

**UNIVERSIDAD DE SALAMANCA**  
**FACULTAD DE FILOLOGÍA**  
**DEPARTAMENTO DE FILOLOGÍA INGLESA**



**THE NOVEL IN ENGLISH AS PARADIGM OF CANADIAN LITERARY IDENTITY:  
FROM FRANCES BROOKE TO SARA JEANNETTE DUNCAN**

**TESIS DOCTORAL**

Presentada por:  
Natalia Rodríguez Nieto

Dirigida por:  
Antonio Rodríguez Celada

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Tesis Doctoral Presentada por:  
Natalia Rodríguez Nieto

para la obtención del Grado de Doctor y la mención de “Doctor Europeus”

El Director:  
Antonio Rodríguez Celada

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## DEDICATION

The white-sailed ship with rope and spar,  
Bound for the land where the blue skies are,  
    Passeth the line so faint and far,  
        Dividing the sky and sea.

So let our love in a glad surmise  
    Sail in the hope of bluer skies,  
Beyond the line where the shadow lies,  
    Into eternity.

SARA JEANNETTE DUNCAN



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## INTRODUCTION

As the title of the present dissertation suggests, my work focuses on the Canadian novel genre in English as a paradigm of Canadian literary identity in the period that covers from Frances Brooke (the British author and temporary Canadian resident who wrote the first Canadian novel in English, *The History of Emily Montague*, published in 1769) to Sara Jeannette Duncan given the pioneering role of her work *The Imperialist*, published in 1904, as landmark in the evolution of the genre in Canada towards modernism. With the aim of examining the paradigmatic character of the novel in English as representative of Canadian literary identity, other authors who contributed to the genre during this period are included not to support prevailing ideas on Canadian literary identity as comprehensive regardless of gender and/or ethnicity, but to question them. Although after such an introduction of these two novelists their relevance as contributors to English Canadian literary identity through the novel may seem evident, their significance has not been raised but rather omitted, overlooked or distorted. Whereas Frances Brooke is frequently mentioned for having contributed to Canadian letters in English with the first novel, the formal and thematic novelties of *The History of Emily Montague* have been frequently left out. Similarly, Sara Jeannette Duncan's literary achievement has been disregarded until recently. Cases of dismissals as those of Brooke and Duncan on behalf of mainstream critical discourses in Canada are not isolated since other significant oversights related to the participation of female and ethnic authors in the novel genre during the period of early English Canadian Literature covered in this dissertation can be found.

Such critical disregards have been echoed from critical perspectives as feminisms and ethnic studies whose challenge of literary criticism is approached in Part I. As explained in Chapter I, ethnic and feminist critics share with New Historicism an interest in the relation between literary and historical discourses that has allowed the

development of a delegitimation of mainstream literary criticism. Their return to history has enabled them to unearth the untold histories of gender, race, power and identity that have also affected literary criticism. Similarly, their renewed viewpoints have provided tools to understand the role of literature as counterhistory, as a space where those silenced histories have been raised and contested. Such a historical focus has been also significant regarding the acknowledgement of the influence of historical and cultural frameworks on both the production and estimation of literature. But their most significant questioning as far as this dissertation is concerned revolves around the writing of literary history; by unfolding the biases of historiography, they also bring into question the historization of literature so that the concepts of literary tradition and identity are ultimately at stake since they have been historically constructed and based on a biased literary history that has silenced certain voices. On the other hand, Chapter II focuses on the ways in which ethnic and feminist approaches intersect and differ. Their shared challenge of mainstream literary criticism has fostered awareness of crucial aspects to be taken into account when analysing the literary production of disregarded authors such as issues concerning alterity, exile, authority and authorship. Very significantly, their renewed analyses have enabled the recovery of silenced contributions that display diverse senses of identity.

Taking over from this theoretical framework, Part II focuses on the construction of English Canadian literary history, tradition and identity. In Chapter III, the debate between canonical and counter-canonical critical discourses on Canadian Literature in English and the canonization of English Canadian Literature are unravelled. Anthologization as one of the most influential canonical tools and its impact on the construction of English Canadian literary tradition and identity are approached in the second section; in order to analyse such an influence, a close study of general anthologies and literary histories from 1920 to 2004 focusing on the representation of early female and ethnic novelists is included. Just as in Part I, the second chapter of Part II is devoted to the intersecting and differing contributions of feminist and ethnic studies. On the one hand, their questioning of English Canadian literary canon and history is unfolded, their crucial ideas about Canada's untold histories of sexism and racism outlined, and the fallacious multicultural and non-patriarchal image of English Canadian Literature brought into light. On the other hand, the process of voicing the

previously silenced writing of early ethnic and female authors that ethnic and feminist critics have developed is uncovered; attention will be paid only to works by early African, Asian, First Nations' and female authors since they are the main contributors to the novel genre during the period covered in this dissertation. Finally, the differing and diverse identities that these dismissed texts give voice to and the predominantly white and male Canadian identity that denies them are pointed out.

In consonance with the recovery of disregarded authors that ethnic and feminist critics have carried out, Part III is dedicated to the analysis of one novel produced by female and/or ethnic writers in English Canada between 1769 and 1904 as paradigms of the restrictive construction of Canadian literary identity. Given their already explained pioneering character, more detailed attention is paid to the novels of Frances Brooke and Sara Jeannette Duncan in Chapters V and VII correspondingly. Chapter VI is devoted to other alternating voices that are approached chronologically according to the year of publication of the novel object of closer study. The first section deals with the figures of Julia Catherine Beckwith Hart, Susanna Moodie and Rosanna Leprhonon as inheritors of Frances Brooke's legacy in sentimental fiction. *Blake; or, the Huts of America* written by Martin R. Delany and serially published between 1859 and 1861-62 is analysed in detail in the following section since it has been raised as the first Canadian novel in English by an African author. Given the fact that Agnes Maule Machar's *For King and Country* (1874) and Margaret Marshall Saunders's *Beautiful Joe* (1894) are addressed to the juvenile audiences, only a brief note on their works is offered, after which attention is paid to the innovative novel of May Agnes Early Fleming entitled *Lost for a Woman. A Novel* (1880). The mainly didactic aims of Margaret Murray Robertson's fiction and the depiction of Canada's socio-cultural complexity in *What Necessity Knows* written by Lily Dougall and published in 1893 are approached in subsequent sections. Robertson and Dougall are followed by Joanna Ellen Wood whose dismissal is very eloquent since she was not only one of the first professional female novelists of Canada but contributed to Canadian letters with a pioneering realistic and critical account of Canadian regionalism through her novel *The Untempered Wind* (1894). Although Simon Pokagon's *Life of O-Ji-Maw-Kwe-Mit-I-Gwa-Ki, Queen of the Woods* (1899) is not a novel highly connected to Canada, a short analysis on the fictionality and Canadianicity of the text is offered because it has been

raised by some critics as the first Canadian novel in English by a First Nations' author. The in-between position of Winnifred Eaton as a female and ethnic author who changed her mixed Anglo-Chinese ancestry for the alien Japanese literary persona of Onoto Watanna makes her case paradigmatic; as explained through the analysis of her novel *The Heart of Hyacinth* (1903) such an alternating position offered the author the possibility of developing a transnational critical insight. Connected through the uneven consideration that their figures and works have received from mainstream literary discourses in English Canada, the close rapprochement of their novels offers access to the silenced and diverse senses of identity they convey and challenges the construction of an English Canadian literary identity of which they are actually paradigmatic despite having been silenced.

## **PART I**

### **THE CHALLENGE OF FEMINISMS AND ETHNIC STUDIES**



What follows is an approach to the theoretical framework in which the present dissertation is inscribed. Given the fact that the early Canadian novels in English analysed in Part III are written by women and/or ethnic authors, the theoretical axis unfolded in this first part revolves around the crucial issues highlighted by feminist and ethnic literary critics. Their critical work is essential regarding current literary debates since it challenges traditional critical perspectives and offers new viewpoints which allow both the rapprochement and better understanding of the literary contributions of silenced writers as those voiced in Part III. In this respect, in Chapter II attention is paid not only to the intersections but also the divergences between feminisms and ethnic studies that simultaneously associate and differentiate them so that a dialectical process is suggested.

Since both critical approaches together with New Historicism have brought into question the connection between literary and historical discourses as a means of contesting the bias on which mainstream literary criticism has been based, Chapter I examines the points that feminist, ethnic and new historicist perspectives have unravelled. Such an association between literature and history has helped in bringing crucial aspects affecting literature into light such as the untold histories of race, gender, power and identity, the role of history as counter-history, the influence of socio-historical and cultural frameworks, as well as essential issues concerning the previous writing of literary history. Their contributions to literary criticism have not been left unchallenged and precisely critics from more traditional stances like Harold Bloom have actually disputed their challenging ideas. In the light of these disagreements, Chapter I also focuses on the discrepancies between mainstream and new critical perspectives as those of feminist, ethnic and new historicist critics not merely in order to refute established critical postulates but to raise axial axioms as those of aesthetics and ideology, the critic's role, literary canon and value, and their impact on the construction of literary tradition and identity.

As the main focus of the present dissertation is on Canadian literary identity, the participation of ethnic and feminist approaches in literary criticism is essential. Whereas, on the one hand, by highlighting the feedback between literary and historical

discourses they have fostered awareness on the biased historization of literature, on the other hand, their questioning of traditional critical bases has equally encouraged acknowledgement of the constructed nature of mainstream concepts of literary tradition and identity. They have untangled all the different factors that have affected the creation of prevailing literary histories, traditions and identities, and have offered renewed viewpoints which have raised both the connection among them and their exclusionary shaping. Hence, both feminisms and ethnic studies together offer fundamental grounds on which the current image of English Canadian literary identity as neither sexist nor racist can be challenged.



## CHAPTER I

### AT THE CROSSROADS OF LITERARY HISTORY

When doing research about Martin R. Delany and his novel *Blake; or, the Huts of America* (1859-1862) I discovered that Eric Sundquist in his work *To Wake the Nations: Race in the Making of American Literature* (1994) included Delany's work as a fundamental piece in the rethinking of US literary history. After discovering Delany's personal and literary connections with Canada, and the generalized silence about his works from a Canadian viewpoint, I realized that his work was also a crucial tool in reconsidering its literary history and its official multicultural literary identity. The new historicist approach Sundquist employs in the introduction to his work became then a significant theoretical basis for the present dissertation as his ideas could be equally applied to Canada's literary context; although, of course, bearing always its specificities and differences in relation to US literature in mind. Besides, Sundquist's reconstruction of US literary history is mainly based on Black/African literary pieces as driving axis, whereas the focus of my research is on the contributions of early women and ethnic writers to the novel in English.

Inspired by Sundquist's ideas as presented in the introduction to his work *To Wake the Nations*, this dissertation attempts to challenge literary history by offering a "comprehensive study" of women and ethnic novel writers in English before the twentieth century in Canada (19). Here, I apply Sundquist's ideas to Canada's literary context by considering it as "defined to include" (10); that is, I regard Canadian Literature as informed by a process of inclusion of writers who have frequently been set apart from those regarded as mainstream literary figures. This dissertation is neither a

mere appraisal of non-canonical works nor a deposition of canonical writers; it is a rapprochement to dismissed works by not so celebrated writers as basis for a reconsideration and rethinking of the ways Canada's literary history, tradition and identity have been constructed. Just as Sundquist takes Black/African Literature in the United States as "the literary early struggle to redeem the national promise of equality and freedom" (10), the analysis of these so-called *marginal* writers' works in Canadian Literature appears as a fundamental tool in questioning the constructed image of its multicultural and non-patriarchal literary framework.

Just as Sundquist proclaims the inability of US literature to articulate diversity and difference due to a generalized "conception of "American" literature as solely Anglo-European in inspiration and authorship, to which may be then added an appropriate number of valuable "ethnic" or "minority" texts" (7), a similar claim can be made regarding Canada. Perhaps, the greatest distinction and paradox affecting Canadian Literature lies on the fact that it has been claimed to be multicultural and non-patriarchal, that is to say, inclusive, whereas it has actually left aside certain writers and works in a plea for establishing what was and is *truly* Canadian. Considering these *other* writers' literary contributions does not necessarily mean a removal of those regarded as canonical Canadian figures, although an evident questioning of established literary values is implied. In this sense, this dissertation is equally guided by Sundquist's "introduction of comparatively ancillary but nonetheless important works" –such as those presented in Part III– which could start being regarded as "the equals of most any writers in the history of", in this case, Canadian Literature (7).

As far as this dissertation is concerned, the most significant contribution of Sundquist's approach is the unfolding of a revision of some fundamental concepts on which mainstream literary histories are based. His boundary crossing attitude involves a reconceptualization of mainstream literary concepts such as "the extent of textuality, the cultural and historical integuments<sup>1</sup> that bind any work irrevocably to a time, a geography, and an array of social and aesthetic practices" (20). His explanation of a too limited interpretation of literariness where the context of literary texts has been left out of the debate can be also applied to Canadian Literature because, in the attempt to settle

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<sup>1</sup> The word "integuments" is included in Sundquist's original text making reference to the cultural and historical aspects that cover or enclose literary texts.

a tradition and identity, such restrictiveness has led to the dismissal of certain writers and works for a varied range of reasons that will be unravelled along this dissertation. As he explains “[t]o include new names in the canon [...] would be one means of making it more democratically inclusive and reflective of the era’s critical events and ideas” (10). In this way, an analysis of the reasons why critical trends have dismissed certain writers or works seems necessary. As a result, totalizing and univocal descriptions of literary tradition and identity from the past will require a redefinition into broader concepts so that a wider range of parallel and intersecting literary traditions and identities is included.

Sunquist’s approach also entails a revision of the concepts of nation, value and race in relation to literature to which I would add the issue of gender, too. On the one hand, through his revision of Du Bois’ work *The Souls of the Black Folk* he explains how the concept of nation is in fact redefined so that any critical perspective which tries to comprehend the significance of his work equally needs to question established national/istic literary boundaries. Regarding Canadian Literature, many writers also cross national boundaries as their works mingle with other literary traditions outside Canadian borders. This is the case, for instance, of Frances Brooke, Winnifred Eaton – also known as Onoto Watanna–, May Agnes Fleming, Lily Dougall, or Sara Jeannette Duncan, among others, whose personal and literary connections situate them in Canada and other literary traditions at the same time. Indeed, as Sunquist explains, Du Bois introduced the “theory of double consciousness” to refer to double or multiple cultural/national frameworks also approached from ethnic as well as feminist critical perspectives when dealing with these writers’ divided selves<sup>2</sup> (3). Furthermore, regarding Canadian Literature, not only these writers need to be considered as early cultural and literary agents, but the messages of many of their novels forerun what some critics regard nowadays as Canada’s multicultural fallacy. The already mentioned novel by Martin R. Delany *Blake; or, the Huts of America* is paradigmatic in this respect because it undermines the utopian vision of Canada as a land where cultural diversity is welcomed and supported through a pioneering insight into ethnic issues that challenges current ideas and policies on multiculturalism. It seems paradoxical, to say the least,

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<sup>2</sup> The concept of the writer’s divided self is inspired by Lorraine McMullen’s article “The Divided Self” published in 1980 in *Atlantis: A Women’s Studies Journal* 5: 53-57.

that early contributions from an ethnic perspective such as Delany's which actually spoke for literary diversity and thus epitomized multiculturalism even before the concept itself was coined have been later silenced precisely by a so-called multicultural national framework as that of Canada.

On the other hand, from Sundquist's critical viewpoint the recovery of dismissed texts such as those by Du Bois and Delany also entails a reconsideration of the traditional concept of literary value. Just as many other dismissed writers, the literary contributions of authors as Du Bois or Delany have frequently been considered as unworthy, that is, non-valuable and thus disregarded as significant literary contributions despite employing and developing genres and forms considered as canonical, as for example the novel. Perhaps, the misinterpretation of the cultural and literary specificities of their works voiced through the introduction of elements of their own traditions in mainstream genres –like the inclusion of songs and spirituals in novels– might have had some impact on such displacement. Following Eric Sundquist's revision of Franz Boas' essay "On Alternating Sounds", the misunderstanding of alternating voices as those of Du Bois and Delany is in fact the result of changing "unfamiliar signs into familiar and hence potentially inappropriate paradigms" or overlooking "features that seem inconsequential, perhaps even antagonistic and nonsensical" (6). This being so, the reevaluation and inclusion of silenced writers' works also imply an enquiry into literary value; they foster the questioning and redrawing of established literary boundaries. Sundquist's assertion that "value, after all, is not solely an aesthetic criterion" actually brings traditional canonizing processes exclusively based on aesthetics into question and hence challenges past constructions of Western literary canons (17).

Tony Bennett also participates in this debate about aestheticism and value by raising a significant distinction. In his opinion, aesthetic discourses applied to artistic fields such as the literary are in fact "discourses of value which are hegemonic in ambition" as well as "universalist in their prescriptive ambit" (35). As he explains, value discourses are self-centered since they settle judgement categories by establishing groups of "valued objects" and "an appropriate valuing subject" so that such subject is him/herself also valued due to his/her "ability to correctly apply the rules for valuing" (34). Furthermore, Bennett describes aesthetic discourses as circular; they not only

claim their universalism through the assumption of aestheticism as a subject's intrinsic principle, since it means "a distinctive mode of the subject's mental relation to reality" but perpetuate their circulation by the very claim of "a distinctive aesthetic model of the subject's appropriation of reality" (34). The identification of suitable valued/valuing subjects' practices with universal aesthetic discourses is carried out through depriving other groups of possessing similar or equal capacities since "the position of universal valuing subject which is necessary to such discourse [...] can be refused *to* but not *by* the individual" (Bennett: 35). In turn, the assumption of others' inabilities by these subjects perpetuates the hegemony of their claims. Very significantly, following Pierre Bourdieu's *La Distinction*, Bennett exposes that value discourses play a crucial role in the construction of group identities because they structure them as well as discriminate others. In this sense, they foster subject archetypes officially "valuing, valued and self-valuing" which when extended actually found "practical social ideologies" (35).

Apart from calling into question literary value, the importance of the part played by silenced writers needs to be reconsidered in view of their "contribution to articulating and sustaining the values of a given culture, whether or not that culture is national or "racial" in scope" (Sundquist: 18). I agree with Sundquist that neither all counter-mainstream literary interventions –ethnic and/or feminist– develop and foster literary excellence for their very *minority* condition nor explicit anti-minority works deserve straight critical oblivion, "if only for the very reason that they are deeply informative" (18). Consequently, close studies of excluded writers and/or dismissed works by praised authors on more specific bases that take into account different aspects of the framework in which writers developed their literary contributions are required. In each case, a given writer's work needs to be approached in order to consider his/her contribution as significant in relation to his/her historical, socio-cultural and literary context. Sundquist's position implies the acceptance of so-considered non-literary aspects which does not necessarily lead to relativist and/or pluralist attitudes. As he states: "the challenge of revising the contours of literary tradition need not produce thoughtless levelling or uninformed displacements" (19).

Following Sundquist's approach, the concept and application of literary value based exclusively on aestheticism is no longer valid. As it will be explained in detail in the next section of this chapter, literary critical attitudes like his have led to a passionate

debate among different sectors of Anglo-Western literary criticism. This is mainly why a comparative study of Harold Bloom's *The Western Canon: The Books and the School of Ages* (1994) in relation to new historicist, ethnic/cultural and feminist approaches is included. Bloom's work is regarded as a crucial tool for my research objectives as it helps in getting a wider perspective of my theoretical approach and also about its weaknesses and paradoxes. His ideas are thus fundamental in order to know what is called Western canonical criticism and to understand why some of these *other* critics' contributions are still being refused by some sectors of mainstream literary criticism. In fact, as explained in detail in the following section, both the so-called traditional and challenging literary perspectives, actually foster a crucial literary debate although maintaining different attitudes.

One of the main critiques concerning challenging attitudes towards mainstream literary discourses turns around their politicization. Actually, as Sundquist explains, politics cannot be removed from the literary debate even from the perspectives of those who claim their discourse not to be politicized, or at least, less politicized than those of feminist, ethnic, cultural or new historicist critics. But I agree with him in that "[t]his is not to say that literature and politics are the same thing" because "[a]ll modes of discourse, no matter how they interpenetrate, borrow from, and influence one another, operate under differing restrictions and enjoy differing privileges in their exercise of authority" (17). As Tony Bennett explains, traditional aesthetic discourses and their universal claims are actually based on the previous construction of a "theory of knowledge" that settles and institutionalizes valuable artistic objects and which simultaneously deprives subjects regarded as not meeting established value standards of any valuable feature whatsoever (36).

As introduced previously, the revision of mainstream Anglo-Western literary boundaries also entails a reconsideration of other crucial mainstream concepts, such as those of race and gender. It means an inquiry into and a redefinition of both as well as a reflection on the credit given to them in the past and on their influence within literary frameworks. Thus, their reintroduction within literary spheres will take place although based on very different principles but never as exclusive and excluding axis of literary criticism. In Sundquist's words: "[c]riticism and intellectual history cannot afford to ignore the imputation of racism or the advocacy of critical essentialism, yet neither

should those pressures rule the act of interpretation” (23). But the significance of these aspects in some literatures such as Canada’s is even more relevant. As Sundquist maintains in reference to US literature,

Issues such as those I have outlined here [race, value, canon, minority literatures...] lie at the heart of America’s national literature as much as they lie at the heart of the nation’s very complex and fragile conception of its ideology and mission. For this reason they are also crucial to the story that the nation tells about itself in public [...]. (23)

In the case of Canada, challenging the generalized assumption that racism and sexism are non-existent in its literary sphere would change its multicultural and non-gendered image into a fallacy. In this regard, its literary tradition and identity need to be revised in order to discern if that multiculturalist and non-patriarchal notion is factual and understand the reasons why it is said to be so. In fact, according to Sundquist, the study of dismissed writers entails not only a revision of specific issues related to the concepts of value, nation and race/gender but a reconsideration of what has been regarded as constituting a literary tradition and identity; as he explains regarding US literature: “a redefinition of the premises and inherent significance of the central literary documents of American culture is in order” (7). This is precisely what can be suggested through the writers included in the present dissertation since, when approaching their writings and analysing the consideration given to them in the past, the construction of what nowadays is presented as Canada’s official image is brought into question. Their texts are thus a significant means to develop a revision and deconstruction of Canada’s literary history, tradition and identity. Just as Sundquist argues that neither white nor black contributions to US literature “guarantees any sort of univocal vision or moral advantage” (7), my aim is to mingle writers, works and approaches so that a broader picture about early Canadian Literature is offered through the recovery of texts by writers immersed in differing ethnic and cultural backgrounds, whether male or female.

## I.1 LITERATURE AND HISTORY: NEW HISTORICISM, FEMINISMS AND ETHNIC STUDIES

In order to challenge Canada’s literary identity and given the heterogeneity of the works analysed in this research, a boundary-crossing approach which shifts among different theories is required. Actually, it would be contradictory that in attempting to

rethink Canada's literary history, tradition and identity by claiming a shifting of literary boundaries, this dissertation had to stick to a single theory. Following Sunquist, "I do not claim that a single unifying thesis or particular theoretical model holds these studies together"; the writers and works analysed in this research connect as means of questioning Canada's established literary tradition and identity by showing that different literary traditions "can be seen as both one and separate" (22).

As explained in the "Introduction" to *Redrawing the Boundaries: The Transformation of English and American Literary Studies* (1992)<sup>3</sup> by its editors Stephen Greenblatt and Giles Gunn "perambulation and transgression of boundaries" – not only of mainstream literary concepts as those of value and/or canon, but also of literariness itself – are at the very heart of literary criticism (5). As a result, a process of "continual refashioning is at the center of the profession of literary study" (5); critics are not exclusively guided by one single theory but cooperate and develop ideas from and for a varied range of critical approaches. A similar position is held by Eric Sundquist; his new historicist claims lead to an awareness of the fact that "each author or text [...] produces to some degree its own context and defining languages" so that a mingling theoretical approach is needed in order to fully comprehend his/her works and their relevance (22). New approaches to literary theory, therefore, demand adopting different perspectives, not as a group of separate schools with their own aims and focuses, but as an amalgam of connected and, at the same time, differentiated perspectives. Despite what is still maintained by more traditional theoreticians, nowadays the existing theoretical drifts cannot be constricted to a clearly established set of principles; they are connected in many and various ways, they inform each other, so that critics are able to take specific points in order to apply and develop them in relation to their own objects of study. Such attitudes to theory are not fanciful but answer to a more complicated literary scene where interdisciplinary perspectives are needed. Given the fact that the writers and works they study demand more harmonizing literary concepts for their

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<sup>3</sup> Given the fact that the name of the authors of an article included in a compilation of critical articles is usually given in the text, the parenthetical information on the corresponding bibliographical reference offered, refers to the main entry under the name of the editor or compiler, unless otherwise stated. In this way, in the case of *Redrawing the Boundaries: The Transformation of English and American Literary Studies*, for instance, such an information about articles as those by Gerald Graff and Bruce Robbins or Louis Montrose refer to Stephen Greenblatt and Giles Gunn. In order to ease readability, subsequent parenthetical details referring to a previously mentioned bibliographical reference only include the page number.



works to be analysed in more equal terms and not rejected as a rule, critics need to open up their views and start establishing theoretical relations which would allow a better understanding of those works and writers. As Geertz explains, “studies do build on other studies, not in the sense that they take up where the others leave off, but in the sense that, better informed and better conceptualized, they plunge more deeply into the same things” (25).

This is the case, for example, of New Historicism. As Catherine Gallagher and Stephen Greenblatt explain in their introduction to *Practicing New Historicism* (2001), the new historicist approach to literature “is not a coherent, close-knit school in which one might be enrolled or from which one might be expelled” (2). Likewise, they deny traditional theoretical attitudes by claiming that “historicism is not a repeatable methodology or a literary critical program” (19). Their attitudes towards literary criticism grow apart from traditional universalist and aesthetic claims. As they affirm, their intention is not ““demounting<sup>4</sup>” art or discrediting aesthetic pleasure” but, in their opinion, claims for universal literary values are no longer valid since it is necessary to emphasize “the creative power that shapes literary works *outside* the narrow boundaries in which it had hitherto been located, as well as *within* those boundaries” (12).

Given the fact that feminisms and ethnic studies are the theoretical axis of this dissertation a closer analysis of the ways in which they intersect with new historicism, as well as of their most important points, seems necessary. As it will be explained in this section, new historicism is not only inspired by other theoretical approaches as cultural criticism, but offers new points of departure to other critical perspectives like feminisms or ethnic studies which, at the same time, extend and renew it. As a matter of fact, Catherine Gallagher and Stephen Greenblatt in their introduction to *Practicing New Historicism* suggest another set of relations between feminist and new historicist views. As they explain, feminism has actually influenced new historicism in the insertion of “new objects for study, bring those objects into the light of critical attention, and insist upon their legitimate place in the curriculum” (11); it has also been helpful in reconsidering established literary assumptions and a starting point for challenging mainstream constructions of literary history, tradition and identity. From my viewpoint,

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<sup>4</sup> The verb “demount” is included in Gallagher and Greenblatt’s original text and means disassemble or remove from a mounted position.

ethnic and cultural studies have also fostered such de/re-construction and called into question cultural and literary significance. In addition, both feminist and ethnic studies can equally be of great use in the process of questioning literary history because of the attention they pay to those silencing processes that have affected the writers and works they focus on. In fact, the marginal positions to which female and ethnic contributions have been relegated to also bring into existence a network of links between feminist and ethnic approaches as critics have similarly been forced to work from the margins of mainstream criticism.

