very conspicuously so. The following section will address one last component to be taken into account in order to assess the relationship between diasporas and their homelands, that is, linguistic dimensions and aesthetic representations.

3.3. Traces of Linguistic Vehicles and Aesthetic Values

One of the most relevant parts of the diasporic reality is the negotiation of linguistic inheritances. While in some cases the language spoken in the homeland is the same as that of the hostland, on many occasions the migrant's mother tongue does not coincide with the official language spoken at the place of destination. This section addresses the different routes and mechanisms that arise when such linguistic clash occurs. This is relevant in the sense that language is "the main signifying resource on which our social

and psychic existence depends" (Bohórquez, 2009: 158), and therefore the migrant's perception of the world and the host society, as well as his/her own identity within the new environment, are interpreted and articulated through it. Living in two (or more) linguistic worlds will necessarily result in strategies to accommodate both signifying contexts, be it the abandonment of one language, the combination of both or the refusal to adopt the host language (158). Since the object of analysis are works of fiction, special emphasis will be placed on how traces of ancestral languages are represented, and on whether any aesthetic or stylistic techniques employed in the formal dimensions of the novels are indebted to a system of values that originated in the homeland.

In dealing with language in the African diaspora, certain aspects must be addressed that are particular to the social and historical context in which it originated and developed. One of the most important is that, in the cultural translocation and erasure that took place with the abduction of African peoples to serve as slaves in the American continent, some 100 African languages disappeared. Slaves were forced to adopt the English language while being denied the right to literacy (Mitchell, 2008: 92, 95). However, this process of linguistic attainment, like the acquisition of Christian religious beliefs, was not unilateral, that is, the new language is not received in a pure and unaltered form; rather, different linguistic factors, such as phonetics, rhythm, syntax and vocabulary are influenced and remodelled by those of the African languages and their multiple contacts in the plantation environment. In the Anglophone facet of the African diaspora, this combination of English and African linguistic styles results in a particular black English or African American English vernacular. From mainstream literary and linguistic spheres, "the oral communicative patterns of black Americans have been considered 'substandard', 'corrupt', 'ungrammatical', and 'sloppy'," and "[b]lack people have been accused of 'destroying the English language' and exhibiting pronunciation 'errors' related to ignorance and to laziness" (Toliver-Weddington, 1973: 107). In opposition to these views, black cultural movements have included the utilisation of black sociolects as one valuable mechanism in the construction of black identity and the expression of black art. This vernacular, therefore, has been employed in both assertive and subversive ways by black authors, as a means to confirm the existence of a black ontology and as a strategy to counteract demeaning mainstream discourses that attempt to marginalise it. For instance, in an interview with Ann Compton, Clarke, maintains that "while our language derives from this enclosed

language, it is, at the same time, a *de facto* reaction against it. I see myself as being in a combative dialogue with English poetry, with American poetry, especially with African-American poetry, and with Canadian poetry" (Compton, 1998: 161). English, although imposed in the first African American peoples and their descendants, has been adapted to their needs and socio-cultural contexts, much in the same way as religion did; and a black vernacular is currently appropriated as a means to redress the disavowal of black cultural forms. For some critics, like Adisa Alkebulan, black rhetoric and aesthetic values of African peoples in the New World are basically the same as those that remain in Africa and from which they originate; according to her, "what we find among Africans in the West is simply African continuity with other features that can be attributed to European sources. What had been lost or weakened as a result of Africans' enslavement has only been re-formed along the same cultural-aesthetic principles" (2003: 34). While proposing that there is an inherent continuity in every art form produced by black people in the African diaspora lapses into an essentialist and deterministic definition of culture (and ignores further regional, historical and cultural influences from the context in which it develops), there certainly are traits that can be identified as belonging to African sources, one of the most salient being the strong connection to oral tradition. Black vernacular is a particular form of expression that comes from an essentially oral background, an imprint that can be discerned in the work of various black poets and writers.

In the current analysis of novels from the African tradition, special attention must be devoted to the presence of orality and the representation of black vernacular, as expressive vehicles that are clearly associated to an African background. Among the techniques that constitute a particularly African American rhetoric, one of the most frequently cited is that of call and response or antiphony (Gilroy, 1993: 78; Alkebulan, 2003: 37; Knowles-Borishade, 1991: 498). This stylistic figure sets the African-American rhetoric apart from forms of European orality, which do not often display it, and it emphasises the role of the audience and the community within the speech act (Alkebulan, 2003: 37). Apart from this central characteristic, Thurmon Garner and Carolyn Calloway-Thomas mention other relevant formulae such as verbal play, which they define as "a nonserious, sometimes nonthreatening, verbal exchange […] a symbolic exchange of selves, an entertainment of each by the other" (2003: 51); and signifying, that is, making figurative use of language and reading between lines (2003:

53). The purpose of this section is to locate linguistic and formal aspects that are related to an African origin; identifying the presence of orality, therefore, will be a major part of this analysis, and it will be done both in terms of the content of the novel (that is, whether these speech acts are reflected as part of the plot of the stories) and in terms of style and rhetoric employed in the composition of the narrations themselves.

George and Rue is a complex novel in terms of language and formal style. Throughout its pages, English is adapted, appropriated and transformed into a unique African-Canadian apparatus of cultural expression. First of all, the characters very faithfully reflect a black vernacular (a particularly local lingo can also be distinguished in non-black characters), to which class variations are added; their speech attempts to imitate the reality and the singularity of every individual. This way, most of the characters in the novel, excluding some white middle class people, use an English that, in Clarke's words, "could not be standard – or monarchical, but closer to the earth, […] to the world" (Kyser, 2007: 865). Some of the most noticeable traits of black language include the elision of the final "g" in –ing verbal forms, the substitution of the pronoun "you" for "ya," or the use of double negation; thus Asa's speech is reflected in phrases like "Ain't tellin ya again" or "Ya gonna defy me?" (27); and, similarly, the brothers would use expressions that resonate with the same cadences: "Rudy, ya ain't got no money for one ring, let alone two. Ya don't even got a bank account" (45). There are two interesting aspects in Clarke's representation of black English. One is the unapologetic way in which this representation is manifested in the written form, that is, the lack of palliative or mediating mechanisms, such as using italics to indicate the presence of a non-standard expression or inserting an apostrophe where signs from the standard English are missing. The other is the extension of this individualised use of language to the figure of the narrator. *George and Rue* is told through a third person omniscient narrator, who occasionally adopts the perspective of different characters. It could be said that the narrative voice, when uninterrupted by those of the novel's characters, displays a language that departs from the standard and verges in the poetic. This does not faithfully follow the norms of mainstream English literary language and could be therefore described as a black poetic style, in that its a *priori* neutrality includes an array of features from orality and black language. A revealing example of this refined language is one of the passages in the opening of the novel, when the narrator describes winter in Three Mile Plains: "Winter was the stench of oil lugged

home. Or it was lugging snow into the kitchen to make tea. Or it was trying to battle oppressive rain, that forceful misery soaking up the newspapered floor. Or it was a crop of rats" (5). Here, elements like personification, the synesthetic association between winter and an unpleasant smell, or the epithets employed to describe rain suggest a strong lyrical presence in the narrative prose. Furthermore, the anaphoric use of "or it was" can be connected to practices from the oral tradition. This poetic drive can be observed throughout most of the novel, dominating the creative process: "Their childhood was cups of grease on a battered table; rat poison set out carefully, carefully, like meals fit for kings; hailstorms wiping out any pretty good crop; lovely, heavy crops reduced to blotches by too much water; a horde of hail and a flood of rain carrying off everything" (26). Again, this paragraph makes use of poetic tropes like alliteration or metonym to portray the context of poverty in which the brothers grow up, combined with less literary expressions such as "pretty good" or "blotches." The reiteration of the word "carefully" suggest the imitation of oral communication. All these elements and a strategic use of stress confer these lines with a very noticeable rhythm a cadence that can be associated with orature, music and the spoken word.

The profound indebtedness to orality that this novel shows can be observed through occasional addresses to an audience/readership. Such is the case of the following passage: "Blossoms were just jettisoning off the apple trees in pastures up, down, the Annapolis Valley – fifty miles of apple blossoms, *sir*, pink-white-ivory-cream-rose blossoms, delicate to look at, fragile to touch [...]" (7, emphasis added). Here, the vocative "sir" suggests the conjured up presence of an interlocutor who is actually absent from the action of the narration. Also, in this excerpt the narrator formulates a question to an assumed audience: "You awoke with snow frosting your face because the window's like a gap between mountains. And no righteous eating, eh? If it wasn't possible to buy food, folks'd slaughter their horses, if they'd had any" (17). This use of interactions with the listener/reader can be traced back to the practice of call and response that is central to the oral tradition that underlies in African rhetoric.

The narrator's voice is therefore very lyrical in quality, simultaneously incorporating poetic techniques and lexicon that belongs to a more standard or informal register. Apart from this conspicuous and particular use of and shifts between linguistic contexts, the merging with the voices of the characters contributes to the polyphony and complex embroidery of styles that permeates the novel. Frequently, the narrator, when

focusing on a specific character, includes streams of consciousness or expressions which that character would say within the course of the narration. These incursions into their minds and the representation of their thoughts and emotions are embedded into the narrator's discourse, with no explicit punctuation mark to distinguish them: "But he [George] was hindered in his interest because he had no place to bring Blondola. The big drafty, stinky barn he slept in was no site for wooin a swell young gal makin dove's eyes at him" (73-73); "Rue sure didn't feel like slavin for anyone: doin Asa-type jobs for stupid, break-ass nothing" (90). Because the fluctuation between voices is not visually announced and there is often a flowing continuity between what constitutes the narrator's description and the characters' participation, there are times when it becomes hard to distinguish where a particular statement comes from. Here, for instance, amidst the description of Cynthia's funeral a part of speech is included that could be George's or Rue's words: "Rue and George trembled in the back room of the shack when they heard the awful voices in the kitchen, ranged around the dressed-up corpse of their mother. A dozen mourners were singing lustily after eating up a storm. *Folks was cryin*. Still they had to have a drink or two" (51, emphasis added); or in this passage, where no specific character is addressed, but rather, the depiction of poverty in Three Mile Plains suggests a collective voice: "People would destroy the horses as they was eatin up the hay folks had to eat. Times they had to boil skinny, filthy rats for meat and take cholera water to drink. They was always between flu and whooping cough" (17). These unexpected shifts to black forms of speech could be read as part of the own black voice of the narrator, in those cases where they cannot be clearly attached to one specific character.

Clarke's fiction thus can be said to illustrate linguistic and stylistic aspects from an African diaspora tradition in at least three ways: firstly, both the explicit and implicit representations of the characters' speech acts utilise a realistically black language, adapted to the social background of each of them; secondly, there are passages in which the presence of an audience is assumed and the narrator directly addresses this audience, thus replicating typically performative elements of African orality; finally, the poetic voice of the narrator includes features from an oral tradition, such as a marked rhythm or the repetition of certain words in order to give emphasis to the message. In both content and form this novel is highly influenced by African aesthetic values and speech structures.

In contrast to Clarke's work, Wesley's novel employs a language that is much closer to Standard English. There is no such strong linguistic distinction between characters, neither is there a melting of narrator's and characters' voices, which tend in general to monophony rather than polyphony. Still, some elements that are clearly borrowed from an oral tradition can be identified in this novel, less in terms of formal composition than in terms of contents and plot. Rarely, a character's dialogue resonates with identifiable black language, as in the line "Fanny let out a hoot. 'You speakin' the truth on that', she snorted" (50). Here, in the written representation of black vernacular features such as the ellipsis of the final "g" are marked with an apostrophe, contrary to the unmarked reproduction of speech that could be found in Clarke's work.

Religion is one element that stands out in her story and whose African aspects, despite being at large a European cultural entity, are related precisely to oral tradition. As Melbourne Cummings and Judi Moore Latta argue, "Christianity became a reality to slaves, its first New World converts, as they began to voice songs of patience, forbearance, love, faith and hope" (2003: 59). Music and performance were central in the transformation of Christian religion into a syncretic African system. These texts were even used as subversive forms of communication, since "[s]ome of the most provocative, reverent, and imaginative songs were spirituals that passed messages about upcoming rebellions or events that were being planned" (Cummings and Moore Latta, 2003: 59). There is a combination, therefore, of oral patterns of communication and expression and religious practices, and as has been previously referenced, the novel alludes to sermons and spirituals, Methodist hymns and gatherings, where "[o]ld plantations songs, 'Bringin' in the Sheaves' and 'Hear de Angels Callin,' brought the crowd alive" (56, it has to be noted that the titles of the songs are some of the few instances in which black language phonetics are transcribed in the novel). A passage like the following provides an insight into the relevance of speech and voice connected to praying: "Grandmother walked along, changing the words of her favourite hymn to a newer version, her version: *Come back Moses, way down in this free land, Tell old pharaoh it's time, oh Lord, time to let my people go*" (64); it also reflects the appropriation and transformation of lyrics, as Cummings and Moore Latta suggested, to adapt to her particular situation and experiences.

Slightly connected to the context of religion and its rituals, occasionally, characters in the novel utter expressions that are also linked to African rhetoric.

Introducing the element of antiphony, or call and response, Knowles-Borishade points out that the main speaker is always followed by a chorus: "In the classical African ritual format, it is never a solitary voice that emits the Word. Rather, utterance is accompanied by the echoes of the Chorus, with cries of 'teach', 'that's right', 'preach', 'Amen', and 'Go ahead on!', a technique used to reinforce collective consensus" (1991: 494). An example of echoing and the conveyance of unanimity through these responses can be observed in a conversation between Fortune and Lydia: "'Sometimes a man gets favoured with a little luck'. 'Yes he does. To that, I say Amen, Fortune'" (80); or through this passage when Lydia preaches: "'The Lord will remember all that carrying on. He sure will. He cannot step his sorry self into heaven. There's none of that allowed up there'. Grandmother let out a turkey chuckle. 'Yes, Lord, none of that goin' to be allowed up there'" (32). These linguistic mannerisms, regularly captured in the novel, are common among the characters, and they are employed both as a way of invoking God and as a means to reaffirm their message.

One more way in which the relevance of oral tradition for this black community in Nova Scotia is stated in the novel is through allusions to orality as a means of communication and transmission of knowledge. The illiteracy of the Redmond family is often pointed out; the only member who can actually read is Sarah, because her late mother, Dahlia, taught her about words and numbers. She, in turn, had secretly learned this from an escaped slave and, when the plantation foreman found out, he cut her thumb off as punishment for trespassing on a territory forbidden to slaves. Dahlia was also an outstanding member of the plantation community due to her skills as story teller: "By night, while Sarah kept watch for Cecil, slaves gathered round to hear Dahlia spin magical tales of Africa, of casting out spells, of romance and of people gone missing in the middle of the night" (31). Thus, gatherings like this, arranged around a speaker, would be an occasion for slaves to share news, to learn about events or to recollect memories from the homeland.

There are other passages in which the centrality of oral transmission as vehicle for communication is reflected. Here, Sarah refers to "The chatter, the prayers and the sermons," all elements from the oral tradition, which "had all been about 'getting' some of that "sweet freedom land" and riches'" (27). It was through these means that slaves got notice about the proclamations passed during the American Revolutionary War offering emancipation to those who fought in favour of the British. On a different scene,

when Fortune is finally reunited with Lydia and Sarah in Birchtown after fighting in the War within the Company of the Black Pioneers, Lydia urges him to tell the story of his journey:

> "That's a long story," he growled as he took small sips of cold tea.
>
> "We got nothing but time. Come on Fortune, finish the yarn." She loved a good story and besides, it would keep him from talking about the war. Her voice was sharp. "I know you been through a lot son, but come on now, tell us about your journey." (78)

When Fortune is telling his story they realise it has been through word-of-mouth that he was able to find Lydia's and Sarah's whereabouts, by talking to a man in Saint John, New Brunswick, who had spent some time in Birchtown. By exchanging information about their families this man let him know about an old woman and a young girl whom he had met in the settlement. Thus, the family is reunited through the work of oral accounts and the passing of spoken messages.

In a critical assessment of language and colonisation in Africadian literature, Clarke writes that "The eradication of traditional African tongues issued in the making of a new English, the residue of havoc. This 'havoc' or sense of rupture in the traditional grammar, syntax, and literary meaning of English explains the inherent tension between the written and the spoken that disturbs African diasporic literatures" (2002: 120). Both novels express in different ways the tensions and necessary negotiations that come from the combination of the literary and the oral traditions. Although they are both written in English, they find strategies to subvert the strong tendency to literacy that can be observed in Eurocentric narratives: Clarke's polyphonic fiction brilliantly renders black language into the written form, as well as introducing aesthetic elements that can be related to African rhetoric, such as the use of repetition, rhythms and direct addresses to the audience; Wesley's novel, on the other hand is more formally standard while focusing on the oral dimensions of religion and on oral transmission of information as a fundamental part in the lives of the black Loyalist community of nineteenth-century Birchtown.

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In the Scots-Nova Scotian tradition it could be presupposed that there would be no dramatic change of language context between the homeland and the hostland, both

being Anglophone countries. These novels, however, are anchored in communities that come from a Highland tradition, where Gaelic was spoken. Nova Scotia, and more specifically Cape Breton, is one of the few geographical areas outside Europe where this language was preserved and spoken for generations. During the nineteenth century there was an extended presence of Gaelic speakers in the Maritime provinces, as Dembling indicates, that reached more than 100,000 speakers (2010: 247). Despite attempts at revivals of Celtic culture, including the Gaelic language, its speakers have declined both in Scotland and in Nova Scotia, where the "Gaelic-speaking area has been largely reduced to the elderly population in a few rural districts in Cape Breton," not exceeding the thousand speakers (247). In formal terms, Gaelic frequently appears in association to music and ballads in cultural productions, and it is for this reason that there is a strong oral tradition underlying the use of the language. As David Williams argues "Cape Breton culture has itself remained residually oral, as its relative lack of printed fiction and its plethora of Gaelic music would suggest" (2001: 62). In the light of these considerations this section will analyse the situations in which Gaelic, its presence and absence, are employed in these novels, taking into account the context of language loss in which these narrations develop. When dealing with the tensions that arise among migrant communities in foreign language contexts Paula Bohórquez proposes two forms of coming to terms with the loss of the mother tongue, or with its hierarchical subjugation to the official language in the hostland, a mourning and a melancholy approach, two concepts which she borrows from Psychoanalysis. Thus, mourning would be a "'healthy response to loss in which the subject eventually resigns herself to the absence of that object and accepts its substitution through investment in a new object;" on the other hand, melancholia would be associated to "a 'pathological' reaction characterised by an inability to let go of the lost object, which is preserved in the form of an ego-identification" (2009: 159). Drawing on this distinction, the allusions that can be observed in MacLeod's and McNeil's novels to Gaelic and the conflicts that arise from its loss will be addressed according to these paradigms, to diagnose the directions that the Scottish diaspora is taking in respect to inherited linguistic vehicles and stylistic forms.

As has been pointed out in the previous section, and because the use of Gaelic and music are intimately related, there is a widespread presence in *No Great Mischief* of Gaelic songs, which are sung at family gatherings or social events such as celebrations

or funerals. It is important to mark that these songs' contents and titles often have an underlying sad tone of loss and desire to go back to happier times. One example is to be found at the very beginning of the novel when Calum starts singing "'*Cumha Ceap Breatuinn,*' 'Lament for Cape Breton'" (2001: 13), and Alexander, the protagonist, joins him almost unconsciously; or at the funeral of one of his cousins, when they play "'Niel Gow's Lament' and '*Mo Dhachaidh*' ('My Home')" (119). Apart from the songs, the characters utter phrases in Gaelic from the oral tradition which are used as leitmotiv. The reiteration of these refrains creates a pattern thanks to which by the end of the novel the reader is familiar with expressions such as "g*ille beag ruadh"* ("the little red boy" or "the little red-haired boy"); *"Beannachd leibh,"* ("good-bye," or more literally "blessings go with you"). These phrases also evoke familial ties, they entail the mutual recognition of a common paradigm through which to understand the world and which reinforces the clannish structure. In relation to communal practices of oral tradition, MacLeod introduces the figure of the *seanaichie*, that is, men who have stored knowledge of the traditions and culture of Scotland: "And if the older singers or storytellers of the *clann Chalum Ruaidh*, the *seanaichies*, as they were called, happened to be present they would 'remember' events from a Scotland they had never seen" (60). They play a central role in these tight communities as repositories of ancient stories which people would revisit and keep alive in familial gatherings.

In her study of the psychological effects of language loss, Bohórquez alludes to the existence of two selves, the "first-language self" and the "second-language self," which coexist within one subject that has been forced to adopt a language other than his/her mother tongue (2009: 161). As one possible negotiation between these conflicting selves she proposes the adoption of a "schizoid position" which, "with its rigid separation between first- and second-language selves conceived as parallel identities, protects the subject from the confusion and anxiety that often accompanies the exchanges and transfers between coexisting languages" (2009: 162). In *No Great Mischief*, the use of Gaelic appears to be connected with an inner or most transcendental part of the individual. In a conversation Alexander has with his twin sister, Catherine, she mentions "the language of the heart and the language of the head" (178); the former is connected to Gaelic/the mother tongue self and the latter to English/the second language self, and as Bohórquez proposes, they are imagined as pertaining to two separate spheres. The conversation opens with Catherine's evocation of the Atlantic

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crossing of their family and the possible thoughts of her ancestor Catherine MacPherson before dying: "'I often wonder if her Gaelic thoughts were somehow different because of her language,'" she says, "'but I guess you think and dream in whatever language you are given'" (177). Alexander then mentions that, in the mining camps where he used to work with immigrants from other nationalities, it was also in these times of absence of consciousness that their mother tongue would be heard: "late at night you could hear the men dreaming in all their different languages. Sometimes they would shout out phrases in Portuguese or Italian or Polish or Hungarian or whatever might be their language of origin" (177). This clearly suggests a split between linguistic selves, the first-language self is associated to a subconscious level whereas the second-language one would operate at a more functional, conscious level. This idea is reinforced and translated to the context of Gaelic and English when the brothers remember that their grandparents "used to dream, sometimes in English and sometimes in Gaelic, but towards the end their dreams were almost totally in Gaelic.[...] It was as if they went back to the days they were younger. As if it had always been the language of their hearts" (177, 178). Gaelic is the language of the dreams and the thoughts, the one that is associated to the first-language self. It forms part of an essence that comes to the surface in the last years of their grandparents' lives, however, it is a part of the self that is subjugated to that of the second-language self, in that its presence only emerges when the English voice is silent.

This subjugation is part of the experience that MacLeod's story mourns, as well as the overall disappearance of the language. This impending and inevitable loss is reflected in Alexander's guilt, which is translated into a tension between "an inevitable ending and a simultaneous refusal to let go" (Nicholson qtd. in Selby, 2010: 9). By the end of that conversation Catherine asks Alexander whether he ever reflects on such matters: "'No,'" he answers, "'in my world nothing like that matters. It is almost as if we are beyond language'" (178). Alexander, working as an orthodontist in Ontario, has abandoned his Cape Breton home and left the organic community way of life behind. As Dembling points out, "the paradigm that reduces Gaelic to an outdated relic standing in the way of opportunities to get ahead in the world has been difficult to dismantle" (2010: 247). The abandonment of Gaelic and rural life in Cape Breton in general, positions Alexander in a space of no language, a silent space of guilt. Both Catherine and Alexander, as part of a generation in which a set of very fixed traditions is fading,

show their remorse in different points in the novel; for instance after they finish singing a mournful song in Gaelic, the narrator confesses: "we stood and looked at each other, almost embarrassed in our expensive clothes amidst the opulence of my sister's majestic house" (210). As Dembling suggests, a successful career in a globalised world threatens this Scottish orality-based culture, which the protagonist palliates through a mournful revisiting and re-enactment of this endangered environment in the written form.

In *Celticity in 20th-century Literature*, Leon B. Litvack analyses the value of the presence of Gaelic elements in some of Alistair MacLeod's short stories. According to him, "Gaelic provides a continuity between the living and the dead. [...] The language still survives, marking out a path of cultural continuity through the agency of a select few" (1993: 10). Gaelic language is similarly used in *No Great Mischief* as a connection to the distant past, to a part of the Scottish ancestry that seems to be inherent to the novel's protagonists. It is an essential part of the fabric that constructs familial relationships and provides a coherent idiosyncrasy to their rural experiences. It is also, however, a representative element for the ephemeral life of Scottish traditions at the end of the twentieth century. In Bohórquez terms, the stubborn and melancholic attempt to preserve the remnants of a disappearing oral world could then be read as a type of pathology, in which the protagonist's guilt impedes him to let go of the past. On the other hand, it could be argued that Alexander, as narrator of his life and that of his immediate and distant ancestors, becomes a *seanaichie* himself, as he transmits the stories and relevant episodes of a community that is both scarred by loss and threatened by it. The role of Alexander as story teller may then be defined as an act of mourning and acceptance of an inevitable loss, a process by which cultural continuity is established and the narrator is reconciled with his past and present choices.

In contrast to MacLeod's fiction, there is a limited presence of Gaelic in *The Interpreter of Silences*. Rather than focusing on the oral transmission of stories from the past, this novel is mostly involved with the written and visual communication of information in mass media within a modern world. If *No Great Mischief* pointed at an endangered culture at the end of the twentieth century, McNeil's work may well be the embodiment of that prediction, as Eve's generation no longer speaks Gaelic and is no longer concerned with the preservation of ancestral traditions. Like the fate of other Highland cultural elements, Gaelic in Nova Scotia is today relegated to welcoming signposts reading "*Ciad Mille Failte*" (McNeil, 2006: 182), to lure tourists into

manufactured attractions resonating with heritage connotations. In fact, the paradoxical tensions that arise from this very form of appropriation of the Gaelic language are well summarised in McKay's words:

> As a merry tartanism covered Nova Scotia, the Gaelic language once spoken by thousands in Nova Scotia was fast disappearing. By a savage irony, while Nova Scotia *appeared* to become more and more Scottish every year, the Gaelic language was fast *disappearing*. The "naturalization" of Gaelic in the welcome the province gave to tourists (*Ciad Mille Failte* – One Hundred Thousand Welcomes) coincided with official neglect of the needs of Gaelic-speakers interested in retaining the language. Tartanism exploited Gaelic as one of its raw materials. It did not sustain it. (1992: 34)

The absence, rather than the presence of Gaelic in the reality represented by this novel, confirms McKay's criticism of the project of taranism and its failure to preserve a community of speakers of this minority language. This absence, however, is not absolute, as Gaelic is alluded to in the context of Eve's family relationships.

Similarly to the dim connection that Eve establishes with a Scottish past, her own personal contact with Gaelic comes from the figure of her father, a descendant of the "True Celts" (45). Upon her return home after so many years, Eve wonders whether she will come to mirror the image of her father, as she had done before leaving, when they lived together: "Will she use his words, remnants of Gaelic and old farm-talk, local words no-one apart from islanders understand, except of course the people they had come from, other islanders across the ocean: *furach,* the coldest part of the winter; *groomach,* overcast; *slancha va!* A glass raised in good health" (45). In Eve's mind, this language is representative of a lost culture and a lost experience, the words are described as some of the last remnants of a world of signifiers only a few can now identify. Later on, there is a point when the narration briefly shifts to the perspective of Eve's father. In this short passage, Alistair recalls moments of his childhood through seemingly disconnected associations:

> The Atlantic: bulleting rain, harassed waves like bucking horses, garlanded by caramel foam. He slept in a bed warmed with a brick steeped in the fire, wrapped in his mother's Gaelic reprimands: *amathan* (crazy person), *d'unth a veeach* (shut your mouth), *gomach* (silly, unschooled person). In the winter he lay in bed and blew breath-clouds into the air until he fell sleep. (110-111)

These distant memories he connects with the figure of his mother and her use of the Gaelic language, now both gone. By this point in his life, Alistair is starting to suffer from dementia, the reason for Eve's return. However, instead of focusing on the processes of forgetting, the narration captures moments of recuperation, as his mind selectively relives these past experiences with total clarity: "Now those years were coming back on him, unpacking themselves like long-neglected heirlooms. Lately a switch had been thrown somewhere inside him and suddenly his childhood was fresh an accessible, as if he were about to live it again" (111). This reversal to the cultural and linguistic identity of an inner self can be paralleled to the experience narrated by Alexander about his grandparents and their permanent adoption of the Gaelic-language self by the end of their lives. In both novels, with the effects of senile dementia affecting the characters of Alexander's Grandmother and Eve's father, there appears to be a retraction to a more essential being, one that was subdued during their lives but which surfaces after the loss of a more immediate and functional level of memory and perception. Alexander's Grandmother, in her last days, could barely recognise her grandson, but had no trouble in recalling the lyrics of Gaelic ballads (251-252). Alistair, who currently struggles to keep up with the tasks of everyday life, is able to lucidly revisit his childhood. These passages suggest that memories connected to the past are stored in a deeper layer of the self, which resists both cellular/physical erosion and the passing of time. Inevitably, for these characters, these enduring fragments are associated with Scotland and the use of the Gaelic language.

In Eve's eyes, however, these aspects are relics of a bygone time, and through them she articulates her perception of the individual identity of her father and the collective identity of Cape Breton society. In one of the first conversations she has with Noel, he asks her about the history of Nova Scotia, about "'the settlers, the indigenous people. Why Gaelic has survived so well, where the French population came from'" (50). Her answer reflects her view of the region as a backward place situated at the margins of modern civilization: "'You mean how they [small places] resist the normalizing forces of globalization.' She paused. 'I think we'd probably welcome global capitalism if it ever took any notice of us'" (50). She thus constructs her perception of the region and its adamant attachments to the past as out of place; the region is ex-centric, precisely like her father and the cabin he lives in: "'You must think it a strange place to live. It *is* strange,' she laughed. 'It's like going back in time. My

father doesn't notice how out of context it is. No TV, barely any electricity, never mind email. Sometimes I don't think he's even in this century'" (124).

In the representation of Gaelic in *The Interpreter of Silences*, an overwhelming absence of the language stands out, disrupted only by its exploitation as marketing device within the project of economic expansion in the region and by allusions to her father's experiences and memories of it. Regarding the latter, two conflicting views arise: from Alistair's stance, Gaelic and Scottish traditions in a broader sense form part of an inner self he is attached to and with which he cannot part; on the contrary, the presence of memories related to this self are intensified as his more superficial self dissolves under the effects of dementia. Going back to Bohórquez theories, this perennial dwelling in the past, in symbolic as well as in practical terms, could be a form of melancholia, developed by this character to come to terms with cultural loss. On the other hand, for Eve, these traces of Gaelic are but an inventory of words that pertain to the anachronistic world of working-class rural life in Nova Scotia. As part of a more recent generation, she no longer mourns the loss of language, but struggles to negotiate her position between this underdeveloped society into which she was born and the modern, present-day world that threatens it.

Although the approach to language and loss in these novels may be different regarding many aspects, they both point in similar directions. As cultural inheritance, Gaelic is profoundly embedded in Alexander's family, which is demonstrated in the vast array of phrases, words and, most importantly, songs and ballads, reproduced in this novel. The importance of oral tradition is thus highlighted through music and through the role of the *seanaichie* or the story teller, a role the protagonist adopts in order to come to terms with the guilt and grief he feels for the loss of his ancestral language and culture. On the other hand, the cultural context presented in *The Interpreter of Silences* tends to favour written over oral tradition, and the lack of the use of Gaelic is a further extension of the struggles illustrated in MacLeod's novel about the inevitable loss of a culture and language connected to Scottish ancestry. Overall the Scottish-Nova Scotian novels depict a panorama of loss and cultural extinction which contrast with the African-Nova Scotian novels. Here, while there is also an implicit loss of languages from the mother land, this does not mean that a creole version of English is not celebrated and promoted in their works, as one of the most relevant pieces of cultural inheritance they receive (and actively exercise in formal terms) from Africa.

This chapter has enumerated and critically assessed the presence of legacies of the homeland in the narratives of diaspora illustrated in the four novels chosen to speak for the African and the Scottish diasporas in Nova Scotia. Through the examination of historical and narrative representations of the homeland and movements of migration and the exploration of cultural elements, linguistic and aesthetic paradigms inherited from the homeland, the degree of attachment to an ancestral identity has been delineated for each of these novels. One of the complications that arises in the comparative analysis of these traditions is the vast socio-historical gap that separates them. Beginning from the circumstances of migration, even while the Scottish diaspora is eventually and partially constructed as a victim diaspora, it is impossible to equate the experiences of Scots affected by the Highland Clearances to those of black peoples taken as slaves and displaced to a new land under deplorable conditions. Their connections to the homeland and their recreation of memories of migration, therefore, are very different in each diasporic tradition. The novels from the African diaspora allude to traumatic crossings and extreme sufferings under a system of human exploitation that, moreover, erased the possibility of direct contact with their original territories in Africa. On the contrary, representations of the homeland in the Scottish diaspora include parts of the history of Scotland, as well as narratives about family migrations, because the ties to the mother country have not been severed, but are preserved and often accessed by Scots in the diaspora, as is shown by these novels, *No Great Mischief* in particular.

A similar phenomenon can be observed when addressing emblematic cultural elements whose origins are traced back to an ancestral past. Like the construction of the homeland in the African diaspora, which is necessarily hybrid and thus incorporates ontological components from different geographies (Africa, Europe, the Caribbean and the United States, mainly), cultural elements have followed a similar process of creolisation. Music, modelled by hybridity, is one of the most outstanding cultural strategies that unites the disparate facets of the African diaspora, and it plays an essential role in Clarke's novel as part of the definition of Rue's identity. Religion, also in a hybrid form and intimately connected to music, is also explored in detail through Wesley's novel, even though it exerts a considerable influence on black communities in Nova Scotia as a whole, outside the scope of the novel. In contrast to the multidirectional nature of cultural inheritances in the African diaspora, the Scottish

novels exhibit a unidirectional transmission of these legacies. Among them, one of the most important is again music, which MacLeod uses as a force that intensifies connections between the family members. The fixity of culture in the Scottish/Highland context also discloses an intriguing aspect of cultural preservation, that is, the genealogical endowment of physical and personality traits that affect the characters' behaviour and positioning in the world. These narratives of ancestry seem to exceed the cultural domain and intertwine with biological factors and this combination operates from collective to individual psychological formulations in the diaspora descendants. This is more noticeable in MacLeod's than in McNeil's novel, but still, the character of Alistair, Eve's father, can be said to conform to this pattern of biological determinism.

The uses of language and aesthetic values taken from the homeland adopts different directions in the African and the Scottish diasporas. In the African tradition, and following the pattern of creolisation and hybridity that permeates through all the ancestral elements mentioned so far, the combination of a forcibly acquired English language, together with remnants of African linguistic paradigms, more specifically, the various influences of the oral tradition, produce a syncretic black English with specific traits and characteristics, rhythms and aesthetic strategies. Both novels celebrate the utilisation of this creole linguistic context, especially by emphasising the oral side of communication and transmission of knowledge. In opposition to this elated approach to a received language, the Scottish novels are profoundly marked by the loss of Gaelic, which they negotiate and mourn in different ways. The disappearance of language is here symptomatic of the disappearance of a whole culture and of a way of life associated to it. Both novels contain aspects of Scottish language and culture, but they are also very much aware of their imminent extinction in the face of globalisation and modernity. McNeil's novel deals more directly with these forces and with the appropriation of Scottishness from touristic project spheres in the region. Therefore, while the African tradition seems to unearth cultural tokens from the past to claim their presence and to preserve them into the future, the Scottish works act as forecasts of the disappearance of Scottish traditions. This can be read as highly ironic, since it is precisely selected elements from this culture which are promoted as legitimately belonging to Nova Scotia, while the presence of black communities in Canada in general is barely acknowledged.

It must be added that despite the inevitable differences there also arise some similarities in the use of collective and individual mechanism for the recollections of the homeland. Notably, narrations from and about the ancestral land or about migration journeys are never merely stored as sealed productions that have no repercussions for the present of the members of the diaspora. The same occurs with cultural elements, which are not just enacted as group rituals and/or customs. In all four novels all the aspects that can be related to the homeland affect the individual identities of the main characters in different ways. Thus, psychological dimensions are unexceptionally influenced by cultural paradigms inherited from the past in the diasporic context. This also means that the continuity between past and present makes it difficult to separate and isolate individual and collective cultural and identity components that originate in the homeland.

Lastly, the close interconnection between the narrations of the homeland, the cultural elements and the linguistic vehicles posed a challenge in the treatment of each of these categories as separate in the analysis of all the novels. In all four works, stories and tokens from the homeland are narrated and transmitted through cultural elements such as music in the particular form of language inherited from the ancestors. Therefore, while it has been beneficial to segregate them for analytical purposes it must be stated that each of these facets of the diasporic experience is deeply related to and invariably dependent on the others.

In the light of these conclusions, the position of these works within current theories of diaspora remains to be clarified. If a strict point of view, such as that of Safran (1991) or Tölölyan (1996), by which an active investment on the present situation of the homeland is necessary for the existence of a diaspora, was to be adopted, then these novels would hardly fit into the category of diasporic narratives. While there are certainly remnants of an ancestral past in the four works analysed, none of them portray the practices of political concern or emotional investment that these critics demand from the diaspora towards the homeland: in the case of the African novels this homeland is largely dispersed among various cultural and geographical signifiers and the Scottish works are more concerned with a version of Scotland that can hardly be related to the actual contemporary nation. At this point of the study and in the absence of a more appropriate conceptualisation of these experiences, a more flexible approach to the concept of diaspora must be adopted, or else the concept of diaspora

dropped altogether. By following the work of Rushdie (1992), for instance, which accepts the existence of imaginary homelands not necessarily connected to a tangible reality, it is possible to provisionally include these fictional works as part of a diasporic context. Therefore, in methodological terms, these novels will still be referred to as forming part of the African and Scottish diaspora. The next chapter will focus on the constructions of the "hostland" in these novels, aiming to determine if these loose definitions of diaspora are sufficient to cover the experiences of migration and settlement that they narrate or whether, on the contrary, the development of the concept of settled diasporas will be necessary to accommodate those segments that may be left undefined by the more limited concept of diaspora.

Chapter 4. The Emergence of Settled Diasporas

4. 1. Forging Connections to the Land: Settling and Shaping Space

The manifest presence of circulating narratives from the past and of cultural and linguistic contexts pertaining to the paradigms of the land of origins suggests the existence of a connection between the Scottish and African migrant-descendant communities in Nova Scotia and what is referred to in theories of diaspora as the homeland. However, while it could be accepted within broad discourses of diaspora that these samples of genealogies and references are enough to justify the existence of the African and Scottish diasporas, a close reading of the novels reveals a series of different allegiances and the forging of an intimate relationship to the land that is known as "hostland." While the origins of the African and the Scottish diaspora in Canada date to the eighteenth century, the authors of these novels write from a contemporary stance. Clarke's and MacLeod's novels take place in the first and the second half of the twentieth century respectively; McNeil's novel is, in contrast to MacLeod's, more centred on episodes from the very first years of the twenty-first century, while his stories span a wider period of time. Only Wesley's novel is set in the context of the first settlements of blacks in the province, but even this account is filtered through the contemporary perspective of the author. Several generations, then, separate the arrival of the first migrants that these stories are at times concerned with and the present situation of the African- and Scottish-Nova Scotian diasporas. For these reasons it is not hard to observe in these narratives detailed descriptions, stories of attachment or the association between memories and places of what constitutes the hostland.

The purpose of this chapter is to analyse the narrative strategies that these novels employ to represent Nova Scotia. In currently widespread notions of diaspora (Safran, 1991; Tolölyan, 1996) the hostland is defined as the nation/geopolitical space to which the migrants move and which shapes their performance as a diasporic or non-diasporic group. If the migrant collective is to follow principles of assimilation into the hostland's society, by which the relationship with their original homeland is severed, then it cannot be said that these migrants develop a diasporic consciousness. Since the identification with the hostland automatically ceases the formation of a diasporic identity or diasporic group, these theories posit that a feeling of alienation within the hostland is an underlying imperative characteristic in these identities. The diasporic subject is

suspended in a permanent feeling (and ensuing social status) of foreignness. As John Durham Peters points out, "[d]iaspora teaches the perpetual postponement of homecoming and the necessity, in the meanwhile, of living among strange lands and peoples" (1999: 39). This implies that, more often than not, the cultural and ethnic markers that set diasporans apart from the mainstream of the host society are a source of segregation usually accompanied by active (systematic and systemic) marginalisation. The hostland for the diasporic subject is usually a hostile space, one in which she/he finds herself/himself longing for home and belonging.

This chapter will clarify whether the (*a priori*) hostland of these (*a priori*) diasporas, that is, the Maritime provinces and more specifically Nova Scotia, is really perceived and constructed in these terms, or whether, on the contrary, the allusions to close connections to the land provide a different reading of this socio-historical space. It is structured into three sections. The first is entitled "Forging Connections to the Land: Settling and Shaping Space," and addresses passages in the novels in which the relationship between the characters and the land they inhabit is illustrated. The assessment of place employed in this chapter transcends the mere physical presence of bodies within its boundaries, to include emotional and psychological investments on those spaces. The novels from the African section include experiences of rejection and racism but also the inevitable development of a bond to the land, more so after the succession of generations. More specifically, Wesley's novel, being close to the settler paradigm, explores the early connections and survival in the land, as physical terrain but also as social space where class, gender and even race limitations can be, if slightly, subverted. The Scottish novels deal briefly with episodes of settlement too, but tend to focus largely on contemporary perceptions of the region which they both articulate through different familial stories as underdeveloped and as situated on the margins. Common to both novels are also the tensions between inhabiting and abandoning this place.

The section entitled "Translating Home from Homeland to Hostland" is directly derived from this previous one. Based on the analyses of the construction and appropriation of space in the novels, this second part focuses on implicit and explicit allusions to Nova Scotia as "home." All four novels construct in different ways the spaces they inhabit as homeland. Here, feelings of (un)belonging are discussed in detail, particularly in relation to the African novels in which discriminatory practices feature

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prominently. With the translocation of home from homeland to hostland thus stated, this section engages with a conceptual restructuring, since the vocabulary of diaspora is no longer applicable to these experiences. Here, the concept of settled diaspora is fully delineated, as a result from the previous exploration of gradual establishment of feelings of belonging in Nova Scotia.

Finally, the third section "The Emergence of a Native Identity" regards the development of an indigenous identity within these groups. Here, Clarke's critical work is closely examined, as he promotes the existence of a black Nova Scotia, in historical, cultural and individual terms. The space he calls "Africadia" is tackled in this section, as background to *George & Rue* and *Chasing Freedom*, and also to one of the most important episodes in the history of black Nova Scotia: the razing of Africville. The main aim is to demonstrate how, through the various explorations and recoveries of black history and the long-standing presence of blacks in the province, as well as through the emotional impact of the disappearance of Africville in these groups, an indigenous collective identity is perceived and constructed. On the other hand, the most problematic novel to consider in terms of settled diaspora, *No Great Mischief* (since Chapter 3 demonstrated its close connection to Scotland) must be carefully dissected in order to find instances of a native identity. One of these instances is the element of music, as well as other practices and ethos reflected in and by the characters' lives. The opposite occurs with McNeil and her heroine, Eve: she can only be described as a Nova Scotian character, who in fact preserves little attachment to her ancestral Scotland. This section focuses on Eve's identity as Canadian, particularly through the contrast to Noel, and other American characters. The examination of the aspects approached in these three sections contribute to the in-depth conceptual formation and delimitation of the settled diaspora, as a term that becomes necessary when the distinctions between homeland and hostland are rendered counterproductive by the reversal of their roles in these novels.

Recently, critics have stated the multiplicity of meanings that can be attached to the terms "space" and "place," as Doreen Massey describes in the introduction to *Space, Place, and Gender* (1994). This study adopts the particular stance of positioning places, not as physical geographies existing independently as mere recipients of social interactions, but as a discursive participants in the dialogic negotiations and policing of space and individual and collective (non)presences (see Gupta and Ferguson, 1992).

Special attention will be drawn to articulations of the land as homeland or hostland, and, particularly in relation to the often unacknowledged presence of blacks in Nova Scotia, it is essential to examine how "particular constructions of place function to constitute people's identities, provide explanations of behaviour or ways of being and thus work together to justify or discredit people's legitimacy and belonging" (Kirkwood, McKinlay and McVittie, 2013: 455). While the presence of Scots in Nova Scotia is not as highly contested, the ascribing of individuals to certain spaces and their constructions in terms of class difference and centre/periphery will underlie readings of the region as homeland or hostland from this allegedly racially privileged perspective.

Unlike other novels from the black Canadian tradition, such as *Chasing Freedom* or *The Book of Negroes*, which include geographical spaces from Africa, the Americas or Europe, *George and Rue* is located entirely in the Maritime provinces. This means that the characters are exclusively interacting with the various places, rural and urban, of this region, as well as with its social ecosystem, throughout the whole novel. Instances of the main characters' relationship with the land are therefore effortlessly found. These are often ascribed to the background of poverty that surrounds the Hamilton family. An early description of the houses black people lived in in Three Mile Plains, a narration that alludes to Asa's own experience, reveals this context:

> Many Plains' homes was ramshackle, lopsided boards, nailed together on crooked foundations, with no basement, only a hole for keeping potatoes. Rickets hit at tables; bureaus and sofas hobbled along on three real legs.
>
> Still, in winter, as Asa knew too well, the tarpaper shack with tin roofs was iceboxes, their cold embittering and chilling even embers. In such inclemency, folks could perish while cooking, or freeze into statuesque sleeping positions like Pompeii's fossilized figures. Or they had to humble and sip muddy water from pigpens. (16-17)

In this scene, domestic space inevitably mingles with elements from the outside environment, as the marginal, destitute buildings barely offer a shelter against implacable climatic forces. As a marker of blacks' position within society, inhabiting this spaces conditions many facets in the identities of the dwellers, from the constant threats of diseases and death to the recursion to alcohol as palliative of the effects of their impoverished lives (17). It is this miserable and deplorable setting that makes Cynthia conjure up other safe, glamorous places where she would rather run away and spend her life. She often dreams of Montreal, which she qualifies as the complete

opposite of Three Mile Plains, even in terms of racial interaction: "fabulous Montreal, where style was brilliant, and where Coloured people could live posh – even if they had to speak French" (18); "What was Montreal? Her Harlem, her Heaven. From movie magazines and cousins, she knew it was rum that was fire in the mouth and satin in the belly. […] Montreal was frontier Paris, a Habitant Manhattan:" these descriptions and fantasies blatantly contrast with "the graveyard that Three Mile Plains could be" (20). For her, the town she inhabits translates into an everlasting desire to escape.

As the protagonists are part of a largely rural community, there are passages in the novel in which direct contact with the land, as nature to be tamed, can be observed. This is especially so in relation to the character of George, who becomes a farmer early in his life, an activity that shapes his identity: "While Rue had been in the music field, sort of, Georgie was in the cornfield. Rue beat on a banged-up piano; Georgie beat on two broken-down mules. Out of school now three years, and aged fourteen, of the two brothers, he was truly the 'country' one: even his name was royally agrarian" (42). From the episodes in which George's farming activities are depicted more peaceful and idyllic representations of place and landscape ensue, representations that are closer to the frequent pastoral descriptions to be found in classical Maritime fiction (Keefer, 187), especially when compared to those of the raw and harsh domestic space. Thus, in this natural, rural context it is possible to encounter pictures such as the following: "The fields about Three Mile Plains and Hants County flowered pure clover and strawberries. Apples, blackberries, and raspberries could be gobbled down along the railway tracks. In the backwoods, the maple leaves used to tickle and harass him, lewdly" (43). His own body is gradually attuned to the tasks required by this environment: "The work was tough; his muscles got to be damned enormous. His hands were bad-ass carpenters, ingenious mechanics. […] He hauled hard against horses but looked just like a mule" (43). Later, following their parents' deaths, "Georgie left Three Mile Plains but chose to stay in Windsor because he liked country life" (70). The narrator reinforces the association of George and working the land with phrases like "[f]arming was natural for Georgie" (70); it evokes an organic occupation of space, a practice that suggests a physical as well as emotional investment in the environmental surroundings; it is in fact a place in which "[h]e'd found Paradise" (71).

While calm and rustic George forges a living through cultivation and harvesting, Rufus attempts to start anew in Halifax, after his lover's death. Nature, the object of

George's appreciation, is despised by Rufus at this point: "After Easter's death, Rue could not tolerate the rose smell, the apple blossom aromas, the peach scents of Three Mile Plains" (62); and he turns to the city to forget both (his beloved and the land), where allusions to poverty, filth and destitution once again abound:

> He boarded the train to Halifax, that open sewer on the Atlantic. Its alleys unfurled a parade of puddles and garbage and feces and head-dented cats. Dogs looked half-run-over or had only three legs. Ugly gals sashayed with black-leather-skirted asses or black-silk-scarved necks. Salubrious, unchaste voices, redolent pigeon squabble and pidgin gabble […] Always, clouds clung to the city, for it liked to have its sunlight shrouded in fog. (62)

In Clarke's poiesis of urban representation, Halifax emerges as the embodiment of the unpleasant, this time not even particularly associated with the decay suffered by segregated racial groups such as the descriptions of Three Mile Plains' houses. He invokes the grandeur of beautiful cities only to subvert the allegory and re-imagine Halifax as an opposite to those alluring places: "Halifax was Venice without canals, Kingston with mosquitoes" (63). From Rue's point of view, the city is diseased, corrupt, vicious. Further perceptions of Halifax include George's experiences of labour discrimination. After serving in the Second World War, he tries to find a job there; however, as the country was immersed in a post-war economic depression, it was difficult for blacks to be employed, other than as unskilled labour: "So when Georgie tried to find work, there was none for a black boy. […] Everyone else in the hall would be hired to unload one vessel or another, but never Georgie" (83). Public space in Halifax is regulated in such a way that race becomes a factor that positions George in a non-place, limiting his possibilities to belong. This forces him to flee Nova Scotia and find refuge in Fredericton, where most of the plot occurs thereafter, together with the city of Saint John, both in New Brunswick. Jennifer Harris points out that "[w]hile there has been a recent surge of interest in African Nova Scotian history, facilitated in part by commemorative events in relation to Halifax's Africville, there has been no comparable outpouring of attention to New Brunswick's Black populations" (2012: 141). Clarke's accounts of the boys' interactions with this part of the Maritimes constitutes an interesting literary exception, even when it focuses mainly on urban centres.

As an urban environment, descriptions of Fredericton at first contrast with the nasty background of prejudiced Halifax, since it seems to be "[t]hat homey town with

no Coloured slum" (85). Soon, however, similar diminishing vocabulary is employed to characterise it, so that, as a whole, these references amount to a disassociation between Maritime cities and ideas of riches, opulence or glamour that were the core of Cythia's fantasies about Montreal: "Fredericton, The Celestial City, was ivory drunkenness and false British accents perfected in lumbercamps. It had tried to simulate Boston, Mass., but had ended up emulating Bangor, Maine, a distinct letdown" (86). It is a town that bears marks of a history of slavery and racism, and where at the time racial abuse still took place: "a place of huts, cops-and-robbers, lumber mills, and railway yards. Here the Ku Klux Klan clucked and conclaved occasionally. The area was named for Lieutenant Thomas Barker, an ex-Yankee and ex-con who landed in 1783 and built a house with iron rings on the walls to hold slaves" (86). Despite these lurking past and present landmarks of racism, "George liked this city, where his jokes, his labour jobs done cheerfully, and his happy-go-lucky personality seemed to win him neighbourly regard" (86). This is a point in which Halifax is counterpointed to Fredericton, as here George is finally able to settle down, find an honest job and lead a peaceful life with Blondola, his wife. For Rue, on the other hand, who comes to join George in Fredericton after hearing about his mild success, the city has different connotations. He imagines the city as racially hostile, due to the non-contact with other blacks and to the overly dense presence of white people: "For Rue, Fredericton was too suspiciously white to be trusted;" and thus, he feels the need to blacken it in subversive ways in order to provide inclusion for himself in what constitutes a reaction against colonial cultural representations in the town: "He schemed to apply black paint to the statue of Bobby Burns on the Green – either that or smash it to bits" (91).

To conclude with the analyses of recurrent and relevant spaces which are featured in this novel in relation to the lives of the Hamiltons, the natural element of the sea and its artistic appropriations will be explored. Assessing the role of nature as literary source in Maritime fiction, Janice Kulyk Keefer says that it "is humanized, accessible, inexhaustibly rich or resistant, but never annihilating: this fact is reflected in the surprising rareness with which the sea makes any major appearance in works sprung from a region in which no writer can live more than a few hours' drive from salt water" (1987: 15). This could be countered by works such as MacLeod's stories or McNeil's novel in which the sea is necessarily and widely incorporated to the experiences of their characters as their primary means to survive. In Clarke's novel, however, the image of

the Atlantic is employed with connotations that depart from this organic (although complex and at times estranging) relationship with the sea as provider of food and working medium. The presence of the Atlantic in *George and Rue* is associated with the pernicious environment of the city of Halifax and so, the vocabulary and images employed to represent it follow the same lines of those observed in depictions of the city: "He [Asa] didn't much fancy the harbour – whose smell he knew instantly – because it ran with unadulterated shit, straight on into the Atlantic" (47). In contact with the city, the ocean becomes, like the shores it washes, a recipient of disease and filth. Again, the marginality of the Nova Scotian capital against the allure and dominance of other urban centres is made apparent through the comparison of its sewage pipe to world-wide monuments and landmarks: "Indeed, the raw sewage pipe into the harbour was Halifax's concrete answer to the Statue of Liberty, the Eiffel Tower, Big Ben, the Great Wall of China, and the Leaning Tower of Pisa" (47-48); and Asa continues to describe the sea through his senses, but he does not conceive it as idyllic or soothing; indeed, his speculations are associated to a foreseen death: "Whenever he'd ride the bus or train to Halifax and glimpse its entrée to the Atlantic – all that murderous water whelming, foaming, foaming, whelming – Asa would ponder his own dying, wonder how it'd go" (48). The sea is the scenery of his death, where he drowns after a fight with Cynthia's lover: "Asa disappeared into dark water – the petrol-slicked, nighttime, molasses-ebony of Halifax Harbour" (47). It is primarily in terms of death and urban debris that the novel's characters imagine and interact with this central element in Maritime life.

This formal analysis of the diverse spaces (domestic/private, rural, urban and the sea) throws light on many aspects of the relationship between the novel's characters and the land they inhabit. One recurrent experience is that of discrimination: the regulation of space in terms of skin colour meant for this family fewer job opportunities, the denial of agency, the confinement to poverty-ridden neighbourhoods and the impossibility to advance in social status. Class is another parameter along which the politics of belonging and unbelonging are stated, as reflected by Rue's lack of affinity with better-off blacks in Fredericton. The interactions with space and place are not, however, unidirectional: as characters' identities are defined and affected by their environments and the social relationships and policies within them, so do they transform space through their perceptions and discursive constructions. George's cultivation and

working in the land is one such very literal transformation of space (as well as being one of the few instances in which a character does seem to belong in an agreeable place), but so are Asa's description of the harbour and the Atlantic, or the portrayal of Halifax in Rue's eyes, both of which position the city as marginal. Spaces are lived in and acquire meaning through these experiences, and therefore, a dialogical connection is established by which both land and inhabitants are constructed and transformed.

Wesley's novel is set in what could be called spaces of early settlement of the colony of Nova Scotia. One of the most conspicuous factors that can be observed when approaching the role of the land in these historical locales is the stark separation between black and white groups, as black Loyalists occupied the settlement of Birchtown, adjacent to, but not merging with, the white town of Shelburne. As Nieves indicates, "Segregated settlements became the basis of an evolving British ideology that saw 'non-white' peoples as belonging to a lower level of civilization" (2007: 88). Racist practices and a regulation of space that limited social mobility for the black community mark the experiences of this novel's characters, who struggle to live as free British citizens in this newly founded settlement.

As this novel develops in the framework of land settling, the imagining, relationships to and constructions of place are essential to understand the social and racial dynamics explored in its pages. Nova Scotia, or rather British North America, is imagined by the novel's characters, especially by idealistic Sarah, as the land of freedom when she first learns about it during her time in the plantation. This is an imagining of place in the strictest sense, since she creates these ideas about Nova Scotia prior to establishing any physical contact with it. In the camp in Charles Town, while blacks were awaiting relocation during the Revolutionary War, Sarah starts constructing these mental images of the place and its possibilities: "As she gazed at the stars, she imagined a glorious fate. If preacher was right, freed slaves went to the Promised Land where all their needs were met" (19). This notion, however, changes when they finally migrate to and experience the new land. Historians have thoroughly discussed how promises of land grants and equal treatment for blacks were left unfulfilled by the British government; Whitfield, for instance, mentions a widespread feeling of disappointment because "the majority of the former slaves did not receive land grants" and "[t]hose who did only obtained paltry allotments that were too small for subsistence;" regarding access to labour, "[e]mployers paid the Black Loyalists less

money than white workers, which caused an outbreak of economically and racially motivated violence in 1784." Moreover, discrimination extended to other social contexts as, "although free and equal subjects of His Majesty in theory, the Black Loyalists were prevented by racist authorities from serving on juries, voting, and regularly received harsh punishments for trivial judicial offenses" (2007: 1989).

This sentiment of defeat at finding that expectations were not met in the new settlement are reflected in multiple occasions in Sarah's reactions and embittered complaints. At one point, when all the family was trapped in Cecil MacLeod's cellar, kidnapped to be sold back as slaves in America via Boll weevil Carter, Sarah, frightened and desperate says to herself: "How could anyone have thought of such a place as the Land of Milk and Honey?" (102). A similar representation of resent and frustration can be observed in Fortune's account of his return after the War, where he alludes to the hopeful investment on his future in the colony and how it seemed to be denied to him upon arrival, despite having served in the Black Company of Pioneers: "'All I got was the uniform on my back, passage to this colony and a head full of promises. We will see how they honour their word. […] I want my land, my rations and supplies. Is it too much to ask after risking my life? Where are the rewards?'" (77). As the novel advances, expressions of dissatisfaction and repudiation of the land they occupied due to social marginalisation and the denial of opportunities blend with passages in which the characters acknowledge their connection to place and its possibilities for social transformation.

If, as Massey suggests, space should be thought of "not as some absolute independent dimension, but as constructed out of social relations" (1992: 2; see also Lefebvre, 1991), it is essential to examine these spaces of early contacts as a product of, and determining factor in, the social transformations that emerge there. One central example of these transformations is the parameters of gender relations. It was noted previously how slavery regimes exploited women's bodies to the point of conditioning their identities, marked by the inescapable category of "slave" (or, in Lydia's case, the more traumatic "breeding slave"). However, the land of Nova Scotia, although it provided far fewer chances at social advancement than were expected, is a place where female characters are enabled to subvert certain gender roles and constrictions. Lydia herself leads one of these episodes as she confronts Cecil MacLeod, the man who forced her to conceive children, and demands him to reveal the whereabouts of their offspring:

"Breeding slaves to get free workers or for your pleasure was common. You could take a slave and do what you liked and the law protected you. You treated me like an animal because I did not have any rights. That is all behind me. I got my papers now" (2011: 47). Cecil himself is alerted by the woman's undermining of patriarchal structures: "Yes, times were changing. And Lydia – she was changing, too, going from being a submissive slave to a demanding fool, a woman of confidence now, bold and thinking herself smart" (69). Even when they still suffered from misery and hardships, the possession of a certificate of freedom results in a shift in authority; in this land, Lydia's body cannot be treated as property, and she is determined to recover what was taken from her during the time her agency was completely denied. Similarly, Sarah relies on her newly acquired status as a free woman to react to the sexual advances of Colonel Septimus Black, a successful black man who hires her as a teacher: "'Colonel Black, I am a free Negro woman and I am not for the taking'" (140). This implies that the sexual abuse that would otherwise be tolerated due to the gender hierarchical impositions of a slavery environment can no longer operate in a land where black women use their freedom as an instrument for establishing individual boundaries on the grounds of human equity.

At one point in the novel, Margaret, the daughter of the plantation owner, who fled to Nova Scotia and who turned out to be one of Lydia's children, sends the Redmond family a truck full of various commodities, among which is a beautiful red dress. Instantly, Lydia warns Sarah against wearing it, as it is not their place to do so: "'That's not a dress for us to wear,' she scowled;" to which Sarah, again encouraged by notions of social status granted in the colony, answers: "'We have just as much right to feel grand. We are worthy'" (158). The image of this dress symbolises to a certain extent Sarah's coming of age. She meets her future husband, Thomas, when wearing it for the first time; shortly after, she makes a decision that reflects her maturity and her determination to prosper as an independent woman. When Thomas asks her to leave the place with him, she refuses him as she holds on to her desire of staying in Birchtown: "She ran her fingers along the edge of the puffed sleeves of her dress, feeling the fine detailing, the expert stitching: steady and even, like she wanted her life to be. She would help raise young Prince and follow her dream of becoming a tailor" (168). The red dress is associated to these first moments with Thomas, but also with her plans for a better future. After this episode, "[s]he wasn't feeling at all like the child who needed

Grandmother to speak for her or the one who needed direction and advice. She was in charge, looking out for herself" (169). An important rite of passage takes place in this scenery of struggle and misery which nevertheless offers her the opportunity to choose her own emancipatory dreams over marriage.

Until the very end of the narration in *Chasing Freedom*, the author intersects episodes of triumph and moments of defeat. Torn between freedom and racial restrictions, Nova Scotia was a place where black had the right to education for the first time, a news that Sarah received at first with apprehension because "[s]he knew what wanting to read had brought the slaves who dared to defy the law on the plantation. […] The very idea of going to school seemed unnatural" (126). Education being one of the pillars of social upward mobility, it is essential to consider this factor as one of the most revolutionary improvements that blacks had access to in the colony. Labour-wise, with the help of Margaret, Sarah acquires a shop to start a tailoring business, in what could constitute one of the most outstanding social triumphs she achieves. However, these dreams are shattered when the neighbours burn down the building where her business was to open. In the middle of the crowd that surrounded the scene, Ramsey, a white man, starts complaining about how blacks invade the space of whites and therefore, should not be granted these advantages: "'I don't want no uppity Negra thinkin' she can come down here and pretend she's one of us. You ain't nothing but trash. First thing, you will all be down here, actin' like you own the place. You hear me now, girl. You keep your place" (194). This statement brilliantly reflects the mingling of social and physical place and how this is imagined and constructed in terms of hatred, by which the racial other is excluded from those spaces outside the borders where they are ascribed to, in this case, Birchtown. To this reaction, Sarah does not restrain herself and once again asserts hers and her people's rights to place, both social and physical, a discourse that is highly charged with gender connotations, as she contests the patronising language that Ramsay employs against her: "'I am not a girl, Mr. Lewis. Not yours, not any man's. You do not own me. Those days are past. Who are you to decide what a Negro can have? We won out freedom and have rights as citizens, the same as you" (194). Infuriated, Ramsay hits the girl, and Sarah hits him back. For this she is arrested and condemned to public lashing, charged with "assault against one of our leading citizens" (203). Although her punishment is stopped when help comes from Margaret, she does receive three lashes before she is set free.

There are various points in which the characters show their awareness of racial discrimination in terms of discursive and practical racism. Discussing again social place with his mother, Fortune reflects: "In Fortune's mind, all this worry about who was who and where you fit was pointless. He had seen and heard enough about race in the war. The fuss over skin was just foolishness to keep the races apart, to put one above the other. 'Place,' he shouted. 'Can this colony afford to worry about place when death waits to claim any of us?'" (112). The early settlements of Nova Scotia were spaces of survival, both for blacks and whites, and according to Fortune the extreme circumstances of the environment they find themselves in should transcend politics of social segregation based on racial divisions. In legal discourses the limitations placed on black people's use and occupation of space result in a collective identity definition from the outside, as Sarah indicates on one occasion: "'The law makes no sense. It assumes drunken Negroes will act differently than drunken white men. We are no more shameful or brutal than they are. Such laws make us out to be the brutes and to further separate us" (159). All in all, space in Nova Scotia is imagined in alternate terms of freedom and restrictions; a place where racial segregation, the construction of the black body as racially inferior, and the effects of these discourses on social mobility result in the constant deferral of freedom the title alludes to. On the other hand, there are glimpses at the subversion of gender and of social roles that indicate the presence of hope and which confer this space ambivalent meanings.

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The description of land and its multiple connections to the lives of Scots-Canadian communities takes two main shapes in MacLeod's and McNeil's fiction: the relationship with nature and the construction of the region of Nova Scotia as a marginal space. The families portrayed in both novels live within rural mining or fishing backgrounds, therefore the presence of the land, the sea and a natural environment as opposed to an urban o metropolitan one, is unavoidable. The second theme, that of the marginality of the region, is a frequent concern in Nova Scotian literature. As the close historical analysis of the Maritimes demonstrated, this part of Canada suffered terrible economic recessions and is today, with regard to other provinces, one of the poorest and most underdeveloped, from which people have to migrate, in contrast to the tendency of other thriving Canadian urban centres, characterised by immigration. This economic (and socio-political) neglect is reflected in the region's fiction produced from the mid-

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twentieth century onwards. As Keefer confirms, "Maritime literature tends to set down its heroes and heroines within isolated communities which cleave to land or sea, however unproductive or grudging these may be; the struggle is not against any lupine wilderness, but often against the limitations and towards the strengths of communal life itself" (1987: 36). This section will explore how this treatment of space and place contributes to the construction and imagining of the region as a (non)homeland.

Nature in *No Great Mischief* is depicted both as a place of death and struggle and as land to be tamed, cultivated, and/or, in the case of mining, excavated, that is, the source of living. When Margaret Atwood ascribes "survival" as the symbol for Canada, one of the meanings she gives to it is that of "survival in the face of 'hostile' elements" (2012: 178). There is a clear example in this novel in which nature and more particularly, its wintery manifestations of nordicity, that is, extreme cold, snow and ice,[21] constitutes the agent of the death of the protagonist's parents and brother, Colin. As they were crossing the frozen sea channel from the house of the Grandparents the family house on the island, the ice broke under their feet and they drowned. There is another episode connected to these deaths under the ice in which Grandpa faces a similar experience. Certain circumstances surrounding the passages are very similar: they both happen in March and they both portray the cracking of ice in the same stretch of frozen water. However, there is a humorous undertone to Grandpa's story in that he falls asleep as the dogs carry him through the ice, because he is drunk at the time. Moreover, even though the situation is potentially fatal and "[h]is ears and his cheeks, along with his fingers and toes, were badly frostbitten" there is a comic connotation to the fact that, as Calum narrates, "he confided to our father in Gaelic 'I think I froze my dick, but don't say anything in front of your wife and young children'" (163). Although hilarious, Grandpa's concern for his genitals and his "'almost accident'" (166) could also be read as a symbol of nature's power to overthrow manhood in its most elemental constituent. It must be pointed out that neither of these episodes are narrated directly or from a first person perspective. The story of Alexander's parents' death is told from his point of view, of how he lived it and what others told him about it, as he was a small child at the time and his own perception was not that of human life being brutally ended by nature, but that of a sudden change in his life of which he was barely aware.

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[21] The North has been another recurrent symbol (though also contested) in the representation of Canadian identity (see Atwood, 1995; Grace, 1996; Collins, 2003).

Grandpa's story does not include his own account of the near-tragedy; it is filtered through the voice of Calum, which is, in turn, represented by Alexander as he narrates the whole story. The multiple levels of representation of these experiences triggers the association between the two incidents and the imagining of alternative realities in the absence of these circumstances: "'It is curious,' said my second brother, 'how Grandpa was saved from the ice in March and yet was perceived as a careless man, while our parents who tried to do everything right went down without salvation. Grandpa could have been lost as well and then things would have been quite different – especially for you, *ille bhig ruaidh*'" (167). In these passages, the destructive quality of extreme natural elements and spaces shapes the lives and fates of all the characters in the novel, a fact of which they are themselves aware.

In contrast to these allusions to natural space as hostile and catastrophic, there are parts of the novel which refer to a more temperate experience of it. After their parents' death, Calum and the other two older brothers were compelled to live on their own; they moved to their Grandparents' old house were they fished and cut wood for a living. In this sense, they were in contact with nature in a much more direct way than Alexander or their sister. Like George's working of the land, this agrarian relationship entails production and transformation in material terms; there are also however, emotional associations between the characters' and their surroundings:

> Father sometimes used to look at the sun. If it was at a certain angle and if the waves were rolling in a certain way, he used to gun the engine of the boat. […] if he gunned the engine in the right manner and steered at the right angle to the sun the spray would fly up and the droplets would be caught in the sun's slanting rays. It had the effect of a rainbow which seemed to be following us. It must have been before you and your sister were born because Colin was just a little boy. He always used to say 'Dad, Dad, make the rainbow.' (194)

Calum, the character recounting this episode, continues his story moving to the time after his parents' death: "I used to take our boat by myself and angle it in different directions off *Calum Ruadh*'s point to try to recapture the effect, but I never could. People would ask me what I was doing out in my boat those afternoons. I was always too embarrassed to say I was looking for a rainbow, so I would say I was just fooling around" (194-195). In this particular use of nature Calum tries in vain to emulate his father's skills; his practice contains a particularly ritual quality where a rainbow ceases to be merely an optical phenomenon of light reflection; rather, it is a signifier for the

lost relationship between Calum and his father. Memories are thus constructed and shaped around and by natural space, as is also expressed in this recollection of Alexander and Catherine's childhood: "if the wind were off the sea, we would run down to the *Calum Ruadh*'s Point and engage in contests to see who could remain standing in the wind's force the longest" (68). The mingling of memories, emotions and natural elements constitutes one of the central narrational mechanisms in this novel.

The fictional lives of Alexander's brothers provide a small-scale embodiment of the marginality of Nova Scotia with respect to other provinces in Canada. Calum and his brothers live in isolation, on the very literal margins of society. Alexander describes their domestic surroundings: "For a long time in the house where my brothers lived, there was neither plumbing nor electricity, and heat came from two stoves filled with wood they hauled with their horses from the shore" (59); the distance between Alexander's and his independent brothers' lifestyles is emphasised in these words: "they never paid attention to Canada's Food Guide or to brushing their teeth before and after meals or to changing into clean pyjamas before going to bed. And at their house the bathroom was a bucket" (61). This contrast in terms of the occupation and use of private space extends to their participation in public spheres. They were never educated at school and, when they grew up they worked in the mines for most of their adult lives; when the industry collapsed, however, they were forced to abandon Cape Breton. In the present time of the novel, Calum is described as a destitute man, an eccentric outcast. Alexander, on the other hand, as well as their sister, "the 'lucky, unlucky' children" (62), had the opportunity to receive a proper education. As Irene Guilford points out, in MacLeod's fiction, "[e]ducation can be seen as both opportunity for betterment and a potential force of separation from family, culture and clan" (2001: 8). While the narrator and his brothers briefly share the working space when Alexander joins them in the mines in substitution for their deceased namesake cousin, he later moves out from Nova Scotia and becomes an orthodontist, an occupation that is totally disconnected from the spiritual needs that lay at the heart of the tight community he grew up in. As Keefer illustrates:

> MacLeod insists upon the superficiality, triviality and even dishonesty of Alexander's life as
> defined by the so-called work he does; it possesses none of the value and usefulness of the
> time-honoured ways out of poverty: teaching and medicine, and it is damned by the value
> system upheld by Alexander's admirable grandmother, who judges orthodontistry to be

man's attempt to improve on God's work, an attempt not so much impious as ridiculous. (2001: 74)

MacLeod himself comments on this deliberate choice (Rogers, 2001: 20) and the novel further reinforces the contrast between Calum and Alexander's idiosyncrasies when, as one chapter finishes by portraying how Calum extracted his own infected wisdom tooth himself, another chapter follows describing Alexander's routine as an orthodontist, beautifying people's smiles. However, while there certainly is irony in this juxtaposition of life experiences, the proximity of these narrative pieces also suggests that Alexander's choice to study dentistry might have been influenced by Calum's shocking process of dental self-removal.

The disparity of Alexander's and Catherine's place in society is marked by the physical spaces they occupy, which is reflected in the contexts in which they are usually portrayed together, repeatedly and almost obsessively referred to as Catherine's "modern house in Calgary" (90, 151, 153, 209), thus designated with the intentional purpose of emphasising the "modern" as opposed to the traditional and outdated community from which they come. The different circumstances of their lives have given them the opportunity to leave Nova Scotia in search for more cosmopolitan and wealthy lifestyles, whereas Calum, who stays in the region, sees his life dramatically affected by its industrial recession and the disappearance of his profession, which constitutes an exploration of "the individual, human implications of social and economic collapse" (Hiscock, 2000: 59). Calum (and only to a lesser extent the other brothers, as their identities are not so clearly discerned in the novel) embodies the epitome of a Nova Scotian working class whose existence is threatened and marginalised by the capital practices and modern society which Alexander and Catherine inhabit.

Approaches to the land in *The Interpreter of Silences* are often close to MacLeod's representation of an economically backward Nova Scotia; while his work mainly focused on the mining sector, McNeil deals with fishing activities, another part of the traditional economic life of the region which faced steady decline with the imposition of capitalist systems of industrial production and trade. The changes in the use of Cape Breton's landscapes for tourism, as uninhabited houses fill with mostly American visitors, is a product of these financial transformations explored in the novel. One tendency that stands out among these representations of the land, however, is the

desire to escape, the perception of place as empty and a strong presence, in consequence, of urban spaces, which constitute the social context the protagonist aspires to live in.

In this novel, Nova Scotia, or more specifically Cape Breton, is a place to be left behind, to be escaped. The lack of job opportunities and the collapse of traditional commercial activities has resulted in high levels of outmigration that remained steady throughout the twentieth century (Dutcher, 2005; Marquis, 2010). Eve is one of these region's inhabitants who decides to leave in search for a better life (although other reasons, which will be addressed later, influence her choice). Upon returning to the island several years after her last visit, she encounters the situation of those who, unlike her, stayed in Cape Breton. Duncan is the owner of a gas station and store where Eve used to work when she was thirteen. Now, Duncan complains, the business is "'[n]ot so good;'" and adds, "'I tried to sell up a couple of times but it looks like they've got all the franchises they want around here;'" the narrator goes on to explain that "[g]arages owned by other Duncans had been bought by Ultramar, now corporate yellow-blue, three eager men attending the forecourt" (17). Eve's father faces similar dilemmas as modern establishments and commercial management invade small, local fishing businesses like his. Logistically, he cannot compete with corporations that operate on international levels and he is forced to accept low prices for the product he manages to sell. At this point his father is considering abandoning his small enterprise: "'Fishing's big business now. Those guys out there off Cape North, they've got two-hundred-thousand-dollar boats. You're either doing it in a big way or you're not'" (28). The description of people's struggles against economic depression and technological progress amount to what McCann calls "the polarizing effects of core-periphery development" (1979: 49). In this case, it is the economic and financial management of the land and its material productions that define certain practices as marginal. Men like Duncan and Alistair do not keep up with the times and their impositions; they refuse, or they are not able to, modernise their commercial activities and therefore they occupy, like many working class groups whose livelihood depends on these outmoded forms of production (like the MacDonald family in *No Great Mischief*), an isolated position and marginal place in society. Again, it is possible to observe here the reciprocal relationships between space and the lived experience of space (Lefebvre, 1991: 93-94), as well as the mutual production of meaning that accompanies this symbiosis.

An outstanding point in the novel concerning the economic situation of the region is the widespread investment in tourist attractions, and the ensuing transformation of the land and of inhabitable spaces to conform to the norms of consumerism and rustic appeal that foreigners demand in this remote place. This appropriation of natural sites is highlighted by the fact that the story revolves around the affair between Eve and Noel, the American who rents the house next to her family's and spends the summer there, together with his girlfriend, Rachel, who eventually comes to join him. There is a passage in the novel when Noel and Rachel are planning a trip around the region: "'Why don't we take the – what's it called? The Sunrise Trail?' Rachel pored over Nova Scotia Tourist Board maps at the kitchen table. 'Evangeline Trail, Glooscap Trail, Marconi Trail. It's like they've made one big park out of the whole state.' […] I'd hate to live somewhere so dependent on tourism. I can't imagine what it's like to be here in the winter'" (166). This piece shows both the artificiality of arranging wild chaos into carefully designed routes, associated to historical and mythological sites, and on the other hand the impassivity of Rachel, reflected in her confusion of "province" for "state," at the realities of people who live in the area and the hardships they have to endure. The perspective of tourism changes to one of invasion in the eyes of people like Eve, who have inhabited the island for an extended period of time and, therefore, possess memories of the place other than the ones attached to transitory vacation experiences like Rachel's. The first times she enters the house that the couple are currently renting she has a feeling of dislocation: "Here she was, standing in the same kitchen she had stood in as a five-year-old, a fourteen-year-old. Now she was thirty-four years old and talking to this stranger. What was he doing in their kitchen? Where had John Rory and Eileen gone?" (49). For her, the rightful owners of the house were those she knew, her neighbours, and Noel's presence, or rather, the new use of the place as tourist accommodation, is read as an intrusion that displaced the people she grew up with.