According to Louis Montrose Chapter on “New Historicisms” included in *Redrawing the Boundaries*, critical perspectives like new historicism, feminism or ethnic studies “have in common a concern at once to affirm and to problematize the connection between literary and other discourses, the dialectic between the text and the world” (in Gallagher and Greenblatt: 392). They are also connected through their introduction of new concepts as those of “*historicity of texts*” and “*textuality of histories*” which make the understanding of literary value and meaning more intricate. As Montrose explains, they require “a shift from an essential or immanent to a historical, contextual, and conjectural model of signification; and a general suspicion of closed systems, totalities, and universals” (393). But more significantly, as well as introducing *other* meanings and values through different cultural and historical frameworks, they affirm that “the survival of those traces rather than others cannot be assumed to be merely contingent but must rather be presumed to be at least partially consequent on subtle processes of selective preservation and effacement” (410). In this sense, apart from implying a reconsideration of history itself, their approaches also challenge fundamental aspects regarding literature. The questioning of specific historical assumptions as those concerning gender and race issues not only helps understanding the process of exclusion some writers suffered, but encourages a renewed awareness about literature’s core role both as a power tool and a site of contestation. As it will be explained later, such interest in the relation between history and literature is manifold and complex. Among many other aspects, they are especially interested in analysing how established historical axioms have also influenced literary discourses which, at the same time, have reproduced and fostered them; how actually literature helps in de/re-constructing history; and the importance of taking into account the

historical and socio-cultural framework of certain literary contributions in order to reach their better understanding. In this sense, these critical approaches also challenge traditional literary criticism and institutions and foster different ranges of research.

Within these crossroads between history and literature, literary histories hold a decisive position as the converging point between both. Literary histories as the means through which the history of literature has been told are a clear proof of the repercussion of historical discourses and their functioning. Their re-examination also fosters crucial questions about female and ethnic literary contributions since the histories of female and ethnic writing have frequently been left either untold or misrepresented. This being so, history, literature, and, of course, literary history are representations which need to be considered together since through the analysis of literary and historical discourses and its procedures critics can dissect the ways in which cultural meaning is negotiated, and power and its models are established, developed and reinforced.

But, “Is “historically” the only way literature can be studied?” (Brodhead: 11). I agree with Brodhead that historical approaches do not hold any exclusivity regarding literary criticism, but I equally agree with him that it is still a field offering new paths of research, “a place where new things can be learned and old understandings reconceived” (12). In this sense, some new historicist, feminist and ethnic studies through their reliance on history claim for the introduction of new perspectives, ideas and issues through which traditional criticism may be enlarged as well as challenged. Likewise, their approaches entail the reconsideration of central mainstream literary assumptions as those concerning literary tradition and identity. This is precisely the main aim of this dissertation for the application of new historicist, feminist and ethnic critical ideas to early Canadian Literature in English, and more specifically to the novel genre in English, involves a rethinking of its established tradition and identity.

### I.1.1 UNTOLD HISTORIES

Although the term ‘New Historicism’<sup>5</sup> has been questioned even by its coiner, Stephen Greenblatt, it can still be considered valid to designate that kind of criticism

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<sup>5</sup> Although the term “New Historicism” is usually spelled with capital letters, it will not be included in such form in the rest of this dissertation for obvious reasons of repetition but also to avoid an uneven treatment of other critical approaches such as feminism and ethnic studies.

born from the ashes of *Historicism* during the times of *New Criticism*. As its naming suggests, this critical perspective develops a renovated interest in historical aspects in relation to literary texts. But this renewed concern regarding history is not exclusive of new historicism. According to Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan's explanation in *Literary Theory: An Anthology* (2004) it "is a crucial part of the current scene in literary study and is one conducted under the aegis of many critical approaches" (506). In fact, new historicism intersects with feminist, ethnic and/or cultural criticism through this focus on history. For all of them, the rethinking of historical discourses is fundamental since they have promoted the founding, support and perpetuation of certain assumptions which have affected female and ethnic literary contributions and their consideration.

The importance given to history by these literary approaches is in Louis Montrose's opinion a consequence of the perennial disregard of history. As he explains, it is necessary to go back to it and become free of the concept of history as "a simple antinomy of myriad expendable details and a single irreducible essence" because otherwise history would be denied "by utterly effacing its *constitutive* differences, by effacing those complex historical formations in which not only the details but also the essences are produced, revised, challenged, and transformed" (in Greenblatt and Gunn: 394-5). The reconsideration of history carried out by these challenging critical perspectives discloses "the fingerprints of the accidental, suppressed, defeated, uncanny, abjected, or exotic –in short, the nonsurviving" and offers renewed approaches which should not be regarded "to be exclusive, uniform or inevitable" (Gallagher and Greenblatt: 52). The silenced histories they unveil can be thus considered "counterhistories" not only because they resist "dominant narratives, but also prevailing modes of historical thought and methods of research" (52). On the other hand, it is necessary to take into account that their essence stops being "counter" precisely when they their goal of collapsing those established axioms is accomplished. In this way, historical and counter-historical discourses cannot be completely detached from each other since, as Gallagher and Greenblatt explain, both "counterhistory and history [...] are moments in a continuous conflictual process rather than substantial opposing activities with independently distinguishing characteristics" (52).

As far as this dissertation is concerned, the most significant contribution of such inquiries into inherited historical discourses lies on the fact that a questioning on the

historically constructed nature of crucial concepts which have also pervaded the practice of both the literary and critical professions is also attained. New historicist as well as feminist and ethnic critics raise crucial questions about fundamental issues as those of race and gender since, in Nancy Armstrong's words, "who can speak the terms of gender and race without recognizing that they are historically constituted?" (in Rivkin and Ryan: 506). Very significantly, in doing so they also foster the unravelling of those untold histories that mainstream historical discourses have kept silenced and which are approached in the following section.

#### I. 1.1.1 HISTORY OF GENDER AND RACE

Feminist and ethnic critics raise two fundamental histories for those historical discourses they question to be divested of inherited axioms and from which new histories can be dug up. These are the histories of race and gender that have been traditionally told by a cultural mainstream that actually denied any kind of artistic or literary agency to members labelled as racialized or gendered, or racialized *and* gendered. What new historicist, feminist and ethnic critics investigate through their close studies about the construction of both concepts throughout history is precisely its influence on the literary creation as well as on the literary debate and criticism.

Nancy Armstrong in her work "Some Call it Fiction: On the Politics of Domesticity" participates in this debate by elucidating the narrowness of the concepts of history in the spotlight. In her opinion, they are actually based on political and economic issues and not on other socio-cultural aspects; that is to say, mainly on public and male-ruled realms. In this sense, prevailing historical concepts have been predominantly male and have established a separation between public and domestic or individual spheres. On the one hand, following Armstrong's explanation, such notions of history have made male history official while they have left aside women's history. Women have been pushed outside mainstream historical models so that, in her opinion, "such models necessarily fail to account for the formation of modern bureaucratic culture because they fail to account for the place of women within it" and consequently there is an untold history still to be told: the "history of sexuality" (in Rivkin and Ryan: 568). On the other hand, these historical archetypes have settled a division between the public realms of politics and economics, and the domesticity of cultural and literary

practices. In Armstrong's opinion, by doing so they "confine political practices to activities directly concerned with the marketplace, the official institutions of the state, or else resistance to these" (567). As a result, they relegate cultural practices, as for instance literature, to a position of inferiority detached from politics so that they are not assigned any kind of political agency. In turn, such denial entailed a great advantage: it disengaged literature from politics so that it meant the site "where political truths could be told" (577). But the banishment of domestic realms as sources of historical information also brought along the silencing of women's history since it was precisely voiced in the remote domains of domesticity. Although it may seem that Armstrong's ideas are inspired by Foucault's works –as the title of his work *History of Sexuality* suggests– he overlooked some aspects in her opinion. As Armstrong explains, "his *History of Sexuality* is not concerned with the history of gender. Nor does it deal with the role that writing for, by, and about women played in the history of sexuality" (in Rivkin and Ryan: 570). Moreover, in Foucault's work *Discipline and Punish* he takes the panopticon example –pan, "all" and opticon, "observe"– of a town under the plague where infected members are kept and controlled within their houses "on pain of death" as a metaphor to explain how power is exercised (in Rivkin and Ryan: 551). In doing so, Armstrong understands that he lays down the barrier between outside and inside, that is, between public and private realms without acknowledging that this is precisely "the line that divvies up<sup>6</sup> cultural information according to gender" (in Rivkin and Ryan: 572).

As far as Foucault's works are concerned, he introduced some crucial concepts that some feminist critics used as theoretical bases which they extended and renewed. In his *History of Sexuality* he exposes that such history is in fact a process by which "we have placed ourselves under the sign of sex" thus creating a knowledge and power mechanism based on gender (78). Such machinery brought along the creation of specific images of women that allowed their stigmatization, study and control –as for instance "the hysterical woman" (105)– so that social order was maintained. Following Foucault, this process affected even the linguistic realm because "as if in order to gain mastery over it in reality, it had first to subjugate it at the level of language" (17). Mary Daly in her feminist study *Gyn/ecology* indeed explains that it was not until the Middle Ages

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<sup>6</sup> The verb "divvy up" appears in Armstrong's original text and means "divide".

that the pronoun *she* was introduced exclusively for women to designate those who were different from *he* which remained as a generic. In her opinion, this change introduced a “self-splitting” which affected women’s literary contributions since “the female saying “I” is alien at every moment to her own speaking and writing” (1990: 18-19). It seems clear that feminist critics such as Daly suggest that gender concepts have been constructed, developed and reinforced through history in order to maintain a hierarchical structure that has affected the literary realm as well. As explained in detail in later sections of this dissertation, the acknowledgement of the existence of an untold history of sexuality, of the construction of gender through history and their influence on literary attempts and revisions are crucial to feminist literary approaches. They helped and encouraged feminist critics in their analyses of female literary depictions by male writers, in understanding women’s attitudes and evolutions as writers, in their questioning of the functioning of literary institutions and the writing of mainstream literary histories that specifically dismissed women’s contributions.

On the other hand, and broadening Armstrong’s ideas, it can be assumed that the uniform and static concept of history she questions has also disregarded the participation *other* so-called “minority” groups. Just as there is an untold history of gender to be told there must be *other* silenced histories still to be voiced as, for instance, that of race. This is precisely suggested by Eric Sundquist in his previously quoted work *To Wake the Nations* (1994) when he exposes the core role of race in American history which has been paradoxically and deliberately removed from the country’s consciousness (17). Following his views, there is an untold history of race since mainstream historical discourses have been predominantly carried out by powerful social groups in America who happened to be mainly white Europeans. Race, then, has a crucial function in the shaping of a racialized historical concept that has settled a division according to race between higher and minor histories and cultures. Besides bringing along their dismissal and hindering their voicing, by ascribing such minority status to certain experiences a silence pact regarding race issues has been established.

Very significantly, the awareness about the influence of race on the construction of history that ethnic critics such as Sundquist raise has further implications in the literary realm. In consonance with feminisms, ethnic approaches also challenge traditional critical approaches and find a starting point to recover silenced voices and

comprehend their rejection from mainstream literary discourses when based on their ethnicity framework. Furthermore, this apparent agreement between both critical perspectives that their raising of both racist and sexist issues implies also fosters the recovery of *other* in-between figures affected by both racism and sexism as in the case of ethnic women writers. In this sense, it can be said that there is a connection between Armstrong and Sundquist, that is, between feminist and ethnic approaches by means of their analyses of the constructions of race and gender through history and their influence and development on historical and literary discourses.

#### I. 1.1.2 HISTORY OF POWER AND IDENTITY

As already explained in relation to Foucault's *History of Sexuality*, gender and race are intrinsically related to power apparatuses since they are two of the means through which power is exercised. In *Discipline and Punish* Foucault explains how power has been founded and transformed through history by creating subjected individuals who internalize its mechanisms, act as its supporters, and who thus ensure its perpetuation (in Rivkin and Ryan: 554-7). According to Foucault, within such a power structure the creation and introduction of the concepts of race and gender can be taken as subjection tools by which the disciplinary society handles multiplicity and changes it into a manageable unity (561-3). By extension, this situation also implies the institution of a "binary division and branding (mad/sane; dangerous/harmless; normal/abnormal)" which has founded an alterity system and a center-margin dichotomy that has in turn served as means of divergently doling out and restraining power agency (553). Once again, it seems that Foucault's ideas about the functioning of power have been very helpful for feminist and ethnic literary critics since they have fostered awareness of the internalization of those power mechanisms on behalf of women and ethnic writers even when exerting power through writing. Likewise, his ideas have also been inspiring in the recognition of the marginality ascribed to female and ethnic literary agency in relation to the mainstream –patriarchal and/or white– which has in turn brought along the consequent misinterpretation, undervalue or overlooking of their works and the formulation of marginal identities within which differences have been ignored and diversity has been turned into a powerless whole. The establishment of such a center-margin –*I-other*– duality has been taken by these



critics as bases to analyse and raise issues regarding otherness and the altered positions that *others* like women and ethnic authors have been compelled to inhabit. Through the authors they focus on, they acknowledge the impact of these power structures in the literary realm where power hierarchies have also been constructed and fostered by assigning an inferior status to certain literary contributors. Hence, there is also a history of power to be told in which the stratification of individuals, their experiences and histories, and even their artistic and literary contributions based on gender and race plays a crucial role.

Foucault also introduces other crucial concepts such as the intrinsic relation between power and knowledge. He maintains “that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations” (in Rivkin and Ryan: 550). Likewise, if as Foucault explains “we should admit rather that power produces knowledge” (550), then the silencing of certain knowledge areas –historical, cultural or literary– answers to this exercise of power. Mainstream discourses transmitted through history, literature and literary histories, then, can be regarded as power tools in which powerless groups were not taken into account until power relations were re-negotiated. This perspective has been also fundamental for feminist and ethnic literary criticism as the writers they study were firstly stripped of any kind of power by ignoring their participation and thus avoiding the creation of any field of knowledge where they were taken into account. Regarding literature, the creation of their own separated fields of knowledge such as women’s writing, African American or Asian Canadian Literature, among many *others*, proves such renegotiation which has brought along the consequent self-representation of these groups as well as the slow introduction of their silenced contributions. The most important paradox in this labelling is the fact that only the so-called *marginal* groups are labelled while mainstream literary expressions are still considered central and axial so that they are taken as the very roots in describing national literary identities as in the case of Canada.

In spite of this divorcing between central and marginal, Richard Brodhead elucidates in his “Introduction” to his work *Cultures of Letters: Scenes of Reading and Writing in Nineteenth-Century America* (1993) that such detachment between areas of knowledge does not correspond to the real contributing process these groups carried out.

As he explains, central and so-called marginal works cohabited in a same social, cultural and historical context. Such breaking up is perhaps more striking regarding Canadian Literature; its insistence in finding its own identity roots through literary works first while simultaneously leaving aside these groups contributions, and then establishing different realms for them, does not seem to be in keeping with the country's official and integrating picture of cultural diversity. Brodhead also explains that those processes of renegotiation were carried out partly because of an adjustment of knowledge areas considered as literary worthy, that is, of power. In his opinion, the development of new literary genres brought along the need of new sources for literary creation and ways "to renew a standard formula" which opened a door previously closed for certain writers (119). This is the case, as he explains, of American regionalism in fiction which "effected a revision of the traditional terms of literary access [...] because it enfranchised a new set of social knowledge as a source of literary expertise" (118). In this way, debarred cultural groups gained access to literature, as for instance, ethnic writers who developed their careers in regional areas as witnesses of those motley cultural frameworks. In Canada for example, when interest in *native* cultures became prominent in the mother country, First Nations' writing in English increased circulation and writers were even brought to Europe as proofs of their cultural exoticism. Of course, this brought their frequent *exotization* as strange *uncivilized* individuals as well as the assumption of their exotic role as writers that Europe projected onto them. Just as this form of writing served some authors as a way into literature, accounts about the new world in Canada provided access to European immigrant writers as well as renovating traditional genres as the novel. One of the clearest examples of this situation is the figure of Frances Brooke who, after many attempts to reach mainstream literary distribution circles in Great Britain, finally gained success through her novel *The History of Emily Montague* (1769) written in and about Canada during colonial times. Similarly, according to Brodhead regional fiction was promoted because it was highly demanded in America, just as accounts about colonization and settlement in Canada were in Great Britain. But to analyse how these new formulas provided a means of contribution for different writers, we need to enquiry into the terms of its historical social life" (118). This is precisely what the writers included in this dissertation help examine.

As far as identity construction is concerned, Foucault's exposition about the history of power is crucial. His ideas about the exercise of power through the incorporation of its principles by individuals consequently affect their identity formation. Given the core role of gender and race in the exertion of power, they can be assumed to have influenced the construction of gendered and racialized individualities as well as the settlement of concrete ideas on self-awareness. They are intrinsically related to the identity formation process because they affect "even to the ultimate determination of the individual, of what characterizes him, of what belongs to him, of what happens to him" (in Rivkin and Ryan: 552). In this sense, just as gender and race issues have played a crucial role in the establishment and maintenance of power, it is also necessary to take them into account when approaching the identity debate. As Armstrong expounds, gender –and by extension race– "became the root of human identity" and established a power dichotomy that needs to be analysed and questioned in order "to understand the totalizing power of this figure and the very real interests such power inevitably serves" (in Rivkin and Ryan: 581). If there is an untold history of power, there must also be a history of identity to be told in which gender and race issues need to be examined. Very significantly, according to Armstrong, not only a "translation of human identity into sexual [and racial] identity" has taken place but it has also entailed "mass forgetting that there was a history of sexuality [and race] to tell" so that the perpetuation of the identity notions it fostered has been secured (577).

Once again, this questioning of established identity concepts has fostered feminist and ethnic critics' challenge. Understanding the impact of a concept of identity influenced by historically inherited racial and gendered notions not only supports their literary criticism in analysing female and ethnic writers' attitudes and approaching their texts but fosters awareness of identity's constructed nature. Furthermore, the founding of a mainstream concept of identity within which, according to Armstrong, there has been a generalized silencing of those histories of gender and I would add race, when descriptions of national or cultural identities were carried out, they were equally left out. In this way, taking into account literature's core role within culture, it has reflected and fostered those identity images which rejected female and ethnic writings or constrained their inclusion to mainstream identity standards. This challenging and questioning of literary identity means another intersection point among new historicism, feminist and

ethnic studies. The relevance of this debate about identity is crucial for new historicists since a widespread forgetting about the construction process our societies have gone through –together with their cultural and/or historical discourses– could bring an inability “to tell the difference between illusion and reality, between essential, beneficial creations and mere sham” (Gallagher and Greenblatt: 167). Inspired by Geertz, new historicists also claim literature’s importance both in such a construction and de/re-construction of identities since “texts seem to be increasingly embedded in the cultures from which they come and to possess within themselves more and more of the culture’s linked intentions” (Geertz: 25).

As it has been explained in this section, in giving history a renewed relevance within literary studies these critics see new ways of voicing previously dismissed literary contributions. A similar view is maintained by Montrose’s new historicist explanation of the influence of historical factors on the literary debate because it involves a new vision by which writers, as well as readers and critics, need to be considered as historical subjects and agents whose contributions should be analysed “by an understanding of meaning as situationally and provisionally constructed” and not relying merely on traditional aesthetic values (in Greenblatt and Gunn: 395). Following Montrose, feminist approaches are relevant precisely because of their claim that literary creation and criticism do not “stand apart from or above the interests, biases, and struggles of material existence” (394). Consequently, feminism and ethnic/cultural literary studies have in common with new historicism the fact that they are based on other factors apart from the so-considered purely literary by mainstream literary discourses; the importance they give to the historical, material, social and cultural backgrounds of literary texts and authors makes their perspectives a fundamental tool in bringing up *counterhistories* which, apart from contributing to expand literature in general, also bring along a questioning of received literary critical boundaries.

## I. 1. 2 LITERATURE AS COUNTER-HISTORY

As it has been suggested previously, these critical approaches are connected not only through their challenge of traditional historical archetypes and the construction of crucial concepts through history, but through their consideration of literary texts as sites of contestation. Literature offers access to those banished experiences as well as informs about the contexts in which they were written. The introduction of these *other* histories “would open history, or place it askew, so that literary texts could find new point of insertion” (Gallagher and Greenblatt: 51). Obviously, the counterhistories these approaches introduce claim for a different concept of history, not as something fixed and unmovable that needs no re-evaluation, but as a constantly evolving and changing entity; not as a single and totalizing but myriad past. In this respect, the acknowledgment of multiplicity does not deny individual significance because, as they explain, whereas new historicist approaches are “deeply interested in the collective, it remains committed to the value of the single voice” so that “what has been the mere background makes a claim for the attention that has hitherto been given only to the foregrounded and privileged work of art, yet we wish to know how the foregrounding came about” (Gallagher and Greenblatt: 14). As Gallagher and Greenblatt explain, “the new historicist anecdote was a conduit for carrying these counterhistorical insights and ambitions into the field of literary history” (54).

Within these crossroads between literature and history, the idea of literary texts as transmitters of counterhistories is inspired by Raymond Williams’ cultural criticism for “he read literature as the history of what hadn’t quite been said” (Gallagher and Greenblatt: 62). For new historicists, the hidden histories literature transmits are parts of a “counterhistory, in which everything is present, all possible orders, with no chronological sequence or ontological hierarchy” (72). Williams’ interdisciplinary approach grows apart from the “ideology critique” by exploring the spaces where discordant voices were expressed which became manifest in “literary works, where “hegemony” collided with what he called “experience”” since, for him, literature helps to infer the unsaid (Gallagher and Greenblatt: 62). The problem is that the hegemony he mentions has frequently buried works that jeopardized it so that in order to reach them a dig-out process is needed.

In this way, not only what has been said is crucial but what has been silenced as well as the silencing process. New historicism, feminism and ethnic/cultural studies also merge through this process of voicing disregarded writers and texts, empowering the anecdotal experiences they convey “often marginal, odd, fragmentary, unexpected, and crude” (Gallagher and Greenblatt: 28). Following Gallagher and Greenblatt, this enlargement of the texts to be studied which enriches the literary debate has a varied range of consequences. On the one hand, disregarded texts will have the chance of being re(dis)covered and studied on different terms far from the marginality to which they have been confined. Besides, the inclusion of these works brings along a questioning process of basic literary concepts and its stratified structure. On the other hand, adding new texts to the literary debate helps in establishing new links, among a broader range of canonical, non-canonical and even *non-literary* texts. According to Fineman and Barthes, the experiences these works and critics portray and rescue are the banned anecdotes which serve new historicists as well as feminists and ethnic critics as means of agitating the so-called “Big Stories” told through mainstream historical discourses and literary histories (Gallagher and Greenblatt: 51).

In the same way that literature helps discover untold histories, new historicism, feminisms and ethnic studies connect through their emphasis on the need of reconsidering the literary text as immersed within a distinctive historical background. According to Gallagher and Greenblatt’s explanations in *Practicing New Historicism*, new historicist studies are influenced by Erich Auerbach’s perspectives. Auerbach in his work *Mimesis* talks about “atmospheric Historism”<sup>7</sup> by which literary works are imbued. In his view, the literary text is revealing “for its claim on the world, its ability to give the reader access to the very condition for perception and action”, within a specific background although not exclusively for those immersed within that spatial, cultural and time span (Gallagher and Greenblatt: 40-1). Some of the critics who followed his approach developed and extended it by applying his ideas to those works left outside the boundaries of the literary. Not only works accepted by mainstream criticism inform about the historical and cultural context in which they were developed, but also those which were dismissed that, apart from telling untold histories, also

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<sup>7</sup> As explained in Gallagher and Greenblatt’s *Practicing New Historicism* the expression “atmospheric Historism” was coined by Erich Auerbach in his work *Mimesis*.

acquaint us with the functioning of literary institutions. In this way, those critics started doubting about fundamental literary concepts as they realized that “the term “literature” functions in part as an honorific” (Gallagher and Greenblatt: 45).

By seeing literary texts as embedded within broader contexts of which they also inform, they can be better appreciated. As Gallagher and Greenblatt explain, “significance can be fully grasped only in relation to the other expressive possibilities with which it interacts and from which it differentiates itself” (13). In doing so, these studies attempt to understand what “the authors we study would not have had sufficient distance upon themselves and their own era to grasp” (Gallagher and Greenblatt: 8). Their approaches to literary texts require broader attitudes which simultaneously focus on the specificities of writers and texts. They distance themselves from universalist assumptions not only by considering authors and their contributions as plunged within their backgrounds, but by affirming that “any individual culture [...] can express and experience only a narrow range of options available to the human species as a whole” (Gallagher and Greenblatt: 5). From Gallagher and Greenblatt’s viewpoint, what they head towards is an “interest in cultural individuality, a respect for diverse expressive solutions to perennial problems, and a vast broadening of aesthetic interest” (13). These interpretations, then, are helpful tools in opening up the scope of what has been experienced and written, in the process of breaking down the frontiers of what is and has been allowed to say and broadening “the consultable record of what man [and woman] has said” (Geertz: 30). In Gallagher and Greenblatt’s words, such an attitude is similar “to what in optics is called “foveation,” the ability to keep an object [...] within the high-resolution area of perception” which offers the possibility of gaining new perspectives towards literary texts (26).

### I. 1. 3 CULTURES OF LETTERS<sup>8</sup>

In the same way these critical approaches highlight the importance of regarding texts as immersed within their specific historical contexts, the analysis of the socio-cultural frameworks which surround literary works is also crucial. Such cultural

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<sup>8</sup> The title of this section “Cultures of Letters” has been taken from Brodhead’s *Cultures of Letters: Scenes of reading and Writing in Nineteenth-Century America* (1993) since it analyses the implications of the cultural backgrounds in which literary texts are immersed.

approach is inspired by Clifford Geertz's theories, included within cultural studies framework as exposed in his work *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1975). In Geertz's opinion, culture is a structure where meaningful events take place –as for instance, literary contributions– and whose relationship is reciprocal: the structure needs to be carefully observed to understand those events and, at the same time, those elements and their connections are signs of its functioning (14, 17). In this way, literature and literary criticism can be regarded not only as cultural informers but the contexts in which they have been developed need to be carefully examined in order to comprehend them.

According to Geertz, culture needs to be regarded as a text that conveys social discourses in which minute voices have expressed themselves (20-1). He proposes not simply a description but an *interpretation* of culture as a network of webs in order to discover significance; through his semiotic perspective, culture needs also to be *interpreted* in the same way literary critics do with texts. As interpretations, thus, cultural analyses can be seen as fictions “in the sense that they are “something made”, [...] not that they are false, unfactual, or merely “as if” thought experiments” (Geertz: 16). As a result, this perspective offers the advantage of realizing that previous descriptions of culture were also “fashioned” by the assumptions of those who described it, because in fact they also interpreted it. Geertz's consideration about the constructed nature of inherited cultural images opened new paths for literary critics. Through his explanation of the anthropological concept of “exoticism” as a response of a culture's inability to comprehend another one, new historicist, feminist and ethnic critics found a way to reconsider ostracized literary contributions precisely due to their assigned “exoticism” by mainstream cultural and literary institutions. As Geertz explains, “the one is as much a *fictio* [...] as the other” (16). In this way, he suggests issues of otherness which have become one of the most important topics of new historicism, feminisms and ethnic studies. Their approaches to literature fostered Geertz's idea about the fact that “understanding a people's culture exposes their normalness without reducing their particularity” (14). Consequently, the same as historiography could not be seen as an unbiased account of facts any longer, critics also started questioning culture and cultural practices and their assumed unbiased descriptions as Edward W. Said in his famous analysis on orientalism. If literature is to be considered one of the most relevant cultural agents, its analysis can be regarded as a



miniature from which culture, and therefore cultural identity, can be re-interpreted and challenged. This is indeed what is intended in this dissertation through a revision of the novel genre in English: the rethinking of Canada's literary identity.