To contrast with these manufactured experiences, there are instances in the novel in which the hostile aspect of nature of the environments is also stated. Further parallelisms with *No Great Mischief* emerge in this context. When addressing the challenges that natural elements posit to the inhabitants of this region it is Alistair, Eve's father, who narrates episodes of himself and other men suffering or dying under extreme cold conditions. He talks

about legendary blizzards and winters when you could walk from Sea Island point to Indian Bay across the ice, winds that killed grown men, scattering them across the ice like match-sticks, a time when there were no rescue services, no highway patrols, when people had risked their lives just for a bit of company, following a spruce-bough-marked path across fickle ice just to sit in a neighbour's kitchen, then getting halfway back across the ice and finding it unstable. (115)

These acts of survival, the references to life-risking endeavours within a dangerous space that threatened people's integrity are, unlike in *No Great Mischief,* explicitly associated to the figure of the pioneer: "'What to do?' her father interjected, encouraged by Noel's eyes, which were wide with the stark simplicity of pioneer dilemma. 'Do I go back, and let my animals freeze or die of thirst, or do I keep going and risk death with each step?'" (115). While Eve and her father belong in a time that is centuries posterior to the period of pioneers and land settlement, this allusion connects both chronologically distanced worlds. A man like him, living in primitive conditions even in contemporary times, has to face and "tame" nature in terms similar to those of the first settlers. Even when MacLeod does not directly mention the settler dilemma as such, or the hardships of the pioneer, his tales about survival/dying in the ice reference, like Alistair's account, an ethos that is similar to what critics like Elizabeth Furniss call "the frontier myth, where nature is feared and endured; where (White) man encounters and eventually conquers the wilderness" (1997: 17). The confrontation with a menacing surrounding requires negotiations in the liminal space of survival, a place between life and death such as the one described by Alistair (or Alexander's Grandpa in *No Great Mischief*); they establish a conflictive relationship with nature which is "eventually resolved by domination and conquest" (1997: 10). This relationship is simultaneously ambivalent, in that sentiments of fear for the unknown and the close presence of death must be overcome and subsumed by the pioneer's courage and the supremacy of his prowess in dealing with nature. Discourses of survival are thus mostly supported by discourses of male dominance; masculinity is a decidedly central element in these narratives and their insistence that "[t]he imperial frontier and settler colonies needed strong, 'true British men' to subdue the wilderness and lay the seeds of civilization" (Errington, 2006: 13). However, in both McNeil's and MacLeod's texts, the conquest of nature appears to incorporate an element of frustration, and most specifically of masculine defeat: in MacLeod's story of Grandpa's nearly-fatal venture into the frozen channel the threat to manhood is ultimately symbolised in a comical reference to his

frozen and numb genitals. This temporal castration stands for the impotence of man when defied by the hazardous winter. Similarly the concept of masculinity is disrupted in the last lines of Alistair's episode: "Her father spoke of grown men crying from the cold, how the marine tears refused to freeze on their faces despite the wind-chill temperature of minus fifty-five. Her father always finished his stories of past hardships this way – with grown men crying from frustration, or pain" (115). The emphasis on the attribute "grown" is used as a mechanism to enforce an opposition with the non-mentioned quality of "childlike" or "immature:" it is acceptable for children to cry, but not for men. Castration is expressed here through the violation of this principle of masculinity in which grown men should be brave, overcome their fear and not cry and show their vulnerability against a treacherous space they cannot dominate. The myth of the omnipotent pioneer is thus partially deconstructed.

For the most part, however, the novel focuses on Eve's contradictory struggles with her internalisation of Cape Breton. She finds her home place oppressive, small, and dull. This is not only related to its economically depressed situation, but with her own relationship with her family and her surroundings. Because her mother died when she was still a child, she spent most of her life with her father and his undecipherable silences, and with her sister, who proffered constant rebukes and criticism. On one of the first days after her return she senses the threat of staying in Cape Breton for an extended period of time, sharing the cabin with her father, a space of non-communication. Facing the possibility of being defined by this situation she reflects: "It's just a place, she reminds herself. It doesn't carve out your destiny. It isn't grasping you, hauling you inside it. Places are neutral; they are just where you decide to be for a while. That's all" (45). She resorts to emphasising the perception of space as a mere physical plane, in order to reassure herself of its inoccuousness. Feeling this pressure, Eve repeatedly expresses her desire to escape, for instance when she drives home after a tough encounter with her sister: "The first exit to Indian Bay rushes up to meet her. If she could only keep driving: past exit ten, then exit nine, hugging the rim of Whycocomagh, then over the Causeway, not stopping until she hit oblivion or the 401, whichever comes first" (161). These escapes are invariably postponed, as she feels compelled to stay and look after her father. Eve finds the quietness of the place unbearable, she resents its remoteness and lack of stimulus and is asphyxiated by its

backwardness. Noel perceives these factors too, but to him they acquire a different meaning:

> [he hand't] expected Cape Breton to be so gritty and removed from the rest of the world. Perhaps because there was no large city nearby, he couldn't feel its shadow cast over the place, sucking the inhabitants in on the off-season, to labour in offices and bars. Here he felt contingent, barely real, poised on the rim of a continent – almost unreachable. Exactly as he had wanted, he reminded himself. (75)

The emptiness and absence that Eve finds so unbearable is what Noel craves from this place. Cape Breton is therefore constructed as liminal in literal and metaphorical terms: it stands at the easternmost border of the continent and at the same time, Noel, because of his position in that island, is on the border of reality, on the limits of existence. Cape Breton and its (non)spaces contain both geographical and figurative margins.

Throughout this critical assessment of the relationship between the characters in these four novels, the land they inhabit and the spaces they occupy several common and differentiating points have been established between them. Although from the African-Nova Scotian novels it is *Chasing Freedom* the one that most directly deals with the settlement of the land, both *Chasing Freedom* and *George and Rue* address the consequences that segregation and racist practices have on the definition and even the self-perception of the characters and the ascribing of meaning to place. At different levels, struggle is central in these novels: struggle against disease and death in bereft settlements, against marginalising attitudes of white peoples, violence, poverty or the presence of slave hunters. In terms of gendered experiences of place, Nova Scotia briefly offers protagonist women in *Chasing Freedom* the position to subvert certain impositions, but even these often result in some way of punishment. The readings of space and place identified in this section tend towards a hostile relationship to land and society, rather than conveying the feeling of attachment and belonging that the homeland is supposed to transmit. On the other hand, in the Scottish-Nova Scotian novels, space is also portrayed as inhospitable, albeit through different mechanisms. Common to both novels is survival against a menacing land, episodes that evoke the myth of the pioneer conquering wilderness but whose deconstruction of manliness confer them an ambivalent interpretation. Moreover, the portrayal of the region as economically and socially marginal coincides too. This is an aspect they share with *George & Rue,* as is reflected in its descriptions of wrecked urban spaces. In the four

novels, space and place are regulated in such ways that they produce either racial or class meaning, and therefore, difference. In the case of the black Nova Scotian context, racialisation is the major barrier that precludes belonging, while environmental forces and class differentiation become the main obstacles for Scots Nova Scotian characters. It could be thus concluded that, at this point in the analysis, it is difficult to associate the positionings of these characters within space with the inhabiting of a homeland. What is clear in all of them is that space, far from being an independent, inert entity, is a central participant in the construction of the characters' identities, as it shapes and is shaped through interaction.

4.2. Translating Home from Homeland to Hostland.

In the light of the results of the analyses conducted so far, it would be problematic to incorporate the diasporas represented in these novels to the area of settled diasporas. No clear idea of the homeland has yet emerged, apart from the fragments studied in Chapter 3, and these are not overtly associated with the hostland. On the contrary, each novel expresses in different terms a degree of dissatisfaction with and distancing from the society they live in. Wesley's representation of racist hostility and practices of segregation in the spaces of early black settlement could be read as a starting point for the history of poverty and discrimination that marks the lives of the Hamilton family at the beginning of the twentieth century in *George & Rue*. For both Scottish-Nova Scotian novels, the region is a place to leave behind, and the stories are in fact told from the perspective of characters who have emigrated from Nova Scotia. It could be concluded that, for various motives, all the main characters feel alienated from the spaces they live in. Given the presence of elements from the diasporas' homelands previously explored, that is, the inclusion of memories, cultural elements and linguistic traces from a creolised African homeland and from Scotland, respectively, would it be safe to assume that these novels are representative of diasporic experiences in the traditional sense of the term? It has been pointed out that allusions to a stable homeland that is recognisable in a contemporary form are scarce in these works. However, so far, the absence of another referent suggests that these imagined and chronologically distant homelands may constitute the cultural anchor for the individual and collective identities of these groups. This section will further explore all four texts in search for evidence that may counter these points, and which helps narrow down the location of the homeland to a more specific and reliable place.

The novel *George and Rue* is a complex text to open this scrutiny with, because it contains few instances in which Nova Scotia or the Maritimes are associated, explicitly or implicitly, to the idea of the homeland. George's temporary achievement of an honest work that fulfils him, his brief periods of land-working, are one of the few occasions in which a character from the novel does feel fully integrated in society. Even these are eventually negated when his employer refuses to pay George for his work, and after complaining and taking away some tools as retribution he is accused of robbery and briefly imprisoned, which results in George's lack of respectability in his community (99). Although one of the earlier lines of the novel states that the boys' father was "the third-generation to call Three Mile Plains *home*" (10, emphasis added), the alienation that the characters feel from their social environments for most of the story is symptomatic of the experiences of unbelonging that characterise migrant groups in diasporas such as those that Safran, Tölölyan and others describe. At this point, it is necessary to move outside the particular chronological context of the text and review some of Clarke's non-literary works.

One of his most salient early projects was the completion of an anthology of black Nova Scotian writing, *Fire on the Water* (1991, 1992) which includes two volumes containing texts from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Here, his initiative to inventory and promote the cultural presence of blacks in the region leads him to gather different works that attest to this presence. Clarke's scope is decidedly historical: being a seventh-generation black Nova Scotian himself, he resorts to this long-standing tradition of Africans to vindicate their rights and their position within its historical and cultural panorama. It is on these bases that he coins the term of Africadia, which, as has been previously explained, refers to a sociocultural cosmos of black communities in Nova Scotia descending from black Loyalist and refugee groups. Clarke's strategy to incorporate the Africadian cultural panorama into the wide African diaspora and into the world of Canadian literature includes the adoption of a nationalist stance. In terms of settled diasporas, this nationalist construction of an imagined community does not mean that belonging is not compromised at times by racist practices in the hostland; as Clarke informs "For Africadians, Nova Scotia was a virtual dystopia. They not only lived an epic indigence, they also suffered ramshackle, poorly staffed schools – when they had any at all" (2002: 111). The poverty he alludes to in these lines is that represented in the novel and this dystopia is certainly George and

Rue's Nova Scotia. However, rather than being portrayed as the means to sever attachment to the land, this dystopia is presented as part of the long and complex history of blacks in the region. Black communities suffered from systematic abuse, marginalisation and social repression. Yet, these factors are not approached as the reasons for not implementing an indigenous identity; on the contrary, despite these obstacles, the prolonged inhabiting of this land permits such identity to be constructed.

Clarke utilises different mechanisms to make this belonging effective. Taking into account that these communities are threatened by discourses that emphasise and insist on their otherness, there is a necessary negotiation of the tensions of living in a space that negates their integration and the desire for integration itself. One of the paradigms he sees the need to address is mainstream culture and literary canons, inherited from a colonial Anglo-speaking Canadian tradition:

> Another point to make about the canon is that it is our canon too. Even though it was imposed on us, it still belongs to us. I am told that I have to accept these writers as great writers, and that, in terms of English poetry, these are the models I have to use, but perhaps we can take these models and blacken them. […] In order to survive, in order to maintain some specificity for ourselves, we have no choice but to try to claim it for ourselves, to pretend that Shakespeare comes from Weymouth Falls or that Virginia Woolf comes from North End Halifax. (1998: 141, 142)

As reflected in this passage, the cultural de-centralisation of Africadian literature is twofold: it refers to their alienation from Canadian archetypes which are, in turn, placed in the periphery of an English canon. Clarke's contestation of the position of black culture in Nova Scotia, twice removed from a formal centre, is to appropriate, rather than reject, these impositions. It must be emphasised that this appropriation is not a mere act of mimicry: it entails challenging and transformation, and the inclusion of the imprint of black culture, that is, "blackening" the canon. A passage in the novel which describes Asa's affair with a white woman named Purity reflects this translation of cultures, as their sexual rapport is described through Shakespearian allusions brought to a rural Nova Scotian context: "The every-Friday-night Asa-Purity duo was an importation of Othello-and-Desdemona Venice to Windsor-on-the-Avon" (32). Their interracial relationship is compared in dramatic terms to that of Shakespeare's characters; the town of Windsor, which is traversed by a river aptly named "Avon" works thus as a double referent for the geographical context of the original play, Venice,

and for the author's native town, Stratford-upon-Avon. This creative re-conversion of cultural referents affects also the apparent solidity of geographical distributions; as Alexander MacLeod puts it "[i]n his always pastoral, green world of Africadia, the fixed facts of Nova Scotian geography become more flexible: Weymouth Falls can turn into Whylah Falls, and Digby County can change its name to Jarvis County. Beatrice Chancy can come from Italy and be relocated to the Annapolis Valley in 1801" (2008: 109). One humorous and ironic re-baptism of place in the novel is the narrator's playful transformation of the name of Halifax into "Hell-of-a-Fuck" (63).

This background allows the reading of *George and Rue* under a different light, one in which the racist society in which the characters struggle for survival is not represented exclusively as the antagonistic hostland that excludes migrant groups from its borders. The degree of complexity that this text entails implies the confluence of a discriminatory space with a space of belonging for Africadian peoples. This leads to negotiation strategies such as the politicising of place naming and the incorporation of cultural elements from the mainstream domain, but also an obstinate assertion of the black presence in the history of Nova Scotia. Like *Fire on the Water*, *Whylah Falls* and *Beatrice Chancy*, *George and Rue* constitutes one more layer in the cultural sediments that allow the reconstruction of different episodes of black Nova Scotian history. There are reasons for the choice of this particular aspect of history. On the one hand, the brothers were Clarke's relatives, and so, his "desire to meditate on the fate of my kin" (Kyser, 2007: 868) comes from a personal drive. On the other hand, there is an urgency to disclose the impact of black communities on white societies (and vice versa) in this region. Because of the insistence on the centrality of black histories in the United States and the concomitant obscurity of similar experiences of discrimination, crime and violence in Canada, the allusion to this atrocious murder achieves two goals: to highlight the presence of black groups in Nova Scotia (and therefore Canada) and to denounce the deplorable living conditions of those groups. While the novel does not exculpate the brothers from their deeds, for which, Clarke acknowledges, they received their sentence, he also states that "there remained socio-political attitudes, respecting 'Coloureds' in the Maritimes, in the 1940s and earlier, that merited examination, especially given that these attitudes helped to imprison black people in illiteracy, poverty, and unemployment (all excellent conditions for creating criminals and killers)" (2007: 868-869). The inconsistencies in racial treatment that prevailed in this region

until the very last decades of the twentieth century (and it could be argued that its effects are still currently felt) provide a socio-historical context to the murder committed by George and Rufus Hamilton. The attitudes Clarke mentions in this paragraph are reflected in the novel in passages such as the following: "(Indeedy, Fredericton was anxious to see 'shiftless, murderous niggers' hanged – in tune with the racket of hammers hitting nails, the crescendo of piano keys – hammers – striking chords and the machine-gun of typewriter hammers striking paper)" (194); in which the predisposition of white society to see black criminals hanged is formally described by using metaphors for the murder committed by the brothers, thus projecting their violent instinct into the white groups' supposed demands for justice. This is further reinforced by the inclusion of an appendix which describes a similar murder committed by two white men in Montreal. They too were condemned to be hanged, however, at the last moment, their sentences were commuted to life imprisonment (214), a factor that contrast with the merciless hanging of the Hamilton brothers.

The regulation of space in racist terms, as well as discriminatory mindsets of white societies in Nova Scotia result in the characters' self-definition as outcasts: "'Joygee, we is just thieves, pure thieves. We steal firewood, chickens, clothes off clotheslines, even fools' bad ideas'" (104). Even though George responds by reminding him that he has been able to support his family through hard work, Rufus insists on these readings of themselves, imposed by the readings of black communities established from the outside, abounding in derogatory and marginalising signifiers. This is far from any concept of an idyllic homeland. However, the ultimate purpose of the novel is to portray these events as part of an ongoing genealogy that has been extant in the region since the eighteenth century. It is the historical roots and troublesome connections to place that this story emphasises, a feeling of belonging articulated through pain and struggle.

In the search for the location of the homeland within black Nova Scotian groups, Wesley's *Chasing Freedom* could be read as predecessor to Clarke's text, following the chronological line of the stories they narrate. Wesley's novel, after all, deals with the foundations, the very creation of the settlement of the geo-cultural dimension that Clarke calls Africadia. The characters' relationships with the land and the white community they coexist with (albeit occupying strictly separated spaces) are, like those portrayed in *George and Rue*, conflictive to say the least. Factors such as the shattering

of hope that Sarah and other blacks had constructed around the idea of an egalitarian community in Nova Scotia, the fact that their granting of freedom did not guarantee any actual liberties, and the confrontation with white groups in a developing colony in which survival was hard even without the added impediments of a dark skin complexion, again establish an unstable basis for the definition of Nova Scotia as a homeland. In terms of Clarke's project of unearthing the historical imprints of Africadians and translating them into fiction as vehicle for their dissemination, this novel may function as a window to the early steps of blacks in the region and the initial stages of the establishing of roots connecting community and land.

At least two elements in the novel point at the emergence of a sentiment that resembles that of attachment for a homeland. The first is that, even though blacks continued to be abused, the gaining of nominal freedom supposed a considerable change from the situation of slavery in which they previously lived. In this sense, the novel shows fleeting moments of happiness in which the protagonist, Sarah, is free to feel at home; such is the case of the public Methodist gatherings: "Sarah felt it in her heart. In no other place could you feel more free or more at home than in the clearing" (55). Being free, Fortune reminds Sarah, is a right that should not have to be granted; however, coming from slavery they celebrate their freedom as a possibility that can only take place in Nova Scotia: "'Bless this child, Destiny, and this child, Prince. They are born out of slavery. Born here to become a free man and a free woman in Nova Scotia. That is the gift to these children" (60). The possession of land is another constituent in the development of a proto-indigenous identity. A land to call their own, even when the size and quality of it fell short of what they were promised, was for some of the lucky few who obtained it, a determining factor in their decision to stay in the colony, despite the circumstances: "The promise of prosperity was now a joke. Birchtown was thinning as the crushing weight of poverty drove folks away. Some of the residents fled to other parts of Canada or back to the American colonies. Some talked of finding a way back to Africa. Fortune's resolve was strong. He refused to leave. What he had was just enough" (150). *Chasing Freedom* is the story of those who stayed in Nova Scotia and struggled to make a better place of it.

The experience of settlement, like those of slavery and migration, is gendered, and so is the assimilation of bonds with place. The absence of her children is Lydia's burden, it is a part of her life that she needs to come to terms with. The acts of using

enslaved women for reproduction purposes and taking their children at birth "had a traumatic and disruptive effect on the kinship structures within which birth, motherhood, and childrearing practices and rituals were embedded" (Bush, 2010: 77). Lydia carries this trauma to Nova Scotia, a trauma that translates into feelings of terrible guilt and anxiety to know where all her children are. Her freedom in the settlement of Birchtown comes in her case through spiritual and psychological relief. Bed-ridden and close to the moment of her death, she is finally compelled to tell her story that she has kept secret for fear and shame: "The time had finally come for the telling, 'the freeing of the soul,' the slaves called it" (171). Both her body and soul can be free in Nova Scotia, the disclosing of her secrets has a cathartic effect. Fortune, upon hearing her account says: "Here in Scotia we can put this family back together. We can know our real kin. There's no shame in that" (172). He begins to enquire about his lost siblings following what few indications Lydia could provide, and he eventually manages to bring them all together. Before dying, Lydia says: "'Margaret Cunningham, Amelia Pinkham, Prince, Fortune and Reece Johnson,' […] 'all my children!' She paused a moment before whispering, 'I love them all. I am sorry I had to keep this secret… Lord, I am sorry'" (218). By leaving slavery behind and settling in this land, Lydia is capable of new acts of resistance that help her negotiate her past and present absences and longing for her children: she is able to look for them and actually contact one, she tells her story to her family and, finally, her hopes realise when she has all her children reunited and can be known to them as their mother. Arguably, through this significant episode, Nova Scotia becomes a land of healing for Lydia.

These are hints at slight improvements in their quality of life that allow the family to establish an attachment to land, to a certain extent. This attachment often works in relative terms, and the characters are constantly referring to life prior to their migration, even when they are assessing the accomplishments they have achieved in Nova Scotia: "Fortune's eyes clouded. He stood out in the fresh air, taking a break from chopping wood, and scanned the land, thinking of how far they had come since Carolina. He was grateful. They were finally landowners. Sarah could read and write. Prince Jr. was doing fine. Mama had realized part of her dream with the reconciliation with Margaret" (174). It must be emphasised that these characters are first-generation migrants and they find themselves in the process of creating and developing a community where none (of their own people) existed before. When dealing with the

mechanisms by which peoples transform space into homeland, Yi-Fu Tuan maintains that "[t]he city or land is viewed as a mother, and it nourishes; place is an archive of fond memories and splendid achievements that inspire the present; place is permanent and hence reassuring to man, who sees frailty in himself and chance and flux everywhere" (1977: 154). These are, according to Tuan, some of the factors that determine the emergence of attachment to the homeland. It is an approach that requires a historical relationship to the land, that is, these bonds are formed with the passing of subsequent generations who create memories and forge ties with a particular place through lived experience for an extended period of time. For the characters in *Chasing Freedom*, no such inventory of memories and events is available. If at all, they are living them in the chronological present of the narration for people like George and Rue, the future generations. At this point, connections to place have to be established by other means, since their interactions with space are immediate and no sense of permanence has been constructed yet.

Tuan affirms that the land is perceived as homeland because it is a place where the individual and the community can feel safe and where daily experiences provide them with in-depth knowledge: "Attachment of a deep though subconscious sort may come simply with familiarity and ease, with the assurance of nurture and security, with the memory of sounds and smells, of communal activities and homely pleasures accumulated over time" (1977: 159). The context of segregation and racial hatred that Sarah and her family have to struggle against problematises this elementary mother-child relationship as these conflicts compromise the creation of memories and experiences that are associated to place in a congenial way, as well as hindering the perception of safety and protection. In relative terms, however, it could be argued that a sentiment of safety is shared in this community; this place does not behave like a homeland per se, but it is perceived as such when contrasted to external perils. Whitfield sustains that, even though black refugees "were not considered good enough for any place [in society] at all" (2002: 42), most of them refused to be relocated in Trinidad since "they realized that sailing down the American coast exposed them to possible capture and subsequent enslavement" (Whitfield, 2002: 48). Something similar could be said of the few black Loyalists who decided to stay in Birchtown despite the misery and violent riots with white residents: their attachment to the land is born from a fear of the life of slavery they left behind and of the possibility that this would be repeated in the

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future. Nova Scotia did not offer them the comfort and prosperity that is commonly associated with the protective motherly role of the homeland, but it certainly provided a harbour from past terrors and unknown future menaces.

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Two aspects in the readings of *No Great Mischief* presented so far conflict with the translation of the homeland to the hostland. The first is that, out of the four novels, MacLeod's is the most persistent in its connections to Scotland. Different dimensions of the characters' lives, in individual and collective terms, are influenced by cultural and biological ancestral inheritances. The second is the pervasive construction of Cape Breton/Nova Scotia as an isolated and underdeveloped place where traditional ways of life are in decay. When moving in diasporic context homeland and hostland are conceived as binary opposites, the former articulated as the original land/cultural dimension of belonging and the latter as the destination/society of settlement and non-belonging. This novel, however, contains textual evidence to demonstrate that Alexander and his family are not "strangers from elsewhere" (Zhang, 2000: 126) and are not struggling to be integrated into a hostile social network. Cape Breton is a homeland for these characters, a place where they do not feel alienated. This section explores passages in the novel that, implicitly or explicitly, attest to these affirmations.

Brah describes home as "the lived experience of a locality. Its sounds and smells, its heat and dust, balmy summer evenings, or the excitement of the first snowfall, shivering winter evenings, sombre grey skies in the middle of the day […] all this, as mediated by the historically specific everyday of social relations" (1996: 192). If as she, and also Tuan (1977: 159, 185) suggest, the association of memories to a particular place is one of the factors that contribute to the feeling of attachment to the land, and therefore, to the subsequent definition of that place as "homeland," then, the previous references to Alexander's memories of Cape Breton may be analysed as part of the itemisation of episodes that permit the interpretation of the hostland as homeland. Alexander's narration process is a consistent unearthing of memories as he gradually displays passages from his childhood, adolescence and adulthood from the narrative present of his middle-aged perspective. In this recuperation of the lived past, Alexander methodically alludes to the distortion that recollections undergo when accessed from a distant point in ti

me, as well as hinting at the interferences and alterations of his and other people's subjective interpretations. These metafictional warnings against the empirical value of memories does not make the past he evokes less real or less important for him: "But still, whatever its inaccuracies, this information has come to be known in the manner that family members come to know one another because they share such close proximity" (53).

There are episodes in the novel in which the island is explicitly referred to as "home." One such example is a moment when Alexander, together with both his grandfathers and his grandmother are going back to Cape Breton after his graduation day in Halifax. The narrator is a witness to Grandpa's euphoria: "We crossed the Canso Causeway. When the front wheels of the car touched Cape Breton, Grandpa said, 'Thank Christ to be home again. Nothing bad can happen to us now.'/ We still had an hour's drive or perhaps more along the coast, but it was obvious that Grandpa already considered himself in 'God's country,' or 'in our own country,' as he called it" (108). Three elements may be emphasised from this excerpt: one is the rendition that Grandpa makes of Cape Breton as a safe place, which again coheres with Tuan's description of the homeland as a protective mother, as a place that offers both physical and psychological shelter; then, it is notable how Grandpa refers to Cape Breton as "our" country, the use of the possessive indicating a strong and exclusivist relationship with the land, one of the most frequently used mechanisms to express the manner in which the location of individual identity is perceived with respect to the world (Tuan: 149, 150); finally, a very localised position of the homeland can be detected, since the characters had been driving across Nova Scotia for the whole trip, but it is not until they crossed the causeway that they feel the relief of returning home.

From a gender perspective, some of the narrative means have been addressed, through which the land, with its winter inclemency, was perceived as a menace to the omnipotence of the settler's masculinity. The symbolic use of the castrated phallus is reversed in the following passage, which is a continuation of the previous one, with a different allusion to male genitals: "'When I was a young man,' he continued enthusiastically, buouyed up by his own good spirits, 'when we would come home in the spring from working in the woods, I would get a hard-on as soon as my feet touched the ground of Cape Breton. Yes sir, it would snap right up to attention at the front of my pants. I couldn't hold it down'" (108). The use of sexual arousal to describe the

sensation produced by the proximity of the homeland is the ultimate expression of an intimate bond between man and land. In contrast to the destructive and castrating effect with which it was previously characterised, now the land induces a response of empowerment and exhilaration. Cape Breton is thus constructed in gendered terms as a threatening masculine contestant to the characters' manhood and additionally, at the same time, it is portrayed in a feminised Oedipal conjunction, as mother (the land that protects) and as lover (the object of sexual affection).

With the deterioration of coal and steel mining that took place in Cape Breton in the second half of the twentieth century, unemployed labourers were forced to leave the island as more and more mines closed down (Marquis, 2010). Calum and the other brothers are part of that sector of society who has emigrated to other mines in Canada and the United States. When Alexander provisionally joins them in Sudbury, Ontario, he describes experiences and conducts that closely resemble diasporic praxis. As emigrants in an unfamiliar place, Cape Breton emerges clearer than ever as the homeland referent, identified in similar terms to those of ancestral homelands of classic diasporas, their situation being analogous to exile. They share the space in the mines with other migrants, people who come from other countries. However, each keep their own separate world, and thus the brothers do not mingle with peoples from other countries: "We would pass by the various groups bound for our own region of the country while voices from the small intense divisions of Europe rose around us. Sometimes as we passed by certain voices would quietly attempt to identify us. 'Those are the Highlanders,' they would say, 'From Cape Breton. They stay mostly to themselves'" (127). This is an example of cultural identity ghettoisation, encapsulated in the mise-en-abime of the mine shacks and common dining room, in which members of each ethnic group establish solid boundaries around the familiarity of their language and their people. Another element that imitates diasporic practices is the nostalgic appreciation and re-visiting of the homeland: "When we were not working or sleeping we played the records of the Cape Breton violin which accompanied my brothers everywhere. […] And when we talked, often in Gaelic, it was mostly of the past and of the distant landscape which was our home" (135). "Home" here definitely does not refer to Scotland, but to Cape Breton. It is through this second exile, through the repetition and re-enactment of the migration acts of their ancestors, that the new homeland for the clan takes shape in the island they left behind.

The perhaps most relevant part of the novel as regards the association between Cape Breton and a homeland is to be found in its last pages. In the final moments of his life, Calum calls Alexander from Toronto saying that "'It's time'" (256). He drives him to Cape Breton, and the instant the car arrives Calum dies. This could be read as the ultimate return home, voluntarily going back to the place of origins and postponing death, waiting to be there in order to complete the most essential life cycle. Once again, the description of the landscape and the surroundings, coupled with memories that are triggered by their return, suggests a deep bond with the island of their childhood: "I recognise all the familiar landmarks, although it is dark and there are mountains of snow. Here is the place where Grandpa threw the top of his whisky bottle out the window the day we were returning from my graduation. The day the red-haired Alexander MacDonald was killed, although we did not know it then" (261). When dealing with MacLeod's stories Urquhart aligns them in a broader Canadian context by saying that

> We Canadians are, after all, a nation composed of people longing for a variety of abandoned homelands and the tribes that inhabited them, whether these be the distant homelands of our recent immigrants, the abducted homelands of our natives peoples, the rural homelands vacated by the post-war migrations to the cities, or the various European or Asian homelands left behind by our earliest settlers. All of us have been touched in some way or another by this loss of landscape and of kin, and all of us are moved by the sometimes unidentifiable sorrow that accompanies such a loss. (2001: 37-38)

This study argues that such deferral of the identification of a homeland with the subsequent reiteration of non-belonging in Canada, and the supposition that a place elsewhere exists which embodies the characteristics of that yearned-for motherland cannot be applied to *No Great Mischief*. The characters of this novel are highly influenced by and stubbornly maintain certain traditions despite globalising circumstances that threaten with cultural loss, but they have a clear conscience of where their homeland is, and that is Cape Breton.

In the case of McNeil's novel, approach to homeland as a place of belonging is not unequivocal because Eve's relationship with Cape Breton is an ambivalent one. She feels the need to escape the place and experience life in a different, more exciting world. The figure of her father, whose point of view the novel adopts at times, conveys a much more direct feeling of attachment to the land, but this is not shared by the main

character. Belonging to a particular place is thus contested between the different perspectives of the characters in the novel, and even within Eve's own subjectivity. Nevertheless, when this text is analysed within the context of the Scottish diaspora, which strictly speaking should involve a certain self-definition of the characters as Scottish and emotional and economic allegiance to this land, it can be observed that neither of these requisites are present. Eve's feeling of belonging might be problematized by the internal struggle between her past in the Maritimes and her present cosmopolitan self she so tenaciously creates, but there are several episodes in the novel that point to the construction of a deep and resilient connection to her native home.

When Eve returns to Clam Harbour, her hometown, she is struck by the familiarity of her surroundings, by the immediateness of her recognition, which suggests the existence of a subconscious level where these images are stored and wait in a state of latency to be revived with new contact: "She is surprised at how hungry her eye is for the detail of a place that she has so deliberately tried to forget. Her ear tunes itself so effortlessly to an old frequency: the wind breathing in tandem with the land, the uninterrupted news of silence" (23). Even though she struggles with her background, as the place where she grew up, she has inevitably formed a bond with this land, albeit not one of appreciation and pride. Like Alexander in *No Great Mischief*, Eve possesses memories of her childhood and early adolescence in Cape Breton; this is a relationship to place that again resonates with Tuan's definition of attachment to the land, in which memories and familiarity are central. Her experience of place means that, even though she fears and rejects this notion, her life was shaped by the spaces she inhabited; the rites of passage and personal development of her early years took place in those spaces and therefore her individuality and her future choices are all influenced (in one way or another) by her time in the Maritimes. It is in the house of her neighbour, for instance, that she starts to move on from childhood and to have her first contact with adulthood: "Celyn's house had been Eve's initiation into adult life with its flower-power permissive parents, the parties they hosted that cut across class and geographical divides, investment bankers from Boston and liquor store cashiers from Indian Bay, drinking and dancing together" (33). Because of the extended time she spent there, she knows the land as part of her body, and has the ability to read the wilderness surrounding her native home:

> She watched him walk down the road, past the NO TRESPASSING sign. The signs were new; they had been nailed to trees by outsiders who had bought the land running down to the shore from the abandoned road. What were they going to do, shoot her? She had always walked the trails through these woods. When she was sixteen she had cut a trail herself up to the top of the mountain, three miles long, most of it uphill. She knew the land from top to bottom, where the rivers began, what parts were swampy, the numerous brooks that coursed down the side of the old mountain like so many veins on the back of a hand. (83)

Even though the open spaces of her past are now regulated by signposts claiming private property, she has created and internalised a map of the land and its components that remains intact in her mind. This approach to her surroundings places her at the centre, as reflected in the word "outsiders:" they may have legal rights to this land, but they are the other, they are the ones who do not belong there, whereas she is part of that territory because, apart from possessing thorough knowledge of the terrain, she has with her own agency transformed it and created new paths where none existed before, thus leaving her imprint in the landscape.

The attempt she has made to forget Cape Breton is reiterated in other occasions. Despite this resolution, her return galvanizes not only memories of physical spaces, but also memories of her past self, the places she would go to, the shape of her own adolescent identity and how it related to her surroundings:

> Years which melted so effortlessly away are congealing again until the version of herself she had been when she had last driven up and down the highway to Indian Bay emerged: the high school misfit who preferred the company of men old enough to be her father, the trials of school-bus friendships, homework, the eternal dilemma of what to do at lunch while cliques undulated in the cafeteria, walking through the forest by the lake and returning just in time for English or History. (183)

She often incorporates these readings of the landscape into her own streams of thought, her inner debates and self-search quests. This connection between nature and transcendental revelations is best expressed towards the end of the novel, in a moment of final realisation and acceptance of her mother's absence: "She has been looking at these lakes so much of her life, waiting for something, some message, a crucial piece of information, perhaps, something that is rightfully hers and which has been taken away to be returned to her" (375). One of the reasons for her leaving the island was probably to escape from the pain of her mother's death, which she has hardly learnt how to

acknowledge: "She will never know her mother, she will never hold her hand, wrap her hair around her finger. Such a simple thought, and yet in all these years she has never allowed herself to think it, even though she has been tracing the outlines of this outrage, unwittingly, all her life" (375). It is through renewed contact with her past and the forging of new connections with this place that she is capable, not only of understanding, but also of coming to terms with it.

Despite these factors the protagonist often clearly states that the confinement of the island suffocates her, she feels out of place even in a land she is so well acquainted with. In a conversation with her sister, she tells her "I never belonged here, you did;" to which her sister remarks, "You went out of your way not to belong" (307). Her mother's death and subsequent problematic and intractable upbringing by her father, together with the backwardness of the place, lead her to seek a completely different life in the city, to explore the outside world. This partial detachment contrasts with the bond between Alistair and the land he inhabits. His knowledge of it, acquired from years of traversing the same territories, is even deeper than that of her daughter's, so that even at night he is able to negotiate his way through invisible obstacles: "They followed her father through the moonless forest. He needed no flashlight, of course, didn't even look at the path, while Eve and Noel had to keep an eye on the ground to avoid tripping over roots and falling flat on their faces" (356). His attachment to the land, sometimes in spite of himself, is much more direct and uncomplicated than Eve's contradictory sentiments towards Cape Breton:

> At times he catches glimpses of another version of himself, living in a modest bungalow in some small Ohio town after a lifetime of working in the ships that ply the Great Leaks, or an inhabitant of the tidy Crescents, Closes, or Avenues of Kitchener, Ontario, of Chilliwack, B.C. Would he ever have survived such an exile? Other men could, sure: tougher men, perhaps. He has stayed where he belonged, only to find that he is deserting himself, although in increments, following the eels and the cod into some unmapped oblivion. (202)

His survival, like that of the disappearing fish, is threatened. He finds himself in the last years of his life in a world that no longer sustains his traditional lifestyle, but his obstinate desire to stay at home prevents him from moving on. Eve and her sister, Anita, while pondering about the future of their father, have a conversation that reflects this dilemma. Anita points out, "It's *his* land. It was never ours. […] He can't keep it cleared; the eels aren't coming in the numbers they used to," to which Eve replies, "I

think it might kill him to sell it;" they finally both agree that it would be hard for him to move into a retirement home (160-161).

A simile between Alistair and the eels he fishes seems to be established throughout the novel. He is fascinated by the lives of these animals, accounts of which the narrator inserts at different points in the story, usually from Alistair's perspective. After spending their lives in scattered regions of the world the eels return to the place where they were born to mate and die in their real home. Alistair wonders: "What could be the point of this blind fidelity to a sunken home? That they should persist with this valley as their home, so remote and inhospitable, that they should believe there could be no other" (286). Like them he has his home in an isolated and apparently irrelevant world, but he nevertheless chooses to remain there despite the basic predicaments of impending extinction.

In terms of migration, diaspora and the recollections and re-enactment of traditions from the homeland, it is clear that these novels present a reading of the hostland (which are in fact different hostlands in their diverse chronological dimensions) that is much deeper and immediate than those they portray of the alleged homelands. Over the course of years and geographical distances there has been a shift in focus and the characters' identities are no longer anchored in the ancestral homelands, but in their present hostlands. While for the first generations of migrants Nova Scotia must have certainly been an alien space, the gaze of these diasporas is no longer fixed in the loss of the homeland left behind in a distant past, as critical discourses pervasively insist upon. This region is represented as homeland in the novels, although this is expressed in different ways. The African novels convey a relationship to Nova Scotia that is developed through pain, fear and struggle. As a narrative of first settlements, Wesley's story portrays a family that is truly alienated from the society they live in, but this is connected to racist practices, rather than to the predicaments and anxieties of emigration and arrival in an unknown place. Clarke continues with this imposed legacy of discrimination and explores the very complex roots that tie the Hamiltons to the land, but it is particularly through his critical work that the centrality of Nova Scotia as a homeland emerges. No race barriers stop the characters in the Scottish novels from having a fulfilling life in Nova Scotia, although there are certain class divisions that obstruct the social mobility of some of the characters, and those who escape those limitations are compelled to feel guilty about it. In this sense the main characters of the

two novels are very similar: their relationship to their hometowns are rather ambivalent. However, deep connections to the land, memories of places and transcendental passages of interaction with the landscapes result in the, overall, role of Nova Scotia as a nurturing homeland.

The purpose of the next section, therefore, is to go one step further in the analyses of the implications of these shifting allegiances and emotional/psychological investments in the land. Is it possible to have two different homelands as identification references? Are the identities of the characters defined in terms of the past or the present one? Is it possible that an indigenous identity emerges among these groups as a result of the transformation of the hostland into a homeland? And if so, what role does the past homeland acquire? The next pages will deal with these questions by closely observing the texts under scrutiny and pertinent critical theory that will throw light on such debates.

4.3. The Creation of a Native Identity.

This point is a crucial stage for the present study. The assertion that the referent of the homeland has been transferred from the signifier of the ancestral or original land/cultural realm, to the present, contemporary hostland has certain implications. If the homeland is now in the place of destination does that mean that the descendants of migrants in these diasporas have become native to the lands they settled? What repercussions may that have on the "true" indigenous peoples inhabiting the same land? How does this affect identifications with or distinctions from more recent migrants from the same diasporas? The following approach to the texts as indigenous to Nova Scotia requires a careful assessment of this affirmation, on the one hand, and a conceptual turn on the other.

Apart from references to the texts, the emergence of a native identity within the African-Nova Scotian (settled) diaspora is evaluated in this section through the exploration of certain points and historical events that are essential to the construction of Africadia. The razing of Africville, and the cultural renaissance that ensued is one such crucial event. As notions of indigeneity seem to be imbued with claims to authenticity two important conversations are established in this context: the first one is between indigenous blacks and the aboriginal peoples of Nova Scotia, since critics like Paula Madden reject this identification which further displaces First Nations Peoples

and their rights to the land; the second is with more recent black migrants to Canada (from the Caribbean especially) whose voices are reflected in the opposing views of, for instance, M. NourbeSe Philip or Dionne Brand, defending that a nationalist stance does not cohere with the African diaspora experience and generates divisions with blacks who cannot claim such roots (Goldman, 2004: 25-26; Madden, 2009: 32). These dialogues will help clarify some of the objections and contestations against the Africadian indigenous positioning.

Regarding the Scottish novels, MacLeod's presents more difficulties when analysing it from a settled diaspora point of view, due to the ubiquitous presence of metaphors and similes that engage with Scotland and which seem to profoundly affect the identities of the characters. Special attention is directed here to the element of Cape Breton music, this time not in relation to its Gaelic precedence but concerning whatever transformations it might have undergone in Canada and its development into an endemic Cape Breton cultural form. This will illustrate some of the processes of nativisation that have taken place in this community. Furthermore, by aligning this novel with his short story collections, additional insight will be gained on constructions of Cape Breton (and not Scotland) as the main target for the various narrators' emotional involvements. It is not complex to identify a native Canadian identity in McNeil's work. It has been mentioned that the protagonist is divided between the rural space of her hometown and the urban space she escapes to. These contexts are explored in more detail in this section, always bearing in mind that the existential anxieties that this division produces are encompassed in a Canadian dimension. The presence of Canadian identity is further reinforced by the contrast with American characters and vice versa, by the portrayal of Nova Scotia and Canada that the American characters construct, a point that is also addressed below.

The empirical shift that is thereby undertaken calls for a conceptual reconfiguration. When diasporas are transformed into settled diasporas the referents of its components are transmuted and, therefore, new vocabulary must be developed in order to address and thoroughly interpret them. The first signifier to be affected by this change is that of the homeland as understood in diaspora scholarship: once it is transferred to the hostland, does that mean that it is to disappear altogether from the equation as a category? Chapter 3 demonstrated how certain elements from this homeland are preserved, even though, with a few exceptions, this may be so on

symbolic and sentimental levels. Origins continue to affect settled diasporans in subtle ways, and in consequence the homeland as a recipient and producer of meaning cannot be discarded. This is especially noticeable in the Africadian novels where, rather than a territorial homeland, the origins and circumstances of migration and the past history of violence and discrimination greatly impacts the evolution of these groups and their current place in the sociocultural contexts they inhabit. Equally relevant are Scottish traditions to the community portrayed in *No Great Mischief*, and in no way could they be disengaged from the characters' present identity and imagination. This study proposes the term "primordial homeland" in substitution for the all-encompassing "homeland," in order to convey the notion of origins and of distance, both in geographical and in chronological terms.

For its part, the concept of hostland also undergoes important challenges. As such, the hostland no longer (metaphorically) "hosts" the immigrants or "guests." As the descendants of migrants develop a native identity and feeling of belonging in this place, "hostland" ceases to be an appropriate designation. "Homeland" would be the most immediate replacement, but would be confusing, besides creating the impression that the hostland is simply transformed into an unproblematised homeland, which is not the case. The struggling, contradictory and ambiguous constructions of attachment to the land represented in these novels suggests that the relationship to this new homeland is shaped and affected by the fact of possessing a migrant and settler genealogy (apart from the influence of the personal circumstances of every specific character), a particularity that cannot be found in indisputably native groups and identities. In order to distinguish this from the former (primordial) homeland, the concept "settled homeland" is introduced as the designation for the cultural and geographic context to which groups with diasporic origins belong. From this point on, the groups hitherto referred to as diasporas will be now addressed as settled diasporas, and equally the other two newly introduced concepts will substitute those of the homeland and the hostland. This epistemological expansion is put into practice in this section, and its value and efficiency will be further tested in the following chapter, by situating the African and Scottish settled diasporas within local, national and global frameworks.

In order to discern the presence of a native identity the contours of Africadia as a settled homeland must be defined. It becomes clear at this point that the historical presence of blacks (descendants of Africans) in the geographical and cultural context of

Nova Scotia has resulted in a ramification of the African diaspora with a very distinct idiosyncrasy. In a semi-autobiographical comment Clarke points at some of the situational circumstances in which these particularities emerge and how they manifest themselves:

> I would travel to Toronto, and someone would ask me, "What island are you from?" and I would answer, "Cape Breton." I would stroll down a street in Old Québec and hear someone playing bagpipes and I would weep, almost shamefully. I would walk along the shores of English Bay, in Vancouver, and I would feel that I was just too far away, too far away, from, from what? Well, a certain pleasure in house parties, the special joys of rye and ginger ale, the deep, soul sound of the singing of African Baptist choirs, the gabble and eloquence of Black English on Gotti'gen Street, at Whitney Pier, on New Road, in Three Mile Plains. (2002: 4)

Nova Scotia and its cultural influences shape black identity, which are in turn incorporated into historical and personal memory, so that, when thus "exiled" the Africadian subject recognises these emblems and externalises the place he/she comes from. This is a combination of cultural elements that has spawned almost in spite of the efforts from the mainstream of society to negate and erase its existence. Clarke argues that although "to be black, at least in Nova Scotia, was to insist on a separate and proud identity […] [n]othing in the province reflected me or mine save for the two dozen or so such churches of the African United Baptist Association (AUBA)" (2002: 3). One of the purposes of the Africadian historiographical project is to resist and fight against this invisibilisation and to restore the Africadian historical and cultural constituents to the often ignored cosmopolitan background of Nova Scotia. The novels analysed in this dissertation are part of this tradition of historical recovery as they illustrate black Nova Scotian's engagements with and struggles against the region's society. The historical episodes narrated in *George and Rue* and *Chasing Freedom* are fragments of the long life of Africans in Nova Scotia. Another vital episode is the razing of Africville.

Africville and its terrible destruction must be included in the analysis of an Africadian native identity for two reasons: as mentioned earlier, it became a turning point for Africadian culture, which experimented a renaissance period as a result; on the other hand, the artistic and cultural productions, as well as individual and collective responses and expressions of discontent and regret that emerged as a reaction were articulated in terms of roots and belonging. The systemic neglect that this community

suffered in its more than a century of existence speaks of the turbulent relationship of Africadians to this region. Africville was a tight community that offered a home and protection to its inhabitants. As Nelson illustrates:

> [the] sense of community came in part from extended family networks that developed over the years through sharing of living space, handing down of properties, and the cooperation required to survive with few financial resources. Older people tended to be cared for at home, and children tended to find food and shelter in the houses of various friends, which would be reciprocated in their own. (2008: 63)

However, she continues, "[i]n urban planning models, extended families living in shared spaces are considered evidence of a community's degeneracy" (63). These domestic practices were seen as anomalous by the white society, they further constructed the racial subject as "other," and therefore as susceptible of eradication and correction. Feelings of belonging in Africville, like those of the characters in Clarke's and Wesley's novels, are circumscribed by racist policies. Struggle and suffering shape the outlines of attachment but the connection, resulting from the possession and inhabiting of land and the establishment of interpersonal and familial links for generations, was adamant. Clarke's fiction briefly includes the historical reality of Africville, it alludes to the people's entitlement to the land and describes its inhabitants as a close community of good-willed people. In the story, when Rufus travels to Halifax he goes to this neighbourhood:

> The city's Negro district, Africville, occupied the south side of Bedford Basin, on the peninsula's North End tip. Though its denizens had land titles granted by Victoria herself, the city council considered the seaside village a shantytown fit only for a slaughterhouse, railway tracks, a tuberculosis and polio hospital, and the city jail. The Coloureds in Africville wouldn't let in shifty interlopers who might give its citizens black eyes and bad names. Rue was welcome to play cards and buy bootleg, but he weren't welcome to stay. (64)

Here, Clarke attempts to show the organicity of the community and their intolerance for troublesome outsiders that would disturb their familial order, despite the fact that they city read this area as a slum where crime and violence abounded (Nelson, 2008: 67; Saunders, 1999: 189).

Evicted from their land and relocated elsewhere, the residents of Africville could do little to prevent the ending of the community. They were uprooted from their homes,

their historical settlement, a process that had devastating effects. As Nieves points out "it was only after residents had settled elsewhere that they fully realized what they had lost: the heart of their community life, their circle of support, and the place where they had a strong sense of belonging" (2007: 91). This displacement has been even formulated in terms of exile, where Africville stands as a homeland to a metaphorical diaspora. To the descendants of its inhabitants and to other black communities, Stephen Spencer writes, "the area is a beacon transmitting its histories and its sense of loss; functioning as an 'imagined community' […] similar to the experience of Diaspora (which it is of course a part) which conveys the dream of a homeland, a shrine of the past where the flame of memory is kept alive for the migrant group" (2012: n. pag.). Complaints, demands for retribution and justice, and awareness movements among other forms of social protest surfaced in black Nova Scotia. The discourse produced by these and by the cultural responses stimulated by the razing of Africville was one of regionalism, of rootedness and indigeneity. An underlying notion of belonging and entitlement to the land and to historical visibility impregnates the literary renaissance that ensues from this juncture. Clarke remarks that this process of reawakening of Africadian culture is thus tainted by the same dynamics of racism and discrimination in which black Nova Scotians were immersed throughout their time in this land, as opposed to the privileged white society whose mechanisms for transformation are grounded on different premises: "Africadian modernity was not marked by the founding of a university or the election of a premier. Rather, it was heralded by the bulldozers of 'progress' destroying the Seaview United Baptist Church and the entire community of Africville […] to engineer 'integration' and engender urban development" (2002: 156). He continues to add that "The failure of the ABA to protect 150-year-old Africville and its church fostered a defensive, apparently secular, nationalism" (156). Africville plays an essential role in the formation of an Africadian identity, as is clear from the above review of different approaches to this event. It also becomes clear that this identity, tied to concepts of long-standing close communities and traumas of uprootedness, dislocation and erasure, acquires an indigenous quality. It is as a reaction to this insistence on the absence of black Nova Scotians and the reiterated acts of obliteration that they underwent that claims for a place in the regional/national narrative is born.

This painstakingly achieved native identity is contested from diverse sources. One of the main objections has been formulated by Paula Madden, who opposes this

identification of blacks as indigenous to Nova Scotia on the grounds of the displacement and disenfranchisement that this affirmation entails for the "true" native groups of the region, primarily the Mi'kmaq peoples. According to her, in settling Nova Scotian lands, blacks were incurring in the same acts of dispossession and misappropriation as white settlers. Just as the renaming of the land in terms of European standards constitutes an erasure of the Natives' distribution and designation of territories so does this occur in a black context, as "[t]he lands that belonged to the Mi'kmaw nation, we rename Africville, Preston, Beechville, and Cherry Brook" (2009: 29). Madden criticises Clarke's approach to a native self-identification as inappropriate, due to its claims to authenticity and its rejection of a foreign origin, which she again aligns with the behaviour of the white coloniser. She sustains that "Clarke's attention to genealogy, place and his naming of some Black Canadians as indigenous, asserts a claim to the nation that is positioned as more authentic," and adds that "[t]his claim to indigeneity accomplishes the same erasure of First Nations' primary claim to this land as does Euro-Canadians' refusal to acknowledge their 'elsewhere' – in other words their origins in foreign lands" (2009: 34). While pointing out the need to recognise the downfalls of inadvertent colonialism, Madden's challenges can be dismantled in two ways. On the hand it is preposterous to sustain that white settlers' policies of appropriation and exclusion operate at the same level as black land settlement. As she admits herself "both groups [Mi'kmaqs and blacks] were, from the beginning of their contact with whites, subjected to unequal treatment and racial violence" (63). Blacks' access to the land of Nova Scotia was not a direct act of dispossession. The circumstances surrounding their migration and settlement are connected to traumatic episodes of abduction, dislocation, violence and abuse. Therefore, their eventual escape to Nova Scotia cannot be read in the same terms as the imperial projects of territorial expansion and civilising betterment of white settlers, especially those from the upper and middle classes. If indirectly the presence of blacks has similar consequences of territorial designation, occupation and exploitation this is in part due to white settlers' self-imposed supremacy and their unequal land management. Furthermore, the implications of Madden's arguments reinforce essentialist claims to national or regional belonging, as according to this view no other group, apart from the indigenous ethnicities, those whose origins are not to be found elsewhere, is allowed to develop a sense of attachment to the land and define themselves as native, under any circumstances.

On the other hand, Clarke's own approach to the First Nations Peoples of Nova Scotia debunks Madden's assumptions of black ethnicities being privileged over Aboriginal ones. Aside from ontological connections that align First Nations and black groups as a result of similar experiences of discrimination and social restrictions in this region, as Clarke declares, there exist important biological ties between both races. He affirms that "[m]any Africadians—if not most—are Métis; that is to say, mixed with First Nations peoples, eminently—but not only—the Mi'kmaq" (2011: 401). This is a largely unexplored domain, one that is only recently starting to gain visibility. One of the reasons for the opacity surrounding Mi'kmaq and black creolisation is the fact that many black families concealed the presence of Aboriginal relatives because, as Dorothy Mills-Proctor has put it "'[i]t's bad enough being black'" (2010: 55). Clarke's novel also attests to this racial métissage, which extends to his own family and therefore to the Hamilton brothers (both real and fictional). In one of the final sections of the book, entitled "Verdict" and signed by the writer, he includes a paragraph where this union is acknowledged:

> Though repelled by the Hamiltons' crime, I embrace them as my kin. They were born where I was born – in the Africadian settlement of Three Mile Plains, Nova Scotia – and George Hamilton and I were named for the same gentleman, his grandfather and my great-grandfather, George Johnson. (In naming me as she did, my mother salvaged the memory of that perished cousin – and recuperated the regal name of her grandfather.) Too, the Hamiltons were – like so many of us from the Three Mile Plains, Five Mile Plains, Windsor Plains (all the same community, really) – part Mi'kmaq and part African. (219)

This paragraph does not only incorporate the Mi'kmaq presence in the Africadian community, which Clarke embraces, but it also alludes to the relation between the protagonists and the writer, and their intricate stories and histories as part of the cultural landscape of Nova Scotia. Within the work of fiction proper, this combination is further integrated. In this passage the narrator offers a glimpse at the uncertain genetic history of Africadians and how it translates into physical traits: "The Plains people had since mixed with the Mi'kmaq, but only a few ancients knew exactly with whom and when. The results were splendid, though. These saltwater, brass-ankle Negroes had bulbous noses, sharp black eyes, curly and partly straight hair, and skin tones running from deep molasses brown-black to maple sugar cream, auburn copper to red-iron, orange, and to blue" (14-15). These body variations and markers of mixed-race ancestry are described as a rich ancestry of beautiful complexions; however, it is precisely these signifiers

which, in contact with white groups, otherise and marginalise Africadians. Thus, when George tries to find a job in Halifax he is rejected because "nobody wanted his malt, half-Injun face on their payroll" (83). In choosing to acknowledge and identify with his Mi'kmaq ancestry Clarke delves into a profound history of discrimination. Following Madden's proposition, Clarke's indigenisation of black Nova Scotia can be aligned with white settlers' projects of Aboriginal erasure. According to critics like Andrea Smith, white settlers apply a "logic of genocide" when facing Native populations, a logic which "holds that indigenous peoples must disappear. In fact, they must always be disappearing, in order to enable nonindigenous peoples' rightful claim to land" (Smith 2010: 69). Clarke's definition of Africadians as native drastically departs from these premises: although valid in itself due to the arduous task that it was for black Nova Scotians to forge a belonging to this land, it is further strengthened with the incorporation of the métis voice. Far from participating of an exclusionist or genocidal ideology, as Madden suggests, Clarke is narrating and visibilising the stories of the dispossessed against their reiterated erasure from mainstream national discourses.

While Clarke's novel is very intimately concerned with aspects of nativism, Wesley's *Chasing Freedom* only acknowledges the Mi'kmaq presence as a parallel experience to that of black settlers. Her text does not reflect a profound entwining of both ethnicities or a merging of cultures, rather, it portrays them as occupying a similar underprivileged space, the interactions between them thus restricted to the social transactions that result from sharing a common settlement. The few occasions where the Native population are mentioned take the form of quotidian scenes in which they indirectly participate. After Beulah gives birth to her children, Sarah and Lydia visit her; Fibby, the midwife, akss them to stay for lunch: "Bread and moose meat," she said, "The meat is from the Mi'kmaq, Joseph Joe, who camps down by the river" (61). Or later, at the beginning of a paragraph in a descriptive introduction of the plot the narrator says: "Sarah and Fortune were out in the yard slicing the eyes off sprouted potatoes, getting ready for the spring planting. Prince, now nine months, babbled away, watching from a small seat made from black ash by a local Mi'kmaq" (156). The novel addresses the existence of the Indigenous peoples as a socioeconomic component of the settlement that the blacks occupy. There is no mention or anxiety with displacement or invasion, except at one point when Sarah and Reece are walking through Birchtown and she reflects: "It's hard to believe people were here before us." However, Sarah does not

refer to dispossessed First Nations Peoples; she is commenting on the "dilapidated buildings and piles of rocks outlining foundations where the wind scattered the snow – the homes of the French before their expulsion" (90). The awareness of a palimpsest experience does not include the Aboriginal population, but the exiled Acadians and the remnants they left behind.

Criticism of the equation between black Nova Scotians and a native identity have also come from some black Canadian scholars. The national implications that this identity positioning involve contravene some of the agendas and ontologies conveyed in the works like Dionne Brand's or M. NourbeSe Philip. They adopt a transnational point of view, where African diasporans cannot be fully accommodated into the limits of any nation-state structure. Philip argues that the New World African is in constant search of a lost homeland: "where is home? And for those of us who belong to what I call the Afrospora, do we go back to the Caribbean […]; do we go 'back' to Africa; do we stay in North America? And always there's the feeling of having been ripped away from something, of having lost something. There is a psychic wound that we all carry and that we all struggle to heal" (Thomas, 2006: 206). These are some of the reasons why these Caribbean-Canadian authors are wary of using any vocabulary like "homeland" or "belonging" within a black Canadian context, let alone acquiescing to a particular national identity. For them the African diasporan is defined through a multiplicity of locations and experiences; moreover, the racist practices that pervade in Canadian white society and which erase the presence of black between its borders further complicates the possibility to belong. Thus as Walcott puts it, "[t]his position of outside means that, ultimately, an understanding of the Canadian nation exists where blackness is not possible as a constituent element" (2001: 128). At the heart of these oppositions lies the assumption that, in declaring Africadians as indigenous, Clarke is in some way privileging this experience as more authentic over those of more recent immigrants, especially from the Caribbean. In this description, McKittrick sceptically questions this project of establishing black historical roots in Nova Scotia by describing his approaches as the "real" and defining black Canadian experience: in Clarke's work it is possible to find "rural black homelands – historically situated and embedded with a rugged Canadian-ness – in (eastern?) Canada that, despite racism, segregation, violence, offer a pristine map back to authentic or 'real,' African-Canadian identities" (2002: 30). The main conflict that arises from this debate, then, is the assumptions that some forms

of articulating black identities are more appropriate or natural than others. Thus, while novelists like Clarke or Wesley incorporate a particular segment of black Canadian history in their fictions this does not entail the concession of any rights or authority over other parts of this multiple historical composition. Neither is the experience of recent Caribbean migrants the "real" or authentic narrative, despite the fact that this population constitutes the majority of black residents in Canada. As Clarke has illustrated, a black Canadian nationalism has to be expressed on the part of the Africadian community because, he says "we have to be insistent about our historical reality, our historical presence, because that has shaped our population in certain ways, and it's something that we need to have recognised. And so people start saying that the Black experience in Toronto of various ethnic groups is *the* Black experience. And that covers us. Quite frankly, I don't think so" (Cuder, 2001: 191-192).

Africadia represents an example of a settled diaspora in which a relationship of attachment and belonging has formed with the settled homeland, namely Nova Scotia, to the point that this connection has come to substitute the devotion and loyalty to the primordial homeland, which in this case can be read as Africa, the Caribbean, the United States or a cultural amalgamation of all. As will be explored in more detail in the following chapter, this is just one particular manifestation of the African diaspora which has developed in this way due to purely contingent historical and national conflicts and interactions but this does not mean that the Africadian settled diaspora is conceived as a model for black Canadianness or as the only possible epistemological approach to the construction of an African Canadian diaspora. The constitutive elements of this group are a struggling relationship to the white Nova Scotian society, and especially the presence in its long history of the experience of settling the land as free peoples, an experience that is the central aspect of Wesley's novel. The fact that *Chasing Freedom* and its accounts of black Nova Scotian early settlement processes has been produced in contemporary times, centuries after the events narrated took place, corroborates the relevance that recounting these passages, stories and mythologies has for the Africadian settled diaspora, as they constitute the foundations of their settled homeland.

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Before examining the Scottish Nova Scotian novels in more detail a brief analysis of the settler group they belong to is required. At this point of the study, certain conflicts

emerge in the identification of native identities that are the result of bringing different ethnic groups and ethos into the same context. When dealing with black Nova Scotians' claims to indigeneity, it became clear that the apparent displacements of Aboriginal peoples that might be an effect of this identification could not be articulated in the same oppositional binaries self/other that pervades ontologies of colonisation from white groups. The challenge here is to include these ontologies and discern legitimate claims to indigeneity within a settler-invader historical background. In settler colonies like Canada and Australia, the white settler takes over as the ruling group of these societies. Mainstream white groups constitute the main ethnic national identification for Canada, and not the "true" Aboriginal peoples; that is, Canada is imagined in terms of whiteness. Non-white minorities often condemn and react to this reality, this normalisation of whiteness, as it largely marginalises and alienates cultures other than white as non-Canadian (see, Aguiar, Tomic and Trumper, 2005; Hutcheon, 1991; McKittrick, 2006; Mukherjee, 1995, among others). This nativisation of the settler subject forms part of the paradoxes these societies are constructed upon. It is an indigenous identity that is forever contested, however implicitly, by the displacement of Aboriginal peoples. Johnston and Lawson, debating on the ambivalence of the settler subject, maintain that the settler narrative

> is concerned to act out the suppression of effacement of the indigene; it is also concerned to perform the concomitant indigenization of the settler. In becoming more like the indigene whom he mimics, the settler becomes less like the atavistic inhabitant of the cultural homeland whom he is also reduced to mimicking. The text is thus marked by counterfeiting of both emergence and origination. (2005: 369)

In discursive terms, then, the settler's myths of origins and ensuing native identity are marked by the silencing of acts of oppression and appropriation, the disarticulation of non-belonging and the underlying rejection of past foreign origins. This results in the creation of a secure position of authority and legitimate belonging.

The articulation of a native identity in *No Great Mischief* and *The Interpreter of Silences* is partly consolidated through these premises, although with a few exceptions. There is little mention of Aboriginal peoples in either novel. On one occasion, when retelling the story of his ancestors' migration, Alexander mentions that "[w]hen the boat landed on the gravelled strand, the cousins who had written the Gaelic letter and the Micmacs who were at home 'in the land of trees' helped them ashore and continued to

help them through the first long winter" (23). Here, the Mi'kmaqs are defined as the real indigenous people who felt at home in Nova Scotia, in contrast to the Scottish newcomers, and there is no conflict between both groups, rather, harmony and comradeship can be read as they cooperate in the settler advancement process. Later, the narrator briefly reflects on the current status of First Nations peoples in Canada: "In Kingston Penitentiary, Calum said, a disproportionate number of the prisoners were from the native population. In many cases they did not fully understand the language of those to whom they were entrusted or condemned. They would hang their dreamcatchers in the windows of their cells, he said. […] It was the only thing he said about his years of incarceration" (254). This excerpt alludes to an implicit situation of injustice, disenfranchisement and out of placeness, although the narrator does not identify any liability on the part of the white group to which he belongs. This failure to align whiteness with the oppressor comes from the self-identification of the characters of this novel (and to a lesser extent in *The Interpreter of Silences* too) with marginalised and dispossessed sectors of society. It has been argued how Celtic ethnicity was preyed on and forced to a process of anglicanisation in Britain's internal colonialism. The Scottish ancestry present in this novel confers a degree of ambiguity to the settlers and descendants of settlers and their role in imperial enterprises. Additionally, there are other ways in which the characters disengage themselves from a dominant or mainstream society, and that is mostly in terms of class differentiation.

While *The Interpreter of Silences* does not deeply engage with the Aboriginal community or the impact of white settlements on the lives of these groups, McNeil's earlier novel *Hunting Down Home* does offer a glimpse of the lives of contemporary Mi'kmaqs and their class and racial struggles. This novel revolves around the life of Morag, a girl who grows up in rural Cape Breton with her grandparents, her grandfather being a reckless alcoholic and abusive man. The text introduces the character of Dan, a Mi'kmaq Chief who lives in the nearby reservation, a friend of the family who often accompanies Morag and her grandfather in their hunting escapades. The narrator, a first-person Morag, addresses the inconsistences that exist between official versions of national history and the realities she sees at the reservation where her friend lives:

> At school we were taught about the finesse of the Micmac, their skill in fishing and hunting, as well as the total annihilation the Newfoundland Beothuks suffered at the hands of our ancestors, the white men. We were taught something of the superiority and economy of the

Algonquin way of life; we learned the strange bubbling-syllable names that marked the way through the dense woods and geography of our existence – *Kejimkujik, Nyanza, Shubenacadie, Whycocomagh*. We learned these alongside the names of places in our own language – Margaree, Liverpool, Inverness, Cheticamp, Halifax, Belle Côte: the Micmac, the Scots, the French and the English. (1996: 46)

Morag reviews the role of different ethnic groups in the shaping of the history of Nova Scotia by listing geographical names of various origins. However, even though the historically distant Beothuks' genocide is mentioned, there does not seem to be a distinction between an Aboriginal entitlement and a foreign appropriation of land. Later, when she describes the actual conditions of the Mi'kmaq reservation, the poverty and misery of the area lead Morag to wonder:

How had this happened? Where were the fierce, sinuously muscled warriors of our history books? Where was the pemmican and the teepees? Now the only birch-bark tent was erected beside Googoo's souvenir ship. (*Get your picture taken with the Chief! In the tepee beside the Handee basket and bead shoppe!*) And some American would wander into the teepee where Charles MacRae or another assimilated-named Micmac like Dan would be sitting with a dime-store headdress on in the gloom. (47)

In this sense, the narrator's approach to current displays of cultural elements reflect a discrimination that transcends class and extends into ethnic marginalisation whereby contemporary Mi'kmaqs are forced to enact a mimic version of what are considered authentic Indian traditions, and thus their selected ethnic performances are turned into a consumable element by the white middle-classes that demand these objects as tourist attraction. This search for the (un)authentic expresses an unspoken anxiety over white settlers' non-belonging and lack of authenticity, but the reality of the reservation is erased and ignored, as is the history of the Aboriginal peoples: "What had happened? No matter how many history books we read in school it seemed there was only one story to our country, but its name was forever obscured in the snowdrifts that smothered the years between our arrival and their demise" (47). These lines express and acknowledgement of guilt for "eradicating their existence *as peoples*," as Sarah Maddison has put it (2013: 290). Yet, the novel still blurs the lines between agents of violence and victims on the part of white settler descendants, as occurs in *No Great Mischief*, through the strategy of aligning the Mi'kmaq character and the protagonists in the same situation of dispossession and class marginal place. Even when Dan reports racial abuse in a bar frequented by Morag's grandfather on account of being Indian (and

prone to intoxication), which positions the Mi'kmaq at a further low social rank, there is still an underlying connection between these characters. This is especially reinforced by the borrowing of the figure of the Trickster, a mythical Mi'kmaq figure representing "the troublemaker," "the embodiment of chaos" which is used as symbol and metaphorical leitmotif to refer to Morag's grandfather. These narrative interactions, together with the common lower class of the characters and the element of the Celtic (i.e. displaced) ancestry work to mitigate the representation of white settlers as hierarchically superior. Also, as will be explored in the next chapter, the Maritimes occupy a position of socioeconomic and cultural ex-centricity within Canada, which further complicates these characters' agency as invaders or as racially authoritarian. Therefore, the articulation of indigeneity in the Scottish-Nova Scotian novels take directions that, in general, depart from the underlying assertion of domination over Aboriginal peoples and the subsequent anxieties and tensions that arise from continuous acts of disavowal.

As representative texts of settled diasporas, the hostland acts at this point as homeland and the task remains to identify how this indigenous conscience is portrayed. Apart from briefly alluding to relationships with the indigenous population, the native identity of the characters is expressed in different ways in *No Great Mischief*. Pointing at indigeneity is the intimate connection the land, which varies from memories of life and death to acts of settlement and collective and individual narrative transformations and adaptations. Other routes taken to convey the idea of a native identity are explored in this section. These include an alternative reading of Cape Breton music, frequently featured in the novel, and this work's, as well as the short stories', concern with the province of Nova Scotia in general and of Cape Breton in particular. The aim is to demonstrate, through this review, that even though there is an insistent recurrence to traditions and motifs from Scotland, and despite the instability of settler subjects' nativism, these texts generate a powerful image of the social and cultural landscape of Cape Breton, of which the characters are an essential part.

Whereas it was previously argued that music was one of the Scottish cultural elements that still today is preserved in Nova Scotia, this needs to be reformulated in order to accommodate this shift in epistemological approach which includes the conversion of the hostland into a settled homeland. The transformation and adaptation of culture to new environments that is exemplified through Cape Breton music is indeed

a perfect illustration of the settled diaspora's teleological value. The emphasis turns at this point from the formal, aesthetic and signifying components that were wholly translated from Scotland to the metamorphosis that Gaelic music underwent and is still undergoing through contact with and development within Nova Scotia. Dembling sustains that "the style of playing fiddle is markedly different from that in Scotland. Each has evolved to suit the rhythms of its respective dance form: country dancing in Scotland and step dancing in Nova Scotia" (2010: 250). The Cape Breton fiddling tradition features prominently in *No Great Mischief*, from the occasions when the brothers play it in the mines, to the family reunions where Grandfather skilfully played or in community gatherings where music became an essential social cohesive element: "Also in the winter their social life improved, as unexpected visitors crossed to see them, bringing rum and beer and fiddles and accordions" (43).

In the novel the adaptation of music to suit situational needs is clear in several instances. Even though the means of expression is usually the Gaelic language the contexts reveal Nova Scotian, and more specifically, Cape Breton landscapes. This is the case of one of the first pieces of folklore that is introduced in the novel, a song significantly entitled "Lament for Cape Breton" which Alexander and Calum melancholically sing. Some of its lines include the following, as translated by the narrator: "There's a longing in my heart now/ To be where I was/ Though I know that it's quite sure/ I never shall return" (14). Together with episodes that depict the brothers in the mines away from their region, these cultural elements constitute an expression for the longing for home that is present in diasporic groups, and the native identity and close relationship to place of the singers of this piece can be discerned in the song's portrayal of Cape Breton as the lost homeland. Other similar musical references of this kind include the song "Causeway Crossing" which deals with the Canso Causeway that connects Cape Breton to the peninsula of Nova Scotia and which Calum mentions in his last journey back home.

Another factor that highlights MacLeod's representation of a native identity is the contexts he creates in his novel and short stories. His narrative is very descriptive and almost invariably his protagonists belong to farmer, fisher or miner communities. The life, customs and interactions of the characters with these backgrounds are explored in detail and realistically portrayed. The short stories, like the novel, engage with the extinction of these economic forms of subsistence and the cultural practices attached to

them. Pat Byrne points out that "Cape Breton in MacLeod's stories connotes the past," while "[t]he present and the contemporary tend to be seen and portrayed as antithetical to this conceptualization" (2008: 204). The loss of a past way of life is the consequence of the present and its insistence on progress. However, traditions mourned in the stories, although they have their origin in a distant land, are largely understood as belonging in the closeness of Cape Breton. The underdevelopment of the province and the decline of Gaelic language, Gaelic music, tight communities, extended clannish families, etc. take the shape of elegies which are sung, not to a Scottish past, but to the past that Cape Breton signifies (Keefer, 2001: 79). The Highland elements these characters have inherited are in a way nativised: like the music, the Gaelic language is used to convey a Cape Breton pathos and they resonate with the conflicts and celebrations that take place in this archaic but present-day social framework. The narrator's concern for Gaelic music in "The Tuning of Perfection," for instance, does not lament the disappearance and erosion of music forms as belonging to Scotland, but as the traditional songs that shaped the protagonist's life in Cape Breton. His writing is regionally oriented, he is set to faithfully render the realities of a locally condensed world, and despite the fact that the communities he portrays owe a great part of their cultural and social production to a primordial homeland, this region emerges as the settled homeland where the characters have developed a native identity.

The identities of the characters in *The Interpreter of Silences* are even more blatantly Nova Scotian/Canadian. Eve's sense of belonging is divided between what she feels is her natural relationship to Cape Breton, the one that limits her possibilities to lead a successful life, and the life she forges for herself in the urban context of Toronto. These tensions are constantly shaping her perception of the world and influence her in the taking of personal choices. For instance, it is mentioned that after majoring in geology her first impulse was to become a scientist, but she could not adapt to fieldwork routines because they reminded her of her time in Cape Breton: "Her fault was to be too ornamental, too dazzled by form. She hated the outdoor life as well – shorts, muddy knees, sunburn. It was too much like her upbringing in the cabin" (292). She goes on to become a gem-sourcer for a jewellery designer. This way she enters the realm of fashion shows, cosmetics, travelling, magazines and glamour. In her years between childhood and adolescence she often read *Vogue*, fascinated by its contents: "She is unaware that in fifteen years' time she will be a bit-player in this haughty,

disembowelled world. She will call Condé Nast's Hanover Square offices in London to speak with women named Miranda and Isabella, negotiate editorials for Caroline, text message Deborah Turbeville's assistant to arrange a shoot involving Louise Quinze furniture and teak escritoires" (71). Her relationship with this cosmopolitan and urban space, however, is not totally unambiguous. While she admits to missing that world and it is certainly a lifestyle towards which she feels attracted, she nevertheless points at the fact that she does not fully belong there either, that she has had to self-consciously make efforts to adapt to it. In one of the moments in which the narration returns to a point in the past, a twenty-three-year old Eve wonders: "What is she doing in this city of psychiatrists, publishers, gender studies professors? They treat themselves like porcelain bowls, with their manufactured dramas and emotional emergencies. But this is definitely a better place to be than the mossy cabin, her father's woollen socks draped over the arms of chairs. […] This is what I aspired to, she reminds herself" (165). Her assessment of this other self, the city self, thus varies between a fulfilling life and a context in which she feels alienated. Furthermore, her perception of Toronto as her home is compromised by physical and emotional distance. Whereas details from Cape Breton remained vivid for years in her mind, after three months away from her house and husband she feels that the contours around their shapes have become blurred in her memories: "*Home*. Could that really be home? Toronto, Lew. She was already forgetting what her apartment looked like. Was the ficus tree by the window or by the door? What kind of bed did she own?" (285). This contrast in how spaces are registered suggest a superficial connection to Toronto and a deeper relationship to her native town.

Her complex relationship to Cape Breton, the story of her mother, life with her father and the disturbing presence of her sister create tensions of love and rejection that prompt her to search for a place to escape the promise of stagnation that her native island seems to offer. The metaphor of the eels, interweaved with some of the novel's existential dilemmas serves not only to provide a contrasting framework with the figure of Alistair, but also to reveal some of Eve's preoccupations and motivations. In the preface of the novel, Alistair is instructing a young Eve on the cyclic life of the eels and how, essentially, human beings are entangled in similar recurring patterns: "Less than you imagine separates him or her from these creatures, he says; like them we will return to the nowhere from which we came. There we will start again. We are on a loop, he tells her. Time is repeating itself endlessly, we are repeating ourselves" (9). This

prospect profoundly upsets Eve, who responds thus: "She is only twelve years old – what does she know about time? Even so, she thinks, I don't want to be a part of this rigid continuum. She thinks, let me be the one to break the cycle" (10). She abandons Cape Breton in order to interrupt the cycle, "convinced a terrible fate awaited her if she stayed" (379), as if repeating the past was a curse imposed on her which she had to break. Her story is one of constant search for self-realisation which eventually culminates in the confrontation of her mother's memory to conclude that, rather than a cycle, life resembles a never-ending spiral. Her predicaments and contradictory sentiments towards Cape Breton, which she combines with equally ambivalent approaches to her cosmopolitan self in Toronto, are nevertheless articulated through an indisputably native identity. Either in the rural spaces of Nova Scotia or the urban spaces of Ontario she is portrayed as unproblematically Canadian. Her uncertainty and anxieties do not concern her diasporic origins, the in-betweenness of harbouring two cultures in one self or the alienation from Canadian society.

Margery Fee, in dealing with questions of whiteness and indigenous identities in Canada and Australia, writes: "Canadian nationalists formed in the 1960s, like me, simply defined themselves in opposition to Americans (implicitly white, supportive of the war in Vietnam, imperialist, capitalist owners of Canadian resources, etc. etc.)" (2007: 190). This novel offers a glimpse of a similar definition of Canadianness which contrasts to the notion of American identities. One of the main contexts in which Americans are opposed to Maritimers' lifestyles is the general identification between Americans and the tourism industry (although it is occasionally extended to other groups, like the Germans). The isolated landscapes in which local people have to toil to survive are consumable commodities to American tourists who spend outrageous fortunes to have their holidays in Cape Breton. Continuing with the theme of the tourist industry being oriented to an American market, Eve remarks that "[t]he Yacht Club had been transformed from its original shack into a glassy structure with a restaurant and offices. The Yacht Club was for visiting Americans, wealthy mainlanders or the island's captains of industry;" these Americans and upper-class people are arguably of Scottish descent like Eve and Alistair, but they are completely different from them: "These people had the same last names as Eve and her father, but still managed to look like another species, standing on the decks of their boats with their thin-soled deck shoes, their hard brown legs encased in canvas shorts. Eve has never set foot in the yacht club"

(42). Differences of nationality and class work here to create separate identities in a context which suggest an a priori seamless and common identification. The fact that the opposition between Canada and the US is based on differences that exist in an apparent sameness is also recorded in one of the first conversations between Noel and Eve, when he says: "I'm still trying to get a handle on why Canada is so different […] [f]rom the States. Everything seems so similar – it looks the same, really, but yet it's completely foreign;" to which Eve attempts an explanation: "Well, there's the usual suspects: a parliamentary system, the social contract – based on European socialism more than frontier capitalism. But I think it's that Canadians have a nearly pathological common sense. You're not burdened by that" (50).