Similarly, Brodhead also affirms that "writing is always an acculturated activity" since it takes place *within* a specific cultural framework which brings the text "to its particular form of existence in interaction with the network of relations that surround it" (8). The backgrounds in which texts are immersed influence their alignment "in or against some understanding of what writing is, does, and is good for that is culturally composed and derived" because, as Brodhead explains, "writing has no life separated from the particularized mechanisms that bring it to public life" (8, 5). In seeing texts as plunged in their cultural and historical contexts, Brodhead also claims the necessity of analysing not only those texts and their contexts but "the multiform transactions that have taken place between them" (8-9). Through the examination of literature's surrounding factors, writings are renovated since these new approaches open new and different means to understand and appreciate their significance. In Brodhead's opinion, individual cases of literary productions and authors are especially useful to these purposes as proofs of different writing conceptions which question the mainstream literary criticism that dismissed them as well. These are crucial examples insofar they help gaining awareness of the "mediations of literary-cultural situations" by which literary difference comes to existence (Brodhead: 11). Winnifred Eaton's case, also known for her pen-name Onoto Watanna, is paradigmatic in this respect. As explained in the corresponding section in Part III of this dissertation, despite her mixed Chinese-British ancestry Winnifred Eaton adopted a Japanese literary persona that was appreciated at first by the cultural environment in which she developed her literary career but later rejected for intruding in an alien culture as that of Japan by subsequent literary trends. Consequently, understanding these mediations seems fundamental in order to gain a better comprehension of disregarded writers as Winnifred Eaton. It can be said then that the new critical approaches Harold Bloom criticizes are not simply driven by and towards history but by many other aspects which somehow derive from their challenge of historical assumptions and constructions which affected literary criticism and that have been and will be outlined here; as Brodhead explains: "the issue of literature as social agent or doer of cultural work; the issue of canonicity and of

literary discrimination; the issue of women's writing and its possibly different traditions; the issue of minority access to literary power" (10).

In acknowledging this intrinsic relation between writers and their cultural context, Brodhead also understands that their works are connected to audiences with their own social, cultural and historical particularities since their writing "addresses and [...] call[s] together some particular social grouping" (5). In turn, through this gathering of different assemblages of individuals, distinct forms of writing find different audiences who read them as they feel *identified* with them. Brodhead's equation between different writers, different audiences and different cultural identities is crucial as far as this dissertation is concerned. The awareness on the existence of different cultural identities to which different writers address serves to challenge cultural identity oneness like the one constructed in Canada which overlooked its diverse identities. Moreover, Brodhead's consideration of texts as immersed in their specific cultural contexts fosters understanding on the assignment of different statuses. As he explains in the fourth chapter of *Cultures of Letters* (1993) entitled "The Reading of Regions" different cultural practices in America were ranged according to a social value scale; in his opinion, social and cultural "stratification" developed into a complex and reciprocal connection (123). The raising and predominance of "a new-style 'high' social class" brought along the furthering of "the culture it valued as a means to subordinate the differently cultured *to its values*" (Brodhead: 123-4). This situation fostered the social construction of the dichotomy between "high" and "low" cultural practices –between *I* and *other*– thus establishing a process of inclusion/exclusion through which value was assigned by those who had the power to do so, those who read and whose socio-economic situation enabled them to acquire and esteem literature. Taking into account that in Canada, like in the United States according to Brodhead, European culture was praised as high and "civilized" over *other* "low" and thus "noncivilized" cultural practices, it similarly served "as a force of coercive *inclusion*, of social management on the elite's behalf" (135). Of course, this process affected the literary realm for, just as their surrounding cultures, literary contributions were stratified as worthy and unworthy according to canonical literary values so that those regarded as inferior were not taken into account as representative agents in the writing of literary history and tradition thus in the construction of literary identity. As illustrated in relation to early English

Canadian Literature in Part II, anthologies have played a crucial role in the perpetuation of this high-low dichotomy since, as tools at the hands of hegemonic literary institutions, they have not only narrowed literature to canonicity but have stuck to the tried and proved so that dismissed authors have been persistently silenced or unrepresented. Following Gerald Graff and Bruce Robbins, it is necessary to challenge the concepts of culture and cultural identity within English-speaking frameworks because “like texts, cultures are seen as indeterminate sites of conflict that cannot be pinned to a single totalized meaning” (in Greenblatt and Gunn: 434-5). They must be re-defined, separated from nation-focused constructions and embrace both the intricacy and heterogeneity of those fluctuating identities and alternating voices that in spite of having participated have been overlooked or misrepresented by mainstream cultural constructions. This is the case of the authors approached in Part III whose contributions to Canadian letters share a boundary-crossing position either as, for instance, a Black American activist who wrote a novel that moves from the United States to Canada and Cuba like Martin R. Delany or a Canadian-born novelist as Sara Jeannette Duncan who offered a sharp critical insight on the making of the Canadian nation in *The Imperialist* (1904) to later develop her literary career in India. It is very important to highlight that this perspective does not imply restricting attention to the cultural details of these voices but, on the contrary, emphasizes the importance of “challenge[ing] the belief that blackness, femaleness [...] are essential, unchanging qualities” (Graff and Robbins in Greenblatt and Gunn: 435).

The postcolonial approach developed by Homi K. Bhabha also entangles “the question of how culture signifies, or what is signified by *culture*” as well as undermines traditional cultural axioms (in Greenblatt and Gunn: 438). His effort in investigating the intricacies of the blending of different cultural identities offers a more accurate viewpoint since it accommodates both the “histories of cultural displacement” and the ways in which they produce “meaning” and “value”; according to his perspective “culture as a strategy of survival is both transnational and translational” (438). Bhabha’s plea for renewed critical positions that neither “disavow or sublate the otherness (alterity)” nor rely on “theories of cultural relativism or pluralism” is very significant in so far it implies a claim for in-between postures that actually match those of the dismissed identities challenging critics deal with (439). On the one hand, as Bhabha

affirms, it is necessary to recognize that “cultural and political identity are constructed through a process of alterity” (441). Given the importance Bhabha attaches to otherness in the construction of identity, new approaches that understand culture and tradition as dissentious and which “engage with the culture as an uneven, incomplete production of meaning and value, often composed of incommensurable demands and practices, produced in the act of social survival” are needed (438). Such challenging perspectives include the so-called *minority* discourses as subjects and not as objects, foster the re-consideration of established cultural concepts and require “the rearticulation of the “sign” in which cultural identities may be inscribed” (437). Although it could seem paradoxical that while attempting to challenge mainstream cultural identity constructions, new approaches tried, in turn, to institutionalize what was considered marginal, in his opinion they mean “the historical movement of hybridity as camouflage, as a contesting, antagonistic agency functioning in the time lag of sign/symbol, which is the space in between the rules of engagement” (459). On the other hand, critical expressions that maintain multi/cultural relativism are no longer valid in Bhabha’s opinion not only because they avoid “the incommensurability of cultural values and priorities” but because they overlook the fact that “the ‘signs’ that construct such histories and identities –race, gender...– not only differ in content but often produce incompatible systems of signification and engage distinct forms of social subjectivity” (439, 441). As he explains, “it is a time of the cultural sign that unsettles the liberal ethic of tolerance and the pluralist framework of multiculturalism”. In his opinion, acknowledging cultural dissonances also leads to new concepts of cultural identities as “the questions of identity that it raises are agonistic; identity is claimed either from a position of marginality or in an attempt at gaining the center: in both senses, ex-centric” (442-3).

I agree with Bhabha that it is time to undertake the de-construction of the traditional axioms through which cultural identities have been designed on the basis of binary oppositions that confront *I* to *other*, that is, mainstream to marginal discourses, and which have constrained otherness and alterity under too narrow labellings or under a multicultural whole in which heterogeneity has been blurred. Consequently, it is also time to start establishing a dialectical process that allows the consideration of those so-regarded up to now central and peripheral voices as, in Montrose’s words, “joined in a

mutually constitutive, recursive, and transformative *process*” (in Greenblatt and Gunn: 413). Taking into account literature’s centrality in the construction of cultural identity, Homi Bhabha also claims for the crucial significance of the so-considered “discourses of ‘minorities’”. In fact, in his opinion, their presence questions mainstream discourses “that attempt to give a hegemonic ‘normality’ to the uneven development and the differential, often disadvantaged, histories of nations, races, communities, peoples” (in Greenblatt and Gunn: 437). These voices claim for different cultural identities that consider nations as fictions, cross their boundaries alternating with and challenging mainstream literary discourses, and that call into question accepted literary assumptions thus opening the debate about “the construction of culture and the invention of tradition” (438). This is precisely what the thorough analysis of early novel writers in English Canadian Literature developed in Part III of the present dissertation brings into light; the claim for diverse identities of alternating voices such as those of Frances Brooke, Margaret Murray Robertson, Agnes Maule Machar, May Agnes Fleming, Lily Dougall, or Joanna Ellen Wood, to cite just some, which despite having been silenced by mainstream literary discourses have contributed together with canonized authors in a dialogical way to the shaping of Canadian literary tradition and identity, or rather traditions and identities.

But not only female identities have been left aside for, according to Graff and Robbins, the invention of tradition and identity in Anglo-Saxon literary contexts has been “the perfect instrument for socializing a threateningly, heterogeneous ethnic population into the values of Anglo-Saxon culture” (in Greenblatt and Gunn: 522). Graff and Robbins’s remark recalls the devising of Canada’s cultural and literary national identity within which challenging ethnic voices have been apparently comprised but actually muted first under the official label of biculturalism and later by multicultural policies. On the one hand, the original bicultural framework established in Canada by which English and French-speaking communities inhabited hegemonic positions –although not evenly hegemonic– fostered a Eurocentric identity debate that, as Marlene Nourbese Philip points out, has been moulded on the basis of an ideological structure that placed Europeans, that is, whites in higher positions in relation to *other* ethnic groups (182). This being so, the dichotmic distinction between “high” and “low” cultural practices raised by Brodhead seems also applicable to Canada. I agree with

Philip regarding the fact that, far from losing its force, such cultural stratification has been perpetuated under multiculturalism since Canada's official multicultural identity is actually "based on a presumption of equality, a presumption which is not necessarily borne out in reality" (181). The reality of the novel genre in early English Canadian Literature described in Parts II and III of this dissertation indeed supports Philip's ideas; Canada's officially assumed multicultural identity is not reflected in anthologies and literary histories as early ethnic novel writers are clearly misrepresented, being the cases of Martin R. Delany and Winnifred Eaton the most significant. But the establishment of such an apparent diversity-focused identity in Canada has also had deeper implications like the absence of serious debates about fundamental questions, as for instance race issues; in Philip's words:

Multiculturalism, as we know it, has no answers for the problems of racism, or white supremacy –unless it is combined with a clearly articulated policy of anti-racism, directed at rooting out the effects of racist or white supremacist thinking. (185)

The avoidance of addressing so crucial concerns as those regarding race in Canada does not simply imply that cultural differences are blurred under the rubric of multiculturalism but, as Vevaina and Godard explain, that "power relations [...] are effaced within a fiction of 'Canada'" (16). As explained in Part II, part of the paramount debate on race and racism and of a renegotiation of power relations has been carried out through English Canadian Literature by ethnic critics; they have brought multiculturalism into question by bringing into light discriminatory practices, voicing dismissed ethnic authors, and thus contributing to the re-thinking and re-writing of Canadian literary history, tradition and identity.

Either regarding early female or ethnic novel writers in English, the silencing of their alternating voices in the construction of Canada's literary identity speaks for a culture of letters –to use Brodhead's words– which seems to be affected by what Eric Sundquist, Coomi S. Vevaina and Barbara Godard agree in raising as culture's inability to enunciate cultural difference; difference that will be unravelled in this dissertation by focusing on texts by writers as those previously mentioned as negotiations of meaning within Canada's framework that should be taken as basis for a re-configuration of its literary identity.

#### I. 1. 4 HISTORICIZING LITERATURE: LITERARY HISTORIES

This revision of literary tradition and identity is also carried out by feminist and ethnic critics by the questioning of literary history that their recovery of disregarded writers implies. Their different approaches to literature not only entail the already mentioned challenge of traditional concepts of history and the reconsideration of undisclosed connections between literature and history, but reviewing literary histories as the converging point between both. As it will be thoroughly explained in Part II, in doing so challenging compilations and studies from an ethnic perspective such as *Native Literature in Canada: From the Oral Tradition to the Present* (1990), *Eyeing the North Star: Directions in African Canadian Literature* (1997), or *Beyond Silence: Chinese Canadian Literature in English* (1997); inspired by feminism like *The Silenced Sextet. Six Nineteenth-Century Canadian Woman Novelists* (1992) and *Canada's Early Women Writers: Texts in English to 1859* (1994); but also focusing on both ethnic and feminist issues as *Intersexions. Issues of Race and Gender in Canadian Women's Writing* (1996) have consequently brought into question Canada's literary tradition and identity.

According to Nancy Armstrong, in the process of historicizing literature, literary historians reproduce and perpetuate those models of history which have left aside women's –and I would add ethnic– contributions. As she explains, for some of them as Raymond Williams and Ian Watt, history occurs in accordance with or in opposition to “the official institutions of state [...] and both forms of power are exercised primarily by men” (in Rivkin and Ryan: 568). She, therefore, forecasts that new historicist studies which have already crossed previously accepted frontiers will not be complete “so long as they continue to ignore *the sexual division of labor* that underwrites and naturalizes the difference between culture and politics” (567-8). Actually, Armstrong elucidates the fact that if as it is widely accepted the emergence of the novel is related to the ascent of middle classes, it is also necessary to recognize its connection with women's contributions as writers because it was then when women started to write widely. She also explains that given the fact that women's realms were those of culture and not of politics, if “no political revolution is complete without a cultural revolution”, women's domestic and cultural uprising through writing could be seen as a crucial step in the industrial revolution (569).

Furthermore, from Armstrong's viewpoint, "we must read fiction not as literature but as the history of gender differences" (in Rivkin and Ryan: 581). Just as there is a gender distinction in society, a similar separation between male and female realms, both as detached and gendered spheres, can be seen through literature. The fact that domestic fiction and novels have been regarded as female writing leads to conclude that there was other writing to be considered as male. Women's writing was involved with fictionalizing domesticity, that is to say, personal and household realms, while men's writing had to do with public affairs and politics (569). One of the implications of this detachment is that by regarding women's writing as part of a cultural discourse separated from politics they could exercise power since "it no longer constituted a form of resistance but enclosed a specialized domain of culture apart from political relations where political truths could be told" (577). In this sense, the novel genre appears as a crucial literary form because it meant the participation of *other* writers, as for instance women, as cultural agents. Thus, fiction and especially the novel need to be regarded "both as document and as an agency of cultural history" (580). Women writers through their detached domestic fictions had at their disposal an apparent powerless means which actually offered the possibility of voicing the unvoiced; they had the possibility of telling *other* histories/stories that were later dismissed precisely due to that detachment since it conveyed a marginal positioning. This is why their novels need to be dug out to reconstruct the spheres where women exercised their cultural authority, and that is precisely what this dissertation attempts in relation to early Canadian female novelists.

But the novel's importance is not only crucial because it meant the participation of female writers but also because it was a tool that served literary histories to preserve that history of gender. Once that gendered detachment was taken for granted only "novels that best performed the rhetorical operations of division and self-containment" were taken into account so that the process could be endlessly perpetuated (Armstrong in Rivkin and Ryan: 577). This is why analysing literary histories is crucial for new historicist and feminist critics, as well as ethnic critics, because they inform about how that silencing process has been developed. Furthermore, following James C. Simmons's work *The Novelist as Historian* (1973) it was during the Victorian period through the development of the historical novel when the boundaries separating fiction and history



became more and more blurred (40). The same as historical fiction started not to be considered such a reliable source of information, history started to be thought of also as a biased expression of facts. According to Gallagher and Greenblatt, this oblique relation between history and literature has been fostered since the nineteenth century mainly through the novel for it “is the most highly developed genre of the probable [...] [that] invites us to appreciate the *believable* as such” (169); then, a process of “demystification” by which literature has started to be considered as “the perfect condition of doubt” has been carried out (168).

On the other hand, through Auerbach’s work, new historicist critics also became aware of nationalist enterprises which used literature as a means of support. Literary histories have been one of its most significant tools in which, as Gallagher and Greenblatt explain, “the spirit of representation sometimes corresponds to the boundaries of nation or class or religion or language, but is not consistently linked to any of these” (37). According to them, Auerbach intended his work to be included within the broader context of Western Literature in order to gain distance from restricted frameworks, either by national or any other category. His dissent regarding the divisions settled by mainstream literary histories offered an awareness of their assumptions as well as opened a path for further researches and challenges in relation to established literary boundaries. Going back to Armstrong’s ideas, these national descriptions through literary histories were carried out on the basis of those gendered – and racialized– identities, which then became the common ground for national identity constructions. Regarding Canada, such consciousness is even more revealing due to the fact that, in writing literary histories as a part of the construction process of their cultural identity, critics laid down national boundaries within which writers had to be fitted. Given Canada’s cultural heterogeneity this attitude runs against its very cultural essence because it left aside some of its writers’ contributions in favour of others considered as mainstream. Writers, who crossed boundaries whether national or cultural, as Frances Brooke, Martin R. Delany, Winnifred Eaton or Sara Jeannette Duncan, were thus left out of the debate or misrepresented. But in their search for *a* Canadian tradition through literature, critics not only carried out a nationalist programme but adopted western cultural assumptions that led to some of their most significant complexes as that of not having a “Shakespeare” for Canadian Literature to

be raised as equally relevant as the British, for instance. In this sense, Auerbach's broadening of national to western boundaries also needs to be carefully considered in relation to Canada for its Eurocentric tendencies, as it will be detailed in the second part of this dissertation.

#### I. 1. 4. 1 HISTORY OF LITERARY ACCESS AND LITERARY INSTITUTIONS.

According to Brodhead, within the realm of literary history, there are two significant histories to tell: that of literary access and literary institutions. On the one hand, I agree with Brodhead that, in order to better appreciate certain writers' literary agency, it is necessary to carry out "an inquiry into the history of literary access: a systematic asking by what means and by virtue of what circumstances different potential authors have been able to lay claim to different powers in the literary realm". (109-10). Investigating authors' differing accesses to literature is actually another useful tool in the process of understanding literary identities, together with the questioning of their construction on the basis of inclusion/exclusion by mainstream literary critics and institutions, insofar it involves issues of literary availability. Such examination has been and is in fact carried out by new historicist, feminist and ethnic critics through their researches about the distinctive gaining of admittance to literature; through their analysis of actual contributions and the impediments for them to be carried out, as well as by examining subsequent obstacles in getting published –and thus being read and exist– and their critical undervaluing. One of the best examples of these studies is Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* that will be analysed in detail in later sections.

Following Brodhead's explanation, not only literature is "not fully representative, but instead literature has been differentially available throughout its history" (109). In his opinion, this history of literary opportunity should involve not only the analysis of literature's status within a given culture and the differential establishment of relations of different social groups to it, but "the history of the acts [...] by which potential authors have made themselves into authors within the opportunities and obstructions of particular social situations" (109). These writers' literary agency needs to be examined individually in order to understand both "what sense of literary empowerment it illustrates and proceeds from" and the reasons leading these authors to attempt the pen (115). In this way, through the analysis of specific

English Canadian novels and authors this dissertation also points out significant aspects about Canada's history of literary access affecting early female and ethnic writers as Joana E. Wood, May Agnes Fleming or Winnifred Eaton. It is interesting that through his history of literary access Brodhead positions his perspective in-between the rejection of difference and the insistence on individual genius. For him, analyses of literary texts should entail the appreciation of the differential distribution of literary opportunity and the comprehension of its historically and culturally constructed nature, "as a culturally mediated historical product" (115). This aspect means another intersection point among new historicism, feminisms and ethnic studies insofar as they focus on historically devised mechanisms affecting literary creation like the access to literature.

According to Brodhead, the issue of access into literature is not only historical, but cultural and social. The impediments or fostering met by different writers' answers to their backgrounds and "the differential social dissemination of relevant skills and of the encouragement to embrace them" (111). I also agree with him that one of the best examples of the connection between literary agency and the access to literature appears in Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* where she rhetorically asks what would have happened if Shakespeare had had a sister with literary inclinations. In Woolf's words, "it would have been impossible, completely and entirely, for any woman to have written the plays of Shakespeare in the age of Shakespeare" either being Shakespeare's sister or not (46). Actually, after reading Woolf's work I started questioning if, for example, Frances Brooke's many and repeated literary attempts to gain not mainstream recognition but simply publication and representation of her theatre works in Britain would have been the same if belonging to another social group or historical and cultural background which could have favoured her vocation. In fact, despite her connections within the literary world, as for instance with Samuel Johnson, it was not until she left her homeland and wrote from and about Canada that she got attention perhaps because of the exoticism that British audiences saw in her novel's setting. But despite some writers' works frequent rejection like those of Brooke, following Woolf, "I maintain that she would come if we worked for her, and that so to work, even in poverty and obscurity, is worth while" (114).

In fact, some writers approached in this dissertation can be considered paradigmatic in relation to Brodhead's revealing idea that "the history of access is never

wholly external to authors” (110). As the cases of many early authors show, even with the great outer impediments from their social, cultural and historical backgrounds quite a few writers actually achieved literary access and success. Those writers I will refer to further in this work show precisely that it was possible to gain access to literary agency in English Canada even in early times regardless of obstacles. Rosanna Leprohon, for instance, was able to write and publish at least five novels and a compilation of poetry between 1848 and 1881 while giving birth to thirteen children between 1852 and 1872. Likewise, an ethnic author such as Martin R. Delany not belonging to the white literary elite also succeeded in getting his work *Blake; or, the Huts of America* (1859-1862) as well as his activist writings published. Given their efforts and actual gaining of literary access, it seems at least paradoxical that their contributions have been frequently undervalued or dismissed later on. Whereas the only work still in print nowadays from all of Leprohon’s writings is *Antionette de Mirecourt; or, Secret Marrying and Secret Sorrowing* (1864), Canada’s first novel by a Black writer has exclusively been approached by ethnic-focused critical works.

On the other hand, along his exposition of the history of literary access, Brodhead also introduces the necessity of telling the history of literary institutions. As he explains:

[...] the literary sphere is the subject of plural and changing cultural organizations, determining what forms of writing are in cultural operation at any time or place, what mechanisms of production support such forms, what public such forms are brought to and *what value they have attached to them* [...]. (my emphasis, 113)

The partiality of literary institutions and critics is also suggested by Tonny Bennet in “Really Useless ‘Knowledge’: A Political Critique of Aesthetics” (1996). As it has been mentioned previously, his explanation about the creation and development of aesthetic and value discourses within literary institutions has led to the dismissal of writers and works which did not fit within their boundaries. On the other hand, Brodhead’s idea on the fact that these institutions “discriminate not crassly or overtly but through the knowledge they presume” can be related to Foucault’s explanation about the intrinsic relation between power and knowledge (Brodhead: 114). If as Foucault affirms, power is exercised through knowledge and at the same time knowledge settles power relations, following Brodhead, literary institutions are equally affected by these equations. By assigning the control of knowledge within the literary realm to certain social groups,

power is also placed on their hands. In this sense, the establishment of certain assumptions regarding literary creation –as for instance the intellectual inferiority of female and ethnic creators– settled, fostered and helped perpetuate a hierarchical literary structure through history that left out some other groups and individuals.

Through the history of these institutions and in intrinsic relation with the history of literary access, Brodhead explains that there have been readjustments in what and who has been considered literary worthy. Brodhead coincides with Nancy Armstrong since he presents domestic fiction as a site of insertion for women writers once household turned into a valuable source of knowledge for literary works. Their experiences within domestic spheres empowered them to become literary agents. Literary regionalism in America also offered access to other members previously rejected from the literary scene. Given the distance from urban centres, the ethnic diversity and linguistic particularities that regional fiction demanded turned minority models into worthy literary sources and higher literary positions. In this way, regional forms afforded not only ethnic but women writers to participate in the literary sphere since “this genre created a writer’s role that women were equipped to perform, especially women from small towns and peripheral locations” (Brodhead: 117). The acceptance of previously silent literary voices as those of female and ethnic authors through literary regionalism was developed in “a certain historical formation of the literary, and beyond that, of culture at large” by which the distinction between superior and inferior practices was settled; undivided cultural and literary realms were broken up by the interference of previously rejected agents which, in turn, provoked mainstream institutions to establish a structure through which their contributions needed to be “asserted over against a now-distinct “low” opponent” (Brodhead: 123). Paradoxically, regional fiction in America did not prevent entrance to other cultural models but favoured it, although in a fictionalized way; it served to recognize social diversity but not as a factual reality since it was carried out in literature. As Brodhead explains, this took place through the adaptation of ethnicity concepts to current conditions –from local to intercontinental ethnicity– and also by translating diversity into a single whole exiled from a standard mainstream as “variant on or deviant from” it (137). Very significantly, one of the consequences of this process which can also be applied to Canada’s case was the founding of a mythical image of America “that was not homogeneous yet not

radically heterogeneous either and whose diversities were ranged under one group's normative sway" (Brodhead: 137).

In spite of offering access, it is necessary to take into account that their participation through these types of genres implied some subjections since, in Brodhead's words "no [literary] form creates access unconditionally"; as he explains, literary models are bound up with specific connections between literature and culture and usually involve writers in what their literary agency is assumed to be and to value (141). Genres that offered access to social groups previously rejected from literary spheres were not issued for them but for those who demanded those kinds of writings; that is, for those whose socio-economic backgrounds made it possible, either due to their power in purchasing or evaluating literature. This situation partly explains why these writers did not break but developed and reinforced the stereotypes their reading audiences held; in order to reach mainstream audiences and thus deserve publication, their works were somehow induced to depict mainstream cultural models and ideals. All in all, their hidden and shy transgressions were frequently overlooked or misunderstood. Furthermore, despite gaining literary access through newly introduced genres, these writers' contributions were not regarded as literary masterpieces. This is precisely the case of most of the female authors approached in Part III who followed the conventions of a mainstream genre as the romance novel but whose innovations have gone unnoticed; for example, whereas *The History of Emily Montague* (1769) by Frances Brooke has generally been considered an imitation of Samuel Richardson's novels, formal and thematic originalities of her text such as the inclusion of shorter letters closer to dialogue, the depiction of strong female characters or the fictionalization of Canada as valid literary setting for the first time have been overlooked. Through works and figures like Brooke's, new historicist, feminist and ethnic critics have started suggesting some aspects about "how the conditions of literary practice actually condition literary production" although, as Brodhead points out, it "is a question still largely unanswered" (141).

It seems clear that literary institutions are not completely impartial for, as Brodhead maintains, "every literary institution projects a profile of the authors it can support through its prescription of the competences required to produce its forms" (113). This statement offers an explanation for the silencing process affecting certain

writers who did not fit within the literary profiles of their time, culture and social context. But it also means a crucial aspect to be aware of regarding current critical perspectives as they also develop different profiles; the greater advantage being, in my opinion, that they do so while questioning previously assumed literary requirements, opening and renewing the literary debate as well as allowing other approaches to be developed even when these question their own views. Very probably, Brodhead would not agree in this respect because the challenge of critical perspectives like those of new historicism, feminism or ethnic studies “has a utopian (not to say illusionistic) side” (108). I agree with Brodhead that these studies sometimes seem “a critique of exclusion” which they partly are; but very significantly they also serve “to demonstrate the interest and power of neglected works, thereby baring the systematic suppressions of a hitherto “complete” account of the literary and opening it to mode of experience it had shut out” (107). I do not agree with him regarding the fact that approaches like these are driven by a naïve desire to see the literary realm as “the exemplary social institution opened to the human in its full range” (107). From what I have been able to grasp from my researches, what these approaches attempt is to de/reconstruct the incomplete literary picture they have inherited and not to depict literature as a utopian site where every human condition is to be included. In fact, through their studies they have become aware that literature is not a democratic realm where everybody is welcome but, on the contrary, that it is a quite elitist sphere where only some social groups can become agents. In fact, their analyses are not ingenuous but realistic since they recover real examples of excluded writers that challenge and lay down established literary boundaries. These critics have opened a debate that asks for further researches given all the questions they have raised; it promotes new, many and different studies to be developed, which does not necessarily need to be closed as long as there are disregarded writers yet to be studied or boundaries to be crossed.

To sum up, theoretical issues as those exposed in previous sections concerning the complex connection of literature with history and culture illustrate some of the crucial aspects that have affected the study of ethnic and female literary contributions. They are fundamental means in order to achieve a better comprehension of their works and imply the rethinking of those critical axioms which have fostered their dismissal; they are indeed crucial for the main task of the present dissertation since they challenge

received notions of literary identity. Just as the critical works on writers included in this dissertation, the ideas of literary scholars unravelled above prove the need “to “redraw the boundaries” in order to show “inescapable cultural difference, division, and dissonance” (Greenblatt and Gunn: 433). From a Canadian viewpoint, the analysis of ethnic and female literary contributions seems challenging not only as early expressions of Canadian literary identity in English but as proofs that question the monolithic configuration of *a* Canadian literary identity. Their works as “tactic[s] of intervention in what constitutes the basis of “national” and of “literary” identity in Canada” help us see the diverse and complex ways in which identities intersect enriching the literary heritage of different “nations”, as well as showing the paradox of Canadian literary identity as “both a single tradition of many parts *and* a series of winding, sometimes parallel traditions” (Vevaina and Godard: 50; Sundquist: 18).

## I.2 THE INVENTION OF TRADITION AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF LITERARY IDENTITY

Despite the apparent consensus among a varied range of critics referred to in previous sections, literary approaches like those inspiring this dissertation have been and are strongly criticized. One of the most remarkable works which firmly dissents with new historicist, feminist and ethnic views is Harold Bloom’s *The Western Canon: The Books and the School of Ages* (1994), considered a crucial work of literary criticism during the nineties. Bloom’s *The Western Canon* is not only fundamental regarding literary criticism and the current debate about it but it also shows some of the main assumptions maintained by Western literary institutions whose influence on Canada has been more than remarkable. Moreover, his focus on Anglo-Saxon literary viewpoints is very significant for this dissertation since it pays attention to early Canadian Literature in English strongly affected by Anglo-Eurocentric critical views. The fact that Harold Bloom questions the theoretical approach chosen for this dissertation makes his work even more relevant as it serves to question such an approach as well as remark some existing confusions about it. His critical attitude towards the literary theoreticians whose ideas are included here as basis for an analysis of Canada’s literary identity has been



very helpful to reconsider some of the theories applied, to understand their axis and become aware of some of their weaknesses.

### I. 2.1 HAROLD BLOOM'S "SCHOOL OF RESENTMENT"

According to Harold Bloom's prelude to *The Western Canon: The Books and the School of Ages* those critical trends that question the established Anglo-Western canon conform to what he calls "the School of Resentment" as they attempt "to overthrow the Canon in order to advance their supposed (and nonexistent) programs for social change" (4). Summarizing Bloom's ideas, "idealism [...] is now the fashion in our schools and colleges" and these *idealist* critics' driving forces are only based on their search for "social harmony and the remedying of historical injustice" while they leave aside any claim for "all aesthetic and most intellectual standards" (7).

Bloom's employment of the terminology "the School of Resentment" to refer to all those theories which, in one way or another, challenge the western literary canon seems eloquent for different reasons. In the first instance, his use of the label "School of Resentment" to refer to challenging critical perspectives as those applied in this dissertation suggests that they are regarded as a single and somehow unified school and thus overlooks the differences, disagreements and even contradictions that actually exist among them. While it is sometimes true that there are connections among their approaches as previously outlined here, there are also fundamental differences to be noted which stem from the specificities of the literary contributions and writers these critics work on. As stressed in Greenblatt's "Introduction" to *Redrawing the Boundaries* (1992), challenging approaches do not belong exclusively to one school and are not obliged to sign any blood pact as members but "each of those subgroups functions in a coordinated, if not exactly an integrated, system in which we may occupy more than one position" (Greenblatt and Gunn: 7). This view allows us to see the differences among them in a not so antagonistic way because the existing conflicts among them are "themselves part of the way the larger whole functions" (7). I agree with Greenblatt's viewpoint in so far it offers a more accurate vision of literary criticism as a profession where frontiers "seem to exist only to be endlessly crossed, violated, renegotiated" (7).

Resentment, epitomized by their willingness to fight against historical injustice, is the main thrust driving both challenging critics and the authors they voice as far as

Bloom is concerned. On the one hand, Bloom assumes that, as literary critics, they do not take their tasks seriously since they follow what he supposes to be a mere socially and historically restitutional agenda so that he refuses they can also have serious academic interest. In relation to the present dissertation, the articles, studies, compilations and researches of prominent scholars in English Canadian Literature such as Lorraine McMullen or Carole Gerson from feminisms, Barbara Godard, Coomi S. Vevaina or George E. Clarke regarding ethnic studies, or even Robert Lecker, Northrop Frye and Margaret Atwood –among many others– cannot be refused to be strongly concerned with the critical profession by any means, either if involved in literary reparation or not. Given Bloom’s eminence, wide background and profound knowledge as a literary critic, the way in which he refers to new theoretical approaches, to feminists as “cheerleaders” and other critics as “literary activists” seems surprising, to say the least. He goes even further by stating that their attitudes are the product of their lack of “love of reading” suggesting that their differing positions as literary critics do not deserve to be recognized as literature lovers. Perhaps, Harold Bloom’s reaction towards what he considers *resented* critics and their challenge to his own views about literary criticism responds to Virginia Woolf’s idea that “when one is challenged, [...] one retaliates, if one has never been challenged before, rather excessively” (99). Ironically, his stance on other critical perspectives which are disrespectfully referred to as “cheerleaders” and “activists” shows exactly what he criticizes about them, that is, resentment. In any case, it seems inaccurate to identify all these critics mentioned by Bloom with a unique driving thrust; their critical works cannot be said to turn exclusively around one axis, whatever it is, since they stem from differing questionings although all of them contribute to offer a wider vision on literary studies after realizing some of its inadequacies. On the other hand, the authors and texts that these renewed critical perspectives focus on seem to be equally affected by resentment as far as Bloom is concerned. From my viewpoint, by attributing resentment to every disregarded writer Bloom makes too broad a generalization and mistakes resentment for these writers’ willingness to express, transmit and employ non-canonical topics and/or forms in literature. As it will be thoroughly explained in Part III of this dissertation, the inclusion of challenging female characters in works by woman writers as Arabella Fermor in Frances Brooke’s *The History of Emily Montague* (1769) offers a broader insight on

femininity that cannot be assumed to stem exclusively from hostility; similarly, instead of considering the employment of Japanese settings by Winnifred Eaton –also known as Onoto Watanna– in novels such as *The Heart of Hyacinth* (1903) the result of the author’s animosity, it can also be understood as a literary response to a given cultural framework which offered the writer the possibility of analysing some aspects of Western civilization from an outsider’s viewpoint. The cases of Brooke and Eaton are paradigmatic regarding the varied range of drives of early female and ethnic authors who contributed to the novel genre in English Canada and that clearly undermine Bloom’s assumptions. In fact, in spite of his insistence on the fact that showing resentment, rancour, or anger is not desirable in what he assumes to be worthy literary works, he does not offer a detailed explanation of why those so-called resented writers or texts could not achieve any degree of literary excellence.

But, in spite of Bloom’s censorious attitude, he seems to offer some authority to some of the ideas introduced by new critical approaches. He accepts, for example, the Marxist concept about the fact that “in strong writing there is always conflict, ambivalence, contradiction between subject and structure” (27). What he does not share with Marxist or any other kind of socio-historical criticism is the source of those conflicts. In his opinion, great writers would never have given away their work “for any cause whatever” and that is why they “identify the cause with the poem, rather than the poem with the cause” (27). This is indeed what he criticizes of new critical approaches “that seek[s] to connect the study of literature with the quest for social change” (27-8). It seems that he again misleads their ideas by assuming that the writers that new critical approaches study renounce literary excellence on behalf of a purely ideological thrust. Similarly, Bloom’s viewpoint leaves no room for different analyses of non-canonized works and authors since, even if they were actually looking for that social change, their innovations and messages have been misunderstood and silenced in favour of, for example, aestheticism.

Moreover, Bloom affirms that resentment is in fact “part of their sense of identity” (7). Given the focus of this dissertation on Canadian literary identity, such affirmation holds an even stronger relevance. Following his assumptions about *resented* identities, it could be concluded that the process of writing English Canadian literary history and tradition and the consequent construction of a literary identity as separate

from the British and the American developed by literary critics in Canada has merely been the product of resentment from the country's historical past and present. As explained in Part III, this is precisely what Glenn Willmott investigates in his article on "Canadian Ressentiment" in which he opts for the French term *ressentiment* as employed by Friedrich Nietzsche in his *On the Genealogy of Morals* to explain the creation of a Canadianicity<sup>9</sup> as "a group identity based upon the negation of an opposing identity rather than the positive creation of a new one" (2001: 135). Although it could seem that Willmott's ideas agree with Bloom's statements on resentment, at the end of his article Willmott states that English Canadian Literature can be considered "peculiarly instructive as a literary history, for having ambivalently combined in its very inception the *ressentiment* required to demand of itself [...] such a national tradition, with the utopian desire to represent and plot against *ressentiment* itself as that which its new society [...] must overcome" (149). It seems clear then that not only Bloom's resentment has played some part in the invention of Canadian literary identity. Likewise, authors contributing to Canadian letters with non-canonical and/or innovative works which distance from Anglo-Eurocentric literary axioms seem to be equally affected by that *resented* identity sense Bloom raises; following his ideas, all those *other* writers who, in spite of employing the same language and genres of canonized authors, are supposed to write from resentment would have to be left aside as they have actually been. In this way, Lily Dougall's fictionalization of Canadian regionalism during post-confederation times in *What Necessity Knows* (1893) or the excellent critical insight on Canadian society at the making of a nation offered by Sara Jeannette Duncan in *The Imperialist* (1904) would not be taken into account so that an inaccurate image of what Canadian Literature in English would be offered. This is precisely what feminist and ethnic critics investigate, raise and question, what has happened in Canada along the construction of its literary identity, and what this dissertation highlights in relation to the novel genre in early Canadian Literature. The novels by either women or/and ethnic writers such as Margaret Murray Robertson, Agnes Maule Machar, Agnes May Fleming, or Joanna Ellen Wood, as well as those mentioned previously, are approached in Part III not only as contributions to Canada's literary expression and

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<sup>9</sup> The employment of term Canadianicity in this dissertation to refer to Canada's essence is inspired by Glenn Willmott's article "Canadian Ressentiment".

hence its identity but as means of expressions of the different senses of identity of their authors. Moreover, paying attention to these texts from a feminist and/or ethnic perspective involves a challenge in relation to the construction of Canada's literary identity as non-patriarchal and non-racist.

But, if in some cases Bloom is right about the appearance of some kind of *resented* feelings in various works, the necessary question would be why those writers show such dissatisfaction. This is indeed what Virginia Woolf –considered by Bloom as one of the best novelists– explores in her famous and ground-breaking work *A Room of One's Own*. There she brings up fundamental issues on the connection between gender –and, in relation to the present dissertation, I would add race– and the *resented* condition Bloom mentions:

Would the fact of her sex in any way interfere with the integrity of a woman novelist –that integrity which I take to be the backbone of a woman novelist? [...] But there were many more influences than anger tugging at her imagination and deflecting it from its path. Ignorance, for instance [...]. We feel the influence of fear in it; just as we constantly feel the acidity which is the result of oppression, a buried suffering smouldering beneath her passion, a rancour which contracts those books, splendid as they are, with a spasm of pain. (73)

Woolf's provocative ideas as exposed in this quotation make clear that not only rancour is visible in literature written by women but ignorance, fear, oppression and pain.

Woolf's feminist views also foster understanding on how and why there are not many well-known women of literary genius even from the nineteenth century which equally encourages a different perspective on early ethnic writers. Just as ethnic authors, women were not encouraged to write but “on the contrary, she was snubbed, slapped, lectured and exhorted” (55); they had to fight against a hostile artistic framework that assumed women's inferior intellectual nature and maintained inequality as they did not meet “indifference but hostility. The world did not say to her as it said to them: write if you choose” (52). In such a context, it seems comprehensible that so few women attempted the pen as “there was an enormous body of masculine opinion to the effect that nothing could be expected of women intellectually” (Woolf, 54), that they employed male or non-gendered pen-names, or that they left their works unsigned. Furthermore, being aware of the cultural framework in which pioneering woman dare to write that, as Woolf maintains, “must have lowered her vitality, and told profoundly upon her work” helps understand how hard they tried to adapt themselves to mainstream literary rules sometimes with the result of awkward texts which seemed circumspect

and not fully committed (54). Very significantly, women artists could not only “expect to be laughed at” but some of the writings by those who had the courage to write died out without receiving any attention as in the case of ethnic writers (Woolf: 61). Unfortunately, works by many *other* authors have also faded away and not necessarily from the peripheral positions as those of women and ethnic writers. From the period of early Canadian Literature in English covered in this dissertation, the figure of John Galt and his novel *Bogle Corbet; or, The Emigrant* (1831), Abraham S. Holmes’ *Belinda; or, The rivals* (1843) or the later novel *Lords of the North* (1900) by A. C. Laut are significant in this respect.

I agree with Woolf in so far all these attitudes towards women artists were –and somehow still are although to a lesser extent– part of a more general framework, that of patriarchy. From her viewpoint, the dismissal of women’s literary achievements belongs to the “range of that very interesting and obscure masculine complex which has had so much influence on woman’s movement; that deep-seated desire, not so much that *she* shall be inferior as that *he* shall be superior” (55). I also share her ironic view on the fact that maybe investigating male hostility against female liberation could be even more fascinating than exploring women’s movement itself. Equally inferior, although for different reasons, were regarded ethnic writers when they also ventured into the literary creation being in their case the racially-focused cultural framework in which they developed their works their main hindrance. In any case, it is necessary to highlight that such gendered and racialized systems not only affected the artistic and literary motivations of female and ethnic writers but denied any literary value to their works too. Paying attention to the treatment that their literary contributions received on behalf of a mainstream criticism that frequently silenced, undervalued or misinterpreted their texts perhaps due to that “obscure masculine complex” Woolf raises, or any others still to be suggested, seems thus significant and essential.

Of course, it could be thought that the dismissal of these silenced works was simply due to the fact that they were not considered worthy literary pieces at a certain time. If so, the interesting question would be why they were regarded unworthy and who carried out such a value ascription. This is precisely what those critics that Bloom disagrees with investigate. Just as Woolf maintains that “it is time that the effect of discouragement upon the mind of the artist should be measured” (52-3), renewed

critical perspectives raise the need of a new awareness that allows the approach of dismissed texts and authors from different perspectives so that some of them can be recovered as crucial to our literary heritage when suitable and their displacement challenged. The case Woolf's pioneering critical work is paradigmatic of how feminist studies "have challenged liberal humanist claims that the literary and critical canons embody an essential and inclusive range of human experience and expression" (Montrose in Greenblatt and Gunn: 394). Moreover, it seems clear that her ideas have been inspiring for many other challenging perspectives since they are part of what Louis Montrose considers a process of demystification of academic criticism as independent from its socio-historical and material background and of the subsequent construction of "a model for the mutual articulation of intellectual, professional, and social concerns" (in Greenblatt and Gunn: 394).

Returning to Bloom's ideas, fashion, idealism and elitism also characterize those critical approaches that break ties with traditional criticism as those applied in this dissertation. In his opinion, feminist, ethnic or new historicist critics, among many others, are idealists whose main drive in the literary profession is following a fashion. Stephen Greenblatt's introduction to *Redrawing the Boundaries* is eloquent in this respect since there he explains that in fact "continual refashioning is at the center of the profession of literary study: it is both a characteristic of the texts we study and a crucial means to keep those texts and our critical practices from exhaustion and sterility" (in Greenblatt and Gunn: 5). In consonance with Greenblatt, the enlargement of Western literary institutions and canons as well as the revision of previous writings of literary history from differing viewpoints is actually the meeting point of new critical perspectives within English-speaking frameworks. Their undermining actions do not necessarily imply the disappearance of those challenged institutions and concepts as Bloom maintains but, on the contrary, open new spaces where although "boundaries can be crossed, confused, consolidated, and collapsed; [...] revised, reconceived, redesigned, or replaced", according to Greenblatt, "the one thing they cannot be in literary studies is entirely abolished" (in Greenblatt and Gunn: 4). I agree with Greenblatt in so far new approaches make traditionally uncontested literary criticism simultaneously more inclusive and dissensual so that an enrichment can take place. One of the clearest examples of such an improvement in English Canadian Literature is related to the last

novelist analysed in Part III of the present dissertation. As explained in the corresponding chapter, Robert Lecker's study on the anthologization of Canadian Literature in English illustrates that Sara Jeannete Duncan and her ground-breaking novel *The Imperialist* (1904) are taken into account as meaningful agents only in thirteen of the sixty-five anthologies containing fiction analysed. It was as late as in 2002 when the novel was included as a "masterpiece" and Duncan as "Canada's first modernist writer" for the first time in an anthology, *A New Anthology of Canadian Literature in English* edited by Donna Bennet and Rusell Brown (154). If it had not been for feminist and other challenging scholars, *The Imperialist* would not have been reprinted in 1961 so that it would neither have been reconsidered nor regarded as significant in mainstream literary histories and Canadian letters would have missed both a significant literary figure and a crucial fiction work which marks the evolution of the novel genre into modernism.

As far as idealism is concerned, the idealistic stances that Bloom sees in socio-historical approaches mean in fact "a way of begging questions of power and inequality" (Gates in Greenblatt and Gunn: 421). As Henry Louis Gates Jr. explains, such *idealist* views actually revolve around a concept of culture –and by extension of literature– as a conflictual site that moves away from purely anthropological and normative notions. In his words, "the word *culture* is invoked today both to affirm the bourgeois idealism [...] and to challenge that idealism in the name of Marxist, feminist [...] [and/or] cultural studies" (in Greenblatt and Gunn: 421). Likewise, Bloom's criticism regarding the unawareness of new critical approaches about their elitism proves not to be accurate. In explaining that "all canons, including our currently fashionable counter-canons, are elitist" and assuming an inherent "elitist guilt" of counter-canon activities (Bloom: 37, 32), he implies ignorance or, at least, avoidance of that elitism on their behalf. On the contrary, as Henry Louis Gates Jr. affirms, these critics are aware of the contradiction that their challenging but participating postures regarding traditional criticism imply since theoretical perspectives like theirs are "associated with professional elitism on the one hand and uncontrolled controversy and sectarianism on the other" (in Greenblatt and Gunn: 424). Elitism is precisely what Robert Lecker raises in *Canadian Canons: Essays in Literary Value* but not in relation to these approaches that Bloom deposes but regarding mainstream literary criticism in English



Canada. In Lecker's opinion, the very choice of the novel genre for the Conference on the Canadian Novel held in 1978 as basis upon which Canadian literary tradition and identity could be constructed suggested a certain literary leaning towards Eurocentric axioms and thus was the "expression of an elitist desire to remain in control" (1991: 14). In this sense, just as elitism characterizes innovative critics as Bloom assumes, it is equally present in traditional criticism as Lecker explains; in any case, it is undeniable that all of us who dedicate our energy, time and resources to literature somehow belong to an elite.

In my view, the problem is that Bloom tries to stigmatize these critics' tasks and considers their focuses on socio-historical aspects as opposed to his one-way description of what literary criticism should be. I think that Bloom establishes a binary opposition where researchers, professors and critics have to situate themselves either on one side or the other. He exhorts his readers to choose but only between two positions since in his opinion "either there were aesthetic values, or there are only the overdeterminations of race, class, and gender" (522). Bloom's insistence on the impossibility of reconciling traditional and *other* literary approaches is in fact contrary to what new critical trends maintain. I agree with Louis Montrose in so far "we[literary critics] should resist the reductive tendency to formulate our conceptual terms in binary oppositions" and instead we "should construe them as joined in a mutually constitutive, recursive, and transformative *process*" (in Greenblatt and Gunn: 413). Similarly, Virginia Woolf states that this establishment of mutually opposing sides –divided by sex, ethnicity or any other category– where each faction needs to prove its superiority by imposing an inferiority feeling over *the other* is outdated as it does not contribute to the literary debate whatsoever. I also agree with her regarding her disagreement on the assumption of traditional trends as that of Bloom "that gifts, whether mind or character, can be weighed like sugar and butter" because within literary realms it is necessary to analyse all those forgotten factors –historical, socio-economic, cultural and/or literary– which led to the overlooking, undervaluing or misinterpretation of certain writers' contributions. As Woolf vehemently explains,

No, delightful as the pastime of measuring may be, it is the most futile of all occupations, and to submit to the decrees of measuring the most servile of attitudes. [...]. But to sacrifice a hair of the head of your vision, a shade of its colour, in deference to some Headmaster with a silver pot in his hand or to some professor with a measuring-rod up his sleeve, is the most abject treachery, and

the sacrifice of wealth and chastity used to be said to be the greatest of human disasters, a mere flea-bite in comparison. (106)

It seems clear then that, unlike Bloom maintains, for these *other* critics not only considering different approaches as opposed and mutually denying is a futile exercise but it also goes against the very axis of literary criticism. This is indeed what the theoretical framework of this dissertation suggests through the inclusion of differing critical perspectives which are not presented as discrediting each other but mingling so that a dialectical process that voices their diverse and distinct critical contributions is established. Feminist, ethnic and new historicist critics –to cite just those whose ideas are applied here– see their studies as well as other perspectives, including Bloom’s, as parts of a same whole, a community with a shared objective. In my opinion, the defence of one theory *over* another suggested by Bloom in his work *The Western Canon* seems paradoxical as every approach regardless of its focus participates in the same task of fostering the literary debate.

#### I. 2. 1. 1 AESTHETICS AND IDEOLOGY

According to Bloom, relying on socio-historical aspects is against *the* basic criterion of literary criticism: aesthetics. He talks about the “over-determinations of race, class, and gender” that do not allow new critics to see anything else but that; in his view, socio-historical perspectives on literature are so biased by ideology that they cannot even be acknowledged as “truly *literary*” (23). But, as far as Bloom is concerned, the influence of ideology upon them is so strong that they are not only driven by ideology but see “an ideology involved in canon formation” and an “ideology *of* canon formation” as for them the creation and maintenance of the canon are also ideologically guided (22). Of course, Bloom’s claims on aesthetics as a critical mainstay have no connection with ideology whatsoever for, in his opinion, “the literary is not dependent upon the philosophical, and [that] the aesthetic is irreducible to ideology or to metaphysics” (10). Once again, Bloom insists on the impossibility of reconciling both stances by opposing his aesthetic approach to what he assumes to be the *others’* ideological perspectives.

Unlike Bloom states, critics like new historicists, for instance, cannot be said to rely exclusively on ideology when carrying out literary studies but are actually able to

see that many established literary measurements, as those based on aestheticism, have been historically constructed as products of reigning ideologies. This is what Tony Bennett explains in his already cited article “Really Useless ‘Knowledge’: A Political Critique of Aesthetics” (1996). His explanation based on Althusserian ideas demonstrates that so-assumed unbiased aesthetic discourses are in fact ideological since they construct a self-reflecting system by which evaluative practices of literary texts actually depend on the “self-recognition” of those who develop them, that is, of those holding the power of literary verdict; if *I* can recognize myself, *I* am dealing with a valuable piece of literature (46). As a result, the incapacity of these critics to feel identified with certain literary contributions or the existence of texts that do not foster the self-identification they demand leads to their dismissal. In doing so, aesthetic criticism also seems to carry out a “practical function of social differentiation” since it promotes a stratification by which a “relevant public” and appropriate valuing subjects prevail which, in Bennet’s opinion, can be considered “arbitrary and authoritarian” just as their universalizing aesthetic claims are (46, 39). Such a posture implies that good taste can only be achieved, developed and applied “when the internal organs of sensation are correctly balanced and when exterior circumstances permit their full and unimpeded exercise and progressive refinement” (Bennet: 39). In this way, taking into account that these inner and outer requirements are not homogeneously available for every individual, the barrier between suitable and unsuitable, that is, the dissociation between higher and lower valuing subjects is laid down. This “disqualification” of unsuitable or lower valuing subjects is actually core to universalizing aesthetic claims; once the founding of appropriate evaluative subjects is settled, the way is cleared for them to decide on “the standard agreed taste” by which some contributions are regarded as not fitting whereas other works are offered the higher status of “classics” for holding the so-considered universal values that in turn assert the discourses that claimed their significance in the first place (42, 38). A specific “theory of knowledge” which settles the right “relation between subject and reality” is thus established in such a way that, after some time, its claims can be taken for granted (36). The institutionalization of art as a separate and renowned realm within this knowledge framework brings along the fetishization of certain valuable elements such as literary texts that “serve as a complement to, and are produced by means of, its universalization of the valuing

subject” (36). This is why Bennett, inspired by Immanuel Kant, maintains that these universalizing discourses seem to claim for an apparent *sensus communis* whose existence is more theoretical than factual; it is precisely in this space in-between universal claims and real practices where those dismissed voices slip in.

Bennett’s challenge against the absence of ideology in aesthetic discourses also implies the questioning of their political agency which, in his opinion, is indisputable. In his words, “the structure of aesthetic discourse is inherently suspect in its political leanings no matter how radical the political protocols displayed on its surface” (45). In accordance with Sundquist’s ideas mentioned at the beginning of this Part I, politics are intrinsic to literary critical discourses even to those who traditionally deny it. Similarly, Gerald Graff and Bruce Robbins affirm that traditional criticism was in fact “the first to “politicize” criticism, a fact conveniently forgotten today” (in Greenblatt and Gunn: 431). Such an oblivion is confirmed by Bennett when he explains that the lack of re-evaluation of traditional critical views is actually based on “a politics of preserving what has already been preserved and consecrated in the judgements of the past, or of emulating, extending and adapting earlier aesthetic models” (45). This is precisely what Bloom’s insistence on the fact that ideology and politics have no relevance regarding literary aestheticism but are factual regarding other critical perspectives seems to demonstrate. In any case, the provocative ideas of critics like Bennett, Sundquist, Graff or Robbins offer an explanation for the self-perpetuating process through which aesthetic discourses have kept a hegemonic structure from which texts and writers not fulfilling established universal standards have been excluded. Given the exploration of literary identities developed in this dissertation, Bennett significantly points out the inadequacy of these discourses since their claims for an unidirectional valuable and valuing subject are no longer valid, given the current heterogeneity of “the multiple, intersecting, but equally non-coincident” identities new critical discourses try to be aware of (47).

A very clear example of the process described by Bennett in English Canadian Literature can be found in the already mentioned Conference on the Canadian Novel held in Calgary in 1978 whose main goal was listing Canada’s *best* one hundred novels in English. As detailed in Part II of this dissertation, only certain critics, that is, valuing subjects, were asked to participate at a time when current questioning perspectives as

those of feminist and ethnic studies did not hold a strong representation in critical institutions. As it could not have been otherwise, the resulting catalogue of significant novels and novelists, or in other words Canada's classics, mirrored the literary claims of those engaged in the task; they decided that not only a genre like the novel but but a realistic literary form depicted the accurate relation between subject and reality and held the necessary representational qualities of Canadian Literature as a whole. Some, although few, female figures were included but ethnic contributions to the genre did not share the same representation. In fact, from 1769 to 1904 –which is the period covered in this dissertation– only works by Frances Brooke, Rosanna Leprohon and Sara Jeannette Duncan are covered whereas no contributor of ethnic origin is mentioned. Once the novel genre and realism as well as that list of authors were settled, a knowledge theory on the best Canadian Literature had produced until then was ready to be perpetuated in anthologies, literary histories and compilations. This is precisely what the study on the anthologization of early English Canadian Literature included in Part II demonstrates and what Part III of this dissertation brings into question by raising the voices of some of those authors whose diverse, converging and differing identities have been silenced by mainstream literary discourses.

On the other hand, although challenging critics as those working from new historicist, feminist and/or ethnic perspectives are aware that recognizing the importance of ideology in literary criticism is significant they also understand that it cannot be reduced exclusively to its analysis. But the relevance of their challenge has further implications since, apart from questioning the hidden ideology of traditional approaches to literary criticism, their undermining also implies an inquiry into the core issue of literary value to such an extent that basic strategies as canonization are also brought into question. As Raymond Williams points out in *Culture and Society*, aesthetics, as a way of valuing art, together with other artistic concepts such as those of genius and talent developed and changed their meaning through history. In fact, the concept of art itself shifted from signifying “any human skill” to “a particular group of skills, the ‘imaginative’ or ‘creative’ arts” according to Williams (15). Along with this transformation, “a new name, *aesthetics*, was found to describe the judgement of art”, entailed the appearance of the figure of the “*aesthete*” whereas the word genius started to mean “‘exalted ability’” and brought a different cataloguing of artistic agents (15).