This at times fictitious line that separates both cultures is also explored through the Americans' point of view. On one occasion, Noel and Rachel are driving through Nova Scotia and stopping at gas stations where "they bought unfamiliar brands of chocolate bars and potato chips – Crispy Cream and Humpty Dumpty – delighted that Canada was, after all, a different country" (212). Here, Canadianness is ironically articulated through the presence of exotic consumable products, in a world where globalisation erases difference by establishing the same brands and corporations everywhere. A distinct cultural identity is thus reduced to the display of distinct products. The contrast between Canada and the United States operates on a flimsy but stubborn level. It gains strength in a passage when, after having a nearly deathly accident on a boat ride where Eve was driving, Rachel threatens to sue her. This is an attitude that Noel deplores as "so *American*, threatening to sue when instant satisfaction was not forthcoming" (273), which indicates both the presence of differences and the characters' awareness of them. These tensions between similarity and difference aside, there is a clear underlying intention to define Canadianness as a unique and specific culture and national identity, which in terms of settled diaspora indicates the emergence of a native mindset that unquestionably turns Canada into a settled homeland.

Aspects of native identity take different shapes in these novels. They all must confront the reality of Aboriginal peoples and their significant relationship to the land as their original homeland of which they are truly native. Works like Clarke's solve this tension by aligning with a part of their ancestry that includes the Mi'kmaq, and which is present not only at the representational level of the novels but in the real historical context as well; whereas Wesley's focus on the early formation of the settlement limits

the interactions between both groups to practical, everyday connections. In the Scots-Nova Scotian novels there is a relative absence of Aboriginal peoples. It has been remarked that white settler societies are constructed upon a sentiment of guilt that is often covered by the effacing of the First Nations peoples' presence in their narratives. Here, this guilt is reflected in McNeil's acknowledgement of the role of white settlers and their descendants in the present devastated conditions of First Nations Peoples. However, in both, feelings of guilt and anxiety over genocide and displacement are subsumed through identification with the margins, which function in different levels. The intention to express a Canadian identity is manifest in them all, and in this thesis, this urgent accommodation to a native desire is expressed in terms of the settled homeland, which carefully distinguish it from native identities, like the Aboriginal peoples', whose origins are not to be found elsewhere.

This chapter has demonstrated, through the complex mapping of spaces and places, feelings of (non)belonging and the emergence of native identities, that there exists a very significant change of gaze in the stories of these migrant-descendants (especially in the Hamilton brothers, and the characters of Alexander and Eve in *No Great Mischief* and *The Interpreter of Silences* respectively): their minds turn from a land elsewhere to the land they currently inhabit. This shift is hereby conceptualised in the transformation from a hostland into a settled homeland, which consequently turns the signifier of the homeland into what is designated as a primordial homeland. In discourses of diaspora critics usually refer to the homeland as a place for which the individual feels a strong sense of connection. One example comes from Jeffrey Smith and Benjamin White who declare that "no term within the geographic lexicon captures the essence of peoples' deep-seated feelings of attachment to place better than the concept of homeland" (2009: 59). Rarely does scholarship focus on the conditions or acts through which this attachment is created and maintained. Tuan is one of the few critics whose work partially deals with the identification of processes of attachment to the homeland. Relevant for this study are the construction of memories around certain spaces which thus acquire meaning and attain the quality of a place where the individual belongs, an idea that is further developed by Brah; and a feeling of safety and protection, which associates the homeland to a motherly figure. These novels convey articulations of the homeland which at times, but not always, coincide with these premises. New forms of identification with the homeland are discerned where these

modes of attachment fail. One of the outstanding features of settled diasporas is that the settled homeland usually (although not necessarily) emerges as such after prolonged occupation of a place, so it could be concluded that some of the factors that contribute to the formation of attachments to the land are closely linked to continuous exposures and interactions to that land.

The Africadian novels constitute a prolific material in the identification of alternative conditions under which belonging is constructed. Nova Scotia is codified in these texts as an alienating space. George and Rufus have to face multiple social limitations imposed on them from a tradition of racist practices, a tradition that arguably commences, in the historical context of the region, with the acts of marginalisation and segregation that can be found in the black Loyalists' lives in *Chasing Freedom*. Combined, these novels constitute a chronology of witnesses and victims of discrimination, but they also offer glimpses at significant relationships that are established with the land: the production of memories, the settling and farming of the soil and the possession of land are some examples. However, it could be affirmed that the experience of struggle and pain is one of the mechanisms through which attachment to the land is constructed for these collectives, apart from the already mentioned. In *Chasing Freedom,* more specifically, fear of the outside reduces the bleakness of the prospects that life offers for the protagonists in Nova Scotia, and thus a feeling of attachment starts to be outlined even at this early stage in the process of settlement. Surviving in this estranging environment confers these communities and their cultures a stable place in the history of the region. Such histories and myths of permanent battling against forces that threaten to erase their presences are reflected in these Africadian works and in the conscious efforts to visibilise those narratives. From these concerns and the intricate relationships that are forged with the land through years of inhabiting, shaping and contending with it emerges a native identity and a desire for self-identification as indigenous blacks, in order to be distinguished from other black ethnicities who cannot trace their roots back several generations in Nova Scotia. The term Africadia best comprises the lines that define these native identities as partly African and partly Acadians (Nova Scotian).

In contrast to the Africadian novels, the Scots-Nova Scotian texts do not include blatant episodes of racial discrimination, and therefore their characters, as is the case of Alexander and his family, can express their feeling of security and ease in Nova Scotia,

complying with one of Tuan's aspects that define attachment to the homeland. The articulation of space, however, is constructed in contradictory, or at least not straightforward terms. First of all, while it is true that racial discrimination is mostly non-existent, there is nevertheless a combination of class, and especially in the case of Calum, ethnic circumstances that collude to impede the social mobility of some characters. Dependence on outdated forms of subsistence and a stubborn clinging to disappearing traditions result in both economic and cultural displacement that affects most visibly the older generations. For those who want to avoid the imminence of this existential collapse the only solution is to abandon the homeland, an act which is accompanied by almost irreconcilable feelings of guilt and remorse. In this simultaneous rejection and attachment to the homeland resides the ambivalent nature of the readings of place and space. This ambivalence is accommodated in *No Great Mischief* through the act of story-telling that Alexander performs, which partially expiates his betrayal and, on the other hand, through the sense of completion conferred by the novel's ending. It must be pointed out that Calum's ultimate comeback to Cape Breton is analogous to the return that the eels effect to their home waters with the purpose of breeding and eventually dying. No such completion seems to be detectable in *The Interpreter of Silences*, or at least not for Eve, who returns to Toronto leaving part of her conflicts with Cape Breton unresolved. In spite of the contradictions, throughout the texts a clear Nova Scotian/Canadian identity can be observed, one in which diasporic origins never act as sources of anxieties of unbelonging.

Clifford maintains that "Diaspora exists in practical, and at times principled, tension with nativist identity formations;" he goes on to affirm that "the claims to political legitimacy made by peoples who have inhabited a territory since before recorded history and those who arrived by steamboat or airplane will be founded on very different principles" (1994: 308-309). At stake here is, on the one hand, the authority to claim indigeneity on the part of settled diasporans, and, on the other, the effects that such claims may have on Aboriginal peoples. The latter has been diversely dealt with in each of the novels: there is a stronger presence of First Nations peoples in the Africadian novels, especially in Clarke's who himself claims his Mi'kmaq ancestry; on their part, the Scots-Nova Scotian novels largely neglect this group but partially seek to redeem their complicity in acts of colonisation through their own implicit decentralisation as part of a Celtic ethnicity. In the quotation above, Clifford describes

again the empiricism of diaspora experiences as recent events, that is, concerning migrants who locate their origins as geographically distant but chronologically close. This dissertation argues that the element of time, although essential in providing a necessary canvas in which to create attachments to land, is secondary in respect to the quality and depth of such attachment. Similarly, there may be groups who have resided in a territory for extended periods of time and still reject a native identification with their hostland (some instances that could conform to this approach is the Armenian diaspora as described by Tölölyan or segments of the black diaspora in which its members choose to identify with Africa, rather than with their place of residence). The analysis of these novels show multiple, complex and often ambivalent manners in which attachment to the land is forged and a settled homeland and native identity emerges, all of which merits consideration to redefine the concept of diaspora and qualify some of its aspects. As this shift is effected, the task remains to position settled diasporas within various frameworks, besides those of space, place and homeland, which play a central role in the shaping of identities, such as race, gender, or regionalism, an exploration that will be pursued in the next chapter.

Chapter 5. The Struggle for Belonging in Modern Canadian Society.

5.1. The Challenge of Geography: Exploring the Local and Global Divide.

So far in this study the focus of analysis has been mainly on representations of the primordial homeland through narratives and cultural elements, and of the settled homeland through constructions and interactions with place and space. Settled diasporas emerge from this scrutiny as an innovative epistemological context in which long-established diasporas can negotiate some of the conceptual inconsistences that emerge from the development of roots in the settled homeland. It is necessary, after these foundations have been determined, to depart from the specificity of an exclusively Nova Scotian location and theoretical vantage point and to position these findings within a broader Canadian landscape. The definition of settled diasporas will not be complete until an examination of the Canadian society where they operate (and also of discourses and practices of the local and the global that shape this society) is effected. By extracting the concept from the restrictive geopolitical background of Nova Scotia we aim to test whether its heuristic possibilities extend from the very particular and can be accommodated into broader narratives of social structuring. This change in perspective means that some elements of the identification with the settled homeland's territory and culture may vary, while others may be reinforced, as constructions of Maritime regional identity are conflated with collective expressions of Canadian nationalism.

This chapter is divided into three parts. The first looks at the difficulties of defining Canada in national terms. The complications that arise in identifying a coherent definition that functions for the whole territory of Canada are mostly related to its internal regional divisions. Here, regional/national tensions and their connection to globalising forces are analysed in the context of the novels as representative of settled diasporas. Thus, Clarke's and Wesley's concern with articulation of black roots will be contrasted to similar or disparate expressions of black Canadian identity. Regarding MacLeod's novel, special emphasis will be placed on his construction of an almost intra-regional identity, as indicated by his focus on a small Cape Breton community. His engagement with the Anglo-Celtic dominant cultural counterpart, French Canada, and their confrontations in the symbolic microcosm of the mines, are also included in this section. Finally, in McNeil's novel there is a strong presence of a Canadian urban context which has not yet been explored in detail. This cosmopolitan counterpart offers

a contrasting scheme to Cape Breton's dynamics, an idea that will be reinforced by the inclusion of Eve's international and global experiences as she travels abroad for her job.

During the course of this dissertation, there have been numerous allusions to questions of race and gender, especially in relation to the Africadian novels, while class differences have been discussed mainly in the Scottish-Nova Scotian context. This section re-addresses some of these aspects with reference to national articulations of identity through the lens of a settled diaspora perspective. Thus, the prominent role of race as a marker of difference and as a politicised element is here explored within the context of multiculturalism that currently defines Canadian ethnic policies. As Daniel Coleman has pointed out, "multiculturalism in recent public opinion polls has been selected as the most fundamental and proudly revered feature of Canadian 'identity'" (2006: 218). The concept is, however, fraught with inconsistences and shortcomings. To this effect, Clarke's and Wesley's novels provide an alternative reading to the widespread conception of multiculturalism as a fairly recent phenomenon, and MacLeod contributes with a particular portrayal of the ethnic mosaic where the homogeneity and neutrality of whiteness is challenged. Class is a defining factor in the delimitation and fluidity of individual and collective identities and its impact on regional and national narratives is tackled in this section. Set in dialectical relationship with race and gender, class is here seen as a factor that may result in the transcendence or reinforcement of racial distinctions. This is the case of a certain segment of black society in and outside Nova Scotia, whose status contrasts with that of the protagonists, thus further fragmenting black Canadian identity, alongside geographical idiosyncrasies. Class differences are also analysed in the Scottish novels, taking into account the diverse personal trajectories of those characters who have access to upper sectors of society and choose to inhabit an urban space. Aspects of gender, although already partially examined, are here incorporated to the context of the settled diasporas as part of a specifically Canadian cultural and political background. Gendered experiences, apart from being constituents of general narratives of migration and settlement, also function to delimit and particularise identities and social performance on a national level, again positioned in dialogue with elements of race and class. In this way, gender roles in the Africadian settled diaspora can be contrasted to gender expressions in other racially marked discourses, whereas the Scots-Canadian novels present gender differences in close association to class divides.

The final section is devoted to the delineation of the settled diaspora against the broader context of the Canadian nation-state. It departs from the structure followed in the previous sections in that there is less literary analytic content and gravitates toward a theoretical assessment of Canadianness. Readings of race, class, gender and national identity are closely connected, to the point that the borders between these parameters often overlap and transcend each other. It becomes apparent that these entwinings of identity markers produce difference and exclusion in dominant narratives of the nation; a revision of the nation's structures is therefore necessary. This section explores the controversy that arises around the use of postcolonial apparatuses to refer to Canadian history and literature. The complexity of the Canadian nation as colonial, postcolonial and neo-colonial factors that operate in different levels on different sectors of society lead critics like Brydon to posit that "In asking if Canada fits within postcolonial models for understanding the world, we are also asking, not just what we mean by postcolonialism, but also what we mean by Canada and what kinds of questions seem most relevant to the problems Canadians face in the present" (2003: 50). An approximation to the elusive meaning of what Canadianness constitutes is carried out here through the contributions of postcolonial and postmodern paradigms as de-centralising discourses, from which a true plural model of the nation-state may emerge.

When staging settled diasporas in the context of Canadian nationalism the first challenge comes precisely from the difficulty of defining Canada as a nation. One of the main obstacles that impedes the reading of Canada as a seamless national unity is its colonial legacy, shared by two, rather than one genealogy, as colonisation of its territory has been carried out by two European centres, Britain and France. As settler colony of these two empires and performing both the enforcement of Eurocentric values and resistance to them, it is easy to distinguish the "ambiguity of Canada as both colonial subject and agent" (Moss, 2003: 11). Canada embodies an ambivalent conflict of cultural hegemonies and its national identity is problematically delimited within and against colonial powers. The conflicts of defining Canadian nationalism, however, only begin after cultural and political declarations of independence. Even when postcolonial discursive proposals that promote the departure from a colonised canon succeed in the creation of autonomous economic and ontological models, there ensues the difficulty of identifying what Canada constitutes as a historical and cultural specificity. As Neil ten Kortenaar has pointed out, reactions against the peripheral position of Canada within the

British Empire are problematic because "[t]heir anti-imperialism creates new centres where once there had been only margins" (1996: 11). Therefore, even if accounted for in postcolonial terms and disengaged from the colonial grasp of their particular imperial powers, still the existence of two major cultural and political structures, that is, the Anglo-Celtic and the French, call for the need to negotiate, in a common territory, the conflicts for hegemony between these two sides of Canadian nationalism. The struggle for a dominant position in political and cultural hierarchies leads to the confrontation of British and French constructions of what constitutes Canada. The existence of these 'two solitudes' has resulted in what has been called "the dual nature of Canadian society" (Wardhaugh, 2010: 338), [22] and the impossibility to reduce Canada to one stable set of defining notions. For a long time, the dominance of Anglo-Celtic over French cultural models and political interests has been deemed as the most urgent disagreement to be solved, one that continues until the present day and which actually galvanised the emergence of the multiculturalist movement, originally conceived to reconcile these hegemonic contestations (Woods, 2012).

This cultural chasm is one of the main actors that contribute to Canada's regional divisions and one that has received much attention. Canada has been for a long time configured in terms of its regional spaces and a result, Donald Savoie argues, "the process of national integration, it seems, has been brought to a halt; things national are either no more, or in a serious state of disrepair" (2000: 203). The political and cultural detachment of Quebec is perhaps the most conspicuous dimension of this internal division, because it transcends the conflict from the physical frontiers to a cultural domain. A second element that problematises the imagining of Canadian unity is its geographical vastness. Critics have frequently commented on the fact that the extensive territory of Canada and the isolation of its regional territories provokes marked differences, which is one of the main impediments to the construction of a common identity. As Robert Fulfort maintains, "[h]istory strives earnestly to teach us its enduring lessons, but in Canada geography is our real teacher, the one to which we must listen with the greatest care. It is geography which sets the tone of Canadian life just as it sets the rules of our working lives and governs our economic relations with other countries" (1995: 51). Thus, regardless of structural and systemic elements that are

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[22] The term "two solitudes" is now popularised in Canadian social criticism to refer to the two major cultural worlds present in the nation and their lack of interaction and negotiation. It originates from the title of Hugh MacLennan's novel *Two Solitudes*, published in 1945.

undeniably directed to the administrative or institutional synthesis of the diverse regions (such as parts of the legislation system, the national broadcast media, etc.), Canada is mostly defined in terms of its pervasive regional differences.

When dealing with regionalism it is important to highlight that despite being one of the most widely used mechanisms of political, economic and cultural management, the conceptual bases as to what exactly constitutes a region are not clear cut and they very much depend on the context in which this entity is evoked. Within the discipline of geography and social studies, different meanings can be ascribed to this signifier; as Christopher Cochrane and Andrea Perrella indicate, individuals "are nested within households, neighbourhoods, constituents, cities, subprovincial regions and provinces, among others" (2012: 834); and Margaret Conrad concludes that even more ample geographical fragments can be described as regions, such as "Atlantica (the name given to the space occupied by Newfoundland, the Maritime Provinces and the northeastern United States), North America and the North Atlantic" (2006: 140). In the Canadian context regions are at times equated to provinces. However, in political and economic agendas, the ten provinces are reduced to five regions, that is, the Atlantic region, Quebec, Ontario, the Prairies and British Columbia; and even within this division there are variants, as the Atlantic region only becomes so once Newfoundland is added to what is otherwise known as the Maritime Provinces (Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and PEI); moreover, Quebec and Ontario may be referred to as "Central Canada," and British Columbia and the Prairies may be conflated into "the West" (Cochrane and Perrella, 2012: 832; Conrad, 2006: 139). Despite these inconsistences a powerful tendency to map Canada according to internal divisions rather than as a coherent unit underlies national and international relations. Historical and economic factors also contribute to this dissolution, as Savoie points out, because there has been a very markedly unequal development of Canadian regions (as opposed to the equally vast territory that composes the United States), with the majority of economic and political power concentrated in central Canada (Savoie, 2000). The processes of marginalisation and economic underdevelopment that ensue within peripheral regions result in the construction of localised socio-political areas as is the case, for example, of Atlantic Canada (Buckner, 2000: 8). The collapse of the structure of the nation-state itself under the burden of international monopolies and globalising pressures also affects the salience of regional identities: on the face of continental assimilation national identity

weakens and regionalism emerges as a way to balance the neocolonial situation in which Canada finds itself with respect to the United States (Marchak, 1980). These complex historical circumstances and political forces translate into the area of culture and literary production.

Canadian literature gravitates towards the regional mode of identity representation. As Herb Wyile argues, the focus on a literary regionalism may be read as a strategy of resistance against "totalizing formations of a national literature" (1998: n. pag.). The hegemonic magnetism of literary productions in Ontario inevitably provokes the marginalisation of literatures that do not conform to canonical models, a tendency that is combated through regionalism by the emphasis on more particular forms of cultural expression. Aesthetic and ontological values are thus decentralised and diversified. However, Wyile also issues a warning of the risks that dominant discourses on regionalist literatures may pose for literary representations that do not conform to those models. Thus, he maintains,

> in asserting a more localized literary sensibility and/or in reacting to a perceived Ontariocentrism in English Canadian literary culture, numerous critics writing about regionalism and/or regional literatures have repeated the same totalizing gestures on the regional level, either through a problematic environmental determinism […] or through the repetition of the strategies of thematic criticism in defining a regional literature. (1998: n. pag.)

It is important to recognise that, in the case of the Maritimes, for example, even though the representation of "the two poles of this region's lived and written reality: a dry-eyed recognition of longstanding deprivation, and a sense of self-possession which privileges native values and truths opposed to the modern mainstream – habits of mind which, indeed, seem only able to survive in areas of chronic impoverishment" (Keefer, 1987: 11), may be predominant in this geographic sector, other forms of constructing reality and shaping socio-cultural contexts should be equally considered as contributions that make this region's literature an heterogeneous and polyphonic landscape. This thesis has offered an inclusive analysis of the multiple possibilities that Maritime fiction offers by not focusing exclusively on the group that appears as the mainstream and most representative of Nova Scotian culture, that is, the Scots-Nova Scotian, and by incorporating the voices of the often marginalised black communities. What follows is a

close examination of the texts and how they specifically articulate a regionalist and/or nationalist ethos through their position as settled diasporas.

George and Rue's engagement with Maritime history is arguably the most comprehensive of the four texts, because it expands beyond the borders of Nova Scotia. As Keefer has pointed out, "Maritime literature runs the risk of appearing as, first and foremost, Nova Scotian literature" (1987:11). The geopolitical force of this province often results in the conflation of Maritime and Nova Scotian culture, an approach that neglects the role of the other provinces that compose the region. Clarke's is the only one of the four works analysed here (the exception perhaps being *Chasing Freedom*, which will be discussed below) that situates its narrative action in other Maritime provinces, in this case in New Brunswick. Furthermore, unlike the other novels, his accounts also portray both rural and urban depictions of the Maritimes, while the other works focus mostly on rural communities in Nova Scotia and place their urban settings outside the region. Thus, the cities of Fredericton and Halifax are juxtaposed with the rural areas of Windsor and Three Mile Plains. Clarke's particular contribution to the shaping of Maritime society is the representation of its racialized spaces, a condition that underlies rural and urban locales and transcends their frontiers. In narrating the crime committed by the Hamilton brothers he also focuses on the reaction of white society in New Brunswick. In this sense, the portrayal of the figures of Justice Jeremiah Chaud and Prosecutor Alphaeus Boyd, in charge of the brothers' trial, could be read as symbols for the general racist predispositions of New Brunswick's white society at large. The description of these characters and their internalisation of racism and accounts of the brothers' lives and motives for murder transcend the merely physical or personal, and merge with historical episodes and ancestral genealogies. Considering this portrayal of Justice Chaud, for example, it is possible to discern the binary opposition between coloniser and colonised; in the guise of a relevant figure in the New Brunswick judicial system, he is re-enacting patterns of dispossession and oppression thus inflicting a manner of imperial dominance as far as the mid-twentieth century:

> Raised in Miramichi, his parley was as beautiful as italic script, but also as dark-edged as letters on a Gothic headstone. Sharp words aimed like knives. As an utterly English Acadian, with not one particle of French that he could pronounce properly, as a soul who was now sycophantically subordinate to the remnants of the original Anglo-Saxon empire,

he felt it was his duty to ensure that the poor – and all those who were not purely white and English – stayed in their fetid stations: the Mi'kmak, the Acadians, the Negroes. (174)

He is the product of a history of hegemony that he is determined to perpetuate within his particular chronological and geographical boundaries. To his eyes, the Hamiltons are "[t]he ugly results of an unhygienic paternity, they were a strain of tramps, laggards, dullards, retards, with violent, cotton-picking hands that, if permitted, would level the Pantheon to a sty" (175). They are seen, by Chaud and, by extension, by white society, as the unpleasant result of circumstances of poverty and destitution that have nothing to do with white agency and everything to do with racial determinism. Boyd's account of the brothers also presents parallelisms of coloniser/colonised hierarchies. For him they were "one deadly criminal: Rufus-George, with suspect clothes, dirty looks, shifty grammar. Boyd heard a scintilla of Africa, of bush, in the boys' talk; also a hint of red men's hatchets, from before Europe's guns and cannons thrust Christ and Shakespeare upon the savages" (176). The individuality of George and Rue is erased as they are merged to fit the pre-conceived category of "savage," so that to these men, that "George may not've meant Silver to die, that he may not've struck Silver, that he was remorseful of what Rufus did, all these facts – if true – meant nothing. Section 69 of the *Criminal Record* was fatally clear on the point" (175). Invoking the Criminal Code of Canada here traslocates this historical event from the particular territory of New Brunswick to the broader structure of state law of Canada, so that the reasons and consequences of this act resonate on different socio-political and cultural stages of individual and collective organisation. While the novel does not deny that the brothers committed the crime, it does call attention to racist mindsets and discriminatory practices present in New Brunswick/Maritime/Canadian society, which not only aggravated their sentences but also arguably led to the circumstances of the crime in the first place. This perspective is especially valuable because, as Whitfield pointed out, the historiography of African Atlantic Canada tends to focus either on the founding experiences of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries or on the destruction of Africville, but "there is a gap between the early years of the 20th century and the Africville saga of the 1960s" (2008: 132). By engaging with this episode and the circumstances that led to its materialisation Clarke is not only addressing racist phenomena in the broad geopolitical area of the Maritimes, but also a period of history which, even within black Canadian studies, is hardly explored.

Perhaps the best way to understand the regional and national dimensions of this settled diaspora is to go back to representations of black identity in Canada. As pointed out earlier, Clarke's appreciation of a black identity that is deeply rooted in Nova Scotia has been criticised as not representative of the black experience in Canada. This conflict reflects a lack of consensus on the common foundations for black Canadian writing, something that Clarke associates with the problems of internal division discussed in this section: "this matter has to do with the whole issue of regionalism in Canadian literature. There are very few writers who can claim to speak for all Canadians and to all Canadians" (Cuder, 2001: 192). The vast regional differences of the Canadian territory thus translate into the discipline of black Canadian writing. However, rather than focusing on oppositional (nativist vs. transnational) approaches to (non)belonging in the nation, black Canadianness would perhaps benefit from a dialogical interaction of the various versions of black Canadian experiences. One fictional illustration of these intra-ethnic variations may be found in Dionne Brand's novel *What We All Long For*. Her novel incorporates characters from different ethnic/regional origins. When describing Jackie's background, a young woman who moved with her parents from Nova Scotia to Toronto in the 1980s, the narrator emphasises the perceived ethnic differences that emerge on regional grounds and which define black people from this community. This excerpt shows the hostile encounters between West Indian (or read as West Indian although born in Canada) and Nova Scotian women:

> The Scotian girls […] had a reputation for fighting. They would beat you like a man. Because their fathers beat them like men and their brothers beat them like men and their men beat them like men, so they beat each other and those West Indian girls like men. You never just fought one of them, they were all related somehow. If some West Indian girl thought she could bring it on in there and took some Scotian girl on, a crowd of cousins and aunts would be on her. (95)

This passage alludes to idiosyncrasies that African Nova Scotians present, largely as a result of their specific histories of migration, settlement and relationships to the land. On the one hand, a strong sense of community and family reliance; on the other, this brief allusion to practices of (gender) violence and abuse coincide with the portrayal of domestic violence in *George and Rue*. In this way, the novel demonstrates how regional particularities produce conspicuously distinct patterns and even rivalry between ensuing ethnic differences.

In terms of historical routes, the milestone episode of the razing of Africville can easily be put in conversation with the destruction of Hogan's Alley in Vancouver, an event that is extensively reported in the critical work of Wayde Compton, *After Canaan*. Parallelisms include the targeting of a racialised area as an undesirable urban space within the same context of city renewal that swept over several American cities, Halifax among them, during the 1960s. There are differences, however, between these black communities and their patterns of space construction and collective identification. Having arrived in Canada from the US West Coast in the 1850s, black people in Vancouver have generally adopted assimilation practices, a tendency that was accelerated and enhanced by this episode of urban remodelling:

> The perceived absence of blacks in Vancouver is a sort of optical illusion: black people today represent a higher percentage of the black population than they did fifty or a hundred years ago, yet it seems like Vancouverites are less aware that blacks live here today than they were then. A scattering, an integration, partly forced, partly wanted, has made for no place, no site, no centres residential or commercial, no set of streets vilified or tourist-friendly, and no provincial or federal riding that a politician would see as black enough to ever rate the wooing of a community vote. Twenty thousand-plus people are here and there – somehow unseen. (Compton, 2010: 105)

Invisibility may be read here as a strategy to avoid racial discrimination; assimilation is thus both imposed and deliberate in the experiences of urban spaces of blacks in Vancouver. The result of this sweeping integration is similar to that of the segregationist practices that black Nova Scotians were subjected to, that is, the erasure of historical roots, the absenting, in official records as well as in the public imagination, of the black presence. The recuperation of these narratives of collective histories emerges as a more recent project in Vancouver than in Nova Scotia, where a longer-established literary and academic tradition devoted to the same goal can be observed. From the perspective of settled diaspora theory, such a comparative analysis of the different strategies of space access and internalisation used within black communities in Canada would broaden the field of its applications. Regions, as geopolitical units that develop in different directions, contain specific realisations of the African diaspora in Canada. In this way, politics of identification such as Clarke's indigeneity will not necessarily be shared by blacks in Ontario or British Columbia. Simultaneously, the porosity and flexibility of regional borders permits the existence of dialectical studies that connect their

similarities and ponder their differences within the common nation-state territory of Canada.

The chronological setting of *Chasing Freedom* positions the novel outside current discussions of regionalism, as the historical and political circumstances leading to the formation of a collective and relatively coherent Maritime identity (mainly Confederation and its aftermath) belong in a later chronological context. Arguably, at the point the novel takes place, a sense of Maritime particularism has yet to emerge, since by then the provinces likely "saw a natural community between them and the New England states" (Stevenson, 1980: 19); moreover, by that time, New Brunswick was part of Nova Scotia and Cape Breton had not undergone its separation and re-annexation to the province, so even the geographical components of what constituted the region were still to be defined. This early settlement acts as a witness to the malleability of geographical regional borders, and also to some of the factors that shape the course of the future of the Maritimes as a framework of collective identification. In this sense, the novel's spaces are divided between the plantation in Carolina and mainly the area of Birchtown and Shelbourne. When the characters talk about the new land they inhabit they refer to it as "Scotia" or "Nova Scotia," which is largely imagined as an ambivalent space of misery and opportunity, a quasi-dystopia that nevertheless provided new territory to develop a collective black identity as free and independent. The sequel to *Chasing Freedom*, *If This is Freedom*, follows the lives of Sarah and her family some years after the events narrated in the first novel. A much stronger awareness of an imperial cosmos permeates this text, as Nova Scotia is mostly called "the colony," and there are several passages which emphasise the importance of Halifax as a trade point in the British economic scheme. Through the introduction of Arthur Blye, Sarah's current employer, and his merchant business, this second novel presents a broad perspective on inter-colonial trade:

> Guarantees of good incomes made for a merry celebration as Blye eagerly laid out his plans for *Blind Faith*. The prized 181-ton schooner would be perfect to transport the large catches of mackerel, pickled herring and codfish as well as spars and pine boards from Shelburne to foreign ports. And on her return, load up with salt from Turks Island, rum, molasses, and sugar from the West Indies, tobacco from the Carolinas and Virginia and flour from New England. And if they could raise another ship, they might even consider dry goods and china from England and wine from Madeira. (2013: 35)

This novel thus draws attention to economic transactions which are not mentioned in *Chasing Freedom*. These connections reflect the triangular trade of the British Empire, on which Gilroy's analytical framework of the Black Atlantic is based. The products the narrator mentions are the same that the protagonists were forced to collect in the American plantations they left behind. This is an essential element in the sense that the overlapping contexts of economy, politics and culture are here highlighted as the practice of slavery as supporting structure of this global enterprise is made very conspicuous.

Despite the fact that *Chasing Freedom* does not engage with the local/global connections of the Black Atlantic as thoroughly as its sequel, there is another central aspect of this novel concerning regional and national historical constructions that may be interpreted in various ways, and that is the description of Nova Scotia as a Loyalist redoubt. In general terms, this novel depicts the arrival of one wave of migration that shaped future articulations of the province. The historical events of the American Revolutionary War and the settlement of black and white Loyalists that took place during the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries and which are represented contribute to the present-day idea that the Maritimes "are the most British and the most Loyalist part of the country" (Buckner, 2000: 6). On the other hand, this novel is a reformulated version of the myth of the black loyalists, which "portrays a benevolent Britain graciously emancipating the slaves" (Walker, 1999: 103). The stories of discrimination and violence that surface within the narrations of the lives of loyalist groups challenge these assumptions of a tolerant and receptive society, notions that are later incorporated as part of Canada's national foundations. The reconfiguration of the black Loyalist myth from a contemporary black female perspective could be read as a valuable incorporation to historical fictions shaping the extent of Canadian nationalism. Anderson posits that such myths are essential in the articulation of imagined communities, as their repetition constitutes one of the mechanisms that permit the "transformation of fatality into continuity, contingency into meaning" (1991: 11). Among early proponents of Canadian nationalism who invested in the role of literature as vehicle to express it there has been an anxiety over the lack of myths giving meaning to the nation. Robert Kroetsch says in *The Lovely Treachery of Words* that "[i]n Canada we cannot for the world decide when we became a nation or what to call the day or days or, for that matter, years that might have been the originary moments. If we can't be

united we can't be disunited. Our genealogy is postmodern. Each move of a generation back into time doubles the number of ancestors instead of refining itself toward a sacred moment" (1989: 27). This uncertainty posits many Canadian writers in the quest for finding those genealogies, that paradoxical dis/unity. The experience of black Loyalist settlement should be added to the mutifocal genealogies that conforms the postmodern idea of the Canadian nation. In this context, this novel could be read as a tool to balance representations of racist practices in Canadian history; the analysis of this particular historical-regional frame, in combination with similar productions such as Hill's *The Book of Negroes* and with other texts set in different chronological points would contribute to a more thorough understanding of black Canadian identities and the state of current race politics and interactions.

<p align="center">***</p>

The Scottish-Nova Scotian novels operate on regional and national levels from a perspective that can be reduced to the geographical area of Cape Breton Island. In different ways, however, they engage with representations of other parts of Canada that serve as contrasting and reinforcing circumscriptions to notions of Maritime regional identity. Part of the Francophone/Anglophone confrontation can be perceived in *No Great Mischief* through the rivalry between the MacDonald brothers and the French group in the mines in Ontario. Although the miners come from diverse ethnic backgrounds it is between the Scots and the French that a clear animosity transpires. In their almost animalistic territoriality, the narrator describes their separation: "We never entered their bunkhouses, as they never entered ours. It would have been like going into the dressing room of the opposing team" (136). There is an ongoing grudge between the two groups, as the French suspect the Scots of stealing their money and the Scots suspect the French of letting the accident that killed the red-haired Alexander MacDonald in the mines happen. Only through the power of music is this hostility momentarily subsumed. There is one occasion when clan Calum Ruadh finds a man named James MacDonald, a Cree-Scots fiddle player, and they bring him to the bunkhouses where he starts playing, soon to be joined by the French miners. This is a moment when neither cultural nor personal differences keep these ethnicities apart, as music is a language spoken by them all: "at other times the titles seemed lost or perhaps never known, although the tunes themselves would be recognisable after the first few bars. 'Ah yes,' the fiddlers would nod in recognition, 'A ha,' '*Mais oui*,' and they

would join one another in the common fabric of the music" (142). Nevertheless, this is only a temporary truce granted by the anomalous presence of the skilled métis fiddler and the transnational dimension provided by music. Soon after the episode, they resume their particular contentious behaviour: "They withdrew more into the privacy of their own bunkhouses, as did we, and we viewed each other through eyes tinged with suspicion" (157). The tensions between both communities grow until their quarrels culminate with the murder of the French leader, Fern Picard, at the hands of Calum, for which he is convicted. The narrator concludes that "They had lost their leader. We had lost ours. Fern Picard had negotiated most of their contracts for them, and Calum had done the same for us" (240). While the strength of this analogy may be disrupted by the narrator's friendship with one of the French miners, the construction of stark oppositions in terms of self and other, and this dramatic lack of understanding and interaction which develops into violent hostility may be read as a symbolic representation of the polarising effects that French/British biculturalism had in Canada.

The instability of regional forms of identification is reflected in *No Great Mischief* when the narration alludes to the intermittent presence of Newfoundland within the limits of this region. Through the eyes of a university professor, not native to Nova Scotia, the territory is constructed in terms of its backwardness and underdevelopment. The professor is advising Alexander to pursue his orthodontist career outside the Maritime provinces: "'There is not a population here which cares enough about its teeth. […] They prefer to pull them rather than fix them. It's almost as if they *want* to. Only Quebec and the aboriginal population have statistics that are as bad,' he said. 'And Newfoundland. I never know whether to include it as part of the Maritimes or not.'" (97). On the one hand, rather deterministically, this character associates circumstances of impoverishment to an inherent predisposition of the inhabitants of the region; on the other hand, areas such as Quebec and parts of society such as the Aboriginals are defined in the same statistical terms of poverty and unemployment. The confusion as to the incorporation of Newfoundland as part of the Maritimes fades to the background as its peripheral status gains importance and the province is aligned to other equally marginalised geographical and social segments of Canada. On another occasion, within the context of the Ontario mines, describing the ethnic composition of the groups of workers, Alexander mentions: "Almost all the men from a small village in the south of Ireland were there and, from our own region, the

always cheerful Newfoundlanders" (126), a declaration which unequivocally points to an imagined inclusion of this island within the borders of the Maritimes.

The blurred lines of politically established boundaries between regions are also problematised in the novel through the introduction of the historical figure of Réal Caouette and his regional project:

> Réal Caouette expressed no wish to secede from Canada. Rather he advocated the creation of an eleventh province. It would straddle the border of eastern Ontario and western Quebec. [...] His reasoning was that the people of that region had more in common with one another than they had with those whom they felt controlled their destinies from the distant cities of Toronto and Quebec City, people who shared neither their weather, their landscape, their daily concerns, nor their sensitivities. Quebec City and Toronto were cities which were remote in many different ways and, to a proportion of the people from the proposed new province, they were distant places that they had heard about but never seen. (228)

The gap between Francophone and Anglophone contexts he bridges by aligning this socio-political outline with a similar imagined community that contains both cultures, that is, "the Republic of Madawaska, that region of the country where the boundaries of New Brunswick, Quebec, and Maine are so close to one another that in the end they vanish within the consciousness of the region's inhabitants. Once again, Quebec City is far away, as is Fredericton, while Augusta, the capital of Maine, is more distant still" (228). From these passages it is possible to observe a rejection of imposed artificial regional frontiers that emerge as a consequence of historical and political conflicts and negotiations that are irrelevant to perceived similarities and common experiences of place and space that create imagined but stable ties among the inhabitants of a given area. They reflect as well a reaction to distant governing centres that do not directly participate of these experiences yet determine the economic and political managements of the region, an ethos that has been shared by the Maritime region in respect to Ottawa, as stated by historians such as Buckner (1990).

For most of the novel, however, there is a more local identity conjured up by the characters which is delineated by the confines of Cape Breton. As discussed, returning home from Halifax, the MacDonald family only feel that they have arrived to their native land when they reach Cape Breton (108). At a different point in the novel, when Alexander and Calum meet in Toronto, the latter mentions that, regardless of the place where he resided, he would always check on the weather of Cape Breton: "'I listen to

the national weather forecast every morning to check on the Cape Breton weather. I did it even when I was in Kingston. […] I guess we were so close to it for so long, always thinking of tides and storms and weather for hay and the winds that might damage the boat or bring the mackerel or herring. And of course the shifting and changes of the ice'" (171). This passage shows attachment, not to Nova Scotia as a whole, but to Cape Breton Island, whose natural elements and seasonal transformations this character's mind has internalised and become attuned to. Nevertheless, this is not the only level of identification present in the novel, nor the most reduced one. It could be argued that collective identity is first and foremost articulated in terms of extended family and community, but different layers of identification expand from the familial to the local, regional and national, and arguably transnational contexts, especially on the episodes of the mines where peoples from different parts of the world share the hardships of a tough space. Precisely within this last environment the isolated brothers receive (at times belated) news from the outside world that relate to their own lives in different ways. The narrator enumerates pieces of news that range from archaeological discoveries, to political changes in Nova Scotia, Canada and the US or sports results. He mentions race struggles and civil rights movements, together with Martin Luther King, Jr's and Robert Kennedy's murders, and also, the announcement of uranium findings near the mines they worked in (227). By invoking these scenarios (local, national, global) and presenting them with no particular order as part of a chaotic structure of events, the narrator discloses multiple intersections between the individual and collective identities and their interaction within these contexts. The confined locality of the island of Cape Breton is thus decentred and positioned in a broader network of economic, political and cultural connections.

The previous chapter anticipated how the character of Eve in *The Interpreter of Silences* is presented as unproblematically Canadian, although the exact delimitations of what this identity constitutes are left unclear. One of the most outstanding narrative mechanisms employed to allude to the existence of a separate Canadian identity is through the contrast with and the points of view of characters from the US. This, however, is not the only way in which Canadianness surfaces in the text. Local descriptions of Cape Breton contrast with the portrayal of an urban ethos, thus resisting totalising associations between Canada and a landscape of wilderness. The presence of the Canadian city is introduced as the context of Toronto, where the protagonist moves

after leaving Cape Breton and where she has been living until the present time of the narration. From the familiar and immediate space of her childhood home the city seems to recede into a distant and ghastly world. She reviews in her mind scenes of her life with her husband:

> she sees them moving through a pallid city, bank towers breathing through their tops, plumes of smoke into a crisp linen sky, Llewelyn reads *Toronto Life*, scouting out the latest restaurants. Trattoria this, bistro that. *I am such a foodie*, he says. She is becoming resentful of this diminutive, consuming world. They go to restaurants where they eat mysterious substances wrapped in banana leaves, nouveau tamales, yucca fritters on the side, grilled crab, various kinds of aioli: mint, basil, lemon. (87)

This focus on the urban as a display of consumable commodities coheres with Edward Soja's description of the city as both product and site of production of capitalism and global confluences. In his words, the "coalition of capital and the state worked effectively to replan the city as a consumption machine, transforming luxuries into necessities, as massive suburbanization created expanded markets for consumer durables" (1989: 101-102). Eve's experiences of the city are articulated though this process of material consumption and production; similarly her cosmopolitan self is represented in a global framework that parallels the negotiation of economic transactions that take place in the city, a framework that departs from organic relationships to the land that prevail in the rural area of Cape Breton: "Meanwhile her life is a shifting patchwork of countries, textiles, minerals, products. In the past four years she has done it all: illegally source stones, open-pit mining, fashion journalists, the requisite temperamental photographers, minor forms of bribery, Fair Trade, Unfair Trade" (88). International dimensions interlock with the national expressed as the urban, the Canadian state performing as one of multiple points of convergence of which the global network is composed. When she is travelling abroad, she "longs for her espresso maker and her hot Trinity Bellwoods flat;" however, "the graphic prosperity of the city alienates her; she can't help thinking that real life is lived in more messy, exigent places. She is never quite content anywhere" (88). Eve's reluctance to adhere to any of these contexts serves as a mechanism to avoid a hierarchical relationship between them. Her restless non-belonging points towards different spaces that never constitute holistic units of identification, rather, rural Cape Breton, urban Toronto, and transnational environments of airports and trade deals are all read as incomplete, with the subject,

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Eve, traversing each of the adjacent dimensions and incorporating into her own experience and construction of national identity the various (im)possibilities of each space.

It follows from these examinations of the regional, national and global contexts in these works that there exists a disparity, or rather, multiple stances from which to approach a Canadian national identity. The identification of distinct cultures, political interests and experiences of place is effectively grounded in the regional context. However, as the analysis of these novels shows, this is not the only geopolitical level in which a collective identity can be articulated. The local and the regional inform the national and transnational: the historical events narrated in the texts from the Africadian traditions are examples of reconstructions of history that affect not only the most immediately local space in which they are set, but also the region of the Maritimes and the nation of Canada; similarly specifically localised stories like those of MacLeod and McNeil weave readings of Cape Breton with urban and global settings that inform each other. The flexibility of boundaries within which to interpret Canadian nation-building is a necessary background to its polyphonic composition. The next section of this chapter suggests that, apart from these spatial axes, the delimitation of regional and national identities are highly influenced by individual and collective conditions of race, class and gender. It must be asserted that place does not transcend these particularities and the varying confluences of these parameters will create diverging versions of the same geographical space.

5.2. Class, Gender and Race as Factors of Inclusion/Exclusion in National Narratives

Settled diasporas at this point emerge as an essential tool with which to construct national narratives in relation to local/regional and transnational levels of cultural and identity configurations, through the characters' lived experiences in their respective chronological framework. The historical perspective granted by these groups permits a thorough analysis of the multi-layered stages and components of political and cultural connections that have contributed to the formation of geopolitical units of identification along an extended period of time. The task remains to establish a detailed comparison of these narratives as refined through the categories of race, class, gender.[23] Each of these

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[23] Other factors such as sexuality, religion, ability or disability, etc. are often mentioned as important axes of identity delimitation (see, for example, Johansen, 2008; Smyth, 2008; or Voicu, 2013); however, for

perspectives adds multiple dimensions and meanings to the experience of inhabiting a common geographical space. Critics have stated the importance of "theoriz[ing] nationhood and belonging as a process always in change and always mediated by issues of class, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality" (Brazier and Mannur, 2003: 14). The fundamental question to be addressed regarding the incorporation of these factors to the reading of Canadianness is that class, gender and race particularities articulate a national identity that tends to be excluded as not belonging to the norm, regarded as peripheral and irrelevant. As Hutcheon indicates, "Canada's colonial culture […] defined itself in terms of value that can today be seen as British, white, middle-class, heterosexual, and male – values that it passed on most obviously in its educational system" (1991: 76). This statement is today obscured by the pervasiveness of the politics of multiculturalism in Canada.

The adoption of multiculturalism as official policy has, for several decades, been used as the main platform from which to define Canadian identity. Faced with the seemingly irreconcilable confrontation between a French and an Anglo-Celtic background it was appointed that Canada would have no official culture, opening the way to immigrants from different ethnicities who were encouraged and welcome as part of the nation. This eagerness to align Canada with a tolerant society goes hand in hand with the growing investment in a separate identity from the United States, one that does not incur in the inequalities and injustices perceived to be central in American socio-political structures. Hence, the focus on multiculturalism becomes another strategy through which Canadians "boast (in many instances quite literally) that they have a more socialized political and economic system than that of the United States, with quality and equally founded public schools, affordable, universal health care, less disparate class divides, and virtually no segregated neighbourhoods" (Pabst, 2006: 123). Chapter 1 discussed how critics observed that reality was different from the utopic images of Canada that have proliferated in the last decades due to this political development. In cultural terms, Arun Mukherjee asserted in the 1990s that a white perspective still dominated the context of literary production: "Canadian literature, created, published, taught, and critiqued under the aegis of Canadian nationalism, promotes the settler-colonial view of Canada. Nationalist critics such as Northrop Frye,

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the purpose of this analytical study, the focus will be on race, gender and class, as those most accessible and most clearly present in the texts selected.

Margaret Atwood, D.G. Jones, and John Moss produced an essentialized Canadian character that, according to them, was discoverable in the literary texts of canonical Canadian writers" (1995: n. pag.). Certain voices have been marginalised both socially and culturally despite the efforts to develop an egalitarian system that fosters racial integration. Aspects of race and racialisation are thus central in the analyses of literatures of settled diasporas, since Canada constitutes a very specific environment regarding race/ethnicity policies, and these of course interact with elements of class and gender to conform distinct identities. The extent to which constructions of identity that do not conform to white, middle class male experiences are included or excluded within narratives of Canadian nationalism is approached/discussed? in the next? section.

The study of black literature and history in Canada offers an excellent vantage point from which to observe the nation's failure to accommodate a multicultural society. The limits on social mobility that spatial distributions and regulations impose on black communities also deny their access to narratives of nation building. As Walcott suggests, multiculturalism policies have the effect of identifying black Canadianness as a recent phenomenon. In his words, "Blackness in Canada is largely imagined as black Caribbean and therefore belies longer black histories in Canada. Caribbean in Canada then, is really a pseudonym for blackness" (2001, 128), an implication that denies the presence of blacks in Nova Scotia, among others. Clarke's novel takes place before policies of multiculturalism were implemented in Canada. If, in a contemporary background, multiculturalism fails to accommodate the presence of black groups in the nation-state, as Victor Ramraj proposes when he says that it "inadvertently promotes a distinction between the minority cultures and the central dominant culture, with which the minority cultures are in a state of constant negotiation" (2003: 315), this conflict is further aggravated in a context where there were no such social constructs to attempt inclusiveness. In the mid-twentieth century setting of the novel, the participation of the Nova Scotian black community in Canadian history is completely neglected. One of the many ways in which this is exemplified in the novel is through the lack of recognition and the distortion of George's role in the Second World War. Racist standards determined his presence and the activities he was appointed to in the army. From the beginning he was relegated to doing cooking and cleaning tasks:

> The valiant cook and heroic janitor endured the rigmarole of "bastard training" up in Sorel, P.Q. (by the Historic Murder Site of Kamouraska), where Frenchies dubbed him Joe Louie,

and he'd have to cook em all hash after, like them he'd run five miles (fully geared up), crawled through mud, hurled himself past barbed-wire barricades, and dug foxholes. But white boys got to play cards and harmonic after; the Indian and the Coloured, well, they still had to fry eggs and swab barracks. (74)

The systemic marginalisation that grants relevant positions according to race clashes with George's desire "to be a notched-gun hero" instead of "a potato peeler" (75). When this possibility is denied him he decides to go to Montreal and join the Merchant Marine under a false name. After his service is over and upon landing from months of travelling the world he is arrested on the grounds of having deserted the Army:

What was his fucking problem, exactly? First, he was "Coloured" or "Dark" ("Complexion") with "Brown Eyes" and "Black Hair" and holding the "Trade" of "Heavy Labourer," whose official function in His Majesty's Canadian Army was only as "General Duty." He also had a "tattoo right forearm ins. G.H." that he'd picked up in London. He also claimed incredibly to have travelled to South America, North Africa, England, and Siberia, and that the S.S. *Karma*'d been bombed twice. ("No record of any such blasted incidents.") (76)

This passage focuses on the dismembering of George's body, its parts assessed as racially different or other, so that, rather than any offense committed against the law, the salience of these corporeal race-markers seems to be the real cause for confrontation. It is due to this perceived otherness that his account of the episodes he lived at sea are discarded as fallacious, his whole participation in the Army reduced to the implication that "he was 'Unable to meet the required military physical standards' and was 'Unlikely to become an efficient soldier'" (77). George's performance in world/Canadian history is thus erased. Unable to conform to racist patterns of hierarchical divisions which were indeed hindering his possibilities of acting as "an efficient soldier," and in trying to resist them, he is denied a place in history records. For the Africadian settled diaspora the experience of regional and national identification is thus strongly mediated by racist practices that profoundly affect the shaping of its identity through a prolonged period of time. Belonging to place is filtered through these barriers of displacement and denial and necessarily have to be constructed in different terms to emotional and national attachment expressed by groups who have not faced these limitations in their social development.

While aspects of race are central in the perception of blackness in Canada (and vice-versa) these readings are in turn affected by class difference to a great extent. As Janice McCurdy Banigan has observed, "[t]here were definitely economic strata among blacks in our community [in Ontario]: middle-class, working poor, and a large contingent of the desperately poor. […] Because of such disparities, the black community lacked cohesiveness" (1995: 75). In the settled diaspora of black Nova Scotia the historical development of communities whose origins are to be found in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries is, as demonstrated in the novel, marked by a long and encroached genealogy of poverty and class stagnation. The legacy of violence and segregation imported from slavery was perpetuated well into the twentieth century so that by the time the novel is staged, Africadians have borne the burden of persistent racism for centuries. The social status of more recent immigrants who arrived in Canada, mainly from the Caribbean in the 1960s, makes their experience of the land a completely different one. As Clarke points out, "in stark contrast to the first-generation West Indian immigrants especially, we were considerably indigent and proverbially illiterate, with few valued skills and little class mobility" (2011: 399). Class differences that transcend racial divisions are portrayed in the novel, for example, in the description of one of Rufus' lovers: "Easter was one of the '400s' – one of those better-off Negroes who had houses, new clothes, flash, big words, cars (or horses), quiet gumption, RESPECT, gardens, white friends and style, but who kept their furniture covered up in sheets to preserve the newness" (57). While Easter resides in Three Mile Plains she nevertheless enjoys a social position that sets her and her family apart from the Hamiltons. She is "meant to marry within her set" (57), which does not include Rufus, and arguably it is through her connection with him that she meets a fatal ending she would not have had to face otherwise.

As race determines class, class also offers the possibility to abate the effects of racism. At the time of World War II breakout, when job opportunities were more available, blacks were still compelled to accept positions as non-skilled labour. Planning his future with Easter, Rufus considers becoming "a sleeping car porter for the Canadian National Railway" (56). To this, the narrator adds that "Coloureds called it the Canadian Negro Railway because it employed Canadian Negroes as porters. The Canadian Pacific Railway was called the Coloured Peoples Railway because it hired West Indians, Negro Americans, and 'real' Indians" (56). Race was a determining factor in limiting labour

accessibility which restricted black people to stay in lower-class sectors of society. For those who can escape these restraints, racism and discrimination does not completely disappear, but class implies a distinction of identity, even within black groups. This is reflected in Rufus' experiences in Fredericton. There he finds other black people who, owing to their higher social status choose to ignore him: "The city had a few Coloureds who acted white, would never say 'Good day!' They'd turn their heads, cross the street, as if Afraid Rue'd brand em with the taint of Africa just by breathin in their direction" (90-91). This passage reflects how class differences may operate over or in contiguity to race differences.

Finally, parallel to intersecting factors of race and class, gendered subjectivities also participate in this interplay of identity signifiers. The role of black masculinities is very conspicuous in *George and Rue*, constituting a presence that is almost indivisible from race and class experiences. Among these, the role of Asa, rather than conveying the typical figure of the black absentee father (McNeil, 2005; Tyree et al., 2012), acquires the form of a violent and alcoholic man, who feels his patriarchal dominance is threatened by his low social position and the presence of his boy children, and therefore proceeds to reverse this emasculation and reassert his power by mistreating them and his wife. In Clarke's words, the purpose of presenting "the violent, dreadful character of Asa was not to surrender to stereotypes, but to indulge in (social) realism" (Kyser, 2007: 866). Asa's behaviour is in part balanced by the model of masculinity transmitted by George, as the writer intends: "I expect that George looks and acts much more appealingly (save for his silly scrapes with the Law and his final fiasco with Rue)" (866). He, too, is compelled to act according to the masculine role of the breadwinner. When he meets Bondola for the first time he delays his marriage proposal until he can make enough money to provide a decent living for the two of them. For this reason he enlists in the Army and when this fails he tries working as a dishwasher in a club in Montreal, where still he can not obtain a salary that would allow him to settle with his lover: "Just like in the army, George could provide invisible benefits to others, but could not extract any for himself, beyond the meagre pay the nightclub owners flipped his way in the form of grimy coins;" and for this reason, "he took to wandering the deserted 2 a.m. streets of the metropolis with a jeweller's hammer, screwdriver, and flashlight. He could tap a window just enough to shatter it, plunder cigarettes, chocolate bars, and other goods quick and easy to sell, or even jimmy a back door to a business to

snatch up anything he could" (79). After carrying out his thefts for some time he is arrested and sent to the Bordeaux Prison of Montreal. In this way, the urgency of becoming a patriarchal provider to his wife, together with class and race limitations lead George to illegality. The pursuit of acceptable masculine roles turns, through the interference of racial and class differentiations, into the stereotypical representation of black males as "criminals, drug addicts, derelicts and other kinds of losers" (Tyree et al., 2012: 468), that is, into the generalised interpretation of black men as outside the boundaries of society. In the light of these episodes it becomes clear that the class, race and gender dimensions that compose the articulation of the black "absent presence" in the region/nation cannot be separated and must be addressed as essential frameworks through which to analyse the particularities of black Canadian identity.

Stuart Hall describes intersectionality as "the tensions and contradictions set in motion among groups involved in social movements and the practice of politics by competing claims, and sometimes contradictory interests, commitments and forms of identification" (2012: 28). The disparities and conflicting identifications that emerge between class divisions within race groups as exemplified in Clarke's novel is one instance of the operation of intersectionalty. For Hall, however, the clearest manifestation of this phenomenon "is the dilemma posed for black women who stand with other feminists in critiquing the sexist and patriarchal practices of (black) men while identifying with the latter's struggles against racism" (28), a dilemma that has been discussed by many black feminists internationally, such as bell hooks. The invisibility of black Canada that obscures narratives of their presence in the nation doubly affects black women writing, as their experience is displaced even from those texts which assert the participation of black communities in processes of nation building without accounting for black women's roles. Historiography on the migration and settlement of black Loyalists in Nova Scotia reflects the focus on black male rather than female agency. When assessing whether "the African Americans who migrated to the Maritimes in 1783 did indeed consider themselves Loyalists and worthy of the same respect and rewards granted to all other Loyalists," James Walker offers as evidence black men's participation in the war and their later land petitions on the grounds of these war services; women's social and political inclinations are excluded from this discourse of allegiance to the British Crown.

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Through the portrayal of the character of Fortune, Wesley tangentially addresses the involvement of black Pioneers in the war. Most of the novel, however, engages with the experiences of black female Loyalists, the specific traumas they have to endure as women and their role in shaping the social structure of the settlement they migrated to. The reconfiguration of the black Loyalist myth that *Chasing Freedom* entails is all the more relevant for Canadian history as it includes a gendered perspective in its representation. The empowerment of female characters operates through the figure of Lydia, when she outsmarts Boo weevil Carter, the slave hunter, or when she fights to overcome the trauma of her motherhood and is able to bring it to a closure; but most noticeably this empowering of female figures is reflected in the portrayal of Sarah. Her ideals of independence, freedom and personal integrity are combined with a strong, resourceful and courageous attitude. Moreover, the source of her strength is matrilineal. In her act of resistance against violence and disrespect from the white population, and the subsequent incarceration and public punishment that comes as a consequence of her rebelliousness, she does not yield, she is never psychically subjugated and shows a fierce reaction that she links to the example of her mother: "She thought of all the times Cecil had called the slaves from their work to witness some type of miserable act: the removal of a limb, a hanging or a whipping. She thought of her mother and that gave her courage. She would show them the willpower a slave could muster in the face of pain. She would not scream and she would not tremble!" (208). Her courage is crucial in fulfilling her determination to open the tailor shop in Shelburne, an event which provokes mixed reactions among white groups, most of them negative, but some of them reflecting subtle acceptance and tolerance:

> The Roseway women cackled like hens when they saw the sign go up, clucking about the bold Negro woman daring to return and set up shop after what happened. Many of them did not like the idea of her competing with Martha Lewis. Some said they would cross the street because they feared walking in front of a Negro's shop. Others just quibbled for the sake of it. Yet others acknowledged that Negroes were people just like themselves, said it was time to work together for the common good. (224)

Through her problematic inscription into white spaces, Sarah is able to transgress the boundaries of what was perceived to be the proper place for a black woman, thus providing a context that inspires a transformation of the social configuration of the settlement, however lightly. Like other black women's writings, Wesley's texts "root

Blackness in the narrative of the Canadian nation-state" (Morgan, 2008: 465). Race and gender conflicts in the chronotope of the early foundations of the nation produce the figure of a heroine whose painful quest for equality should be regarded as a valuable incorporation to symbolic Canadian nationalist discourses and myths of origin.

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Critics have pointed out that the policy of multiculturalism is "considered for the most part as a policy which placates 'other cultures' and in particular, cultures of newer immigrants coming into the country. It is not considered to apply to the 'charter groups,' the English and French, even though they are only two of the country's many cultures" and that immigrants and ethnic minorities are seen as compelled to integrate in the pervasive "cultures of the charter groups" (Jansen, 2005: 22, 32). As part of the dominant white Anglo-Celtic charter group, the Scottish ethnicity is perceived as the "norm" in Canadian national discourses. Like Anglo-Saxon and arguably Irish settler descendants, Scots-Canadians are not usually constructed as "real communities with subjective narratives;" instead, due to their position within hierarchical structures of state policies, they are portrayed as "vessels of power" (Kaufmann and Haklai, 2008: 745). MacLeod's text constitutes a reversal of these tendencies, which he achieves first by imbuing his Scots-Nova Scotian characters with distinct cultural and racialised markers and by problematising dominance in the depiction of class subalternities.

Previous chapters explored how a strong genealogical line connects the characters of *No Great Mischief* to their primordial homeland of Scotland. This is not only seen in cultural terms, in the re-enactment and indigenisation of traditions, but also in physical and "racial" terms. Repeating patterns of racialised markers in the MacDonald family, such as the red or black hair, result in members of the clan being recognised by distant relatives in different parts of Canada, or even as far as Scotland, where Catherine travels for the first time after her ancestors' emigration took place centuries ago and yet she is immediately identified and accepted as part of the family she finds there. On the other hand, these elements of ethnic cohesion are diluted to the foreign eye, and their names and ethnic identifiers fail to distinguish them outside their clannish circle. When stopped by a police officer who "speaks with an accent that is not local to the region," the following scene takes place:

> "What are your names?" He asks.

"We're MacDonalds," we say.

"MacDonalds?" He says. "Are you the guys who make the hamburgers?"

"No," says Calum, "we're not the guys who make the hamburgers." (259)

In this context, the brothers are associated with a section of Scots whose name and social impact has been incorporated to the mainstream of capitalist Americanness, a correlation that exemplifies the disintegration of particular ethnicities and subjectivities into the greater category of the dominant, white group. It is interesting to introduce here George Ritzer's concept of the "McDonalization" of modern society. His work analyses current socio-economic transformations that are taking place in the face of an industrial and social environment that operates on principles of rationalisation, that is, emphasising "*efficiency, predictability, calculability, substitution of non-human for human technology,* and *control over uncertainty*" (1983: 100, emphasis in the original). There is a strong element of irony in the confluence between this global theory and the particular passage of the novel quoted above: first of all, Rizter uses the McDonald's Corporation as representative of a rationalized society, which is the same icon the policeman is drawn to when he hears the protagonists' surname; most importantly, the idea of a McDonalized society is precisely one of the main predicaments underlying the narrator's approach to his and his family's lives, that is, the transformation and disappearance of a traditional and organic community under the pressure of progress and modernity.

While MacLeod focuses on underscoring the experiences of this Scottish community in Nova Scotia, his novel does not come across as ethnically totalitarian. Far from being the only group portrayed, the text offers a landscape of different ethnicities and their participation in Canadian society. As Williams maintains, "[f]rom the imagined inclusion of Ukrainians in Canada to the nameless workers invited by signs in the fields along the highways […] the narrator is engaged in cataloguing the plurality of the nation, from oilmen (and his sister married to a Slav) in Calgary, to the ethnic miners (and his own brothers) in Northern Ontario, to Celtic fishermen (and his remaining family) in Nova Scotia (2001: 66-67). Often, in ethnic minorities' accounts, MacLeod emphasises transience, elsewhere connections and a (usually frustrated) desire for home. The opening of the novel shows Alexander driving through Ontario to meet his brother in Toronto. On the way he reflects on how "[o]n some larger farms much of the picking is done by imported workers; they too, often, in family groups;" they work

"for wages to take with them when they leave," because "[t]his land is not their own. Many of them are from the Caribbean and some are Mennonites from Mexico and some are French Canadians from New Brunswick and Quebec" (1). The temporary nature of some of these groups is also reflected in the collective of the mine workers. In this case, the expectancy about leaving Canada behind is closely related to the tough conditions that they have to endure. Thus, in their calendars, some men "had futuristic specific dates circled or boxed, often with a word or phrase beneath: 'Freedom' or 'Gone' or 'Last Day' written in English; or words of equivalent meaning in the various languages of Europe" (133). When the countdown is over, the narrator adds, "[t]hey would go with their earnings to the lives envisioned beyond the circled or boxed dates. To Toronto or Portugal or southern Italy. To get married, or to take a course, or to start a business, or to buy a car. Some few would get no farther than Espanola or Spanish or Sudbury and would return days or weeks later, wan and depressed, having lost their money" (134). The mines act like a no-man's-land space: non-belonging is not contingent on ethnicity, as a desire for escape is expressed even among those individuals who do not come from a different nation. It is an inclusive place in the sense that all workers are treated equally, but it is a repudiated environment, one where multiculturalism is adopted in an extreme version of the Canadian ethnic mosaic.

It has been widely acknowledged that Canada and the United States follow different strategies in the adjustment of the multiple ethnic groups that conform their populations: the former opts for a policy of multiculturalism, which translates into what has historically been called a cultural mosaic, whereas the latter implements assimilation, a process identified with the metaphor of the melting pot (Palmer, 1976; Roberts and Clifton, 1982; Roy, 1995; Peach, 2005). These different mechanisms, though perhaps not so clearly polarised in reality, result in diverse examples of social and cultural layouts. As Ceri Peach describes,

> unlike policies of assimilation, policies of multiculturalism are expected to lead to the preservation of minority identity. The maintenance of group identity, in turn, requires a concentration of the minority to afford the critical mass necessary for institutional completeness […]. Multiculturalism leads to economic integration but without social fusion. Multiculturalism leads to the maintenance of residential segregation. Whereas under assimilation, socio-economic progress is expected to lead to suburbanisation and diffusion,

under multiculturalism, socio-economic progress leaves the group concentrated irrespective of whether it is in the inner city or the suburbs. (2005: 4)

A similar social inter-ethnic distribution can be observed in MacLeod's portrayal of the different ethnic groups that compose the plurality of the mines' landscape: "Within the dining hall the ethnic groups sat by themselves, each group speaking its own language, leaning forward intensely amidst gesticulating hands" (126). The social behaviour displayed by the workers coheres with the mosaic version of multiculturalism allegedly implemented by Canada, where ethnicities coexist without merging with one another, maintaining solid boundaries and preserving the identities of the different collectivities. MacLeod himself rejects the idea of the mosaic in favour of a metaphor in which ethnic groups are consigned to separate rooms in the same house. As he affirms, people think of Canada "as a mosaic, composed of individual areas – here are the Scots, and here are the Irish names. Here are the French-Canadians; here the Ukrainians, the Icelanders, and they're spread out like that across the country. I think of it as inhabiting a single room within a larger house; inhabiting both" (Nicholson, 1985: 97). Another fundamental singularity is that, unlike the framework of the nation-state, the mines offer a context where no particular ethnicity stands out as dominant over others; the white groups are not situated at the centre, they occupy the same place as non-white ethnicities. Rather, distinctions operate by means of class positions, that is, those of the workers as opposed to the employers.

Exclusion is also seen in terms of gender, as this is an entirely masculine world where there is virtually no presence of women. McKay describes that, in some mining towns, there was a very strong division of gender roles: while men worked underground, "[w]omen provided the backbone of the community's social and religious life" and "coal miners who left for the West could rely on their wives to maintain the household in their absence." Moreover "their exclusion from (and dependence upon) the mine" lead many women to "report their frustration at living on the surface, never or rarely allowed a glimpse of their husbands' working reality" (1986: 24). In the novel, as opposed to the rough world of physical work, accidents, fights, blisters and sweat, the narrator depicts alternative life in the city as almost emasculated. While working in the mines, Alexander reflects that "in Halifax there was a very different kind of life, a life that included movie theatres and music and the possibilities to be found in libraries and

laboratories. […] There was a life, I knew, which was not so totally masculine nor dominated by the singleness of one profession" (158).

Ethnic hegemony is thus partially undermined in the portrayal of a plural but starkly divided social organisation in the masculine background of the mines. Even while the story is told from the point of view of a specific group, there does not emerge a true racial distinction between self and other, since the self, the Scots-Nova Scotian, are equally depicted as "other" by the rest of ethnic communities. It is through distinctions of class, however, that the supposedly uncontestable dominance of white groups is debunked, a condition that is best exemplified by the episodes of Calum's last part of his life in Toronto. In his study of Maritime migration to Toronto during the 1960s, Marquis describes several points that coincide with Calum's circumstances. He explores the problematisation of the working-class Atlantic Canadian in Ontario, and the perception of this collective as impoverished, dependant on welfare and a concern to the general society of the city. He mentions that, "in Nova Scotia, migrants included not only rural workers but also displaced Cape Breton, Pictou County, and Cumberland County miners and iron and steel workers as well as their families;" and that surveys conducted at the time "noted that many were alcoholics who valued the area for its soup kitchens, cheap rooming houses, bars, and pawnshops," and were hardly "equipped to deal with the big city" (2010: 86, 91, 92). In several ways, Calum conforms to these definitions. When Alexander arrives in the area where his brother is currently living he describes the deplorable state of the streets:

> I manoeuvre my car for a short way through the back alleys with their chained-down garbage cans and occasionally chained-down dogs, and over broken glass which is so crushed and flattened it is now no threat or danger to any tyre. The makeshift fire escapes and back stairways lean haphazardly and awkwardly against their buildings, and from the open doorways and windows a mixture of sounds comes falling down: music and songs from various countries and voices loud on the verge of quarrel and the sounds of yet more breaking glass. (2)

Calum, now an ex-convict and alcoholic, lives in a block of flats for "people who do not own much of anything" (4). When in his company, Alexander feels uncomfortable and guilty and when the moment comes to exit Calum's building to buy some liquor for him, he feels "ashamed for seeming so eager to abandon the room I have driven so many miles to enter" (12). To this effect, Marquis points out that "Atlantic Canadians

who were educated and middle-class, those who had professional jobs, and others who had moved to the suburbs were embarrassed by the lifestyle and image of the dependant groups, who enjoyed a 'clannish social life' centred on quaint regional lingo, drinking..." (2010: 93). Reactions of shame and rejection towards the differences in lifestyle and class are here complicated by the fraternal relationship of the protagonists. However, most importantly, class distinctions and alleged difficulties in adapting to urban spaces due to belonging in rural areas result, not only in this specific group's social displacement, but in stereotypes that translate to the region of the Maritimes as a whole. From these discourses Atlantic Canada emerges as "Canada's 'Deep South' – a region that seemed to be stuck in the 1930s" (Marquis, 2010: 90). In this way, readings of class and economic conditions affects constructions of differentiations among distinct sectors of white groups (as occurred in the black context), differentiations that operate at the regional level. From outside the Maritimes, the region is read as backward and underdeveloped. This may be the actual experience of many of its inhabitants, but it is a generalisation that also contributes to conflating a diversity of identities under the same stereotypes. MacLeod's novel offers deep insight on the intricate conditions and circumstances that shape the identities of the MacDonald family, that range from ancestral mindsets to national and global economic forces; and at the same time, it provides a decentred reading of Scots as unproblematically dominant.

McNeil's focus on a fundamentally rural landscape in Nova Scotia, and its juxtaposition to the urban space of Toronto seem to reinforce some of the stereotypes with which the Maritimes are imbued from the metropolis. An example of this could be a comparison of nightlife in both places:

> If she were in Toronto she would be walking along Queen Street to get spring water at two in the morning, cut flowers wilting in buckets outside corner grocery stores. Lew would be cycling from the CBC studios, the hollow roar of the Queen Street streetcar alongside him, spewing teal sparks. Here there is nowhere for her to go, no bars she would dare walk into alone; the nearest cinema is in Sydney and it is on a non-stop diet of summer blockbusters. (182)

The contrast, however, is often limited to images and possibilities of commerce, entertainment and other forms of capitalist consumerism, which has the effect of portraying the city as superficial and frivolous. On the other hand, the complexity of the

lives and everyday dramas and conflicts of Cape Breton characters resist any elementary and stereotypical reading of the region.

In *The Interpreter of Silences,* gender is a fundamental factor in determining how the regional and the national are perceived and experienced. Finding herself trapped by emotions in her old home in Cape Breton, Eve feels the urge to escape; however, unlike in the city, there are no such available spaces in the island to run to: "She felt a sudden desire to be on the move, to be walking anywhere. But where was there to go? Whenever she felt hemmed in at home she could just set off down Queen Street and walk east, a voyeuse spying on the couples and groups sitting at sidewalk restaurants and bars" (29). In this passage, Eve's self-description as "voyeuse" clearly invokes the figure of the flâneur, the archetype of the streetwalker, the aloof observer, moving freely around the city (Wolff, 1985; Carrera, 2015). Even though, as Janet Wolff indicates, "the dandy, the *flâneur*, the hero, the stranger – all figures to epitomise the experience of modern life – are invariably male figures" and the female subject "could not adopt the non-existent role of a *flâneuse*" (1985), Eve's behaviour certainly echoes that of the flâneur, engaging in voyeuristic exercises from the spaces of leisure of the restaurant and bar. The reconciliation between the female body and an autonomous urban experience is to be found in the work of critics like Isabel Carrera, who proposes "that contemporary postcolonial, post-diasporic texts create embodied (and at times exposed) *pedestrians* rather than detached modernist *flâneurs*, or even the resistant *walkers* imagined by de Certeau" (2015: 4). While Eve's detachment and close parallelism with the flâneur problematises her reading as an alternative model of female urban traverser, her own reversal of the masculine "voyeur" into its feminine counterpart shows a conscious intention to feminise this experience. Besides, the access to the city in these terms is prompted by emotional impulses that are also inscribed in the cityscape, which becomes a place of solace and freedom.

Wolff has observed that "[t]here is […] an apparently common assumption that women who do participate in 'the public' on anything like the same terms as men somehow manifest masculine traits" (42). Even though this is hardly the case anymore in the contemporary present time of the narrative, Eve's flirtation with the traditionally male role of the "stroller" situates her in a position of gender division transgressions. This is further reinforced by a passage in the novel where she reflects: "She is thirty-four and she finds she wants, more than anything, to look like a boy. Perhaps she really

wants to be a man. To be light, hollow. Soon she will cut her hair and when people pass her on the highway in their muscular Jeeps and Fords, they will say, was that a boy or a girl we just passed? *Boy, girl*. How wonderful it would be, to inhabit that borderland between the genders" (69-70). Her plea to embody gender liminality could be connected to her mother's own desire to transgress gender barriers and be like a man: "*I want a bigger life*, her mother wants. *I want to live as he has lived, see the world as he sees it. I want to be him*" (257). In this case, Eve's mother's desire for masculinity stems from frustration at the limits imposed on women in such close localities as the Cape Breton of the 1970s. Eve, on the other hand, and as seen in her incursions into urban space and her cosmopolitan life in fashion, partially fulfils her mother's ambition for male privileges. It is not accurate, however, to define Cape Breton as an entirely restrictive space in terms of gender. In *Hunting Down Home*, the protagonist, Morag, crosses gender borders as she is introduced to, and engages with, traditionally male roles thanks to her grandfather, like hunting: "'She follows him around like a little dog. Out into the woods; trapping, fishing, shooting. Can you imagine it? At her age, learning to shoot?'" (1996: 78); this, to the concern and annoyance of her great-aunts, according to whom, with such gender-ambivalent upbringing "'She'll grow up to be a tomboy. She'll be queer'" (78). The figure of Morag's great-great-grandmother, Eileen (who has no clearly identifiable equivalent in *The Interpreter of Silences*) is also portrayed in ambiguous terms or even as the embodiment of masculinity: "If there was anything really distasteful to be done, like shooting a dog caught in a bear trap, she was the one who did it. She merely aimed the rifle and shot, while the dog looked at her as any creature would look at what it recognizes as its natural assassin" (29). The wilderness and rural landscape enforces a permanent trial of survival in which gender role separations and performances can be unconsciously transgressed.

However, even though these heroines are seen at times as breakers of gender barriers, Eve is simultaneously enticed to a constant struggle to fit gender models: the masculinity that seems to pervade in certain aspects of rural life in Cape Breton, the constraining structures of domesticity and motherhood, personified by her sister Anita, and the poise and near-perfection displayed by cosmopolitan women. All these pressures are reflected in one of Eve's confrontations with Rachel, when she lets her know that she is married: "Eve basked in a balmy moment of having bested this woman, who had certainly thought her too unconventional, too marginal, to be married" (194).

Eve perceives there is a certain level of female competitiveness with Rachel, who is otherwise portrayed as one of those impeccable urbanites, and being married here represents an advantage for her. Eve, who is often associated with staunchness and masculinity, in part due to her own inscription in the region she inhabits, feels that this time she is able to yield a weapon that defines her as a true woman. Patriarchal standards are hereby incorporated as the parameters to determine gender appropriateness, a form of social designation that Eve battles as "she does not fit, she is becoming to understand, any category of woman" (129).

The production of national and regional narratives is, therefore, shown to be mediated through intersections of race, class and gender, intricate to a point that it becomes nigh impossible to dissect and analyse them separately. *George and Rue* and *No Great Mischief*, for example, demonstrate how class may function to reverse the marginalising or centralising effects of race and ethnicity: the Hamilton brothers, marked by race-based discriminating practices encounter groups of blacks who, due to their upper social position, are able to partially transcend those impositions. On the other hand, the privileges white groups like the MacDonald family are entitled to are also undermined in the case of destitute Calum and other lower-class Maritimers who are constructed as "other" due to their socio-economic condition. Gender constitutes another factor of exclusion from male-dominated national cultural productions. The protagonist in *Chasing Freedom* actively struggles to transform race/gender parameters of domination in the segregated community she lives in and to shape the settlement in such a way that those divisions are, to a certain extent, subverted. *The Interpreter of Silences* also inscribes the female body in spaces that are traditionally constructed as masculine. Nevertheless, Eve struggles to accommodate gender restrictions and categorisations of female subjectivity which she both tries to fulfil and resist. The following section takes a look at how these identity determinants of exclusion of dominating narratives of white middle-class masculinity can be negotiated into readings of the Canadian nation through the concept of the settled diaspora and discourses of postcolonialism and postmodernism.