Hence, the bases for artistic canonization were settled. But the establishment of this new terminology implied both the inclusion and exclusion of those contributions that were considered as aesthetically worthy and unworthy at a certain historical period. If at the time these terms became crucial in valuing artistic and thus literary works female and/or ethnic cultural expressions, for instance, were considered marginal, then their meaning equally excluded them. Later on, these ideas were taken as basis in the creation of a literary tradition and identity that again ignored those so-considered peripheral works. In consonance with Williams, other critics like new historicists maintain that aesthetics as well as other canon-making tools are products of the time in which they were established; just as readers and writers, critics are “persons in society” and thus exposed to the impact of the ideological contexts in which they perform their works (Montrose in Greenblatt and Gunn: 396). It seems clear that these critical views also acknowledge their own positions as (re)constructors submerged in specific socio-historical frameworks whose ideologies equally influence them. As Montrose affirms, “our analyses necessarily proceed from our own historically, socially, and institutionally shaped vantage points and that the pasts we reconstruct are, at the same time, the textual construct of critics who are, ourselves, historical subjects” (in Greenblatt and Gunn: 415). What Montrose describes is actually a circle by which new critics contribute by ideologically de/re-constructing previously ideologically constructed literary discourses. Regarding English Canadian Literature the silencing of women and ethnic novelists that the 1978 Calgary Conference implied can be thus said to be the result of the ideological and historical background in which it took place. Very significantly, approaches to art and literature as those of Williams or new historicist allow us to understand that not only criticism but also literary texts are themselves ideological agents, because “all texts are ideologically marked, however multivalent or inconsistent that description may be” (Montrose in Greenblatt and Gunn: 405). Literary texts represent and fictionalize the world and, at the same time, contribute to its configuration as *Blake; or, the Huts of America* by Martin R. Delany –together with all the novels analysed in Part III of this dissertation– did in early Canada.

Unlike Williams or any other questioning critical figures, traditional critics as Bloom are reluctant to accept these evidences about the historically constructed nature of those concepts which have affected artistic and literary evaluation. Bloom insists, for

example, that “one breaks into the canon *only* by aesthetic strength, which is constituted primarily by an amalgam: mastery of figurative language, originality, cognitive power, knowledge, exuberance of diction” (my emphasis, 29). In fact, he goes even further and affirms that the disagreement of other critics regarding the importance he gives to aesthetics is an unmistakable sign of “the degeneracy of literary study” (11). Far from accepting such a decadence, these critics find these new conflicts and awarenesses advantageous for they “presuppose[s] a democratically disintegrated society, in which the beliefs embedded in art are no longer taken for granted and thus have to be elaborately analysed and explained” (Graff and Robbins in Greenblatt and Gunn: 427). This viewpoint offers a basis for a different literary analysis given the vantage point that the historical and ideological acknowledgement provides. Thus, certain writers, texts or aspects of their texts which were previously dismissed in favour of aestheticism can be now taken into account so that some of them would show themselves as significant literary contributors. As explained in detail later in this dissertation, the cases of Frances Brooke’s figure and her novel *The History of Emily Montague* (1769) as well as Sara Jeannette Duncan and *The Imperialist* (1904) are paradigmatic regarding the evolution and positive outcome of literary criticism in English Canadian Literature since both were at first misrepresented or even overlooked but have been somehow recovered by Canadian critics.

The abyss that Bloom establishes with other critical perspectives depends on his resistance to accept their evidences about historically constructed concepts which have affected the literary realm. In fact, Bloom’s presents his literary approach as non-historical, independent from any social and material framework in which its value-making practices were developed. It is very significant that, according to Montrose’s argument, new critical perspectives bring the need of historicizing not only the past *but* the present “and to historicize the dialectic between them” so that “a dialogue between a poetics and a politics of culture” is established (in Greenblatt and Gunn: 415). Just as writing and reading, critical practices need to be regarded also as a “always historically and socially situated events, performed *in* the world and *upon* the world by ideologically situated individual and collective human agents” (Montrose in Greenblatt and Gunn: 415). It is precisely in relation to history where Harold Bloom and socio-historical criticism distance from each other. On the one hand, according to Virginia

Woolf's explanations, some of the reasons of the unequal participation of women in literature are both historical and material; "for women [...] difficulties were infinitely more formidable" because, for instance, "to have a room of her own" where they could devote to writing "was out of the question" (52). On the other hand, in Bloom's opinion these are just excuses that have nothing to do with literary criticism whose only goal is victimizing certain writers so that their value would be increased (29). Identifying new historicist, feminist, postcolonial, ethnic, cultural, or Marxist studies with a simple process of victimization seems quite unfair and lacks any kind of critical rigour. But far from a simplistic victimization of dismissed writers, what socio-historical projects attempt is gaining awareness of the perverse silencing processes some of them suffered. They mean a starting point which could lead to re-discover, and thus, re-consider dismissed authors, disregarded works by canonized writers or even canonized texts by canonized writers although from different perspectives. As explained in Part II, in doing so these critical attitudes challenge the basis on which the Anglo-Saxon Western literary canon is founded on, that is, literary value and canon-making means and, consequently, the literary traditions and identities constructed upon them. In this sense, vehement reactions as Bloom's provoked by these questioning approaches prove that, in Montrose's words, "there may be something important at stake in our reading, teaching, and revision of the literary canon" (in Greenblatt and Gunn: 416).

#### I. 2. 1. 2 THE ROLE OF THE CRITIC

Of course, the distance Bloom establishes in relation to socio-historical literary approaches also affects their views about the critics' role. As explained before, although all of them more or less agree that literary criticism is somehow an elitist profession, there are some disagreements regarding specific issues of literary criticism. As Graff and Robbins explain, some of them claim for a criticism closer to "the general public" by using a simpler language although accepting the elitism inherent in their profession; in his opinion, there has been a deviation in the critical profession since the critic who wrote for "the "common reader" of Samuel Johnson and Virginia Woolf has been replaced by the narrow academic specialist employing a jargon addressed only to other academic specialists" (in Greenblatt and Gunn: 429).



In fact, Graff, Robbins and Bloom coincide about Samuel Johnson's relevance as a crucial figure in the development of literary criticism, although not in the scope of his importance as, in Bloom's words, Johnson is "unmatched by any critic in any nation before or after him" (183). The disagreement between Bloom's view and other critical perspectives relies on the reasons why Johnson is for Bloom the standard of what a literary critic should be. Whereas Bloom stresses the importance of "the self" as the main critical tool in contrast with what he considers "a political or social science or a cult of gender and racial cheerleading" (184), other critics as Virginia Woolf put forward that this insistence on the self, that is, on the *I*, is sterile because "nothing will grow there" (100). Moreover, Bloom also maintains that "wisdom, not form, is the ultimate standard for judging imaginative literature" being Shakespeare, for Johnson or any other individual involved in literary criticism, "the critic's supreme test" so that the question to be posed is "how can one's response be adequate to the central writer in the Western Canon?" (186). On the other hand, feminist critics as Catharine R. Stimpson point out that a such "wisdom" has not been equally shared by challenging critics. Her reference to Lanser and Beck's study in which facts such as that in "the 1970s [...] of a total of 653 essays, only 16 (2.4%) were by women" demonstrate that there has been an uneven participation of women in literary criticism (in Greenblatt and Gunn: 256). It could be deduced that this unequal influence of women on the critical profession also had some degree of impact on the lower relevance offered to both women's literary works and topics. Paradoxically, in stating that "in the *Lives of the Poets*, his major critical achievement, Johnson found himself introducing fifty poets, chosen by the booksellers (publishers)" Bloom seems to suggest that Johnson was not only lead by individual wisdom but also influenced by his socio-economic and historical background (192). Besides, he also admits that "canonical criticism [...] has its religiopolitical and socioeconomic motivations" (197), so that he seems to agree with Montrose's ideas on critics as historical subjects and the historically constructed nature of literary critical axioms. In spite of these apparent consensus, Bloom highlights that one of the most significant features of Johnson as epitome of *the* figure of the literary critic is precisely his ability to "push aside his own ideologies" which, as outlined in the previous section, seems not to be applicable to counter-canon critics as far as Bloom is concerned (197). In fact, Bloom's explanation on the importance of Johnson on the basis of his

pioneering contributions to “biographical criticism” could be similarly applied to the introduction of sociological, historical and/or material aspects into literary criticism by current critical approaches in so far these views could be as enriching as Johnson’s approach (193). As they explain, “the power of literature, and of literary study, lies in its ability to infiltrate any speech and writing, transforming what seems outside itself into something else, into its own odd being” (Greenblatt and Gunn: 11).

Once again, the distance between both perspectives on literary criticism seems to be supported more by Bloom’s insistence on placing *other* critics on what he considers to be the *other* side of literary criticism. Unlike Bloom, modern critics attempt to offer a more reconciling attitude towards the critical profession; they do not pay tribute to a single and unique theoretical approach but shift and interrelate with different perspectives despite being linked to a certain subgroup. Feminist critics take some aspects of new historicism and the reverse; likewise, ethnic/cultural criticism and feminism share also many connections but simultaneously maintain their own specific viewpoints. In this way, frontiers are kept “conceptually alive” because “what is sought are not closed boundaries but regulated thresholds, controlled passageways” (Greenblatt and Gunn: 8). As Greenblatt explains, such a shifting system is based on “written and unwritten treaties” and a communal feeling or “sense of solidarity” which, although somehow illusive, “is important, even if it is the result not of natural limits –there are none– but only of arbitrary regulations that have become naturalized in the imagination” (Greenblatt and Gunn: 8).

## I. 2. 2 THE ANGLO-WESTERN LITERARY CANON

The fact that Bloom entitles his work *The Western Canon* seems eloquent since, as Graff and Robbins point out, “the very prominence of a term like *canonical Western culture* implies that what the term denotes has lost its self-evident status and become a theoretical entity and a locus of conflict” (Graff and Robbins in Greenblatt and Gunn: 428). As Gerald Graff and Bruce Robbins explain in their chapter about cultural criticism regarding Raymond William’s *Culture and Society* the introduction of cultural criticism’s essential concepts as for instance, culture, canon or Western, “results from the breakdown of the consensus that had formerly made those words unnecessary” (in Greenblatt and Gunn: 428). This is precisely what Bloom does not seem to share, the

fact that the accepted cultural and literary critical bases have become conflicted and are no longer taken for granted. Besides, in his opinion, this dispute is necessarily negative as it will destroy literature and literary criticism whereas for cultural, new historicist, feminist and/or ethnic critics it means a way of widening frontiers. Bloom's insistence on the irreconcilability of traditional and new literary perspectives, is based on his assumption that their attitudes imply the denial of canonical writers, while, in their opinion, reading those works is fundamental as a basis to analyse how canonicity worked in the past and discover the reasons why other writers have been neglected.

#### 1.2.2.1 LITERARY CANON AND VALUE

Canonicity is precisely one of most relevant areas of conflict between traditional and current critical perspectives. As far as Bloom is concerned, although he acknowledges the detrimental effects that ideologically-driven attempts to preserve the Western canon may have, it is only in relation to the equally damaging "onslaughts of attackers who seek to destroy the Canon or "open it up", as they proclaim" (22). In his opinion, the broadening of canonical axioms that questioning critical perspectives carry out "has meant the destruction of the Canon, since what is being taught included by no means the best writers who happen to be women, African, Hispanic, or Asian" (7). It seems clear that Bloom offers an elegiac vision as, for him, new approaches only contribute to annihilate the literary canon once and for all; in any case, he hopes that they will see sense, that is, *his* sense and "will cease to hurl themselves off the cliffs" (4).

The work of challenging critics such as the already mentioned Catharine R. Stimpson foster understanding on the broadening –and not destruction – of the canon that their critical approaches imply. As she explains regarding feminisms, by voicing silenced contributions their goal is not to collapse the canon and literary institutions forever, but to rethink, challenge, extend and open them up in order to understand and change some of their preconceptions (in Greenblatt and Gunn: 266). In doing so, at the same time they bring into question the axioms of traditional canonization, they *re-cover* overlooked, misunderstood and/or dismissed texts that have been constantly left out of the literary debate due to restrictions imposed by mainstream literary criticism as well as offer renewed viewpoints from which canonized texts can be analysed. But their

critical works do not presuppose the establishment of a new and firm framework as they are regarded as taking part in the process in motion that is the *re-thinking* of literary boundaries. As Greenblatt and Gunn explain, such a *re-drawing* is intrinsic to literature since “not only is the canon of literary works in any genre fashioned by a simultaneous perambulation and transgression of boundaries but the very concept of the literary is itself continually renegotiated” (5). This is precisely what the study of ethnic and/or feminist approaches to English Canadian Literature included in Part II shows; that the works by critics such as George E. Clarke and Hallie Q. Brown from an African Canadian perspective, Lien Chao’s examination of Asian Canadian Literature in English, Penny Petrone’s compilations of the writings of First Nations authors, or the raising of disregarded female writers developed by Carole Gerson or Lorraine McMullen –among many others– have actually participated in a renegotiation of critical boundaries in English Canada. On the other hand, critics like new historicists, for instance, know that their attitudes will not destroy the canon precisely because they are aware that they work for and from it, although adopting and accepting dissensual perspectives. Consequently and paradoxically, whereas researches as that developed for the present dissertation contribute to challenge traditional canonicity, they somehow cooperate in differing canon-making processes; the advantages being, first, that they do not maintain a restrictive but broader vision on works which might conflict their viewpoints, and second, that they are aware of their contribution to constantly in-the-make critical discourses and, of course, of the elitism of their profession.

Although in stating that there is an “alliance of sublimity and financial and political power [that] has never ceased, and presumably never can or will” Bloom seems to acknowledge a certain relation between power and canon (33), he does not share Stimpson’s ideas about the fact that the canon not only displays cultural power but incarnates it, precisely because it has the authority to do so (in Greenblatt and Gunn: 266). Besides, for Bloom “the Canon is the true art of memory, the authentic foundation for cultural thinking” and without memory cognition is impossible in his view (35). As I see it, the problem of such description is that it eludes the debate about how canonical selectiveness has determined literary memory and, hence, history, tradition and identity. Bloom does not present these concepts as parts of a dialectic process where canon, memory and cognition inform each other. As he explains, it has been traditionally

established that we know what we remember, that is, what is included within the canon, while the canon has been telling what should be remembered, what has been needed to be known, and thus, valuable. In this sense, following Stimpson's explanation about the intrinsic relation between canon and power, if the Western canon is a construction of powerful societal elites, thus our literary memory and identity are equally influenced by their views. This being so, I would add that the canon Bloom describes is neither *the* true art of memory nor *the* authentic foundation of cultural thinking, but a part of it. It is necessary to reconsider its assumptions and broaden its boundaries, so that we start knowing and remembering more and thus incorporate dismissed aspects, writers and works that in fact belong to our literary memories and identities. Regarding Bloom's omen that "without the Canon, we cease to think" (41), by challenging the canon we do not stop thinking but start re-thinking, dissenting, learning to view different and anew.

As outlined in Part II of this dissertation, Barbara Hernstein raises the concept of literary value as axial in the construction and perpetuation of traditional literary canons. In consonance with Hernstein, Stimpson describes the canon as "contingent not universal", as "a fiction about aesthetic and intellectual supremacy" which not only reflects value but also helps to construct it (in Greenblatt and Gunn: 266). On the other hand, for Bloom there is neither an intrinsic relation nor reciprocity between literary value and canonicity. As he states, "the West's greatest writers are subversive of all values, both ours and their own" and the Western canon should be understood as "a choice among texts struggling with one another for survival" (20, 29). But subversion, as Greenblatt maintains, is actually a sign of power for only powerful agents are capable of developing any kind of undermining (qtd. in Greenblatt and Gunn: 402). As a matter of fact, it could be argued that subversion is another value-making tool, for what has been thought as literary subversive also served to construct value while it left aside writers, works, forms and themes which were not considered subversive enough, did not coincide with current concepts of subversiveness or were too subversive for their time. Some of the early Canadian novels analysed in Part III are paradigmatic in this respect; Frances Brooke's *The History of Emily Montague* (1769), for instance, has rarely been considered subversive while in fact it subverted the epistolary form of the novel genre by making it more dynamic and dialectical, characterization through the inclusion of atypical women, and literary themes by suggesting feminist topics. Similarly, the

realistic and critical depiction of regional Canada developed in *The Untempered Wind* (1894) by Joanna E. Wood has not been considered innovative enough, just as Sara Jeannette Duncan's bright critical insight on Canada as a nation in the make in the first Canadian modernist novel *The Imperialist* (1904) was perhaps too experimental for the early nineteenth century. Likewise, Bloom's explanation lacks a consideration about which texts did in fact struggle; a struggle can only be carried out by those who have the power to do so, if whoever or whatever is completely powerless there are no options to struggle against or for anything. How could, for instance, a text like Martin R. Delany's *Blake; or, the Huts of America* which gained publication with great difficulties fight for canonization on equal terms?

Besides subversiveness, Harold Bloom also raises containment as a fundamental feature of canonical literary pieces for "great literature will insist upon its self-sufficiency in the face of the worthiest causes: [such as] feminism" (28). According to Louis Montrose's new historicist views, this canonical dichotomy between containment and subversion is actually "simplistic, reductive, and hypostatized" (in Greenblatt and Gunn: 402). For him, as well as for many other socio-historical and cultural literary critics, it is necessary to challenge it because in fact both concepts are contingent on each other and thus set forth a shared meaning. Their critical approaches imply the questioning of canonized literary pieces which seem "to *contain* apparently subversive gestures or even to *produce* them precisely in order to contain them" (402). They claim for different discourses that grow apart from agreement and move to dissension, for a "shift of emphasis from canonicity and consensus to diversity and contestation" (402). Diversity and contestation are precisely the focus of this dissertation whose goal is not to give or take away value from certain literary works, but to challenge the construction, application and reinforcement of value-making processes carried out in Canada's literary framework by questioning its literary institutions through the recovery of silenced novels by diverse women and ethnic writers. As Robert Lecker explains about Canadian Literature in his work *Making it Real: the Canonization of English-Canadian Literature*, "the act of evaluation and the investigation of value are two entirely different forms of enquiry" (1995: 44). It is not based, as Bloom assumes, on an ideological thrust but on the realization that certain writers within Canada's framework were left

out of the debate so that its literary tradition and identity can be said to be, at least, incomplete.

Besides denying any kind of influence to literary value on canonization, the dismissal of texts as those approached in Part III of this dissertation is explained by Bloom on the basis of the absence of the two qualities he considers fundamental in canonical texts: strangeness and originality. According to Bloom in his “Preface and Prelude” to *The Western Canon*, literary canonicity is usually linked to strangeness (3); he also affirms that “the tang of originality must always hover in an inaugural aspect of any work that incontestably wins the agon<sup>10</sup> with tradition and joins the Canon” (6). As it can be observed, here we confront the same problem about who assumes what is meant by originality and strangeness, and thus about what is considered as inaugural within the literary realm. As already mentioned, the case of Sara Jeannette Duncan’s novel is eloquent in so far the acknowledgement of its originality has evolved in accordance with the changes that literary criticism has experienced in English Canada; whereas at first *The Imperialist* was not echoed with much emphasis, it is currently included in some literary histories as a pioneering novel. According to Zora Neale Hurston’s definition of originality as “the modification, [...] exchange and re-exchange of ideas between groups” (qtd. in Sundquist: 8), it could be said that many writers apart from those widely regarded as canonical have actually contributed to such an exchange. Similarly, contrary to Bloom’s univocal statement that “all strong literary originality becomes canonical” (25), Mary Daly explains that “which is truly original cannot be reduced to a model, form, or pattern without serious distortion” (1984: 79). But following Bloom, the texts by those labelled as resented writers cannot entail neither originality nor strangeness precisely because of resentment; furthermore, he assumes that “even if they were [original], they would not suffice to create heirs of [...] Homer, Dante and Shakespeare” (7). In this way, no matter the contributions made by any of these newly *re-(dis)covered* writers they would never achieve the literary excellence of any of these three, whether showing those two features or not. A similar objection can be applied to Bloom’s idea about the need of rereading as the ultimate tool to prove texts’ canonicity; in his words, “one ancient test for the canonical remains fiercely valid: unless it demands rereading, the work does not qualify” (30). This view is questionable

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<sup>10</sup> The term “agon” meaning “conflict” appears in Bloom’s original text.

from the perspective that it is not possible to reread what is unknown; a preliminary recovery process is needed first in order to reread forgotten works so that any reconsideration can be developed. The already mentioned *Blake; or the Huts of America* by Martin R. Delany is a clear paradigm in early English Canadian Literature; despite having been published for the first time between 1861 and 1862 it was not reedited in book form until 1970 so that in the meantime it has not been possible to take it into account as another significant contribution to the genre. Bloom also talks about the expectations a text “needs to fulfil or it will cease to be read” (19); but it is necessary to take into account that certain works did not fulfil those expectations at their time because they were misunderstood, undervalued or simply left out without serious consideration, or that in attempting to fulfil current literary expectations they were not written as freely as others, as Woolf explains in relation to women’s contributions.

Within Bloom’s description of the Western canon, “Shakespeare *is* the secular canon, or even the secular scripture” and in fact without him there is no canon, “no recognizable selves in us, whoever we are” because “we owe to Shakespeare not only our representation of cognition but much of our capacity for cognition” (24; 40). That *we* Bloom mentions includes not only English-speaking readers but also other frameworks regardless of language, geographic location or cultural specificities because for them Shakespeare “is a signifier for their own pathos, [and] their own sense of identity” (38). In the light of these ideas, questioning Shakespeare’s predominance can only lead to dispute all innovations of his works so that Bloom again offers only two options for critics: “either they must deny Shakespeare’s unique eminence (a painful and difficult matter) or they must show why and how history and class struggle produced just those aspects of his plays that have generated his centrality in the Western Canon” (24). Whereas for him Shakespeare’s “universality is not historical but fundamental” (38-9), critics like Homi K. Bhabha maintain that such a universality is no longer valid as literary discourses “cannot be accommodated within theories of cultural relativism or pluralism” (in Greenblatt and Gunn: 439). Taking Shakespeare as epitome of the canon, other critical approaches such as Bhabha’s postcolonial perspective convey the need of reconsidering not only how and why his works have been regarded as crucial but also of analysing the historical background in which such a literary genius was possible as Woolf does. For Virginia Woolf exploring Shakespeare’s socio-



historical and cultural framework can bring awareness of the fact that a “genius like Shakespeare’s is not born among labouring, uneducated, servile people” (48). From a feminist point of view, approaches like hers help in explaining that in Shakespeare’s time “it would have been impossible, completely and entirely, for any woman to have written the plays of Shakespeare” for already mentioned reasons as the discouragement and negative response to her works on behalf of her socio-cultural context (46). I agree with Virginia Woolf that maybe Shakespeare, unlike women authors, had nothing to fear and that is why “all desire to protest, to preach, to proclaim and injury, to pay off a score, to make the world the witness of some hardship or grievance was fired out of him and consumed” so that “his poetry flows from him free and unimpeded” (56-7).

But following Woolf, such disheartening and undervaluing process was not specific of Shakespeare’s age –and I would add background– because “even in the nineteenth century a woman was not encouraged to be an artist” (55). Her ideas open new paths to approach certain writers’ works and understand their significance by taking into account the socio-historical, cultural and literary backgrounds in which their contributions were carried out. Likewise, they may be helpful in developing studies that examine the establishment and evolution of those canonical strategies that dismissed them so that the construction of literary tradition and identity are also at stake. Just as Virginia Woolf, Jane Austen, or George Elliot’s works did contribute, other writers who are not considered canonical did cooperate through their individual literary efforts to express certain realities –perhaps, too distant or *exotic* for mainstream literary discourses– and it is only possible to explore to which extent they are significant if their works are rescued from oblivion. If we do not even know about their existence, if they are kept silent, we will not be able to approach them and they will be kept silenced and worthless. In consequence, having no value would mean that they would not be taken into account when describing literary traditions and identities, so that a double process of silencing would be taking place. In sum, approaches to literature as that of Woolf foster reconciling views for they acknowledge that Shakespeare *is* important and that perhaps there are some dismissed writers whose significance is also historical *and* fundamental.

### I. 2.2.3 THE ANXIETY OF INFLUENCE

In taking Shakespeare as the centre of the canon, Harold Bloom also introduces the concept of the anxiety of influence. For him, “the strongly achieved work *is* anxiety” in so far it “creatively misreads and therefore misinterprets a precursor text or texts” (8). As a matter of fact, in Bloom’s opinion, it is not possible to have any kind of what he calls “strong, canonical writing” without this inter-textual exchange (8). If as Bloom explains every literary production is based on imitation, it is worth questioning where is the difference between worthy or unworthy borrowing to which he answers stating that innovative writers “know *how* to borrow” (11). It seems clear that the vagueness of his univocal assertion does neither offer any explanation about what is/was in fact considered good or bad literary loaning nor illustrates the reasons for such a differentiation. A very clear example of the effects that imprecise assertions such as Bloom’s have had once established as mainstream critical axioms in early English Canadian Literature can be found in the already cited novel *The History of Emily Montague* (1769) by Frances Brooke. Just as many of her contemporaries, she followed the tradition of the novel genre founded by Samuel Richardson –the so-called father of the novel– in Great Britain from which she borrowed formal and thematic aspects. Equally imitative of European forms and topics were other early contributions to the novel genre in English Canada such as *Wacousta; or The Prophecy: A Tale of the Canadas* (1832) by the Canadian-born author John Richardson whose borrowing seems finer given the appraisal and wide canonization of the novel unlike in Brooke’s case. Following Bloom’s ideas, it could be deduced that she did not develop the worthy know-how in her borrowing whereas Richardson did which is, of course, a too simplistic explanation for the uneven consideration that both works have received by mainstream criticism in Canada.

In spite of acknowledging the anxiety of influence that literary production entails, Bloom’s description does not include any reference to the unequal anxieties experienced by authors whose positions in the literary realm differed from the mainstream. Such is the case, for instance, of early women writers whose internal and external subjections at the time of attempting the pen were not comparable to those of their male counterparts. The different contexts where women developed their literary

careers fostered a stronger internalization of this anxiety of influence not only because, as already outlined, they were exhorted not to write by a cultural framework that insisted on their weaker skills as artists, but also due to the fact “they had no tradition behind them, or one so short and partial that it was of little help” (Woolf: 77). When attempting the pen, their search for references were fruitless so that they became aware that in order to be considered as serious writers they had to stick to some established literary rules that disallowed them since they had been created neither for nor by them. This is precisely what feminist critics have demonstrated in relation to women novelists such as Jane Austen or George Elliot and what Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar illustrate in their work *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (1979). The anxiety that literary borrowing implied in the case of women writers was even more powerful since for them writing meant “self-creation” and was, in Adrienne Rich’s words, “an act of survival” that had to be developed in struggle with “his reading of *her*” (Gilbert and Gubar: 49). As Gilbert and Gubar explain, the anxiety male authors felt was totally different from that of women writers since they had to deal with “the loneliness of the female artist, her feelings of alienation from male precursors and successors, her urgent sense of her need for a female audience together with her fear of the antagonism of male readers, her culturally conditioned timidity about self-dramatization, her dread of the patriarchal authority of art, [and/or] her anxiety about the impropriety of female invention” (50). All these hindrances, of course, affected both the ways in which they borrowed from other texts and the consideration of their works as usually developing awkward borrowing so that they were not included as contributors to what Bloom calls great writing.

Likewise, Bloom’s conceptualization overlooks the complex ways in which that the anxiety of influence affected ethnic writers. As explained in Part II of this dissertation, Penny Petrone brings light in this respect regarding early First Nations’ Literature in English Canada in her compilation *Native Literature in Canada: From the Oral Tradition to the Present* (1990). Unlike women, First Nations authors met the added obstacle of having to write in an alien language which did not hold the necessary cultural and artistic links for them to feel identified with it, the result being similarly awkward. First Nations and other ethnic writers surrounded by a cultural superstructure

as in the case of Canada established connections with the canonical works of that established as *the* mainstream literature by, for example, employing literary genres alien to them as the novel. But, at the same time, their works developed a network of literary influence with others from their own cultural frameworks so that a dialectic that little by little forged a literary tradition within another tradition was founded. The problem is that, as these authors borrowed from canonical *and* other writers from their literary backgrounds, their works have tended to be considered marginal. This is one of the main paradoxes of mainstream criticism because when those so-called minority writers revised whether what they considered to be their literary ancestors or those considered as *the* great writers they have been equally marginalized.

On the other hand, the introduction of these ideas on the anxiety of influence by Bloom can be helpful when applied to literary criticism and institutions. Critics have also experimented such an anxiety when, in attempting to describe a certain literary tradition, they have dismissed many texts for not borrowing from great Western canonical writers like Shakespeare. Canadian Literature in English is paradigmatic in this respect since in the process of describing, and at the same time constructing, a literary tradition Canadian critics have anxiously confronted the dilemma of not counting on a Shakespearian figure to be established as the axis of their canon. Given Canada's colonial past, critics have faced the problematic of reconciling its colonial and postcolonial literature, of raising Canadian Literature as significant in an international context, and of paradoxically dealing with Anglo-Eurocentric canonical standards in order to achieve it. Eurocentrism is actually present in Bloom's ideas since he affirms that "'American Classicism' is an oxymoron, whereas 'French Classicism' is a coherent tradition" (519). Although he is perhaps right in that American classicism is somehow an oxymoron, he forgets that expressions like these have been coined by critics in their attempts of raising, for instance, US and Canadian literary achievements to European levels, especially to British standards, led by the influence of their previous colonial situations. Maybe, it is also true that there is no such a thing to be called American classicism but perhaps there are different "coherent traditions" to be discovered, named, brought into existence which have been kept silent under the powerful influence of Western Eurocentrism on their literary institutions.

Regarding the relation between Eurocentrism and the anxiety of influence, Bloom admits to “have enjoyed the School of Resentment’s repeated insistence that such a notion applies only to Dead White European Males, and not to women and to what we quaintly term ‘multiculturalists’” (7). Apart from his wrong use of the term multiculturalists in which every ethnic/cultural critical approach to literature is included and the existing differences among them misunderstood, from his viewpoint the fact that the Anglo-Western canonical figure par excellence is a European white man has no relevance whatsoever. Unlike Bloom, feminist and ethnic critics have brought into question such a relevance by exploring, for instance, the reasons why Shakespeare is considered axial, who was also attempting the pen during his times, what is the value offered to *other* literary agents, or why there are no ethnic or female central figures. Such questions bring along the reconsideration of some central aspects of literary criticism as those raised by ethnic and feminist critics developed in the next chapter. As already pointed out, researches and studies from feminist and ethnic perspectives offer the chance of reading *other* writers who are still unknown so that their works have the chance to be analysed and, perhaps, some “strongly achieved work” –to use Bloom’s words– can be recovered. In this way, the network of literary influence is broadened by establishing new connections between canonized and non-canonized works and traditional ideas on literary tradition and identity are brought into question.

### I. 2.3. LITERARY TRADITION AND IDENTITY

Literary tradition is, according to Bloom, “not only a hanging-down or process of benign transmission; it is also a conflict between past genius and present aspiration, in which the prize is literary survival or canonical inclusion” (8-9). As the ultimate result of this process of transference is permanence or canonization, Bloom’s definition of tradition excludes all those works which have not survived or have been overlooked by canonical criticism as, for example, many of the writings by women and ethnic authors. Whereas Bloom sees a fabrication that does not shape a literary tradition in the connections established by feminist and ethnic critics among these writers, they maintain that those links are actually proofs of the forging of other literary traditions. This is what Henry Louis Gates Jr. explains in relation to African American literature for “many black authors read and revise one another, address similar themes, and repeat

the cultural and linguistic codes of a common symbolic geography” (in Greenblatt and Gunn: 308). Likewise, Elaine Showalter maintains that in order to unfold the literary tradition of women writers accurately it is necessary to understand it as a collection of “still-evolving relationships between women writers and their society” since it “is the product of a delicate network of influences operating in time” affected by different socio-historical and material factors such as those affecting the literary market (1977: 12). I agree with Showalter that for the necessary connections among women authors to be disclosed awareness on “the ways in which self-awareness of the women writer has translated itself into a literary form in a specific place and time-span, how this self-awareness has changed and developed, and where it might lead” is paramount (12). In her opinion, the lack of understanding towards women’s literature has been a consequence, first, of the reluctance of mainstream criticism to open up a literary tradition that included few significant female figures such as those of Jane Austen, the Bröntes, George Eliot, and Virginia Woolf, and second, of the establishment and development of “culture-bound stereotypes of femininity” by mainstream critics (7).

As a matter of fact, some of those works which did not achieve survival and canonization but silence and invisibility were disallowed because they did not fulfil the literary expectations of their time or were not appropriately examined either by contemporary or later critical approaches even when extensively read by the general public. As explained in the corresponding section of Part III, the case of Joanna E. Wood’s *The Untempered Wind* (1894) in early English Canadian Literature is significant in this respect. While right after publication the novel was both widely accepted by reading audiences and estimated by critics, its message was later disregarded and the novel stopped being anthologized until rescued mainly by feminist critics. Examples as this of Wood’s novel are eloquent regarding the spiral of silence that has affected some literary contributions; as they were not considered as worthy literary pieces either at their time or later, they were not included in any anthology, never taken into account in the process of establishing a given literary tradition, and not reprinted so that it is as if today they do not exist. The already cited novel by Martin R. Delany is also eloquent as epitome of the lack of recognition that affected some other works because of different obstacles –social, cultural and/or material– which diminished their options of getting wider audiences since it was only published in the ethnic journal

*The Anglo-African Magazine* and was not reprinted in book form until one century later. Similarly, some writers who were considered as canonical for a specific contribution did not gain further critical attention in relation to other of their achievements. Within Canada's literary framework, this is the case, for instance, of Susanna Moodie, whose *Roughing it in the Bush* emigrants guide or settlement journal is considered a crucial work of early Canadian expression in English, while many of her novels have been frequently left out of mainstream literary critical debates. Although the goal of the socio-historical critical approaches that bring up aspects as those mentioned above is to understand the sphere of influence of these factors in the literary field, Bloom rejects those approaches because they are a consequence of an "academic radicalism" that, in his opinion, "go[es] so far as to suggest that works join the Canon because of successful advertising and propaganda campaigns" (20).

A similar contradiction between traditional and new critical approaches can be found in relation to the perpetuation of certain works within a literary tradition. While Bloom offers a fixed image of tradition as an unmovable "catalog of approved authors" that needs no re-evaluation (20), I agree with Louis Montrose in so far the permanence of some works and not *others* "cannot be assumed to be merely contingent but must rather be presumed to be at least partially consequent on subtle processes of selective preservation and effacement" (in Greenblatt and Gunn: 410). As the diachronic study on English Canadian anthologies, literary histories and compilations included in Part II demonstrates, anthologization has played a crucial role in the maintenance of the list of approved authors because "anthologies generally tend to stick with the tried and true" (Lecker, 1995: 128). In this way and as Robert Lecker exposes in his study about the canonization of English Canadian Literature *Making it Real* (1995), literary histories through the writers, genres and works they include have not only reflected canonical axioms but have reinforced and even created literary value for "anthologies are almost always authorized by institutional need and values" (116).

Although Bloom does not explicitly mention the relation between literary tradition and identity, by considering tradition as comprising the fundamental traces of literary heritage any definition of literary identity based on such a legacy is equally affected by the boundaries and assumptions established by literary tradition in the first place. In this sense, all his ideas about literary canon, value and tradition exposed

previously have an intrinsic relation with the concept of literary identity as they offer a similarly narrow and fixed identity image of any given literary framework. As a matter of fact, the tradition Bloom talks about is a mainstream literary tradition where other traditions/identities are subsumed and that has frequently silenced them or kept them in the margins. Once again, the voicing of these disregarded identities has been carried out by those critical perspectives Bloom dismisses such as new historicism, feminism and ethnic studies which unfold the constructed nature of both literary tradition and identity. This is precisely what Henry Louis Gates Jr. explains in relation to US literary identity for ethnic critics have contributed to show “the factitious nature of an “American” identity” that left out of the debate what was considered marginal and never “revoiced” it again” (in Greenblatt and Gunn: 308). He also points out one of the main paradoxes of such counter-mainstream criticism as while it pretends the deconstruction of a settled literary tradition/identity, it is forced to employ its same tools in order to make other traditions/identities visible so that they repeat “the mechanism responsible for rendering it marginal in the first place” although, in my opinion, with the advantage that awareness on their participation in the endless process of redrawing of literary boundaries offers (312). In Gates’ opinion the borrowing of this “ideology of “tradition”” is due to the fact that these critics “remain at a stage where the anxiety of identity formation is paramount” (311). This crucial search for identity is also mentioned by Elaine Showalter as the last stage of the evolution of what she calls *subliterary* traditions as those of women or countries like Canada. As she explains in *A Literature of Their Own* (1977), there is first a stage of imitation and internalization of mainstream fashions, followed by dissent against established boundaries, and closed by a “*self-discovery*, a turning inward freed from some of the dependency of opposition, a search for identity” (13). It has to be noted that I do not share Showalter’s terminology about other literary contributions within mainstream cultures as belonging to a *subculture* as I do not consider their inferiority or minority status as inherent to them but as inscribed by prevailing literary backgrounds. Regarding the concept of marginality within English Canadian Literature, Smaro Kamboureli takes Russell Ferguson’s ideas and explains that it is a creation of mainstream cultures in order to preserve their hegemony and maintain *other* literary expressions in a condition of inferiority so that “minority literature, then, is nothing other than a construct, an expression of the power



and literary politics of any given time” (1996: 2). By raising the constructed nature of a concept as that of minority, Kamboureli and many other challenging critics ultimately participate in questioning the biases that have influenced the process of creating mainstream literary identities in which the diverse identity complex of literatures as that of English Canada has been overlooked.

To conclude, although the critical perspectives offered by Bloom and socio-historical approaches to literature may seem irreconcilable some connections can be found. Just as his work warns about the elitism of the literary debate and the paradoxes of too generalizing literary discourses, Homi K. Bhabha also raises the sterility and naivety of too broad discourses. Likewise, by stating that “canons always do indirectly serve the social and political, and indeed spiritual, concerns and aims of the wealthier classes of each generation of Western society” and that “capital is necessary for the cultivation of aesthetic values” Bloom seems to draw near to Woolf’s ideas about the influence of the external factors on the literary creation (33); perhaps, the main difference is that for him such dependency is indirect and does not affect literary measurement while feminists, new historicism, cultural and ethnic critics see an intrinsic relation among them. Besides, Bloom as well as socio-historical critics are aware of the imposition of literary limits that any critical perspective implies although the distance from each other regarding the specificities of such unawareness. Whereas according to Bloom “the Western Canon [...] exists precisely in order to impose limits” (35), for Vevaina and Godard those limits exist precisely to be constantly re-negotiated so that “what was once outside and requesting entrance is now inside proffering invitations” (5). In any case, I agree with both in so far literary criticism is “carried on by the perpetual agon between past and present” as Bloom maintains, and with Vevaina and Godard regarding the fact that in “positing no point of origin, with no return ticket, “we” [critics] meet in transit, in writing and reading” (Vevaina and Godard: 5).

The following chapter precisely focuses on how the critical perspectives of ethnic and feminist scholars meet in transit through their examination of dismissed authors and works which also entails the questioning of axial concepts of traditional literary criticism such as literary value, canon, tradition and identity. Although first sections explore the intersecting points between both approaches such as, for instance,

regarding issues of otherness, authority and authorship, independent analysis of feminist and ethnic studies are also included in order to highlight the equally important specificities they deal with. Their intersecting and differing perspectives lay the foundations of the study included in Part II of this dissertation that examines the ways in which ethnic studies and feminisms have contributed to challenge mainstream critical discourses in English Canada and thus participated in the de/reconstruction of Canadian literary tradition and identity. The analyses of novels by early English Canadian ethnic and female authors developed in Part III reinforces the claims of both ethnic and feminist critics and challenges mainstream Canadian literary identity.

## CHAPTER II

### “INTERSECTIONS / INTERSEXIONS”: FEMINISMS AND ETHNIC STUDIES<sup>11</sup>

Regarding what has been previously explained and taking into account the writers studied in this dissertation, it seems necessary to analyse the most important concepts of feminist and ethnic studies, as well as the ways in which they intersect and grow apart. Although as it will be outlined later in this chapter there are many intersecting points between both as literary approaches, there are examples that show that despite the common history that the raising of feminist and ethnic issues has had, there are also crucial specificities to be taken into account. Perhaps, one of the most revealing examples of such common history in North-America is the fight for rights during the anti-slavery and women’s suffrage movements. During this period both causes carried out a dialectical discourse which, apart from proving their sometimes common goals, also brought up crucial disagreements between both and showed that racist and sexist issues could be more effectively approached when united. The lack of agreement and the realization of both movements’ racist and sexist attitudes –whether conscious or unconscious– show that it is necessary to maintain a dialogue between both; not only because their causes can be advanced in a more powerful way, but more importantly, because if not the debate would be incomplete since certain cases, as that of ethnic women, would be left aside. This is precisely the reason why in this research a section with the points of coincidence between both approaches is included. Since the main aim is to challenge Canadian literary identity and show the diverse and differential contributions of dismissed early novel writers, it is necessary to approach their

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<sup>11</sup> The word “intersexions” is taken from Coomi S Vevaina and Barbara Godard’s work of *Intersexions. Issues of Race and Gender in Canadian Women’s Writing* (1996) where intersecting points of both feminist and ethnic topics are analysed in relation to Canadian literature.

intersections as well as their specificities so that a different picture of Canada's tradition and identity will be revealed: not as one and unique but multiple, diverse and different.

Angela Y. Davis' work *Women, Race and Class* (1983) highlights the exchange that the ethnic and the feminist movement went through at this period. Although, as she explains, both causes were aware of their common goals at the beginning, along their reciprocal relation crucial disagreements emerged and drifted both movements apart.

On the one hand, Davis highlights the active participation of black abolitionist spokesmen in the women's suffrage movement and of feminist spokeswomen in the anti-slavery cause. This is the case, for instance, of Frederick Douglass "the country's leading abolitionist, [...] the most prominent male advocate of women's emancipation in his times" (30). He was not only able to acknowledge the importance of women's involvement in the anti-slavery cause because of their political weight, but when he participated in the early assemblies for women's rights whereas some women considered the claim of female suffrage too revolutionary, he stood out as one of its only advocates. It was paradoxically him –and not a woman– who suggested "the issue of women's rights to the Black Liberation movement, where it was enthusiastically welcomed" and later officially supported by the National Convention of Colored Freedmen of 1848 (Davis: 51, 59). There were also crucial contributions of women in the anti-slavery cause. According to Davis, Sarah and Angelina Grimke stand out as two of the most significant female figures who joined the two causes. They engaged actively in the abolitionist movement around 1836 with their speeches addressed to joint audiences of males, females, blacks and whites. They were pioneers not only due to their role as spokeswomen but because of their acknowledgement of the dialectic between ethnic and feminist issues; according to Davis, they "were never caught in the ideological snare of insisting that one struggle was absolutely more important than the other" (44). Furthermore, they foresaw one of the main paradoxes of women's rights movement since they raised the question of racism within feminism as they realized that black women were being systematically excluded. But the attacks and pressures both groups received led them to focus more exclusively on their *own* cause. Although abolitionists groups –predominantly male– had welcomed women's cause at the beginning, they also started questioning the suitability of continuing with the dialectic these outstanding figures suggested. The Grimke sisters came to the conclusion that

women needed first to support the feminist cause to stand out as relevant political agents and later promote the abolitionists. As far as Douglass is concerned, after the violent episodes of 1863 and 1866 against the Black community in New York and New Orleans he cut himself off the women's rights movement to advocate abolitionism; as Davis states, he realized that "Black people's need for electoral power was more urgent" at that moment (79).

On the other hand, Davis also reveals crucial conflicts between both causes during this intersecting period. Although their distancing would become more evident later in connection with the right to vote, there were previous revealing details. As far as anti-slavery groups are concerned, they showed sexist attitudes by, for instance, barring women's active participation in the 1833 American Anti-Slavery Society convention, while "the first anti-slavery society was formed by Black women in 1832 in Salem, Massachusetts" (Davis: 34). Similarly, when Canada became a crucial element in black discourses after the passing of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act in the Canadian convention of blacks held in Toronto in 1851 there was only one female attendant: Mary Ann Shadd Cary. Despite her active career as suffragist, abolitionist and writer, she did not participate as speaker but secretary; at the convention, she again met the already mentioned Martin R. Delany<sup>12</sup>, a prominent black leader and author of *Blake or the Huts of America*.

Similarly, there was actually no black woman participant in the first women's convention in the United States at Seneca Falls in 1848. The resulting declaration which claimed to give shape to "*women's rights* at mid-century" not only left aside working-class women but black women (Davis: 53). Although many early white feminists were involved in the abolitionist cause, they used the metaphor of slavery to describe their own situation within marriage overlooking the crucial differences between both oppressions. Actually, Davis suggests that early feminists used their defence of the abolitionist cause to prove their value as political agents and break the bondage of traditionally assigned female roles. Although they "learned about the nature of human oppression" (Davis: 39), I agree with Bell Hooks' statement that these women "attacked

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<sup>12</sup> Although in Bell Hooks' work and other studies in which Martin R. Delany is cited the spelling of his surname appears as "Delaney", I use the spelling "Delany" since it is the one used by Floyd J. Miller in his 1970 edition of Delany's novel *Blake or the Huts Of America*.

slavery, not racism” given their overlooking of specific and fundamental issues that affected ethnic groups (125). According to Angela Ingram in her introduction to *Women’s Writing in Exile* such neglect can also be seen through the ethnocentrism of some feminist literary criticism. In her opinion, these “failures of white liberal feminist scholarship to confront racism” are crucial since if left unchallenged, they continue with the inherited patriarchal inclusion/exclusion duality they defy (in Broe and Ingram: 6). In so far as feminist criticism does not question its own bonds and keeps confined within old boundaries, even when approaching disregarded writers, their “revising risks perpetuating a hierarchy” which will equally restrain *other* writers (5). This is the case, for instance, of ethnic women writers such as Chicanas and coloured women who, according to Sonia Saldívar-Hull, have been systematically left aside “from even revised feminist canons” (in Broe and Ingram: 8). It is clear, then, that feminisms cannot shun the race debate as they would be leaving aside some of their counterparts and perpetuate the system they are struggling to change.

Mary Ann Shadd Cary’s case is significant as paradigm of the intersection between both causes and as a boundary-crossing voice. Born in a free family in the United States, she moved to Canada in 1851 where she remained until the end of the American Civil War. While in Canada, she participated actively in Canadian Anti-Slavery conventions and the famous Underground Railroad, helped publish works by black writers in Canada, and worked for the development of non-segregated schools as founder and teacher. As a journalist, she is significantly remembered as the first woman in North America to write and edit a newspaper, *The Provincial Freeman*, which was also one of the first black Canadian newspapers and “the best” of “Canadian Negro newspapers” and “the most vigorous Negro newspaper Canada would see” according to Robin W. Winks (394-5). In *The Provincial Freeman*, Shadd openly “gave generous notice to [...] the growing women’s rights movement” and offered a space to many women writers who discussed crucial feminist topics and encouraged other women writers “to step forward” (Bearden and Butler: 139). Shadd’s newspaper also counted on some important contributions by black males as those of Frederick Douglass and Martin R. Delany. But Shadd was not only involved in the black cause because as an independent woman worker, writer and teacher she experienced male discrimination, and thus begun to work for “the equality of sexes” –together with Lucretia Mott among

many other outstanding women– and became “an active member of the Woman’s Suffrage Association” in 1881 (Bearden and Butler: 19; Brown: 95). She is also said to be the first female lecturer in Canada and was the first black woman correspondent accepted in the National Negro Convention of Philadelphia in 1855 (Almonte: 21).

The role of in-between figures as ethnic women like Shadd is fundamental since they destabilize both groups once they inhabit hegemonic sites of contestation. These other *others* are crucial since they “articulate and examine issues which many feminist [and ethnic] theorists apparently have great difficulty in addressing” (Ingram in Broe and Ingram: 184). Despite the joint challenge of some figures like Shadd against established sexist and racist stereotypes, some suffragist and abolitionist advocates showed that they had internalized and, thus, reinforced them. A very clear paradigm of this situation is the fact that even literary attempts by ethnic and women writers depicted both groups following mainstream patterns. According to Davis, one of the clearest examples can be seen in Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1852); in her opinion, whereas it has been considered an outstanding anti-slavery novel, it actually develops established stereotypes which support the subjected position of both women and blacks since its female characters are nothing but mothers and wives and blacks “noble savages”. As she states, “as ironic as it may seem, the most popular piece of anti-slavery literature of that time perpetuated the racist ideas which justified slavery and sexist notions which justified the exclusion of women from the political arena” (31). As it will be explained later in this research, novel writers in Canada also developed sexist and racist patterns; it is the case of, for instance, Frances Brooke’s novel *The History of Emily Montague* (1769) whose depiction of ethnic women followed colonialist standards. Just as many other women writers of her time, Brooke did not realize that not only their ethnocentric characterization but also the exertion of authority of these characters was carried out “not merely on a landscape new to them but more seriously on the people displaced from that land” (Gardiner in Broe and Ingram: 139). Likewise, Martin R. Delany, who in his attempt of advancing the black cause through his work *The Condition, Elevation, Emigration, and Destiny of the Colored People of the United States, Politically Considered* (1852) reinforced women’s exclusive mother role by stating that “our females must be qualified, because they are to be the mothers of our children” (qtd. in Hooks: 89).

The cases of Brooke and Delany show that some female and ethnic writers exiled by a sexist and racist cultural structure were at the same time creating other exiles that paradoxically *belonged* to their own group; ethnic women were part of both groups and were also alienated by both. Similarly, critical approaches which were theoretically expected to join different groups under the same cause –women *and* ethnic women, ethnic males *and* women– turned out overlooking crucial peculiarities that barred some of their counterparts. According to Sonia Saldívar-Hull, just as ethnic male critics,

[...] women who might have been natural allies in a struggle against exclusionary, patriarchal practices in the academy instead are estranged because the feminist mainstream has not dealt adequately with differences of women on the periphery of the power structure [...]. (in Broe and Ingram: 182)

It is indeed through this gap between idea(s) and their performance that racist/sexist attitudes can slip in, weakening the efforts and goals of both feminist and ethnic critics. This is precisely why in the present dissertation there is a joint approach of both theoretical perspectives which, together with a practical analysis of writers and texts, challenge Canada's literary identity in different ways<sup>13</sup>.

Throughout the historical intersection of feminist and ethnic claims in North America, once both groups started to fall apart, their early common history became two-fold and both movements started showing opposing attitudes. It became more evident that feminist claims referred almost exclusively to white women, just as the abolitionist cause was mainly male. A clear example of such distancing can be seen in the dissolution of the Equal Rights Association (ERA) in 1869 which had been created in 1866 to join the fight for sexual and racial equality. After the American civil war, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and other women suffragists considered that women deserved a compensation for their support of the Union cause by endorsing their right to vote; they did not ask the same for the black community. It was actually Stanton who, when viewing women's enfranchisement at risk through the approval of the Fifteenth Amendment –intended for the abolition of ethnic differences as veto to vote– by the ERA affirmed that “women's rights advocates had committed a strategic error in subordinating themselves to the cause of abolitionism” (Davis: 73). These early

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<sup>13</sup> Although there is a third variable to be taken into account, class, it is not widely examined in this theoretical approach but only taken into consideration since it is a crucial element within the writers' cultural and historical context claimed by new historicists as fundamental in the comprehension of their works.



feminists considered that if blacks gained the right to vote before, and thus, political power, sexual inequality would be kept. At this point, despite early attempts of joining the two causes, both movements drifted apart. Canada's case is also significant since whereas women, that is, white women, gained the right to vote by 1917 in some provinces, the wrongly-called Indians either male or female did not achieve it until 1960 (Morton: 173). It is clear then, that both movements ended up defending their own cause since they considered that joining forces would jeopardize their claims. But, what about in-between figures as, for instance, ethnic women? Even Frederick Douglass, one of the most prominent supporters of women's rights, forgot to include black women within the black cause when he stated that "Slavery is not abolished until the black man has the ballot" (Davis: 77). Although in Davis' opinion Douglass' attitude was not sexist, she actually affirms that he overlooked established female patterns, the same as "the former abolitionist men in the ERA were not always shining advocates of sexual equality" (84). But the foresight of black women's cause was not new for Sojourner Truth between 1867-69 questioned the enfranchisement of black vote as it excluded black women and pointed out the racism inherent in women's resistance to blacks gaining the right to vote first and their ignorance towards black women's issues (Davis: 83-4). It was precisely Sojourner Truth, a black female suffragist and abolitionist, who delivered the famous speech titled "Ain't I a Woman?" in which she did not only turn upside down male assumptions about female inferiority and opened a crucial path for destabilizing patriarchal patterns, but challenged feminists' anti-racism.

Bell Hooks took Truth's question "Ain't I a Woman?" to entitle her study about the implications of patriarchy within the black movement and the influence of racism on feminism, *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism*. Her work is an approach to the situation of ethnic women –specifically of black women– trapped at the crossroads of sexism and racism and left aside by both black males and white women. Hooks shows how black and feminist advocates adopted, developed and reinforced sexist and racist patterns. In this way, once both groups raised themselves as victims, they denied any imputation of oppression. This is a very good example of the difficulty of recognizing some victims' simultaneous role as subjugators; once the victim's site of contestation is occupied, it is extremely difficult that those who inhabit it are recognized at the same time as oppressors who create other victims: black males as victims of

racism and white feminists of patriarchy but not as patriarchal and racist oppressors too. In the light of these facts, I agree with Saldívar-Hull regarding the need to highlight the importance of difference within both feminist and ethnic approaches and of taking into account the socio-historical, cultural and material backgrounds of women and ethnic writers (in Broe and Ingram: 194). As far as this dissertation is concerned, the recovering of dismissed writers is not an act of victimization but a close approach to their works to see the ways in which they challenge mainstream literary discourses as well as reflect and/or question established stereotypes. In this sense, this project is dual for through these writers' works not only Canadian literary identity is questioned but the texts themselves raise new questions about gender and race either through their challenge or support.

Hooks explains how the black cause was actually rooted in patriarchal axioms, for, as mentioned previously, although some male black leaders were in favour of women's political cause, their support did not include a factual challenge against sexist patterns so that although black and white men were separated by racism, they intersected through their sexism. Paradoxically, then, black men adopted the constricting system of those who were actually oppressing them. Black leaders did not realize that, just as with racism, the "oppression of women [was] a cultural necessity" (Hooks: 117). Although it could be expected that the black leaders' adoption of patriarchy put white and black women on the same level, taking into account the influence of racism, black women were doubly ostracized; they were not only women but black. For instance, despite the stereotyping of black women as domestic figures has been frequently compared to that of white women, their roles as mothers and workers were quite different within the slavery system. As Davis explains, unlike white women, they "were not mothers at all; they were simply instruments guaranteeing the growth of the slave labor force" and, in fact, they had no rights over their own children (7). When industrialization inflicted an even lower status on white women since they were not regarded as productive agents, the black female workers' role as slaves "contradicted the hierarchical sexual roles incorporated in the new ideology" (12). Since as labourers black women somehow challenged female assigned functions, white historiographers concluded that the black family was matriarchal, ignoring any influence of the slavery framework. As both Davis and Hooks explain, the matriarchal *nature* of black families

exposed in the famous “Moynihan Report” of 1965 was actually a fallacy. According to Hooks, Daniel Moynihan’s statement “was based on data that showed that only one-fourth of all black families in America were female-headed households” (Hooks: 180). In Davis’ opinion, this absence was a way white scholars found to explain the conflicts of the black community (13). It seems clear then, that the adoption of patriarchy by the black movement did not help at all in the liberation process they claimed for all blacks in North-America since black women were kept subjected. Of course, far from promoting the black cause, such situation created a division between them. As Hooks puts it: “here can be no freedom for black men as long as they advocate subjugation of black women” (117).