5.3. Postcolonialism, Postmodernism and the Audacity of Canadian Nationalism.

The ongoing debate over the appropriateness of defining Canadian literature as postcolonial includes historical, political and ethnic identity as points of contestation. The first problem resides in the historical formation of the nation as a settler colony

from two European centres which have developed into the nation that Canada is today, culturally dominated by Eurocentric values. It is a difficult task, then, to perceive Canadian literature as resisting or challenging those very principles on which its socio-cultural structures are supported. In ex-colonies like India or areas of the Caribbean, there emerges a stronger critical assessment of their literatures as reacting to patterns of colonial domination, but this is a process that is necessarily different in Canada since, at large, the adoption and imposition of Eurocentric values is not (*a priori*) rejected by the majority of the white settler society. As Elena Shohat contends, "positioning Australia and India, for example, in relation to an imperial center, simply because they were both colonies, equates the relations of the colonized white-settlers to the Europeans at the 'center' with that of the colonized indigenous populations to the Europeans" (1992: 102). However, as Stephen Slemon has extensively explored, there also lie certain disciplinal dangers in the conflation of postcolonial criticism with the literatures of what he calls the Third and Fourth Worlds. He proposes that the "Second World" (former settler colonies) be analysed following postcolonial criterion because

> when the idea of anti-colonial resistance becomes *synonymous* with Third- and Fourth-World literary writing, two forms of displacement happen. First, *all* literary writing which emerges from these cultural locations will be understood as carrying a radical and contestatory content […]. And secondly, the idea will be discarded that important anti-colonialist literary writing can take place *outside* the ambit of Third- and Fourth-World literary writing – and this in effect excises the study of anti-colonialist Second-World literary activity from the larger study of anti-colonialist literary practice. (1988: 33)

While it is has to be acknowledged that the ontological agendas of white settler groups will unquestionably diverge from the postcolonial assertions of First Nations peoples, as will be analysed below, there are multiple parameters through which Canadian literature may be defined as postcolonial and critically accessed in postcolonial terms. Certain concessions must be made to the point that Canada, or at least that part of its society which engages with the politics of identity of the white majoritarian ethnicity, does not conform to the same grounds in which the literatures of other postcolonial contexts are imagined. The very imperial origins of its foundation and the perpetration of colonial apparatuses strongly oppose the ethos of the subaltern expressed in postcolonial writings of resistance. However, Canada has shown its own forms of responding to forms of imperial pressure and the legacies that colonialism has imprinted in its society.

This dissertation has widely addressed the issue that the settler-invader subject cannot be delineated in a one-dimensional way. Whereas their active participation in processes of colonisation, often violent and brutal and involving the decimation of indigenous peoples, cannot and should not be denied, the ambivalent role of certain groups as both enacting and resisting imperial authority must be taken into account. The settler society entitlement to authenticity stems in part from the political modes of imagining the colonies as the periphery; in the imperial mindset, "Canada was a 'child', one which through copying the 'mother country' would grow up to be a nation whose identity was situated in its own space" (Pickles, 2002: 3), so in a sense the settler collective is constructed in inferior or subaltern terms. The settler coloniser has been seen to enact certain aspects that pervade in colonised societies such as the use of mimicry to maintain a position of correlation to the imperial centre. As Katie Pickles repeatedly argues in *Female Imperialism and National Identity*, institutional agents of imperialism "constructed a hegemonic Anglo-Canadian identity that was based upon mimicking Britain" (2002: 168-169). From their coloniser/colonised position, white settlers copied and reproduced cultural, political and historical narratives from the British centre (in the case of Anglo-Celtic Canada) and presented them as authentic and hegemonic to themselves and to the colonised population. If there are identifiable elements symptomatic of an oppressed culture during the historical period of colonisation, there are also literary practices that point to overtly postcolonial ontologies in the period after colonisation. One example could be the anxieties over origins and genealogy that leads Morag to seek for answers in Scotland, only to assert her Canadian, as opposed to a residual ancestral identity. Hutcheon has proposed that the pervasive presence of irony in Canadian fiction may be seen as a strategy of resistance, since it "allows a text to work within the constraints of the dominant while foregrounding those constraints *as constraints* and thus undermining their power" (1995: 163). The use of irony as resistance to imposed Eurocentric values is perhaps best reflected in *No Great Mischief*. Here, the recurrence of the title and the ironic historical passage to which it alludes (the complex political conflicts and cross-cutting cultural oppositions in which the Highlanders were employed in the British war against the French after being defeated by England themselves) discloses the vulnerable position of the Scots-Canadian with respect to the dominance of Britain. At the same time, the clashing readings and interpretations of history offered by the two grandfathers provide a context with which to debunk inherited Enlightenment values of historical

Truth and cultural essentialism, by pointing at its own fictive and transformative nature. It is through these mechanisms of postmodern self-consciousness of the fragility and instability of discourse that a postcolonial rationale can be distinguished in settler Canada literature.

The outlining of these patterns should not obscure the realities of the profound imprint of displacement, cultural effacement and marginalisation that the formation of the geopolitical territory of Canada as dominion and later as nation-state have left (and still leave) on the Aboriginal population. Strictly speaking, the continued presence of white European groups in Canada entails the ongoing colonisation of First Nations Peoples. In this respect, "the 'post' does not refer to the end of colonialism, but rather to what was formed under colonialism and remains after official colonialism is abandoned and colonialism begins to be recognized as a major component of modernity. The 'post' refers to the survival of certain ways of seeing and not-seeing from the past into the present" (Brydon, 2003: 56). Their subaltern position in relation to the settler imagined centre and their current rejection and struggle against socio-cultural and political domination and erasure, then, constitute clear examples of a postcolonial mentality. As such, their experiences of (post)colonialism should be regarded on their own grounds, and although this dissertation proposes the utilisation of postcolonial studies to refer to Anglo-Celtic settler literatures this does not mean that both idiosyncrasies are equated as stemming from and following the same patterns of cultural and racial oppression. As Diana Brydon proposes, each domain should be considered as "different orders of colonial experience" (1995: n. pag.), even while their postcolonial condition results in shared critical and discursive foundations.

Postcolonialism is also an undeniably necessary tool to illustrate and articulate the experiences of the multiple ethnic groups that conform the nation of Canada. In particular, these experiences are often related to displacement, in-betweenness, or the narration of the self as other in national discourses. Much of the configuration of the multicultural landscape in Canada results from complex histories and cross-cultural movements of colonisation, postcolonialism and, more recently, of globalising forces that enhance intra-national mobility. Different foci of power and resistance emerge within and shape ontological expressions of ethnic minorities' cultures. Therefore, postcolonial approaches to dominant discourses, alterity and to forms of identity and cultural vindication and assertion are fundamental to define, interpret and attempt a

solution or negotiation to these phenomena. One of the main mechanisms employed from institutional state structures to accommodate the presence of various ethnic groups in Canada was, as pointed out, the adoption of Multiculturalism as an official policy. However, the application of multiculturalism in Canada has proved to have clear shortcomings. On the one hand, ethnic minorities are constructed as alien and their differences are visibilised ("preserved and enhanced") in alleged processes of integration while, at the same time, by the very definition as "multicultural," they are relegated to a subordinate position in relation to white dominant culture. The definition of Canada as multicultural in these terms thus incurs in a paradox by which the presence of multiple cultures is required for multiculturalism to exist, while, simultaneously, in practice, those presences have been (and still are) negated and erased. This implies the second shortcoming of this socio-cultural and political arrangement, namely, the perception of white ethnicities as outside the definitions of multiculturalism. As Kaufmann and Haklai have argued, "It seems abundantly clear that many, if not most, postcolonial states have dominant ethnies, even if these often lack the premodern, organic ties to the state and its national identity that one finds in Europe and East Asia" (2008: 745). As the dominant ethnicity, white groups are not imagined as forming part of the collective that multicultural movements towards plurality are directed to. This is perhaps best exemplified in the assessment of the effects of multiculturalism on peripheral areas of Canada. In the hinterland, according to Aguiar et al., "whiteness has had the power to maintain its hegemony without needing to accommodate "Others" or offer concessions as required by the discourse of multiculturalism. Here, monoculturalism openly and shamelessly marks the space" (2005: 163). On the one hand, it is true that areas with such palpable white majority are not so highly pressured to implement political measures directed to solve conflicts that may arise between multiple ethnicities, and therefore, in these geographically isolated territories, the assumption that white groups do not conform one more ethnicity but are indeed the norm to which other cultural groups have to adapt is easier to sustain. On the other hand, this conception does not allow for inter- and intra-regional relationships that can be established in political and cultural terms between the periphery and the metropolis, and seems to overlook the influence that adopting multiculturalism as a policy may have on Canada as a whole. Most importantly, the generalised idea that only large urban nuclei contain a multicultural population and that the hinterland does not show such demographic variety obscures the relevance of a historical cosmopolitanism such as the

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one to be found in Nova Scotia. Multiculturalism, as understood in terms of recent migrants to big metropolis excludes the different experiences of plurality of this region where the coexistence of Indigenous, black, and white groups (including British, with their subsequent ethnicities, Acadians, Germans, Irish, etc.), resulted in long-standing practices of racism and segregation. To this, the recent or more contemporary migration of various ethnicities, mainly to the urban centres of the Maritimes, has to be added, which creates complex and contrasted relationships and cultural identifications. Postcolonial theory contributes to, firstly, uncover and identify the problems of multiculturalism as generally constructed; and secondly, to name and clarify some of the cross-cultural conflicts that emerge from the contact of multiple and chronologically separated ethnicities.

It becomes clear that, while conflated under the same territory and socio-historical paradigms, the colonial and post/neo-colonial experience of settler-invader groups differs from that of the Indigenous populations and these, in turn are different from the experiences of ethnic minorities identified as aliens and (sometimes inaccurately, as is the case of the Africadian communities) with limited historical interaction with Canada. These discrepancies should not result in their complete separation as independently sealed categories of analysis, nor do they preclude the urgency of reading Canada as postcolonial, since, as Brydon contends, "[w]orking from principles that accept local differences, postcolonial theorizing seeks a larger picture that can maintain respect for genuine difference while also drawing comparisons that link disparate fields within broader frames of analysis" (2001: 66).

The impact of colonialism in Canada cannot be denied, and postcolonial reactions to this regime permeate through its literature. To this must be added a present condition of cultural subordination under neo-colonial practices coming from the United States. In Clarke's words "Canada will die –postcolonial to Britain, but colonial to the US– and the stars and stripes will flutter –majestically– from the Peace Tower" (2003: 35). One of the ways in which this phenomenon is reflected is in the continued impulse from Canadian circles to polarise the two nations in opposite terms. The tendency to define Canada against the contours of the United States is often juxtaposed to the long history of colonisation of the country. According to Hutcheon, Canada "frequently feels marginalized, relegated to the periphery in cultural, economic, and political terms by the power of both the British colonial past and the American colonizing presence" (1991:

65). The reaction against dominant forms of cultural capitalism from the United States are thus often read in terms of a postcolonial condition. In this sense, and relevant to this study, critics have compared Canada and Scotland through their peripheral position with respect to America and England respectively; they are both, Edward Cowan maintains, "northern countries co-existing with wealthier and more powerful southern neighbours" (1999: 67). Diversely colonised by these imperial centres they both seek to establish the basis of a national identity that actively disengages from their influence. In the terrain of fiction and poiesis, Chris Gittings expands this notion by affirming that "Confronted with aggressive culturalizing agents of imperialism, Scottish and Canadian writers develop similar and decidedly antiimperialist modes of articulating cultural identity in relation to the other; they define themselves against the dominant English and American cultures that attempt to thwart their construction of self" (1995: n. pag.). While these approaches are useful in that they speak of intranational negotiations of dominance and assertion, and because they allow the presence of an otherwise questioned Canadian identity, they also run the risk of negating the possibility of a Canadian identity existing independently from these conflicts as an intrinsic entity that is not contingent of relational oppositions to another stable and powerful culture. *The Interpreter of Silences* is illustrative in this sense because not only does it present readings of the US from a Canadian perspective, but also appreciations of Canada from the point of view of American characters. One example of the latter is this appreciation of Canadian biculturalism: "Noel picking up an eight-pack of beer by the HANDLE/POIGNÉE and laughing with Rachel at how Canada was a country in the grip of a strange compulsion to repeat everything, even the most obvious details, in French" (212). The Francophone/Anglophone divide is reduced to hilarious comments and characterised as some sort of linguistic schizophrenia, as the characters are unable to relate to past and present tensions and conflicts caused by this separation. Demeaning interpretations and definitions of Canada are common in the American context. Talking about the island with a friend, Rachel complains: "Was it ever off the map. I really thought we'd fallen over the edge of the known world. Like in those *mappae mundi* with icebergs and dragons in the margins. It actually made me *long* for Manhattan;" to which a friend adds, "I've heard it's like Maine, but emptier" (392). Here, Canada, or rather Cape Breton, is described as marginalised and irrelevant on the one hand, and on the other as a consumable object, and always in contrast with the American spaces known to the characters.

In the light of these arguments, even while there is not a consensus as to Canadian postcolonialism, it becomes clear in assessing the near-impossible task of delimiting Canadianness that much of the difficulty stems from its colonial past and also in its postcolonial and neo-colonial present. Postcolonial discourse, then, appears as an apt vehicle through which to confront the challenges of this particularly elusive form of nationalism. What should be tackled at this point is the connection between these concepts, since their conflation raises certain problems and ambiguities. As Chelva Kaganayakam illustrates,

> Postcolonialism has almost always entailed the assertion of a nation state, held together despite all centrifugal tendencies that endorse precolonial identities. In that sense postcoloniality has, in practice, involved the assertion of "home" –of belonging– regardless of the ideology of the dominant group. In other words, in order to be postcolonial, countries needed to uphold the myth of a centralized nation perpetuated by colonial rule. (2003: 146)

Along these terms, postcolonial writing could be said to reinforce the idea of the nation, constructed as a site of belonging against colonial rule and its own national production. In this sense, in Anglophone Canada, nationalist movements were prominent from the 1950s onwards, and concerned primarily with the assertion of a Canadian identity as autonomous and independent from British influences and cultural models. In terms of Benedict Anderson's insights of the nation as an imagined community (1991), this is the period in Canadian history when national symbols necessary to maintain and reinforce the idea of a coherent nation, such as the flag or the national anthem, are created. Literature, as Marie Vautier has pointed out, played an essential role in the construction of this national ideology, as they served "to reimagine the world in a post-European and postmodern manner" (1998: 21). The literature of writers like Margaret Laurence or Hugh MacLennan, like nationalist critical work by Northrop Frye or Margaret Atwood, should be read as postcolonial reactions against British literary and ontological models, and as the basis to forge an autonomous sense of Canadianness. Laurence's *The Diviners* is one of the best examples of a literary text which overtly claims a Canadian national identity. The protagonist of the novel, Morag, tries to negotiate and accommodate her Scottish ancestry throughout the story; when she finally travels to Scotland, in search for a transcendental revelation of enlightenment and meaning, she refuses at the last moment to visit the land where her family supposedly migrated from.

At this point the real epiphany occurs, which is not triggered by the connection with her ancestral land as she was hoping:

> "I thought I would have to go. But I guess I don't, after all."
> "Why would that be?"
> […]
> "It's a deep land here, all right," Morag says. "But it's not mine, except a long long way back. I always thought it was the land of my ancestors, but it is not."
> "What is, then?"
> "Christie's real country. Where I was born." (319)

This passage conveys an open declaration of Canadianness. It could be argued that, as a result of this journey, Morag finally turns away from colonial domination and is able to define herself as Canadian. These narratives, dominated by a drive for cultural and economic independence from the imperial centre and autonomy in terms of individual and collective identity, are symptomatic of the ambivalences and anxieties of origins of a settler-invader society. In the words of Mari Peepre-Bordessa, "[i]t can be argued that Canada came into being only when a uniquely Canadian tradition of literature was developed, when its writers were able to incorporate into their language the diction and cadence of their own community and, using these, could begin to create literary landscapes that were recognizably Canadian" (1992: 17).

This process of identity assertion, however, is not unilinear in Canada, which is, as Brydon puts it, "a nation suspicious of nationalisms" (2003: 49), especially in the current global climate of decline of the structure of the nation-state as economic unit and as framework through which to define individual and collective identities. The conflation of nationalism with one form of ethnically dominated culture and political institutions, which is, in the case of Canada (as in many Western nations) the majoritarian white ethnicities, excludes other groups from the possibility of belonging. As the novels and much critical scholarship demonstrates, this exclusion does not only affect individuals or communities who have a relatively short presence in Canada, but also those with a much longer history of settlement, as Africadians do, on the grounds that their perceived racial otherness erases that history. It is for these reasons that transnational modes of identification and cross-cultural representations emerge, in many cases assisted by the most recent conceptions of diaspora, in order to offer an alternative to the inherent constrictions of hegemonic nationalisms. In terms of race, as David

Goldberd suggests "[t]he state – and nation-state especially, where nation here becomes the cultural reproduction of hegemonic consensus to state administrative mandates – is all about institutionally reproductive homogenization" (2002: 30); but this homogenising tendency is not limited to race and seeks to cover regional, class and gender differences. This chapter, however, has demonstrated that belonging to master narratives of the nation is not only challenged in terms of race or ethnicity, but also depends on factors of class and gender. Again, Canada posits an uneven terrain of analysis in that its regional divisions create ambivalent contexts of identification that complement, overlap or clash with national identifications. The Maritimes is a case in point, being one of the most marginalised and stereotyped regions in Canada, so that even though it historically and culturally contributes to the formation of a broad sense of Canadian nationalism it does so at the expense of often finding itself in the periphery of national narratives. Race, class and gender create a complex network of subjectivities and connections on levels of identification that vary from the very local to the global.

It is not surprising that, in the face of the tensions created by these identity discrepancies on the one hand, and the homogenising tendency of the nation-state that functions to subsume these differences under a hegemonic discourse of seamlessness, the attempt to delimit and to sustain the boundaries of Canadian nationalism proves an audacity. This suggest the question of whether the nation-state model should be totally disposed of, or rather, if it is more realistic and useful to conceive a national structure that is capable of preserving the multifaceted plurality of this postcolonial, global society. The nation could be substituted by transnational strategies of identity definition, by an ethereal and far-reaching superstructure in which particular subjectivities are not attached to a particular place and infinite possibilities of belonging are provided instead of the fixity of territorial homelands, as is the option ushered by proponents of diasporas conceived as transnational multiverses, which is one of the most solid and most extended models that oppose the monolithic nature of the nation-state. An empirical implementation of this proposed alternative to nationhood, while it may indeed be effective in adapting to the experiences of truly transnational subjects is difficult to apply to the population at large. The destruction of a nationalist base of territorial and cultural division would be an impractical drastic transformation, since, as Clarke maintains, "[t]o pretend geopolitical divisions do not exist, to wish them away out of fealty to the diaspora, is to surrender realism for surrealism, Machiavelli for Mickey

Mouse" (2012: 6). In these novels there is a strong regional, national and, at any rate, physical and spatial articulation of belonging that for the most part depends on the nation-state to survive. Were nation-states to be discarded, this would imply the elimination of, in this case, the historical, cultural or linguistic, among other particularities that make the identities portrayed in the novels specifically Canadian (Clarke, 2012: 6). Much as current constructions of the nation-state are flawed with practices of racism and patriarchal and class exclusion, the particularities of time and place, the mechanisms (artificial, of course, yet with an undeniably real impact) through which settlements, towns, regions and finally nations come to being, the political and cultural movements within these imagined borders, and their transformations through history cannot be denied as having a powerful influence in the determination of individual, collective and even trans-generational identities.

This does not mean that the predominant conceptions of the nation-state do not need to be challenged or altered. On the contrary, a revision of some of its most basic premises should be effected in order to counteract the much censurable totalising and centralising force of its essence. As Sugars posits, the fact that "the vector of the nation continues to have profound psychic resonance for Canadians […] need not imply a robotic adherence to essentializing and dictatorial conceptualizations of the nation" (2001: 117). In the calling into question of the nation's exclusionist constructions, Canada, as an ample and multifaceted "contact zone" (Pratt, 1991: 34), offers unique and fertile historical and cultural coordinates in which to map an alternative, inclusionist approach to nationalism. This version, one that effectively accounts for Canada's plurality, necessarily follows a postmodern epistemology. Postmodern and poststructural thought are still useful in this context in that they provides the grounds for undermining claims to self-legitimising narratives, naturalised authenticities and centralising theories, and in turn acknowledge the presence and importance of voices that are silenced in essentialising regimes (such as the current master systems of the nation-state), that is, those of the racially subaltern or the class underprivileged among others. Canada emerges as a complex nation, product of colonial, postcolonial and neo-colonial relations, shaped by Indigenous peoples, settlers, settler-invaders, ethnic minorities, diasporic and settled diasporic groups; each of these at times overlapping categories being simultaneously separated or intertwined by class, gender, sexuality or religion among others. Experiences of nationalism are mediated by the local and the

global. The idea of a nation-state that is capable of overarching this synchronic mosaic gravitates towards postmodernism, given that "difference and ex-centricity replace homogeneity and centrality as the foci of postmodern social analysis" (Hutcheon, 2002: 5).

As has been pointed out in the past (Hutcheon, 1995), there are indeed risks in juxtaposing theories of postmodernism and postcolonialism as vehicles to attempt the circumscription of what Canadianness constitutes. One of the central points of disparity between them is the tendency towards ambivalence that dominates postmodern thinking, and the contestation of the authenticity of political ideologies, among which postcolonial political projects are to be included; postcolonialism "possesses a strong political motivation that is intrinsic to its oppositionality" (Hutcheon, 1995: 150), whereas postmodernism seeks to destabilise and transcend politically fixed agendas. On the other hand, from the point of view of postcolonialism, postmodernism may be rejected as just another Eurocentric/Western philosophical current that does not stem from disadvantaged ex-colonised groups, but from the same institutions and structures of power that fostered the oppressive practices that derived from modernism and colonialism (Ashcroft, 2009). Having said this, there still exists a symbiosis between both discourses that may bring their teleological uses to a common point, even while they differ in some aspects. As reactionary discourses, they share the initiative of counter-reading the systems that precede them. Also, postmodernism and postcolonialism coincide in the retrieval of marginalised and oppressed voices and their incorporation into plural, if unstable and provisional, forms of representation (Hutcheon, 1995: 153).

The reconfiguration of the nation-state necessary to the inscription of Canadianness in an inclusive sociological and cultural schema needs to engage in a "dialogic process that attempts to track displacements and realignments that are the effects of cultural antagonisms and articulations – subverting the rationale of the hegemonic moment and relocating alternative, hybrid sites of cultural negotiation" (Bhabha, 2012: 255). The deconstructive tools provided by postmodernism have been essential to implement these dialectical cultural relationships in the postcolonial locale of Canada. The novels analysed in this dissertation lead, in different ways, to postmodern subversions of ethnocentric dominant narratives by using both postmodern and postcolonial strategies. They closely follow the lines that Vautier uses when she

theorises the necessary emergence of New World Myths (as postcolonial narratives and postmodernist acts of hierarchy destabilisation), which in her words,

> make more blatant use, in their challenges to history and to historiography, of the techniques that have come to be considered the markers of postmodernism in fiction: autoreferentiality, intertextuality, playful self-reflexivity, parody, irony, and multiple, often contradictory, retellings of the same event. They also thematize many concerns of postcolonial literatures: the centre/margin debate; place and displacement; language, speech, and silence; written versus oral history; and multiple challenges to the hegemony of the Christian liberal-humanist worldview. (1998: 37)

It is essential to emphasise that, as representative of settled diasporas, these texts invest in geopolitical anchoring and certainty; however, notions of exclusion and multi-layered forms of identification problematise the portrayal of space and place as stable sites of belonging. They all acknowledge historical contingency while historically grounded, and are concerned with a self-interrogation that comes both from a postmodern awareness of the incompleteness of the text and from the questioning of colonial legacies themselves. The Africadian novels tackle the urgent predicament underlying in the reality that "anti-racist activity remains hamstrung until we begin to carry out the historical work that traces its genealogy" (Coleman, 2006: 218), and in doing so they reformulate and revise inherited notions of history that are thus disclosed as artificial. On the other hand, as part of the white dominant group, the Scots-Nova Scotian novels nevertheless constitute counter hegemonic narratives, since, as Uwe Zagratski asserts, "[f]orming a new identity more in line with Scottish discourses and rejecting English axioms of universality involves […] literary resistance" (1999: 308), and it could be added, an attempt at decentralising the narrating voice. In a broader, national sense, they contribute to the plural and polyphonic Canadian landscapes by positioning their experiences and predicaments, not as privileged over other readings, but as one more layer in the process that the (re)invention of identity implies.

As has been argued, external forces contribute both to fragment and to cohere the representation of Canadian identity: an example of the former could be the double legacy of colonisation, while the latter can be discerned in the pressure that American neo-colonialism exerts on the urgency to express a Canadian cultural and economic autonomy. The various configurations of local/regional divisions and their infinite mediation through factors of class, gender and race seem to indicate that a necessarily

plural postmodern assessment of the nation needs to be applied to the Canadian case. This is not an innovative strategy and was in fact formulated at the time when Canadian nationalism was beginning to emerge. Such is the case of Kroetsch's notion of disunity as unity (1989: 27), that is, the acknowledgement of the paradoxical presence of a wholeness composed of a multiplicity of voices. A nation-state that effectively follows this perspective avoids incurring in the creation of a hierarchy of master over unsuitable narratives, although only as long as no dominant centre is distinguished among them. These novels, with their refusal to accommodate to permanent definitions of history, culture or identity, are examples of the confluence of postmodernism and postcolonialism as guidelines through which to locate the elusive and contradictory concept of Canadian nationalism.

This chapter has departed from the diaspora backgrounds of migration and settlement: once the settled homeland is identified and established in Canada, it became necessary to explore the national context of this territory in order to verify how the settled diasporic groups described in this dissertation are incorporated to a broader framework of identification. Given the pervasiveness of the nation as a tool to articulate individual and collective identity (despite its alleged decline), the definition of the Canadian nation has been thoroughly tackled in this chapter. From the domain of Africadian literature it has become clear that such a taxonomy denotes a very specifically regional ethos. Indeed, Clarke's work can be said to be strongly region-oriented and, moreover, it fills the gap of a provincial representation that goes beyond Nova Scotia to include New Brunswick, and thus presenting a more balanced version of the Maritime region. The regional, however, should not be understood as excluding or cancelling the national (or the supra-national, for that matter). Working on regional differences within black Canada may be an optimal strategy to disintegrate its writing into an heterogeneous landscape of experience and aesthetic values: as race and national geography unite, so do specificities of class, historical settlement, or regional identity contribute to enrich black Canadian writing's fundamental paradigms. This ideal model of cohesion in disunity has actually been central for this chapter. Equally, the portrayal of the early black settlement in Nova Scotia featured in *Chasing Freedom*, engages with a very particular segment of history in a very localised geographical context that is only interrupted by the American setting of the plantation. This does not mean that Wesley's reconfiguration of a historical period in which black Loyalists participated does not

have epistemological consequences on a national level (as is demonstrated by the fact that the novel offers an alternative to the much extended national myth of the Loyalist); nor does it imply that this text should not be considered as a fundamental addition to the multiplicity of black Canadian (women) writing at large. Macleod's *No Great Mischief* has provided a fertile narrative in which to observe the work of regional and national identifications because it thoroughly covers a geographical spectrum that goes from the extremely local to the international and global. Not every point of this scale is equally represented, however, and the landscapes of Cape Breton emerge as exerting the most influent source of identification. National predicaments can be discerned in the dramatic transposition of the Anglo-Celtic/French conflict into the relationship among mine workers. The extra-national, reflected in the global news (and also, it could be argued, in the ancestral connections to Scotland) provide complex networks of points of subjective and collective definition. Lastly, McNeil's novel has worked at fomenting a national reading that is unambiguously Canadian. Her intentional oppositions between Canadian and characters and perspectives from the US is one way through which she achieves this. She also gives balanced, although decidedly isolated accounts of urban and rural aspects of Canada, the first of which is identified with Toronto, the centre, and the latter, with Cape Breton, the periphery. Eve, as the subject who goes back and forth between these spaces is the only apparent factor that connects them.

National identity, as regional or transnational identities, need to be assessed in connection to aspects of race, class and gender. Throughout this dissertation, all these axes of identity demarcation have emerged as essential factors in regulating the experiences of migration, settlement, and the re-interpretation of the hostland and settled homeland. In a nation-oriented context, it has been possible to conclude that the combination of these aspects often amount to differential identities that are largely excluded from master concepts of the Canadian nation. If the nation is to be equated primarily to an ethnocentric whiteness, Africadian writing will appear as inevitably marked by its racialised difference. This dimension can be furthered by adding class and gender as aggravating (or palliating in some cases) components of identity, a phenomenon that can be detected in both Clarke's and Wesley's novels. The recuperation and reinscription of the Africadian voice in the Canadian nation constitutes a challenge to the covert monoculturalism that often operates in Canada even today under the veil of a faulty multiculturalism. White ethnocentrism is combatted in

McNeil's and MacLeod's novels primarily through the use of class and/or gender distinctions as the element to destabilise notions of power and domination. Their characters emerge as complex, at times displaced and marginalised, and marked by economic and social status. On the other hand, MacLeod offers a comprehensive view of a non-hierarchical multicultural mosaic in which white ethnicities do not emerge as dominant over other groups, even while this is presented in the dystopic background of the mines.

Given the multiple versions of exclusion (and less frequently, inclusion) discerned in these literary analyses, it still remained to locate Canadian nationalism and the settled diaspora within it. The concept of the Canadian nation does not become more and more transparent with the study of its regional components or of its identity divisions along axes of race, class and gender; on the contrary, a growing opacity and multiplicity of experiences and voices emerges where certainty should arise. It seems useful at this point to turn to postcolonialism to offer explanations for certain social and historical phenomena that have shaped the nation. Colonial legacies, the reaction against imperial centres, the struggle of the Indigenous population and ethnic minorities for recognition are some of the reasons for the inclusion of Canada in these paradigms. Moreover, as postcolonial theory informs the development of the concept of settled diaspora, it would be counterproductive not to include discourses of postcolonialism in this thorough exploration. However, when even further complexities and different foci of cultural conflict and production emerge after the assessment of Canada in postcolonial terms, some amendments to the way in which the nation is currently articulated must be effected. Postmodernism becomes then the theoretical background into which a version of an inclusive Canada that actively accounts for and engages with difference can be incorporated. Keefer talks about the cultural broadness of Canada as a "polylogue," whose fundaments she describes as

> [b]order-crossing, not in order to arrive at some totalized, monolithic ideal of Canadianness, but rather to establish a dialogic rather than an oppositional field of discourse, to conflate margin and mainstream, dominant and emergent group into an everchanging choreography of differences. As ideas, information and experiences move across cultures through the medium of film or theatrical performance or literary text, an awareness may result that where "difference" or "otherness" exists, so too does significant similarity. (2012: 214)

A de-centralising and self-conscious postmodern national pattern, which recognises provisionality and the process of enacting and becoming that identities constitute is offered here as an alternative to the hegemonic notion of the nation, which is inevitably inclined to favour one culture over others. In the multiplicity of voices that composes Canada, settled diasporas are one more distinctive experience that contribute to the definition of Canadianness by inscribing a historical experience of place and space, invested with emotional and genealogical dimensions and which provides a bridge between the foreign (as represented in their diasporic origins) and the native, that is, their undeniable, intrinsic Canadianness.

Conclusiones: Las diásporas asentadas como puente entre contextos foráneos y nativos.

Dada la complejidad de las obras en las que se basa este análisis y la disparidad entre los entornos socio-históricos en que se encuentran tanto personajes como autores, desenredar la madeja narrativa y discursiva ha sido una tarea difícil. Sin embargo, se ha obtenido como resultado un claro patrón, los contornos de una imagen teórica: la de la diáspora asentada. Siguiendo las direcciones marcadas por los estudios de la diáspora, el inevitable adentramiento en el "hogar", entendido en los términos de Safran y Tölölyan, ha revelado la presencia de diversos elementos que se pueden ubicar en los "hogares" imaginados/reales de las respectivas diásporas (la africana y la escocesa). Si bien este paso puede parecer, a primera vista, una contradicción sobre el argumento general de la tesis, (es decir, el hecho de que estas novelas proyectan la idea de una emancipación cultural e identitaria del "hogar"), en realidad refuerza las premisas iniciales al afirmar que estos grupos pertenecen a una diáspora. Éste es un punto de gran relevancia, ya que el desarrollo de un nuevo término puede inducir a la conclusión errónea de que el término más antiguo desaparece o se extingue. La experiencia de las diásporas asentadas no reemplaza a las diásporas. Este aspecto fundamental de las teorías aquí presentadas impide que este fenómeno diaspórico se denomine "postdiáspora", un término que parece más accesible y de más fácil difusión pero que no obstante implica una progresión cronológica y/o ontológica. Las diásporas y las diásporas asentadas son conceptos íntimamente relacionados y el segundo no puede existir sin el primero. Por estas razones el Capítulo 3, "Legacies of the Homeland", resulta una pieza fundamental de la estructura, ya que proporciona las bases sobre las que el resto del análisis se asienta. Demuestra que los legados del "hogar" preservados, aunque reales y, en su mayor parte fácilmente identificables en los textos, no corresponden con las ideas de la patria original concebida como espacio al que se pertenece y a donde se desea volver, o como objeto de nostalgia y proyección emocional. Éste es uno de los principales ejes que permiten la localización conceptual de las diásporas asentadas. Se definen como indígenas en el contexto de los "hogares" asentados; sin embargo, los orígenes diaspóricos o extranjeros no se pasan por alto ni se eliminan por completo. Mantienen un grado de influencia, más o menos directo en cada grupo, pero que nunca han de ser descartados del todo y deben ser, por tanto, preservados y examinados con especial atención para poder situar y determinar la conexión diaspórica. Es interesante señalar

que las prácticas culturales y los rituales resultan, en general (quizás a excepción de la conservación de las tradiciones representadas en *No Great Mischief*, de Alistair MacLeod), menos perceptibles o contundentes que las narrativas, los recuerdos y los mitos sobre migración e historia. La naturaleza imaginada de estas tierras ancestrales se ve, por tanto, más acentuada en las diásporas asentadas, siguiendo una argumentación lógica por la cual, a mayor distancia (geográfica y cronológica) entre el grupo diaspórico y el "hogar" original, más profundamente será éste reconfigurado como producto de la imaginación colectiva y de las narrativas difundidas. Aunque, quizás, en lugar de definirse por la calidad de las conexiones preservadas con el "hogar" primordial, las diásporas asentadas deberían ser definidas a través de las conexiones que se han perdido. Los problemas que se plantean al situar a África como el único "hogar" de la diáspora Africana han sido tratados en distintas ocasiones en esta disertación. Múltiples focos de identificación surgen donde normalmente sólo hay uno, lo cual dificulta enormemente el estudio de las identidades de la diáspora africana a escala global. A nivel local, y a través del ejemplo de la comunidad de Africadia, quizás los elementos más fácilmente distinguibles en las representaciones elegidas son los estilos lingüísticos y la tradición oral, donde destacan las influencias africanas. En cuanto a la diáspora escocesa, se presentan dilemas similares ya que la amplia dispersión escocesa implica que el "hogar", aunque situado en un claro contexto territorial, puede no ser "understood in the same way by all participants, and outwith these groups, the un-organised majority and un-aligned individuals offer alternative vital renderings of home at times incompatible with associational rules and values" (Macdonald, 2012: 22). Esta inconsistencia es patente en las novelas escocesas las cuales, a pesar de pertenecer al mismo entorno, ofrecen versiones muy distintas del "hogar" ancestral: su influencia es muy palpable en *No Great Mischief* en forma de narrativas, la revisión de la historia y la repetición de tradiciones, mientras que en *The Interpreter of Silences,* donde el principal rastro de una herencia del pasado es el lenguaje gaélico, el apego es mucho menor. En general, diferentes factores han contribuido a la erosión de las relaciones con los "hogares" primordiales en los casos africano y escocés. De esta manera, no existen ni el compromiso con la nación-estado de origen en su forma contemporánea ni la construcción de ese territorio como "hogar".

En las diásporas asentadas, estas construcciones del territorio como "hogar" se encuentran en lo que se ha denominado como "hogar asentado". Ésta es una parte

determinante del desarrollo de esta tesis, ya que supone un cambio de orientación desde la tierra de origen a la de destino y de asentamiento. Debido a que el "hogar", los procesos de migración y la movilidad son los principales objetos de análisis de la disciplina de las diásporas, las transformaciones identitarias que tienen lugar en esta fase de asentamiento y estasis se suelen pasar por alto. El Capítulo 4 presta especial atención a las narraciones dedicadas a la descripción del territorio y el espacio físico. Como resultado de este estudio se concluye que las cuatro novelas contienen ejemplos de la producción del espacio social a través de las experiencias vividas, una idea que se torna esencial a la hora de mediar las tensiones entre la oposición nativo/extranjero. En las novelas africadianas, los contextos rurales y urbanos de Nueva Escocia (y de New Brunswick en el caso de *George and Rue*) emergen como espacios racializados. La regulación del espacio en términos de raza es uno de los principales medios a través de los cuales se construye, se impone y se implementa la alteridad. La segregación, en un sentido muy literal y geográfico, aparece en *Chasing Freedom* como la separación física entre los asentamientos de los "Loyalists" blancos y negros, mientras que las barreras que el racismo impone en la movilidad social para la población negra se hacen patentes en toda la novela de *George and Rue*. Por otra parte, Cabo Bretón se construye como un espacio contradictorio para y por los protagonistas de *No Great Mischief* y *The Interpreter of Silences*. Alexander y Eve abandonan este lugar porque la situación económica no les permite obtener las oportunidades que encuentran en otros centros urbanos modernizados. Cabo Bretón se construye de varias maneras como un espacio obsoleto, una región improductiva que no es capaz de acomodar las presiones del progreso y la globalización. Estas tendencias se aprecian más en *The Interpreter of Silences*, donde la protagonista articula explícitamente su disconformidad y su falta de apego por la isla. En este punto del análisis (y especialmente recordando los contenidos del capítulo anterior, "Legacies of the Homeland"), Nueva Escocia juega, aparentemente, el papel de país de destino tradicional para estos personajes. La discriminación racial, junto con los obstáculos sociales y contextuales, parecen impedir a los personajes que desarrollen un apego real con este territorio. Como propone Gabriel Sheffer, "because of the still widespread opposition to diasporas that is engendered by hostile cultural, social, political, and economic surrounding environments in their hostlands, some peripheral diasporans refrain from public identification with the entire entity" (2006: 133). El rechazo hacia el "hogar" que a menudo expresan los personajes de las cuatro novelas podría ser interpretado como un

indicador de este tipo de comportamiento, y al no existir prácticas anómalas que los separen de las diásporas tradicionales, el debate podría zanjarse en este punto, alegando que las novelas africanas y escocesas de Nueva Escocia son ejemplos representativos de una consciencia diaspórica.

Sin embargo, mientras que la presencia de elementos que problematizan la articulación de la tierra como un espacio idílico de seguridad y apego es palpable, esto no significa que Nueva Escocia no sea representada como "hogar" en estos textos. Junto a los pasajes que muestran descontento, ostracismo de la sociedad e incluso un deseo manifiesto de abandonar la región se encuentran otros que muestran una importante inversión en el territorio. Para George y Rufus, dos de los personajes más claramente afectados por las prácticas racistas, estas inversiones se reflejan en una genealogía profundamente arraigada y en episodios que narran el contacto con el espacio rural, principalmente a través del personaje de George. Es incuestionable que los personajes de *Chasing Freedom* también desarrollan un apego (aunque a veces problemático), ya que, por primera vez son capaces de experimentar una libertad relativa, tienen derecho a poseer las tierras que trabajan y, en términos personales, pueden aplacar ansiedades del pasado, como se muestra en el reencuentro de Lydia con sus hijos perdidos. *No Great Mischief* es, de las cuatro novelas, la que presenta más dificultades a la hora de posicionar el "hogar" en Cabo Bretón, ya que se expresan en ella fuertes sentimientos de nostalgia por las tradiciones y el pasado escocés. Sin embargo, una cantidad considerable de episodios aluden a Cabo Bretón como "hogar", que además se construye a través de las experiencias vividas, los recuerdos y el contacto prolongado con el espacio que se convierte en familiar y se internaliza como tal. Un procedimiento parecido se puede observar en *The Interpreter of Silences*, donde la protagonista se inscribe, física y psicológicamente en los territorios de la casa de su niñez, mientras que simultáneamente es transformada por ese mismo espacio. De esta forma, el "hogar" en las novelas escocesas se articula en los términos de Tuan y Brah, es decir, como paisajes locales que se viven, se experimentan, recuerdan y revisitan. Lo que resulta interesante de estos "hogares" asentados es que se problematizan de acuerdo a parámetros idiosincráticos para cada diáspora asentada. Una de las principales discrepancias entre las diásporas asentadas africana y escocesa es precisamente la naturaleza de estos parámetros. Para el primer grupo existe una lucha por la inclusión racial; estructuras hegemónicas culturales y socio-políticas desarrolladas por la sociedad blanca son

específicamente diseñadas para excluir de sus centros a las etnias que no sean blancas. Estos "impassable symbolic boundaries" (Hall, 1996: 445), impuestos por el racismo, operan activamente para impedir un sentimiento de apego por parte de la población negra, un acto de eliminación social sistémica al que las etnias como la escocesa-canadiense no se tiene que enfrentar. La relación de éstos con el "hogar" se hace ambigua a través de una serie de circunstancias que se acercan más a la clase social y a la situación de subdesarrollo y de depresión económica, que poco tienen que ver con la regularización racial del espacio. De hecho, se podría decir que las conexiones ambivalentes que Alexander y Eve mantienen con Cabo Bretón siguen, de forma aún más precisa, una identificación nativa con el territorio: al abandonar el lugar donde sus vidas modernas no pueden sostenerse les asaltan sentimientos de culpa que son comparables a los sentimientos de arrepentimiento a menudo expresados por gente exiliada de su tierra natal.

En cualquier caso, se puede concluir que el "hogar", para los personajes tanto de las novelas africadianas como las escocesas no es, como para los miembros de una diáspora "a place which is always elsewhere" (Johansen, 2008: 48); por el contrario, el "hogar" asentado es el presente, el "aquí", incluso aunque las comunidades negras sean interpretadas como extranjeras y las presiones de clase social desemboquen en conflictos de repudiación en algunos de los personajes escoceses-neoescoceses. Si el "hogar" es, en palabras de Brah, "a mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination" (1997: 192), entonces el "hogar" asentado emerge como un espacio que no se atiene a esta proposición. Como objeto de deseo, el "hogar" es permanentemente evocado y nunca alcanzado en una consciencia diaspórica; se pospone constantemente. En comparación, los "hogares" asentados son accesibles e inmediatos y se forjan precisamente con el contacto reiterado. Esto no significa que los espacios que emergen como "hogares" asentados sean fuente de identificación ininterrumpida y no problemática: como se ejemplifica en estas novelas, la relación entre los sujetos de la diáspora asentada y sus "hogares" son discontinuas y están sujetas a factores socio-históricos contingentes. Estas complejidades impiden que los "hogares" asentados se interpreten como entidades fijas y unidimensionales. El trasplante de raíces que se efectúa en este cambio de "hogares" no está exento de controversia. El desarrollo de apego por el "hogar" y la transposición de lealtades nacionales y puntos de identificación implican un cambio radical en el paradigma: la distinción que define a la

diáspora, "living here and remembering/desiring another place" (Clifford, 1994: 311), desaparece cuando la condición de alienación se reemplaza por el indigenismo en las diásporas asentadas. La afirmación de esta notable alteración necesariamente ha de ser formulada con cautela, ya que declarar que los sujetos de la diáspora asentada son indígenas, sin mayor aclaración, resultaría en el desplazamiento de las poblaciones nativas presentes en ese territorio (sea en Nueva Escocia o en cualquier otro contexto donde se dé el fenómeno de la diáspora asentada). Como se analizó en la sección 4.3., "The Emergence of a Native Identity", las aspiraciones a una identidad nativa sin matices, como las que presentan las poblaciones aborígenes, han de ser descartadas. Ésta es la principal razón por la que resulta esencial mantener la figura del "hogar" primordial y restringirse a los límites teóricos de la disciplina de los estudios diaspóricos. La existencia de orígenes en otro lugar, aunque éstos hayan sido transcendidos mediante cambios de orientación política o cultural, crea una división conceptual entre las diásporas asentadas y los grupos nativos. La presencia histórica de las diásporas asentadas en el territorio implica que las formas de identificación que desarrollan se asemejan ontológicamente a aquellas de los nativos. Se podría incluso afirmar que, en el espectro de identificación con "este lugar" o con "otro lugar", las diásporas asentadas se acercan más a la posición ocupada por los aborígenes, (que pertenecen "aquí" de manera incondicional), que a las proyecciones identitarias hacia el exterior que manifiestan las diásporas. Sin embargo, las diásporas asentadas no pueden ser directamente equiparadas a la población nativa, incluso cuando su identidad tiende al indigenismo. La confusión acerca de estas distinciones ha llevado a que el impulso dado por Clarke a la identidad africadiana como indígena haya sido denunciado por incurrir en las mismas prácticas de suplantación y desplazamiento de los aborígenes que aquellas empleadas por los colonos blancos y sus descendientes. Como se propone en esta disertación, Clarke desacredita estas críticas acercándose, en sus ensayos así como en sus obras de ficción, a la población aborigen, y enfatizando el hecho de que muchos africadianos poseen ancestros negros y Mi'kmaq. La insistencia en un tipo particular de nativismo es aún más urgente en el caso de la diáspora asentada escocesa, ya que las etnias blancas, históricamente, han ocupado una posición hegemónica en colonias como Nueva Escocia, en su mayor parte a través de la eliminación de la población aborigen. En la novela *Hunting Down Home* de McNeil se aprecia una valoración del sentimiento de culpa y responsabilidad por estos actos. Por otro lado, los personajes de *No Great Mischief* y *The Interpreter of Silences* palian los efectos del lugar que ocupan en una

jerarquía opresiva, como descendientes de colonos, al hacer hincapié en su propia marginalización en términos de clase social.

Los análisis en los Capítulos 3 y 4 se llevan a cabo en un espacio muy localizado, apenas excediendo los límites de Nueva Escocia como marco de referencia territorial. La situación de las diásporas asentadas se completa con la exploración de distintos niveles de identificación en los cuales se pueden articular identidades individuales y colectivas, un estudio que se realiza en el Capítulo 5, "The Struggle for Belonging in Modern Canadian Society". En el contexto canadiense es casi inevitable comenzar el debate literario centrándose en la unidad regional ya que, en general, la literatura canadiense (y el nacionalismo canadiense hasta cierto punto) se conciben en términos regionales. Lisa Chalykoff señala, sin embargo, que "a belief in a seemingly land-based regional essence supports conveniently a parallel belief that 'the land itself' produces an ostensibly standard of literary value", una suposición que restringe las posibilidades de expansión de la literatura canadiense/regional y que además resulta en la creencia de que "[c]anonical works of regional literature are those which 'reflect' with the greatest 'accuracy' the 'inevitable' effects that a land-based regional essence exercises 'uniformly' on its inhabitants" (1998: 166). Una de las premisas básicas introducidas en esta disertación (el hecho de que el desarrollo histórico prolongado en el mismo enclave local unifica grupos tan dispares como son las comunidades africana y escocesa) parece incurrir en este error de sobre-simplificación. En esta tesis se ha sugerido en diversas ocasiones que estas literaturas comparten, como resultado de su coexistencia en el mismo entorno histórico y geográfico, una serie de intereses y temas, como son el destacado recelo por el progreso y la modernidad, o un fuerte sentimiento de pertenencia al lugar que en ambas literaturas se puede conectar con historias de migración y asentamiento. A pesar de estas similitudes, sería demasiado prematuro diagnosticar estas coincidencias casi inevitables como síntomas de un enfoque simplista de la literatura.

Se han reconocido y explicado ampliamente las particularidades de cada texto de ficción de los cuatro aquí analizados, y ninguno de ellos constituye una representación más apropiada que las demás de lo que la literatura de las regiones Marítimas "debería ser". El último capítulo muestra que la identidad regional puede ser reforzada o transformada al enfrentarse a yuxtaposiciones de tipo nacional, complicando así aún más su supuesta homogeneidad. A nivel nacional, por ejemplo, la conceptualización de

las diásporas asentadas se vuelve más necesaria en el contexto afro-canadiense. La identidad africadiana indígena contrasta con la de inmigrantes más recientes, especialmente los que provienen del Caribe y sus descendientes, y con la de inmigrantes del África continental, un grupo que se suele pasar por alto en los estudios de la diáspora africana (Tettey y Pulampu, 2005: 5). Estas comunidades pueden presentar una identidad transnacional o incluso nacional (si están orientadas exclusivamente a África o el Caribe), que entra en conflicto con una experiencia del lugar que permite la articulación del país de destino como "hogar" (asentado). El concepto de nación-estado, como estructura de la que parten las políticas de inclusión y exclusión, emerge como un espacio de debate en estas disparidades inter-raciales: al mostrar una identidad nativista, con la subsiguiente afiliación nacional, puede parecer que la diáspora asentada africana participa de la oposición de binarios de "el yo" frente al "otro" en las que se regula la pertenencia a una sociedad, a expensas de excluir a aquellos grupos, los "otros", que no pertenecen. Cuestiones de autenticidad y aspiraciones de legitimación abundan en los debates sobre las etnias negras en Canadá. Como se muestra en las secciones 5.1. "The Challenge of Geography: Exploring the Local and Global Divide" y 5.2., "Class, Gender and Race as Factors of Inclusion/Exclusion", las diásporas asentadas contribuyen a conceptualizar experiencias de asentamiento y apego en términos no exclusionistas: desarrollos históricos y experiencias personales diferentes conducen a diferentes ontologías de pertenencia y modos de identificación, lo que no quiere decir que unas sean más válidas que otras. Es precisamente la pluralidad de las manifestaciones geo-políticas e históricas de la diáspora africana lo que hace necesaria una redefinición de aquellas prácticas diaspóricas que se alejan del paradigma central. Al abordar los sectores de esta diáspora que exhiben profundos sentimientos de apego nacional, como hace la diáspora asentada, esta tesis pretende refinar una disciplina de estudio, en lugar de fragmentarla en categorías irreconciliables. La diáspora escocesa no presenta estos problemas a nivel nacional. El mayor obstáculo en las novelas de MacLeod y McNeil es la negociación de la identidad periférica de las Marítimas respecto al modelo que se promueve desde la región central de Ontario. Eve es un ejemplo de un personaje que atraviesa diferentes dimensiones geopolíticas: lo local, lo nacional y lo global. Sin embargo, mientras que su pertenencia a Cabo Bretón/Nueva Escocia se puede cuestionar, su identidad como canadiense es indiscutible. Algunos aspectos de clase y género subrayan la fluidez de su posición identitaria y social, pero estos cambios siempre tienen lugar en un contexto canadiense. El análisis de estas

variables de clase, género y raza también resultan fundamentales para definir las bases de la diáspora asentada. La aplicación de políticas de multiculturalismo en Canadá populariza la idea de que la inmigración y el cosmopolitanismo son fenómenos recientes, lo cual eclipsa la existencia de las comunidades como la africadiana. En estos discursos nacionales, las diásporas asentadas juegan un papel doble: por una parte, funcionan para deconstruir nociones de multiculturalismo como exclusivamente urbano y contemporáneo; por otra, buscan establecer la premisa de que ninguna etnia debería ser privilegiada como más canadiense que otra.

Al interpretar el sujeto de la diáspora asentada según variaciones de raza, clase y género, se enfatiza la naturaleza fluida e inestable de la identidad, y las fronteras entre centro y periferia, si no en la práctica, se eliminan en la teoría. Al afirmar la prominencia de los estudios de la diáspora en los discursos académicos, Lisa Cho mantiene que "[d]iaspora must be understood as a *condition of subjectivity*" y subraya que "it is not just that power presses upon, hails and forms diasporic subjects. It is also the case that diasporic subjects emerge out of psychic relations to power which do not come from without, but are integral to that which is within the processes of subject formation" (2007: 14-15, énfasis en el original). Esta disertación también ha tratado de situar las diásporas asentadas como productoras y a la vez producto de subjetividades que dependen de factores históricos, políticos y sociales. Aunque la articulación de una definición de la diáspora asentada era esencial para localizar los contextos y los límites conceptuales del término, su existencia como una condición dialéctica de subjetividad no se puede pasar por alto. Como tal, se han explorado exhaustivamente las experiencias de la diáspora asentada en clave de género, clase y raza, que construyen espacios de pertenencia (y son construidos en ellos). El sujeto se aborda a través de estos marcadores de identidad en la interpretación de representaciones de ficción. Existe un contraste entre micro y macroestructuras de construcción identitaria que se puede establecer en las descripciones y el trato de la subjetividad que se observa en estas obras. Dicho contraste permite la incorporación, en sus lecturas, de elementos nativos y foráneos. La diáspora asentada emerge de estos análisis como una ontología y como un marco heurístico donde lo ajeno y lo nativo se subsumen. Por tanto, discursos y prácticas de identidades colectivas e individuales negocian los orígenes diaspóricos en sincronicidad con las identificaciones nativas, lo que ofrece la posibilidad de transcender ciertas restricciones propias de las narrativas de las diásporas, tales como la

insistencia en el movimiento y el transnacionalismo, o la victimización imperativa del sujeto diaspórico.

Al final del Capítulo 2 se señalaron una serie de requisitos esenciales para la existencia de la diáspora que entraban en claro conflicto con las subjetividades diaspóricas encontradas en las novelas. La inconsistencia más obvia, la existencia del "hogar" fuera del lugar de asentamiento, se ha abordado ampliamente a lo largo de esta tesis y se han aportado vocabularios y rutas definitorias alternativas para acomodarla. La cuestión del énfasis en el movimiento y la victimización y ex-centricidad de los sujetos diásporicos también se han explorado en los análisis literarios. Los textos de Clarke y de Wesley constituyen ejemplos conspicuos de un giro hacia las raíces y el apego por la tierra de Nueva Escocia; esto en parte contradice nociones de la diáspora como sitio de movimiento permanente, el cual, si no físico, se refleja en transiciones identitarias entre más de un emplazamiento de identificación personal y cultural. Esto no quiere decir que la literatura africadiana no pueda representar o no represente contextos transculturales y/o introducir la pluralidad y lo transnacional. En términos globales, la literatura Canadiense establece claras relaciones dialécticas con los cánones británicos y americanos, fruto de historias de (post)colonialismo y neocolonialismo. En este sentido, las diásporas asentadas pueden ofrecer la posibilidad de abrir espacios simbólicos donde reforzar o polemizar estas influencias. Un ejemplo es la incorporación y la transposición que realiza Clarke de referencias Shakespearianas a su narrativa en *George and Rue* (2006: 32); o la aproximación de Wesley a las políticas de economía imperial en su novela *If this is Freedom*, que pone de relevancia el papel de Nueva Escocia como enclave cultural y comercial en el Imperio Británico. En el contexto escocés-neoescocés, la complejidad de las líneas narrativas en *The Interpreter of Silences* implica la existencia de varias realidades geopolíticas fuera de Nueva Escocia. Eve, que viaja alrededor del mundo debido a su trabajo en el ámbito de la moda, personifica a un sujeto femenino moderno cuya vida transciende los límites regionales y nacionales y que participa de una economía global y de infraestructuras de comunicación y redes de capital internacionales. Noel también encarna lo transnacional, en tanto que sus actividades periodísticas, que le llevan a África, representan la transmisión y los intercambios de información a nivel mundial. En su mayor parte, no obstante, estas referencias transnacionales se ven afectadas por una fuerza centrípeta que las hace girar alrededor del núcleo geográfico que es Nueva Escocia. A parte de en

la centralidad de la región, esto se refleja especialmente en pasajes como la alusión al atentado del 11 de septiembre, que se incluye en la novela a través de un paralelismo entre sus víctimas y la muerte de Kate, la sobrina de Eve, tras caer por un acantilado. De forma similar, MacLeod representa eventos históricos y políticos transnacionales, e incluso la confluencia de trabajadores mineros procedentes de distintas etnias y naciones ayuda a establecer conexiones globales en un entorno deterritorializado. Sin embargo, una vez más sus personajes están profundamente arraigados en Nueva Escocia y siempre es en relación a este centro que se articula la globalización. Un ejemplo es Catherine, la hermana de Alexander, a quien se muestra como un personaje itinerante, de nuevo debido a razones profesionales, y cuando se encuentra en el espacio indeterminado y desarraigado del aeropuerto busca de forma consciente lo familiar, gente que comparte su acento o su apariencia física (2000: 178).

Un último aspecto clave que se reconsidera gracias a las posibilidades conceptuales de la diáspora asentada es la forzosa condición de víctima que supuestamente entraña el pertenecer a una diáspora. La atención que se presta a la dislocación y el dolor por el desarraigo y por la separación física y psíquica del "hogar" deseado resulta en una asociación entre las diásporas y el victimismo que se fosiliza y parece afectar a todos los aspectos del desarrollo de la identidad de los grupos diaspóricos en el país de destino. Por supuesto, es esencial recordar que estas correlaciones con el victimismo y el sufrimiento no solo proceden de las condiciones de exilio en las que frecuentemente se emigra, si no que a menudo aumentan en la sociedad de destino, que ven a las comunidades diaspóricas como fuera de lugar. Las diásporas asentadas también pueden ser interpretadas como ajenas; pero incluso en aquellos casos en los que las políticas nacionales las posicionen como extranjeras desde fuera, necesariamente se interpretan a sí mismas desde dentro como completamente pertenecientes al "hogar" asentado. De esta forma, una vez más, la diáspora asentada como marco de análisis actúa como mediadora entre las alienaciones impuestas y una identidad nativa progresivamente construida. En base al análisis textual, ésta es una de las mayores diferencias entre las diásporas asentadas africana y escocesa en Nueva Escocia, ya que esta última no está sometida, en comparación, a la exclusión de la sociedad de la que es objeto la primera. En este sentido, los escritores africadianos emplean distintas estrategias para inscribirse en una historia que niega su presencia: la revisión de episodios de esclavitud en la provincia, la re-narración de mitos de origen

como el mito de los "Loyalists", o el enfoque sobre hechos tangibles de supresión y desposeimiento como la demolición de Africville. Éstas se pueden ver como necesarias representaciones de la larga lucha contra la segregación y las prácticas racistas a las que esta comunidad se ha enfrentado históricamente y que en su mayoría son ignoradas. Son, al mismo tiempo, narrativas de resistencia y empoderamiento; constituyen una aserción de "agencia", y un medio de transcender la posición estancada de victimismo a la que han sido relegadas. En contraste, las comunidades y los individuos escoceses representados en las novelas no sufren una represión y marginalización de la sociedad tan flagrantes, al menos no en términos de raza o de origen étnico. De hecho, la cultura "auténtica" de Nueva Escocia se ha asociado históricamente con la tradición escocesa, lo que puede llevar a la conclusión de que estos personajes no se enfrentan a ningún tipo de exclusión de las lecturas hegemónicas de la sociedad. Esta idea se deconstruye en las novelas al denunciar la promoción de lo escocés como algo superficial y adulterado con el fin de servir a la industria del turismo; y al representar las realidades de dificultad económica que son parte de las experiencias de estas comunidades que resulta en su diferenciación de clase y subsiguiente marginalización. El victimismo se articula aquí de otra manera y su eventual transcendencia poco está relacionada con contextos de la diáspora asentada. Estas distinciones de clase, sin embargo, no deben ser consideras irrelevantes ya que, como se ha mencionado anteriormente, es fundamental tener en cuenta todos los aspectos de la construcción de la identidad (aun aquellos que no se relacionan, *a priori*, con las prácticas diaspóricas), si se pretende alcanzar una definición exhaustiva de la diáspora asentada.

Aunque este estudio se restringe a un marco geopolítico e histórico muy específico, las líneas del concepto de diáspora asentada se han diseñado y se han puesto a prueba de tal manera que pueda ser aplicado a otros contextos. Por una parte, el hecho de que una sección de las diásporas africana y escocesa haya sido seleccionadas para ilustrar estas transformaciones no implica que las mismas se comporten, en su totalidad, de la misma manera. Por otra parte, esta disertación abre el camino para investigaciones posteriores en los diversos entornos en los que se pueden discernir las identidades de las diásporas asentadas. Gwendolyn Davies argumenta que existe un fuerte sentido del lugar en la literatura de las Marítimas, y que "the 'home place' emerges as a symbol of cultural continuity and psychological identification in the face of social fragmentation, outmigration, and continuing hardscrabble economy" (1991: 194). ¿Sería posible

encontrar diásporas asentadas en territorios que, por lo general, no muestran este profundo sentido de pertenencia? ¿En qué formas un país de destino más estrictamente homogéneo impediría su formación? A estas cuestiones en ámbitos aún no explorados habría que añadir aquellas que esta disertación ha abordado sólo parcialmente, como la incorporación de otros marcadores de identidad (por ejemplo la religión, la sexualidad o la discapacidad) al desarrollo de las comunidades de diáspora asentada. Como conclusión final, mantengo que esta tesis constituye una expansión conceptual muy fructífera que se delimita aquí en términos de representaciones de ficción, pero que ofrece el potencial de ser aplicada en un contexto empírico y teórico de gran proyección.

Appendix

This appendix is devoted to the description of the novels' plots, which for the readers' convenience is separated from the main body of the thesis, so as not to disrupt the reading process. The texts utilised in the critical analysis of this dissertation are complex and disparate in content and historical background, and, for these reasons, each of the narrative lines are outlined below. Since this thesis incorporates elements from relevant works other than the primary novels, a summary of their themes are also included in this appendix.

George Elliott Clarke is one of the most acclaimed Canadian writers, Toronto's Poet Laureate in 2012 and recipient of the Governor General's Award for *Execution Poems* in 2002, among other outstanding recognitions. As a seventh-generation black Canadian, his fiction, as well as his critical scholarship, focus in great part on the recovery of the historical experience of blacks in Nova Scotia/Canada. Although best known for his poetry, the work selected to be analysed in this dissertation is his novel *George and Rue*, a narrative account of the lives of George and Rufus Hamilton, two brothers born in Nova Scotia, who were hanged for the murder of a taxi driver in New Brunswick, in 1949, an event which also provided the basis for his poetry collection *Execution Poems*. Both historical and personal motives compel Clarke to engage with this episode, as the protagonists were in fact his cousins. Thus, as well as adding to the historical archive of the black Nova Scotian community (and, by extension, of black Canada), it is a familial and intimate project. The novel opens with the introduction of the rural community of Three Mile Plains, where the boys' parents, Cynthia and Asa, meet. The long-established genealogy of the Hamilton family is emphasised in the narration, as they are described as belonging to a part of the black Nova Scotian population who arrived as slave refugees in the beginning of the nineteenth century. George and Rufus are thus born into a deeply rooted family, but theirs is a household stricken with misery, marginalisation and violence. As they grow up the brothers have to endure their father's alcoholism and brutality, their mother's resort to bootlegging and the rejection and marginalisation from white society. After their parents' deaths they take different paths: George is portrayed as the most prudent and practical of the two siblings, a hard-working man who cherishes life in the farm and even enrols in the Army in order to support his future wife. Rufus, on the other hand, becomes a more reckless man, and alongside his creative streak he has a tendency to disobedience and

pride. At the point when they reunite in Fredericton they both find themselves unemployed and in need of money so they plan to steal it from Silver, a taxi driver. The final part of the novel concentrates on this action and it shows a regretful and apprehensive George in contrast to an audacious and almost eager Rue, who is actually the one to commit the murder. Although the text does not expiate the brothers from the crime perpetrated it does disclose a much needed social and historical dimension to the context in which it took place. The fictional reconstruction of their lives positions them as individuals first and then as murderers, and underscores the segregation and tough reality of black Nova Scotian communities during most of the twentieth century. Clarke's is an inclusive narrative that adopts the stance of the invisible and silenced and recuperating this fragment of history contributes to the (re)imagining of the black Canadian voice.

A historical focus also pervades in the other text chosen as representative of African diasporic writing in Nova Scotia, *Chasing Freedom*. Gloria Ann Wesley is also the author of three collections of poetry *To My Someday Child* (1975), *Woman, Sing* (2002) and *Burlap and Lace* (2007), and her work has appeared in several anthologies of Canadian poetry. In 2013 she published the sequel to *Chasing Freedom,* entitled *If This is Freedom*. The story in the novel this dissertation is concerned with revolves around the lives of Sarah Redmond and her grandmother Lydia, former slaves who have only recently arrived to the newly formed black settlement of Birchtown. After the American Revolutionary War the British Crown relocated many of the Loyalists to other colonies of the Empire, most to the province Nova Scotia, where the town of Shelburne was established. Slaves who joined the British Army were promised freedom and lands in the colonies, like their white counterparts, and the black Loyalist settlement of Birchtown emerged, adjacent to Shelburne. The novel portrays the conditions of this deeply segregated community, the unfulfilled promises and hardships that black Loyalists had to endure. The historical and narrative value of the novel resides in that it offers a retelling of one of the foundational myths of the region of Nova Scotia, the myth of the white Loyalists, from the much neglected black and female point of view. The main characters are strong female figures, who struggle to negotiate their past as slaves with their newly gained but nevertheless debatable freedom. For even while freedom is nominally granted to them, the settlement of Birchtown is not a safe place for black Loyalists: on the one hand, Boll weevil Carter and Cecill MacLeod (the

overseer and foreman of the plantation in Carolina) also established themselves in Nova Scotia; their presence provokes fear among black people as they could be resold back as slaves, should they be captured without their documents. Slavery has left physical and psychological imprints on the characters, especially on Lydia, who back in Carolina had been forced to bear children to be sold to slavery. The traumas of the abduction of her children and her frustrated motherhood accompany her to Nova Scotia. However, this is a stage of her life when she is free to speak about and react against the ordeal she has been put through and the guilt she feels as a consequence; she is even starting to look for and identify her lost children and she manages to meet them all again before her death. On the other hand, Sarah rebels against the injustices of past slavery and present segregation. The narration often adopts her point of view, and her development into a confident and proud but cautious person conforms the central body of the novel. Determined to make her dreams come true in the "Promised Land," she manages to open a tailor shop, but, confronted with rejection of the white population she reacts against them and is imprisoned and condemned to public lashing. Although justice comes to her at the last moment, it is not until she has received three lashes that she is released. By the end of the novel she reopens her shop and marries; however, the scars she bears will always remind her of the hardships that, as an idealist black Loyalist woman, she endured in the province. The Loyalist myth of survival and settlement is revisited through the eyes of a young black woman, highlighting the crucial role of gender and racial factors in the development of individual identity and in the inscription of collective identity into history.

Of the two Scottish novels analysed in this dissertation, *No Great Mischief* engages most closely with Scotland and its legacy. MacLeod was born in Saskatchewan in 1936, but grew up in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, with his Scots Canadian family. It is not coincidental to find such a strong connection to the Old Country, Cape Breton being one of the last Gaelic-Speaking areas in the world, and certainly the only one in North America. Cape Breton has retained elements of Highland traditions, culture, and language, from the early settlements to the present. Apart from the Gaelic language, which is spoken by a few hundred people, there is a deep conservationism of musical forms that are said to be even more historically "authentic" than those in Scotland, since they have not been subject to any changes in the New World and have become almost fossilised. MacLeod portrays the cultural and identity landscape of a small community

in Cape Breton, and the influence of Scottish hereditary tradition and values permeates his entire work. His two previous collections of short stories *The Lost Salt Gift of Blood* (1976), and *As Birds Bring forth the Sun and Other Stories* (1986), deal equally with the complexities that isolated communities in Nova Scotia experience. In *No Great Mischief* he portrays, through the eyes of Alexander MacDonald, the history of the clan Calum Ruadh, a history that spans a period of two hundred years, from the moment Alexander's ancestors leave Scotland bound for Canada to the present in Alexander's story. The novel opens with Alexander going to visit his older brother Calum in Toronto (both middle-aged men now), a point from which he starts the narration of his own life. He is orphaned at an early age, although he moves with his grandparents afterwards. It is through the contrasting voices of his two grandfathers that he learns the history of his ancestors and its own contradictions, and how their family migrated from the Highlands to Cape Breton. Personal introspection, genealogy and history are thus intertwined, the narrator moving back and forth in time in a narrative technique that weaves past and present together. Loss, both personal and cultural, the authenticity of history and its overlapping with fiction are key points in this text and the emphasis on ancestry and the importance of family is exploited in much detail. MacLeod fictionalises not only the lives of his characters, but the environment in which they move as well. The history of the land shapes the stories of those who inhabit it and this community that becomes the centre of MacLeod's novel is threatened because their lifestyle is threatened. *No Great Mischief* deals with the struggle to maintain alive a set of traditions and values which do not seem to belong in the contemporary world, because their ontological space is gradually shrinking with each new generation. It therefore appears that *No Great Mischief* is tinted with the element of nostalgia that abounded in those nineteenth-century novels that so profoundly lamented the loss of their homelands. There are aspects of the text, however, that situate it in this group of contemporary novels that seek to explore and assert a specific Canadian identity, aspects that are essential for the central discussion of this dissertation.

Although *The Interpreter of Silences* is set in Cape Breton as well, the novel greatly differs from MacLeod's *No Great Mischief*. Jean McNeil was born in Nova Scotia and has published several novels, including *Hunting Down Home* (1996) and *Private View* (2002), for which she was finalist of the Governor General's Award for fiction in 2003. One particularity about McNeil in comparison to all the other authors

approached in this dissertation is the fact that she has resided outside Canada for over twenty years. As this thesis is primarily concerned with diaspora and migration this novel is especially interesting in that its author has effected herself what could be called a reversal migration movement, going back to Britain, the land where her ancestors came from. Partly due to McNeil's constant worldwide mobility (she has travelled extensively through South America, Africa and Antarctica) *The Interpreter of Silences* departs from the more focalised perspective that MacLeod offers, and it provides a depiction of Cape Breton that is easily situated in a more global context. The protagonist, Eve, has been away from her home in Cape Breton for eight years. After her mother's death when she was a small child she spent most of her life with her uncommunicative father and trying sister, resenting the isolation and oppression of her surroundings. At the present time of the novel, she is leading a cosmopolitan life in Toronto, but is forced to go back to her childhood home to look after her father, who seems to be developing some sort of dementia. The plot of the novel is expanded with the arrival of Noel, an American journalist who rents the neighbouring house with his girlfriend for the summer holidays. Multiple points of view are presented throughout the novel. The narrator adopts the voices not only of Eve, but also of Noel, whose traumatic experiences as a journalist covering the aftermath of the Rwandan Genocide have left in him psychological scars; of Alistair, Eve's father, whose fishing practices are severely affected by the current economic depression and who faces the truth that his late wife had a lover; of her mother, who speaks through a diary Eve finds in which she narrates the affair she had with a man who turns out to be Eve's biological father; and even of Eve's niece, Kate, whose accidental death marks the ending of the novel. Different concerns and psychological lines can therefore be discerned in the complex interrelational webs knit by the characters. Eve, however, stands at the centre and her contradictory relationship to her homeland stands out as one of the dominant themes of the novel. Her unquestionable belonging to Cape Breton and her constant desire to abandon it provoke tensions of (un)attachment that she attempts to negotiate through her contact with Noel, her father, and through the coming to terms with her mother's death after reading her confessions. Thus, even while the density of the novel and the intricate predicaments of the characters make Eve's a unique story, there is an underlying concern with the dwindling of traditional life and with the threat that progress poses for inherited Scottish culture in Cape Breton that runs parallel to the anxieties explored by MacLeod in *No Great Mischief*.

These four novels conform the main literary corpus on which the comparative analysis of this dissertation focuses. Their engagement with diasporic aspects such as migration, the retention of ancestral traditions and artistic patterns and their diverse approaches to ontologies of (un)belonging and the inscription of identity into place (and vice versa) are the chief reasons why they have been selected as representative of diasporic literature. There are other texts, however, which are discussed and, when required, examined in detail alongside these works. Clarke's opera libretto, *Beatrice Chancy* (1999), is a relevant piece in that it addresses one of the most commonly overlooked episodes of Canadian history, which is the practice of slavery. The drama, which focuses on a female character, throws light on experiences of abuse and brutality that are usually associated to the plantations of the Caribbean or the American South, so this text becomes another contribution to a balanced and thorough representation of the history of black communities in Nova Scotia. Wesley's sequel to *Chasing Freedom*, *If This is Freedom*, is also explored. This narration is arguably more mature and realistic than its predecessor, and presents in greater depth the role of Nova Scotia as a fundamental component of the Imperial network that tied colonies and territories together through trade and peoples' mobility. However, since specific issues of migration are confronted in a more tangential, less direct way than in *Chasing Freedom*, this novel is only addressed at certain points throughout the thesis. Lawrence Hill's novel *The Book of Negroes* (2010) becomes an essential text when analysing the history of black migration into Nova Scotia. The narration follows the life of Aminata, who is abducted as a child from her home in Africa and sold as a slave in America. Her multiple Atlantic crossings (the crossing of the Middle Passage, her later journey to Nova Scotia, her return back to Africa and eventually going from there to England) make the novel a fictional mapping of the Black Atlantic (Gilroy, 1993). The plot partially overlaps with that of *Chasing Freedom*, as Aminata also migrates to the settlement of Birchtown as part of the black Loyalist group whose names were recorded in The Book of Negroes (hence the title). Both stories coincide more especially through the character of Lydia who shares with the protagonist the fact that they were born in Africa and were used to breed slaves, which left severe traumas in them, the search for their lost children becoming a common goal for both women. It is for these reasons that the novel was initially selected as one of the four main texts to be analysed. However, as its plot reaches a much more global scale, it deals with Nova Scotia in less detail than *Chasing Freedom*, so that the latter was deemed to be more representative of the black

Nova Scotian experience. Lastly, Dionne Brand's *What We All Long For* (2005) provides an interesting perspective on the representation of diasporic experiences. The main character of the novel is Tuyen, a second-generation Vietnamese young woman living in Toronto. She is part of a group of friends of diverse ethnic origins: Carla, who is mixed-race, Oku a second-generation Caribbean migrant and Jackie, who has migrated with her family from Nova Scotia to Toronto due to the prevalent economic depression of the region. This work provides a compelling account of the multicultural landscape of the city while also offering a view into the distinct ethnic manifestations of the black diaspora, among which the established community of African Nova Scotia can be found.

As part of the Scottish diaspora literature, MacLeod's collection of short stories, compiled in *Island* (2002) has been mentioned as portraying a similar ethos to that of his novel. The short stories offer a more focalised gaze into rural community life in Cape Breton. Most of them have a middle-aged man as main character, a protagonist who somehow struggles with the disappearance of traditions, the fishing, mining or urban sectors, and the organic community organisation. As in the novel, Scottish inherited values are constantly present in the social background of the narrations; and one noticeable coincidence between many stories and the novel is the feeling of guilt many characters profess at leaving that menaced traditional environment behind as they strive to pursue the commodities of modernity. McNeil's early novel, *Hunting Down Home* (1996), is also occasionally addressed as it complements some aspects presented in *The Interpreter of Silences.* This novel also features a female protagonist, Morag, who grows up in a rural area of Cape Breton. In this case, however, the story is centred on the girl's childhood (which takes place roughly in the 1970s, while the main setting of the other work develops in the turn of the century), and her conflictive relationship with her abusive grandfather. As this work is more condensed plotwise, there is a more direct account of the Highland Clearances, which are revealed as the cause for her ancestors' migration from Scotland. It also offers a valuable perspective on Scottish traditions, mainly through the character of Morag's grandfather, who is a musician and often plays Gaelic songs. Both novels share also the impulse of the protagonists to leave Cape Breton behind. Another novel from the Scottish Canadian diaspora that is considered for brief analysis is Margaret Laurence's *The Diviners*. This novel does not take place in Nova Scotia; however, it contains many elements that coincide with the

main texts. It is important to point out that the protagonists in this novel, as well as in *No Great Mischief* and *The Interpreter of Silences* are orphaned (even though the latter grows up with her non-biological father), which may represent a symbolic disengagement with the mother country. The fact that both *The Diviners* and *No Great Mischief* are related becomes obvious by the reference that Catherine, Alexander's sister, makes to a passage of *The Diviners* while speaking about the Gaelic language as the language of the heart. The main episode that sets *The Diviners* apart is the overt declaration of Canadianness that, for various reasons, are not obviously displayed in the other Scots diasporic works, but which confirms the transformation of Canada into an independent homeland. Finally, this dissertation also engages with Alice Munro's *The View from Castle Rock* (2006). Historically, Alice Munro (nee Laidlaw) is related to the celebrated Scottish poet and novelist James Hogg (Munro's great-great-grandfather was Hogg's first cousin). However, a strong Scottish background has not clearly emerged until *The View from Castle Rock*. In this semi-autobiographical collection of short stories she creates a personal genealogy by offering a brief introduction to the land of Ettrick valley and the people who were related to her there, the first of these ancestors being Will O'Phaup. Intertwining fiction and facts she proceeds to give an account of their voyage to Canada, and the short stories continue to the present day, finally catching up with episodes from her own life. One of the most interesting aspects that this text presents is the fact that, contrary to what can be observed in all of the other works at hand pertaining to the Scottish diaspora, this narrative does not engage with a Highland but with a Lowland ancestry. Thus, Munro disrupts the general identification between Scottishness and Highlandism.

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