Furthermore, the case of black women can be taken as a paradigm of the carefulness in which ethnic women’s cases need to be approached with. It is necessary not only to take into account their special situation as women but also as members of a specific background with its own historical and cultural implications. Ethnic women epitomize what Sonia Saldívar-Hull calls “alienated women who exist only at the periphery of the women’s movement, the contemporary exiles of the feminist literary and critical projects” although not exclusively since ethnic women are also exiled by those ethnic critics who overlook the implications of gender (in Broe and Ingram: 183). The great majority of women supporting the feminist cause belonged to accommodated middle-classes who –consciously or not– forgot to include women from other social, economic or cultural backgrounds in their struggle. Vevaina and Godard also take black women’s case as a paradigm of white feminists’ ignorance about racial issues. In their opinion, although they avoided any imputation of racism and class bias, they actually adopted and reinforced race patterns since they “have tended to uncritically idealize colored women and their culture and graft labels like ‘exotic’” (23). They were unable to comprehend the internal divergences of the female community and overlooked the crucial differences of sexist structures within specific cultural groups since “native and ethnic women are also subject to ethnically specific definitions of womanhood” (Vevaina and Godard: 23). In this way, a process of appropriation of womanhood by white women took place through which early women advocates not only disregarded and denied ethnic women representation, but adopted and reinforced an ideological structure inherited from those they were fighting against.

It is not strange, then, that black women rejected joining the feminist cause at first; they were aware it did not deal with their own specific issues. As Vevaina and Godard explain, “the collective “we” of feminism is a “we” that not all women wish nor are able to adhere to” (112). Although it may be understandable that, given white feminists’ attitude towards ethnic women, black women did not want to join *their* cause, neither did they comprehend that racism was one of the main obstacles for advancing both the black and female cause. Facts like these warn us about the dangers of developing a monolithic attitude –perhaps without acknowledging it– whatever our critical perspective is. Following Saldívar-Hull, the same as feminists, ethnic critics need to recognize “that their history is not monolithic” but that it comprehends many histories frequently detached as *others* because of their in-between, cross-border and dual positions (in Broe and Ingram: 184). The issue of monolithism is even more relevant regarding English Canada as this dissertation precisely participates in the questioning of the monolithic construction of Canadian literary tradition and identity.

Although these historical intersections between ethnic and feminist movements reveal the exchange both causes have been through as well as their neglecting of their own sexist and racist attitudes, it has to be noted that not all of those immerse in these early movements had perspective enough to foretell the need of a common discourse. Of course, there were alternating voices who claimed for a joint movement, perhaps because they suspected its higher effectiveness, but who finally opted for their own cause sometimes with the intention of trying to fight for the other cause. Given the course of events, it is quite easier for us today to see their weaknesses. The truth is that the “constant comparison of the plight of “women” and “blacks” deflected attention away from the fact that black women were extremely victimized by both racism and sexism” (Hooks: 141).

Just as early women advocates did not suspect they were supporting a racist structure, in literary criticism when early feminist critics began raising the unequal treatment and situation of women as writers they were mainly talking for and to white women. According to Hooks, feminism “is fundamentally racist for books to be published that focus on the American white women’s experience in which that experience is assumed to be the American woman’s experience” (137). Similarly, as Vevaina and Godard explain, when feminist literary critics approach writings by ethnic

women they also develop mainstream stereotypes since they “often dismiss their works as either ‘too ethnic’ or ‘not ethnic enough’” (24). In doing so, they overlooked fundamental differences of those women writers belonging to other cultural frameworks. Within the Canadian context, according to Vevaina and Godard, although Anglophone feminist criticism has gone through a widening process by which *other* women writers have been taken into account, it has mainly focused on the francophone community (107). As it will be explained later in this chapter, this situation epitomizes Canada’s mainly bicultural and bilingual rather than multicultural character. In any case, Canada’s example speaks for the restrictiveness of feminist approaches that has barred and silenced, for instance, black women writers. Again, they are to be taken as a paradigm of the intricate interconnections between both ethnic and feminist criticism and the misunderstanding of those who inhabit such in-between positions.

As mentioned in previous sections, this situation led to the creation of specific realms –publishing houses, anthologies, or critical schools– where dismissed writer’s issues were approached. Although at first this was part of a renegotiation, it turned out to be a segregation of literature into black women’s writing, African Canadian, and so on literatures, by which “the writer is still ghettoized as [a] woman writer or [a] small press writer and ignored by the *critical* institution” (Vevaina and Godard: 108). According to Henry Louis Gates Jr. these efforts to challenge mainstream literary institutions and canons by creating their own domains answered, as in the case of Black Literature, to a “self-defense against racist literary conventions” (1992: 29). The main problem of that situation is that it could lead to the establishment of different but equally segregating criteria by which other alternating voices could be equally left out. In fact, in Saldívar-Hull’s opinion the omissions of these separated realms are suspiciously similar to mainstream neglects; as she explains regarding Chicana writers: “the implication to those women exiled by their allies is that they are too alien to be included in a female ruling-class tradition that is also part of the white power structure” (in Broe and Ingram: 184). Taking into account Gates’ idea that the creation of anthologies either by mainstream or the so-called *minority* literary circles “functions in the academy to *create* a tradition, as well as to define and preserve it” (1992: 31), anthologies then help not only to discover mainstream power structures but also of those cultural groups which, after being dismissed by the mainstream, have created their own

literary fields. In this sense, it seems clear that anthologies hold a crucial significance and that is why in Part II of this dissertation a thorough study on the anthologization of English Canadian Literature is included. Very significantly, Gates also points out literary histories' core role as masks behind which political and ideological bias are hidden; as sites where the line between what has actually been written and what is said to be worthy recalling is blurred. As outlined in Chapter I and unlike Bloom, counter-canon critics see established literary standards as not so unbiased as they are claimed to be for, as Henry Louis Gates Jr. points out, "none of us is naive enough to believe that "the canonical" is self-evident, absolute, or neutral" (1992: 32). In this sense, he warns us about the dangers of constructing canons and traditions and questions traditional literary criticism since it forgot that not only critics settle them but "just as often, writers make canons, too, both by critical revaluation and by reclamation through revision" (32).

Within early English Canadian Literature, the case of the already cited Mary Ann Shadd Cary as a black woman writer dismissed by mainstream criticism, that is, as an in-between figure –and her insistence in joining both the feminist and ethnic causes– can be taken as a paradigm of the necessity of joining forces so that alternating voices are also represented without forgetting their particularities. Her emigrants guide *A Plea for Emigration; Or, Notes of Canada West* published in 1852 followed similar non-fictional patterns to those of the works by early Canadian writers of her time which, unlike Shadd's, have been re-edited and canonized. In fact, although "emigrant guides have been accorded classical status in the realm of early Canadian Literature" Shadd's contribution to the genre has been systematically dismissed (Almonte: 9). Following Gates, the dismissal of alternating and cross-border writers and the weakness of separate counter-canon activities show that "our next move within the academy, our next gesture, is to redefine the whole" (1992: 150). The same as "white texts inform and influence black texts (and vice versa)" in order to acknowledge the intricate set of intersections between different writers and contributions "a thoroughly integrated canon" is needed so that a broadened image of, for instance, English Canadian Literature would rise (Gates, 1992: 39). It is senseless that in such a complex literary context as that of Canada, different literatures, either black, Asian or female, remains split as if they had no influence on each other. Taking Black Literature as a paradigm "the idea that

African-American culture is exclusively a thing apart, separate from the whole, having no influence on the shape and shaping of American culture, is a racist fiction” (Gates, 1992: 151). Likewise, in the case of Canada, the fictional frontiers imposed on literature based on nation-state limits have led to the dismissal of cross-border writers whose contributions to Canada’s cultural heritage have been left aside. Gates pleads “to account for the comparable eloquence of the African, the Asian, and the Middle Eastern traditions”, among many others, so that literature and literary criticism is no longer the realm of “guardians at the last frontier outpost of white male Western culture, the Keepers of the Master’s Pieces” like Bloom (1992: 43).

In order to do so, as it has been explained in previous sections and following Gates, it is also necessary to go back to history. Once again, new historicist claims intersect with ethnic and feminist perspectives. In this sense, Davis and Hooks’ works not only show how ethnic and feminist issues have intersected throughout history and warn us about their specificities, but urge to divest history of sexual and racial assumptions in order to see the ways in which ethnic and gendered axioms have been established and internalized so that they can be challenged. They foster the revision of mainstream historical discourses by telling those frequently avoided histories of sexism and racism. But very significantly, they not only attribute imputations of gendered and racialized attitudes to mainstream historiographers, but also to those immersed within the feminist and ethnic cause. Furthermore, they also encourage a renewed debate about identity because they jeopardize established cultural rules and question “the arbiters of identity” (Hooks: 99). This is precisely what this research attempts through the joint use of ethnic and feminist perspectives together with the recovery of both dismissed female and ethnic novelists: to offer a broader image of early English Canadian Literature which puts at stake currently accepted ideas on its literary tradition and identity.

In conclusion, ethnic and feminist approaches in consonance and at variance underline the importance of recognizing and appreciating *difference*. Writers and works need a close study that allows their differences and particularities to be fully expressed and understood, and not used as bars towards rejection. It is necessary then to contextualize them properly moving away from what Sonia Saldívar-Hull calls “historical void[s]” (in Broe and Ingram: 183), either inherited from mainstream discourses or even developed when attempting to challenge them. What they actually

teach us is the need of crossing boundaries, not to establish new ones but to open a process that needs to be constantly challenged. Both approaches together promote the regard of new perspectives, writers and literary forms that extend the literary research and widen the literary debate so that it is no longer a waste land of the tried and proved. Next sections focus on how the integration of both approaches broadens critical possibilities but also on the specific issues each of them deal with as basis for the subsequent analysis of the challenge and expansion of literary criticism that feminist and ethnic studies have actually fostered in English Canada included in Part II.

## II.1 INTERSECTIONS: FEMINISMS AND ETHNIC STUDIES

Despite being aware of the risks of joining both approaches since it demands a very close attention towards their particularities, while doing research about early Canadian Literature in English I realized that both critical perspectives challenged in a very similar way its literary tradition and identity. From an English Canadian viewpoint, both claim for a rethinking of established axioms that have prevented the analysis of certain writers and/or works within an apparently multicultural and non-patriarchal literary sphere. The significance of both approaches in relation to English Canadian Literature seems crucial since in a country like Canada where so many efforts to construct a national identity through literature have been done, it seems ironical that when looking backwards in a search for roots, some writers have been forgotten on the way. These oversights –either conscious or unconscious– inform about the functioning of cultural and literary institutions which have offered an identity image from which groups regarded as *marginal*, such as women and ethnic *minorities*, were left aside. Furthermore, as Sonia Saldívar-Hull affirms, it is necessary to integrate both gender and race –and class– together within the literary debate so that critics who themselves try to challenge literary boundaries, do not keep others also as *peripheral* and exiled. As explained before, ethnic and feminist studies promote the analysis of crucial “questions of difference” and foster a self-critical perspective (in Broe and Ingram: 183).

As outlined previously, both approaches together foster the questioning of Canada’s constructed identity through the rapprochement of dismissed writers. As the



historical disagreements highlighted in the previous section that both movements have gone through show, the insistence on their disparities was a wasteland since in-between figures as those of ethnic women were silenced by both. As a result, the joint use of both perspectives as critical approaches to literature helps avoiding the disregard of borderline authors while participating in the questioning of established ideas on literary tradition and identity such as in the case of English Canadian Literature. Moreover, next sections elucidate the dialectical debate that ethnic and feminist studies foster in relation to issues concerning the concept of otherness and the problem of representation, literary exile, authority and authorship, and the idea of minority literature; they challenge mainstream literary discourses, highlight the constructed nature of tradition and identity and promote its rethinking.

## II.2.1 OTHERNESS AND REPRESENTATION

The issue of otherness or alterity inspired by Foucault and Geertz, is perhaps one of the most important given its crucial role in understanding the process by which specific literary contributions and forms have been dismissed. According to Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar in *The Madwoman in the Attic* the fact that women were excluded from developing any kind of literary agency as writers relegated them to an inferior position as cultural agents. This barring from literary contribution, as Elaine Showalter explains, was a consequence of considering women and ethnic groups intellectually inferior for “Victorian physicians and anthropologists [...] maintained that, like the “lower races”, women had smaller and less efficient brains” (1977: 77). Thus, lacking the power to depict themselves, they were literary represented by those who had the power to do so; this brought along their incarnation “of just those extremes of mysterious and intransigent Otherness which culture confronts with worship fear, love and loathing” (Showalter, 1979: 19). These images established a dichotomy of right and wrong by which women were frequently depicted as either angels or monsters, and ethnic groups as innocent or savages.

But, as it has been explained before, despite the similarity of their status as *others* it is very important to take into account that both fostered and reinforced the consignment of other groups precisely to the position they were denouncing. The same as black males did with the feminist movement, white women themselves as the others

within a patriarchal system promoted the placement of non-European and/or non-English-speaking cultures in an/other position within Anglophone backgrounds. In spite of those figures who claimed for a joint struggle mentioned previously, both movements ended up focusing on their own causes. Similarly, regarding literary criticism, according to Showalter, feminist critics used “literature to dramatise the ordeals of wronged womanhood” but not of other wronged cultural groups (1979: 35). Very significantly, some ethnic groups also developed and strengthened women’s altered position within their cultural frameworks through the adoption of patriarchal axioms which consigned ethnic women to a doubly subjected position as ethnic *and* women.

This alteration or process of assigning an otherness role to certain groups in literature is both a consequence and a cause of the problem of literary representation. It is a consequence in so far as it has been nurtured by those members of society who exercised their power through literature –predominantly male and white in Anglo-Saxon contexts– and carried out the representation of women and ethnic groups in literary texts. The images they depicted founded and developed archetypal patterns that confined these powerless *others*; these models were not allowed to be contested given the fact that women and ethnic groups did not have the chance of representing themselves at first. This is part of what Gilbert and Gubar call “the metaphor of literary paternity” that also implies that men not only controlled others’ depictions but their own; they offered fictions of themselves and reinforced them since “each man, [...] has the ability, even perhaps the obligation, to talk back to other men by generating alternative fictions of his own” (12). By doing so, they founded and perpetuated a circle by which their hegemony was meant to be perpetuated while other groups were kept in the margins. It is necessary, then, for feminist and ethnic critics both to examine those models “-as-sing[s]<sup>14</sup> in male [white] -constructed discourse” and/or women and ethnic authors “as producer[s] of textual meaning” (Godard, 1987: ii). In this sense, their critical studies endorse what Barbara Godard calls “differential analysis” either by “describing the other that has been excluded from that discourse [...], or [...] examining the process of exclusion”, the latter being the main thrust of the present dissertation (1987: ii).

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<sup>14</sup> The expression “women-as-sign” written with hyphens appears in Godard’s original text.

At the same time, otherness is also a cause of the problem of literary representation. When those models were settled, that is, when Armstrong's suggested history of sexuality as well as the history of race highlighted here behind them were erased, women and ethnic writers were led to adapt precisely to those archetypes. In fact, Gilbert and Gubar establish an intrinsic relation between female literary archetypes mentioned before and their role as writers. By depicting *good* women as angels who abide by the rules, and *bad* women as monsters who cross established boundaries, even before thinking about writing they were being told, in a veiled manner that was not what they were expected to do because it meant a violation of their assigned roles. Women as writers epitomized challenge and rebellion against impositions; in Gilbert and Gubar's words, they represented "the mysterious power of the character who refuses to stay in her textually ordained 'place' and thus generates a story that 'gets away' from its author" (28).

The relevance of these representations is crucial since "the images of 'angel' and 'monster' have been so ubiquitous throughout literature by men that they have also pervaded women's writing to such an extent that few women have definitely "killed" either figure" (Gilbert and Gubar: 17). Similarly, regarding ethnic writers in Canada, when First Nations' members wrote in English they tended to reproduce Eurocentric stereotypes which reduced them to savages or noble savages. Moreover, it is also very important to take into account that some groups were not even represented by mainstream sectors, neither through positive nor negative images; this situation ascribed absence, lack of importance and value to their literary weight and slowed down their own participation as literary agents.

Given the fact that both women and ethnic writers were considered intellectually inferior when they actually exercised literary power their contributions were regarded as equally minor or marginal. This situation led them to stick to prevailing literary forms in order not to be dismissed and reach mainstream audiences. Paradoxically, despite this strategy of adaptation their works were again regarded as unworthy literary pieces. Their dismissal also brought along the ignorance that through their writings, although following prevailing modes, they introduced challenging innovations that crossed the boundaries that had kept them outside; by insinuating new elements in order to reach a better self-description, they offered new models which subverted traditional images and

challenged reigning stereotypes. These paradoxes are, in Barbara Godard's opinion, precisely the site of contestation of feminist and ethnic criticism because it undermines "the very notion of centre on which patriarchal monolithism is founded, by introducing multiplicity in thought and expression and by being resolutely eclectic and interdisciplinary in nature" (1987: ii).

It is important to take into account that in Canada's case, the situation was slightly different since literary contributions in English were developed by women early after colonization and before ethnic authors. It was precisely in 1763, after the Treaty of Paris which ended the colonial wars and gave Canada officially to Great Britain that Frances Brooke, considered as the first novel writer in Canada, arrived to that country. Only six years later, her novel *The History of Emily Montague* (1769), written during her Canadian years, was published in Britain. Her novel is widely accepted as the first Canadian novel in English, although its literary value has been questioned. This fact proves that women writers started contributing to Canadian English literature very early which makes their exclusion and/or undervaluation even more striking.

Meanwhile they kept on writing, for both women and ethnic writers, "literature became a symbol of achievement" (Showalter, 1977: 21). But, following Gilbert and Gubar, in order to "escape just those male texts which, [...] deny them the autonomy to formulate alternatives to the authority that has imprisoned them and kept them from attempting the pen", women writers had to "examine, assimilate, and transcend" the archetypes those texts had introduced (13, 17). Likewise, ethnic writers had to undo the "noble savage" and "savage" models that their racialized environments offered them. In order to achieve this –paraphrasing Virginia Woolf– they had to kill not only the angel or the noble savage but the monster and the savage. In this way, they faced a process of reassertion because, following Showalter, "[i]f womanliness [and ethnicity] was [were] defined as something that had to be proved, it had to be proved again and again" (1977: 86).

## II.2.2 WRITERS IN EXILE

In the same way that for women and ethnic writers literary agency emerges as a sign of achievement, they seem to find a home in writing. Exiled in a metaphorical sense as writers, and sometimes also in a geographical sense by moving to another

country, writing acquires a new transcendental meaning as home. Metaphorically, given the peripheral positions they have been relegated to, both women and ethnic writers have actually been *exiled* with regard to central literary discourses. The Anglo-Western literary tradition that excludes them, forces them out. As Angela Ingram explains, “the world of readers and publishers and writers has laws that effectively exclude writers in the bases of race and gender, subject and genre, which determine a writer’s major or minor status” (in Broe and Ingram: 8). Even when contributing to an apparently boundary-crossing genre as it is the novel –in the sense that it can be both considered *high* literature and *low* entertainment– they have also been rejected. The participation of both women and ethnic writers as novelists means, following Hilary Radner, an encounter “between legitimate textuality and institutionally illegitimate textuality” that is, between exilers and exiled (in Broe and Ingram: 259). Their unauthorized appropriation of the novel genre, despite being a way for their own stories to slip into prevailing discourses, is still locked up precisely by those discourses (Radner in Broe and Ingram: 263).

In spite of this displacement, their exiled positions also offer them a vantage point; they inhabit sites from where they are, using Woolf’s words, both “alien and critical” (97). As outsiders, they act not simply as observers but critics so that their writings are, in Ingram’s words, “exilic texts which, in reflecting the master discourses, subvert them” (in Broe and Ingram: 4). Regarding early English Canadian Literature, this is the case of, for instance, Frances Brooke’s depiction of some women characters as Arabella Fermor, whose audacity challenges patriarchy from within, or Delany’s fictional subversion of racial axioms by placing the black community in a higher position although by mirroring the value scale that marginalized blacks. Writers like these have been able to undermine mainstream literary assumptions; for them, there is no centre to surrender to but, on the contrary, “with exile: the center is always shifting, or, rather, being redefined, re-placed” so that their works as well as their positions they have been relegated to are “ex-centric” (Ingram in Broe and Ingram: 2).

Paradoxically, the displacement of both women and ethnic writers does not prevent their simultaneous function as exilers. As mentioned before, exiled writers created other *others* by adapting their works to dominant gender and race discourses. According to Jane Marcus’s explanation regarding feminism, the study of exile by some

critics equally assigns them an exiled position in relation to an academy that reprobates their critical perspectives; Harold Bloom's rejection of feminist and ethnic points of view clearly demonstrates this situation. But similarly to the writers they approach, these critics also expel other authors by ascribing or wronging otherness. The risk lies in creating fake exiled positions, homogenizing exile experiences, or universalizing otherness since it "is not universally experienced, nor is it universally acknowledged" (Marcus in Broe and Ingram: 276). This is precisely why a close and individual analysis of any given writer and works is required. But it is also essential that new critical discourses which distance themselves from the traditional universalizing discourse become aware of the risk of generalizing their own claims and avoid emulating its stratified structure. Their critical positions offer them the advantage of being sensible to these contradictions since they bring the perversion of traditional criticism into question. This dissertation is inspired by Marcus's proposition when she states that "it is the ranking and privileging process which we must continually call into question, as well as our own roles as collaborators in mapping the boundaries of discourse" (in Broe and Ingram: 273).

On the other hand, the issue of exile is in some cases also geographical. Some of these writers escaped –or were induced to– from the confinement of their own countries so that, as Angela Ingram states, "geographical exile is often more a *getting away from* than *going to* a place" (in Broe and Ingram: 4). Even when this crossing of nation boundaries is not forced but voluntary, it seems not so spontaneous. Regarding Canada, while Susanna Moodie's was somehow compelled to move from Great Britain to Canada due to economic reasons, perhaps Frances Brooke's struggle to gain recognition in British literary circles also induced her to join her husband in Canada where she kept at a distance from a literary scene which rejected her; ironically, there, far from *home*, she wrote her most successful novel. Similarly, Martin R. Delany –although not being a slave himself– as a black leader in search of a free land for his diasporic community, left the United States to experience Canada and capture the country in his novel as a way out from slavery. But there are also examples of Canadian writers like Sara Jeannette Duncan who changed her *homeland* for India.

At this entrapping crossroads where home is nowhere, writing *is* home. According to Judith Kegan Gardiner, it offers them a site to contest, "a safe arena from

which they can both criticize nostalgia and use their own nostalgia in the service of social criticism” (in Broe and Ingram: 149). The same as their birth countries, the literary institutions that reject them turn from “mother” into “alien” and they learn to write with regard to a centre that considers them peripheral. In such a process, they find themselves in a new environment, physical and imaginary, “a locale they could romanticize but could not assimilate as truly “home”” (135). This is the case of most of the writers analysed in this dissertation for whom Canada means almost a utopian refuge; free from slavery as Martin R. Delany shows in *Blake*; or where patriarchy can be challenged as Frances Brooke does through the character of Arabella Fermor in *The History of Emily Montague*. But just as there are different kinds of exile there are different exilic texts. Whereas Moodie’s depiction of Canada in *Roughing it in the Bush* is not precisely benevolent as she experienced great hardships when trying to build a home there, those developed by Brooke or Delany are more ideal; while Brooke’s Canada is a nature paradise, Delany sees in Canadian soil the possibility of settling a black nation. As a Canadian-born, Duncan’s viewpoint in her excellent novel *The Imperialist* is much more critical. These writers’ texts show that the topic of exile is very significant in early Canadian Literature in English; on the one hand, due to its complicate and diverse comings and goings of authors, but on the other, because of being an exiled culture with regard to a mother country, within whose boundaries other cultures have been also paradoxically expelled. Colonial backgrounds like Canada’s are particularly interesting since women and ethnic writers are not only trapped by racism and sexism, but had to deal with the colonization of a whole culture while looking for their own place in it.

According to Ingram and Marcus, the issue of exile is especially transcendent in women writers’ cases. According to Joanne P. Sharp’s explanation, the identification of nations with women brings along their consideration as national/istic symbols, either as “mothers of the nation or vulnerable citizens to be protected”, that is, as passive members unlike their male counterparts (99). The use of the term *mother country* in Canada to refer to Great Britain during colonial times seems fairly significant. It not only suggests the birth of Canada as a nation thanks to the intervention of that mother country, but gives an explanation of its difficulties when trying to cut umbilical cords, either socio-economic or cultural. Hence, Canada’s search for identity can be said to be

actually a catharsis process to arrive to adulthood. In that process, Canada inherited *and* emulated the mother country by, for instance, importing patriarchy which ironically came from a feminized national centre. At the crossroads of growing apart from colonial ties and asserting not only its political but cultural independence, a search for roots was carried out although leaving aside crucial matters; as Carole Gerson suggests, it was assumed that Canada was not as patriarchal as Britain so that gender –as well as race– issues were not brought up. Very significantly, in Sharp’s opinion, such disregard is intrinsically related to the construction of national identities for “the very nature of national identity will be different depending upon whether or not it deals with gender issues at the outset” (103). As she explains following Benedict Anderson’s *Imagined Communities*, if the power/gender structures on which that nation has been founded are not approached and are taken for granted, they end up conforming the nation’s identity. As expounded in previous sections, this is what Nancy Armstrong calls the history of sexuality which needs to be told in order to re-cover identity and its history. In this sense, just as national identities are not unbiased in relation to gender, “the symbols of nationalism are not gender neutral but in enforcing a national norm, they implicitly or explicitly construct a set of gendered norms” (Sharp: 98). Identities, thus, are not to be found simply by looking back in search for roots but through the unravelling of all those forgotten power relations; they are “constituted in particular times and places through relations of power already existent in society” (103). It seems obvious that literary production plays a crucial role in the construction of national identities since through it national symbols are repeated and institutionalized. It fosters and reinforces national unity “which encompasses the entire citizenship in a rhetorical horizontal bound” against the interests of cultural difference (98). Although not horizontal but vertical, the social tie mentioned by Sharp is fundamental in Canada given the traditional description of its culture as a vertical mosaic.

In this way, for women writers exile –either geographical, by moving to another country, or metaphorical by turning into writing– is not just an escape but a refusal of the exclusive mother-and-wife roles ascribed to them under patriarchy since, as Marcus explains, “in exile the woman rejects her role as representation of home/the mother’s body to male desire and so is a threat to patriarchy as well as to the state” (in Broe and Ingram: 273). Their flee is subversive; as strangers/outsideers they become critical and



thus destabilizing elements for established patriarchal roles. But very frequently they meet the dilemma of being empowered from their critical pulpits while at the same time, in Ingram's words, entrapped "by the expectations and rules of the world of words" (in Broe and Ingram: 5).

As explained previously, the estranged places exiled women and ethnic writers inhabit demand new perspectives. As Jane Marcus suggests, different critical viewpoints and languages are needed to appreciate their texts and more importantly, to understand the whole structure in which they have been produced and evaluated. Once again, their historical and cultural environments are essential to gain a wider and deeper understanding and avoid their immediate rejection as marginal in relation to that centre which indeed decentres them. There is a paradigmatic Canadian figure whose context is absolutely necessary to re-discover her writing: Winnifred Eaton. A Canadian-born of mixed English and Chinese ancestry, created the literary persona of Onoto Watanna, emulating prevailing notions of *exoticism* in order to gain access to wider audiences. Although this alter-ego might have been expected to be inspired by her Chinese descent, it was actually Japanese, perhaps in an attempt at distancing herself from her successful sister Edith Eaton who had already adopted the Chinese *nom the plume* Sui Sin Far. Onoto Watanna is one of those cross-border figures since she lived and wrote in Canada and the United States although her novels have been disregarded in both countries despite her 1924 *Cattle* was praised at her time even by the famous Canadian writer, Stephen Leacock (Brennan: 'Couple Enriched'). Her case is not only a clear example of Canada's diverse cultural heritage but of its literary institutions restrictiveness.

### II.2.3 AUTHORITY AND AUTHORSHIP

Gilbert and Gubar's metaphor of literary paternity mentioned before has further implications regarding female and ethnic issues of authority and authorship. Although they only talk about women, some of the questions they raise can be equally applied to ethnic writers. As they explain, the lack of literary authority not only prevented them from carrying out any kind of authorship at first but induced them "to consider with deep anxiety the possibility that they might be 'Cyphers,' powerless intellectual eunuchs" (60). In connection with the already cited concept of the anxiety of influence raised by Harold Bloom and in consonance with Virginia Woolf's ideas on the lack of a

literary tradition on which women writers could rely, such framework entailed what Gilbert and Gubar call “the anxiety of authority”; when women and ethnic authors dared to write they were not only told they were inferior and not behaving as expected, but also that they did not have, or had few, forerunners to lean on. Indeed, they usually found literary predecessors whose patriarchal and racial patterns “drastically conflict[ed] with her[their] own sense of her[their] self –that is, of her[their] subjectivity, her[their] autonomy, her[their] creativity” (48). In this sense, it is very important to take into account that the anxiety suffered by authorized social members as writers that Bloom mentions, and those who were at the crossroads of having to authorize themselves cannot be considered in equal terms.

By gaining access to literary authority and developing authorship, women and ethnic writers started expressing what Barbara Godard calls their “being-in-the-world”. (1987: v). Although at the beginning they did not have many precursors, through their writings they were actually playing as forerunners who gave support to and motivated later writers. In this sense, according to Showalter, feminist and ethnic critics’ tasks should also focus on holding out links since for her “[t]here is clearly a difference between books that happen to have been written by women, and a ‘female literature’” (1977: 4). Despite recognising that women novelists did not develop a group consciousness from the outset, in her opinion, women’s literary tradition is not simply a list of women who wrote but a joint network which speaks for their lives and histories. The debate about the existence of a specific tradition –female, black/African, or Asian among others– within English-speaking contexts will not be developed in this dissertation as its main focus is on the challenge these writers, either female or ethnic, offer in relation to the established image of Canadian literary identity. Actually, before being able to see the “tapestry of connectedness which [...] [they] are constantly weaving” (Daly, 1984: 26-7), it is necessary to dig out their contributions and analyse the process of their exclusion.

On the other hand, following Nancy Armstrong, women novelists also found support in some male writers. In her opinion, the fiction of James Joyce and D. H. Lawrence, for instance, undoes previous gendered axioms and the separation between females and males they implied just as women writers’ texts do. As she explains, all of them “placed themselves outside the reigning categories of their culture and identified

themselves as an elite intellectual minority” (58). In this way, it was not only women or ethnic writers that were relegated to marginal positions but also those authors who broke traditional literary rules and who did not necessarily belong to a *minority* social group. It could be thought then, that both groups influenced each other. In this sense, connections can be found not only among women writers but between them and mainstream writers. Precisely, this should be Canada’s main challenge when describing its literary identity because it would reflect its heterogeneous essence as well as the great variety of *alien* contributions that have taken place there; as a first step in that process, the present dissertation focuses on the necessary recovery of, in this case, early silenced novelists. All of these writers’ innovative contributions to the novel genre, either belonging to marginalized cultural groups or not, also prove that “that no area of culture [...] remains stable through time and repeated usage” (Armstrong: 56-7). But the main difference between them lies in the fact that challenging contributions of writers belonging to mainstream cultural groups, as Joyce and Lawrence, were later *re-considered* despite having been somehow neglected at first. Although such *re-thinking* processes also affected very specific women and ethnic writers, many of them were left behind.

When feminist critics started to be aware of the positions of alterity of the authors they studied, they realized that, as Barbara Godard explains, the tasks they carried out were bilingual since as critics they were in-between “two worlds, the one defined for us and that defined by us” (1987: iii). Similar to the female writers they focus on, feminist critics had to translate their own discourses, develop them and create new ones within a patriarchal linguistic system. In this way, feminist approaches link up with ethnic studies since bilingualism as a conflict between two languages is especially relevant to some ethnic writers, immersed within English-speaking contexts, who wrote English in order to reach wider audiences. As descendants of immigrant communities which still used their mother tongue in private spheres, they went beyond their own linguistic boundaries, transplanted their culture into another linguistic framework and simultaneously introduced foreign aspects into an Anglophone cultural frame of reference. Ethnic critics, then, had to *translate* their texts because they expressed a culture which was alien for the mainstream but in a mainstream language although foreign for these writers. As Anthony K. Appiah explains in *In My Father’s House*,

“language here is, of course, a synecdoche” since what matters is not merely the linguistic but the cultural bounds that language entailed (55). Furthermore, within colonized societies the settlement of foreign literary frameworks “produced a generation immersed in the literature of the colonizers, a literature that often needed and transmitted the imperialist vision” (Appiah: 55).

The issue of bilingualism is especially relevant in Canada given its bilingual and bicultural framework which favours English and French-speaking communities. Such dichotomy is not simply a conclusion to which ethnic critics have come to but actually part of Canada’s official policy. As it is stated in the Introduction to the *Report of the Canada Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism: The Cultural Contribution of Other Ethnic Groups* (Book IV, 1963) there are “two founding races” which mark “the basically bicultural character of the country” (3). It is not necessary to deduce these two cultures’ superior authority from the previous quotation because further on in this same text it is directly stated: “Canada recognizes two official languages and that it possesses two *predominant* cultures that have produced two societies” (my emphasis, 4). It is important to mention that women also seem to hold different positions within this binarism. In the fourth chapter of this report, the first section deals with Literature “*In English and French*” from which points 562 to 568 refer to prairie and urban novels as the most important contributions to the novel genre. Despite including some women writers such as Martha Ostenso and Laura Salverson, they are just referred to as “two *other* prairie writers” (my emphasis, 200). In this way, unlike ethnic groups, women seem to be included in these two predominant cultures in Canada although in a position of inferiority regarding their male counterparts. Thus, despite the report’s avowed intent to embrace “men and women of all ethnic origins” it does so in such a way that it sets up a differential mechanism for both female and ethnic members (200).

In spite of mentioning “*the contribution made by the other ethnic groups to the cultural enrichment of Canada and the measures that should be taken to safeguard that contribution*”, this official document sets a dual structure and a racialized alterity system (3). It is clear that this document not only introduces but officially institutes otherness as part of Canada’s culture; likewise it gives race a crucial role within it because it mentions “two founding races” and not cultures. Such a two-way system

establishes a disconnection between Anglophone, Francophone and other cultural expressions. In doing so, it sets up a distinction and value scale given the fact that these “*other ethnic groups*” simply enrich Canada’s cultural heritage but do not form fundamental axes at an equal level. In fact this situation is explicitly specified for according to the second point of the introduction ethnic issues have to be approached “in relation to the basic problem of bilingualism and biculturalism, from which they are inseparable” because it is assumed that “the terms of reference do not call for an exhaustive study of the position of those of non-British, non-French origin, but rather an examination of the way they have taken their place within the two societies” (3). That is to say, they are only important in so far as they contribute to those two main cultures. In this way, the *Report* considers every *other* culture as non-British and/or non-French which implies that they are not cultures in their own right but non-mainstream; and furthermore, it gathers them into one sole group disregarding the existing diversity, variety and differences among them. In this respect, despite the document stating that “the resulting exchange of values [...] is beneficial to the country provided that it is carried out in a spirit of understanding and with a view to mutual enrichment”, it seems merely a good intentions declaration (3). Moreover, another significant implication of this binarism between *predominant* and *lower* cultures relies on the fact that those two superior groups simultaneously impose a racialized image. According to Marlene Nourbese Philip in her work *Frontiers: Essays and Writings on Racism and Culture, 1984-1992* Canada as a nation has been devised not only by Eurocentrism but by *white* Eurocentrism. As mentioned previously, Philip elucidates that an analysis of the historical construction of Canada shows that the country was built upon an ideologically-driven structure that offered hegemonic positions to white Europeans so that the ideological bonds Bloom refuses to see in mainstream discourses are also disclosed; according to Philip, such an stratification *is* an ideology (182).

At the bottom are precisely First Nations according to the Royal Commission’s text since it leaves them out of the founding role. By affirming that “Canada, [is] a vast territory inhabited in the beginning by Indians and Eskimos, was first colonized by the French [...] and then by the British” (4), First Nations seem to be included merely as inhabitants but not as agents of Canada’s cultural heritage. In fact, Marlene N. Philip affirms that as late as in 1992 the Canadian Constitution had not formally acknowledged

their culture yet (181). In my opinion, the employment of the term *Indians* in the *Report* is equally eloquent because it shows European influence on Canada since that is the naming that first explorers and colonizers used to refer to First Nations; it also speaks for the process the country has been through as nowadays they are no longer called that way but as First Nations. This is precisely one of the most striking paradoxes within the Canadian cultural context: the fact that even First Nations cultural expressions were regarded as foreign, as the *others*, while in fact they inhabited what is known today as Canada's territory before English and/or French linguistic communities arrived. Furthermore, when First Nations members or other ethnic writers tried to reach mainstream audiences by using one of the two official languages, and thus became bilingual, they were frequently dismissed or regarded as *exotic* contributions which, for mainstream criticism, did not provide anything apart from that exoticism.

This approach to the *Report of the Canada Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism* clearly shows that Canada's cultural context has not only been described but officially established as a Eurocentric realm where issues of race and otherness have played crucial roles. Significantly, the text makes clear that its underlying ideology also affects literature. For instance, the fact that the previously mentioned section on Literature –from Chapter VIII entitled “Arts and Letters”– includes a part devoted to the novel in English seems eloquent because it supports the preeminence bestowed to a European genre that the already cited 1978 Calgary Conference on the Canadian Novel also shows. Given such insistence, the novel is again placed as a crucial literary means in questioning the construction of Canadian literary tradition and identity as the present dissertation attempts. Moreover, this section from “Arts and Letters” starts dealing exclusively with literature in English and French so that other literary expressions in Canada are indirectly regarded as *minor*. In any case, on the one hand, the report appears as an important tool to understand and bring into question some crucial issues of Canadian Literature as those raised by feminist and ethnic critics. On the other hand, the text also speaks of Canada's colonial status in the past and, more importantly, for its colonized culture where European languages, cultures and literatures held a predominant position. Elaine Showalter precisely includes Canadian Literature in what she calls “literary subcultures” together with “black, Jewish, [...] Anglo-Indian, or even American” with regard to British literature (1977:

13). As already pointed out, subjected literatures as that of Canada have gone through a three-phase process of emulation, rebellion and, finally, exploration of their own literary heritage, that is, “a search for identity” (1977: 13). This is partly why the identity debate has been so intense and crucial in a country like Canada. Given its importance, what this dissertation attempts to do is to revise and question it precisely because it has been held on the basis of that colonial influence. Nowadays, of course, U.S. and Canadian Literature are no longer regarded as inferior although the acceptance of their lower status for centuries can still be seen in their internal literary value systems. It can be deduced that this system of subordinations was inherited from their colonial historical pasts which, in the case of Canada, seems not to have been completely overcome given its Eurocentric literary critical tendencies.

In Showalter’s opinion the evolution of colonial literatures is comparable to that of women in the exertion of literary authority –I would also add of authors of ethnic origin– from reproduction to self-expression. When they attempted to write, at first they reproduced mainstream literary forms and topics; later, they overtly showed their opposition by introducing new models, to fully discover and develop their own paths of literary expression. It has to be noted that even in the first stage –as it will be seen through the analysis of some works in this dissertation– they were actually introducing new aspects that did not correspond to prevailing modes but that have been ignored by mainstream critical approaches. Such a progression can be thus said to be another intersection between ethnic and women writers, this time by means of their similar colonized positions within their corresponding patriarchal and racial cultural environments. According to Showalter’s reference to John Stuart Mill, cultural imperialism was predominantly male, and I would also add racial (1977: 4). In this sense, feminist and ethnic critics together call attention to the need of thoroughly analysing this process to fully comprehend the writers they study. In fact, it can also be said that even critics went through a similar authorising process since they also accepted established critical forms that they started questioning afterwards and finally developed new approaches which have allowed a better understanding of silenced authors as in the case of ethnic and feminist studies.

#### II.2.4 *MINORITY* LITERATURES, DIVERSE IDENTITIES

Given the already mentioned altered positions offered to both women and ethnic members as cultural agents in Canada, it can be deduced that their literary contributions are similarly perceived as *minority* literature. But, although literature by women in Canada has similarly been labelled as *minor*, it is necessary to note that not only women novelists held and hold less marginal positions –so to speak– in relation to ethnic authors given their earlier participation and inclusion in mainstream anthologies, but also that some of them reinforced racial axioms in their fiction; similarly, feminist critics forgot to take ethnic contributions into account when challenging mainstream literary discourses as pointed out in previous sections. As explained in Chapter I, this ascription of a borderland position is in fact a power tool used to keep *others* far from the centre and to preserve reigning literary hegemonies. According to Smaro Kamboureli, “the concept of marginality has no inherent meaning in itself” apart from that assigned by those interested in maintaining the centre/margin division (1996: 2). This is perhaps why within Canadian Literature they have been called hyphenated literatures or literatures of “lesser” diffusion/value. But, within the Canadian context, such a process of underestimation has further implications given the fact that Canadian literary institutions in their attempt to break the colonial ties that kept their literary production in a lower status in relation to, for instance, Great Britain, and thus *finding* their own identity, were simultaneously undervaluing and assigning inferiority to *other* literary contributions within Canada’s national frontiers. This paradox speaks of Canada’s colonial status in the past and, more importantly, for its colonized culture where European languages, cultures and literatures held a predominant position.

By bringing into question concepts such as that of *minority* literature, critics who have focused on women and ethnic writers who have followed and challenged literary modes have consequently carried out an inquiry into prevailing literary critical stances such as objectivity. Those who realized that “this much-valued objectivity is presently lacking” became aware that in fact, as Barbara Godard affirms regarding feminists, “there is no such a thing as neutrality and objectivity” (1987: 25, v). Again, they exposed the fallacy of a deliberately unbiased literary criticism by inscribing critics into their historical, social and cultural frameworks. The whole critical structure that had



been supposed to be objective started to be regarded as ideologically constructed by different critical subjects, that is, as subjective. Following Barbara Godard's explanation, feminist critics fostered a critical attitude towards the concepts of objectivity and subjectivity which can be also applied to ethnic critics; both questioned the literary power structure "by introducing variety and multiplicity in thought and expression" as well as reconsidering women and ethnic writers' contributions as "moving us towards a future which will be more humanely inclusive and integrative" (1987: 3, 25).

Furthermore, "in originating the question of gender and hierarchy, these[feminist] critics are attempting to break the circle of the critical establishment that has pushed them[women writers] out to the margins" (Godard, 1987: ii). Likewise, ethnic critics became aware of the implications of race that have equally kept ethnic authors in a status of inferiority. Both feminist and ethnic critics, then, had to *re-cover* the scattered literary remains of silenced writers as proofs of the segregating functioning of mainstream criticism. In doing so, both critical approaches distanced themselves from accepted literary universalism as that supported by Harold Bloom and offered refreshing points of view to simultaneously analyse issues of "dominance and difference" (Godard, 1987: iii). Following Godard, this process significantly implied taking difference, diversity and multiplicity as core arguments that at the same time involved critics in a different identity discourse. Identity could no longer be described as one sole thing, usually male and white, but needed to be re-considered as multiple, diverse and different. Such identity questioning is intrinsically related to the alterity issues mentioned in the section devoted to otherness and is, of course, crucial for the present dissertation. The altered positions that mainstream literary discourses rendered to, for instance, ethnic and female writers unqualified them as axial in the expression of a literary identity; in contrast, studies on their contributions as those developed in Part III foster the unfolding of precisely the different, diverse and multiple identities that Godard raises. Her ideas, based on Luce Irigaray's, help us realize that identity has been constructed on a "logical principle" that subdues those others to "sameness" or into what Mary Daly calls "the monodimensional foreground" either through gender or race (1987: 17; 1984: 27). In order to escape those identity models which have been oblivious of the participation of women and ethnic writers and which have

simultaneously shaped their own senses of identity, it is necessary then to realise and voice the complexity and diversity not only between their differing contributions but within the works of their own agents.

Writing, thus, appears as a fundamental tool for those writers who started breaking identity oneness by carrying out self-representation and giving expression to their heterogeneous identities. Women in a British garrison in Canada as those of Frances Brooke's *The History of Emily Montague* (1769), Martin R. Delany's black community in the diaspora in *Blake or the Huts of America* (1859, 1861-62), the immigrant experience in a Canadian small town depicted in *What Necessity Knows* (1893) by Lily Dougall, the fallen woman in regional Canada of Joanna E. Wood's *The Untempered Wind* (1894), or Canadian identity as a nation still in the make as that of Sara Jeannette Duncan in *The Imperialist* (1904) are precisely some of the silenced or misrepresented identities that the early Canadian novels in English analysed in Part III unfold. Critics who focused on works like theirs had necessarily to adopt different postures which would allow the understanding of not only their difference but multiplicity. According to Godard, these viewpoints were inspired by Derrida's works that were of great help in regarding difference "no longer [...] as repressed object, but as deferred meaning and significance, in a process of perpetual dialectic" (1987: 16). From here derives the importance of feminist and ethnic studies, which do not merely attempt to undertake a simplistic recovering of those writers only because of the fact that they have been marginalized, but because they have been involved in a crucial debate on identity. Regarding Canada, the questioning of mainstream identity concepts of already cited feminist critics such as Carole Gerson and Lorraine McMullen, or Arun P. Mukherjee, Smaro Kamboureli and Marlene Nourbese Philip from ethnic perspectives, seems much more relevant given Canada's constant insistency, and even obsession, on discovering what is Canadian Literature.

## II.2 FEMINISMS: "ALIEN AND CRITICAL"

As explained previously, it was Virginia Woolf who described women writers' simultaneously detached and interrogating positions as "alien and critical". Despite the unquestionable relevance of her remarks on women's writing as early as in the 1920s

and Woolf's standing as a crucial figure in literary feminism, Louise Yelin thinks she offers "an elitist, ethnocentric vision of both feminism and exile" (in Broe and Ingram: 396). In her opinion, when Woolf talks about women writers she actually refers to a restricted group of women, mainly middle-high-class white educated women; in this way, there is an appropriation of feminism that leaves some *sisters* behind. Although Woolf's remark copes both with women's exiled positions as "alien" from which they challenge and are "critical" precisely to the environment that exiles them, according to Yelin, it also overlooks fundamental differences of the complex female community it speaks for.

Similarly, Bradford K. Mudge in "Exiled as Exiler: Sara Coleridge, Virginia Wolf, and the Politics of Literary Revision" presents Woolf's feminism as both "exiled" and "exiler". In his opinion, apart from digging out women's writing, Woolf also shows "cultured wariness of and palpable disdain for "minor" literary achievements" (in Broe and Ingram: 202). In spite of his recognition of Woolf's crucial role, Mudge urges on adopting critical attitudes in order to discover her limitations and their implications. As he states, in spite of her visionary ideas, her arguments lack an in-depth consideration of established concepts such as "tradition", "culture", "talent" or "taste" and the consequent dismissal of unfitting figures and forms (213-4). As I see it, disagreements such as these between Mudge and Woolf are actually fundamental since they arouse decisive questions for feminist criticism. They warn about the risks of mirroring patriarchal valuing discourses of major/minor, relying on its graded stratification of literature on the basis of Art's ultimate authority, the entrapment between imposed "aesthetic standards and [...] desire for historical revision" or the oversight of the hidden intervention of institutions in the process of literary production (Mudge in Broe and Ingram: 204). In this way, feminist critics become aware of the need of interrogating not only the whole valuing structure and even the very concept of literariness, but also of their own role as evaluators. They realize that, just as Woolf, they are immersed in biased cultural frameworks which influence their viewpoints. In Mudge's words: "to question Woolf's unquestioned tenets [...] is also to question the paradigms that stricture our own critical activity and to wonder the possibilities of cultural studies [...] more receptive to the varied and often fragmentary voices of history" (217). I agree with Mudge in so far this self-criticism is not only enriching but

essential to feminist work. It is necessary to keep an awareness of its own bias so that new critical approaches are welcome in an endless process; not to close the literary debate down but to keep on having something else to say. In my opinion, approaches like Mudge's do not minimize Woolf's importance as a critical voice who opened up a full new range of critical possibilities and offered women a pulpit to speak up. Although it could be said that she speaks for women in a specific socio-cultural and historical context, she cannot be requested to say what from our current view seems logical.

This debate also highlights very important facts of feminist criticism: its diversity, so that we should talk about feminisms and not feminism since they claim for heterogeneous approaches to literature rather than a *pensée unique*; and its varied evolution from Woolf's forward steps –sometimes converging some other times diverging– always bringing the feminist cause forward. In fact, the multiplicity, eclecticism and interdisciplinary inherent to literary feminisms have frequently led to their dismissal under the argument of not being a coherent school, and thus, lacking rigour according to established academicism. In “Towards a Feminist Poetics” Elaine Showalter explains that “of all the approaches to English studies current in the 1970s, feminist criticism is the most isolated and the least understood” (1979: 22). This seclusion and misinterpretation can be said to be another sign of the monolithism of mainstream literary criticism and an attempt to subordinate their critical work to established codes. This is what some feminist critics call Methodolatry, for the methodology which those who reprobate their approaches try to impose is itself another patriarchal tool “which sets implicit limits to what can be questioned and discussed” (Showalter, 1979: 24). In Showalter's opinion, this situation epitomizes the unwritten division of literary criticism where trends are considered superior or inferior depending on their approach, the so-called scientific or humanistic; feminisms are, of course, assigned to the latter because they also care about aspects “of content and interpretation” (1979: 38). They follow Virginia Woolf's ideas set forth in *A Room of One's Own* and focus, among other aspects, on the obstacles met by women writers when attempting to live by the pen since they need to be weighted when approaching their texts as well as when re/considering the relevance given to them. In this sense, feminist critics find themselves in a similar crossroads to that of the female author between male inheritance “which asks us to be rational, marginal and grateful” and

female sisterhood “which engenders another kind of awareness and commitment” (Showalter, 1979: 39).

Despite Showalter’s prominent position within feminist criticism, her ideas have also been challenged. Similar to Mudge’s analysis of Woolf, Jane Marcus reveals Showalter’s ethnocentrism for in her attempt to re-write literary history from a feminist perspective in “Piecing and Writing” racial issues are absent from her discourse. In consonance with the claims of early feminist and ethnic activists unravelled at the beginning of this chapter, the matri-line Showalter pretends to draw is incomplete since it leaves, for example, black women out. According to Marcus, such a line needs to be contextualized and not set apart from its historical and cultural background in which both gender and race play crucial roles (in Broe and Ingram: 282). Feminist critics like Marcus urge on the need of constantly actualizing feminist criticism through combined approaches in which racial issues are also acknowledged. They claim for the updating of feminist claims to join race and gender so that ethnic women are also taken into account. As Marcus states: as feminists “we cannot be silent at the displacement of race in the name of feminism or its banishment to the borders” (283).

But dissentious postures are to be found not only in the relation between feminisms and ethnic studies but within feminisms. This is the case, for example, of Showalter’s distinction between two main kinds of feminist criticism: “the *feminist critique*” which deals with “*women as reader*”, that is, with women’s writings absence from mainstream literary histories and traditions, and “gynocritics” related to issues concerning “*woman as writer*” and thus with the close study of her texts (1979: 25-6). In her opinion, whereas the former is “male oriented” because it focuses on wrongly achieved assumptions about female literary contributions and does not bring to light practical knowledge of women’s writings and fosters “women’s victimisation”, the latter “begins at the point when we [...] stop trying to fit women between the lines of male tradition, and focus instead on the newly visible world of female culture” (27-8).

On the other hand, according to Barbara Godard, in new feminist criticism there is no division between these two kinds of criticism as both entail a “differential analysis” since “the concern with dominance and difference is co-present” (1987: ii-iii). The awareness on the exercise of power in literary production as well as in what is defined by literature brings along a distancing which allows us to see its functioning

through established notions and its influence on a supposedly universal “Great Tradition” which has effaced female writing. Such acknowledgment jeopardizes the hegemonic structure by moving its mainstays because “this naming and denunciation of the nature of oppression shifts the centre” (Godard, 1987: iii). In my opinion, both approaches Showalter presents as separate in fact intersect because there is a feedback between each other. Identifying the levels of women’s subjection to settled literary criteria –their stereotyping, obstacles and circumstances as writers– must be accompanied by the close study of their works, for them to be *re-covered* in more equal terms. To fully comprehend female literature, to see how “in some women’s literature, feminine values penetrate and undermine the masculine systems which contain them” (Showalter, 1979: 28-9), it is necessary to bring out the established assumptions about women as writers and how they have influenced their works. By learning about literary archetypes of women, we understand better not only their inputs when writing but their textual messages; and more importantly, the hidden or open ways in which they tried to subvert those images and the process by which some of their works were neglected precisely due to that undermining can be brought into light. In this way, both approaches are placed in the past and in the present at the same time; they go backwards to raise and question wrongly claimed universal standards and move forward by changing and subverting established notions. They both “work in the gap between what has already been spoken and has been forgotten and what is yet to speak” (Godard, 1987: x). Thus, as Virginia Woolf pointed out, feminist criticisms should adopt “elastic” attitudes which would allow them a wider understanding of women’s literary contributions. Besides, Godard somehow shares Showalter’s concern about *feminist critique*’s “phallic centrism” although she suggests that such male-centrism has been bypassed by the work of those feminist critics who have paid serious attention to women’s contributions (1987: 11). Godard also explains that gynocentric feminisms are currently more valid due to the fact that *difference* has become the fundamental object of exploration which would allow drawing a matri-line of literary connections and finding their own expressive and interpretative domains.

As mentioned before, in order to portray this matrilinearity it is necessary to recover neglected writers and works so that a set of connections among them and other writers of their time –whether canonized or not– can be discovered. In Elaine

Showalter's opinion, both processes have to take place, since "it is because we have studied women writers in isolation that we have never grasped the connections between them" (1979: 35). As she explains in her work *A Literature of Their Own* (1977) following the path opened by Virginia Woolf, "one of the most significant contributions has been the unearthing and reinterpretation of 'lost' works by women writers, and the documentation of their lives and careers" (1977: 8). This is the work of what Godard calls the literary archaeologist who researches "the archive of women's culture [...] seeking evidence of the lost voices of women writers and, peeling back the layers accreted, attempts to constitute that interpretive community which will give these writers renewed circulation and understanding" (1987: vi). In their activities, literary archaeologists have to deal with women's fragmented cultural remains, that is, with "discontinuity, both as instrument and object of [her] [their] research" (Godard, 1987: vi). In this way, they carry out an inquiry about the literary restrictions imposed on women as well as a search for new interpretative strategies which "subvert systems and transgress their taboos"; as Godard suggests about Louise Forsyth's essay on Nicole Brossard, they try "to unfold a new space in which women live and write on their own terms" (x).

A very clear example of a literary archaeologist on early English Canadian Literature by women is that of Carole Gerson. Not only the title of her chapter "The Canon between the Wars: Filed-notes of a Feminist Literary Archaeologist" included in Robert Lecker's *Canadian Canons: Essays in Literary Value* (1991) but the uncovering of silenced female authors developed in 1994 work *Canada's Early Women Writers: Texts in English to 1859* make clear that she considers her feminist work archaeological. As it will be thoroughly explained in Part II, this latter work by Gerson is crucial since it unravels the figures of early female writers almost totally forgotten today and their works. Regarding the novel genre, the cases of Mary Anne Sadlier's fiction, the 1856 novel *Saratoga; A Story of 1787* by Eliza Lanesford Cushing, or Sarah Macdonald who seems to be the actual author of the anonymously edited *Sabra, or The Adopted Daughter* (1858), among others, are paradigmatic of Gerson's archaeological feminist work. But, in such archaeological studies as these by Gerson, there is a revisionary ambivalence to be taken into account. According to Angela Ingram, for revisions to be fully challenging they need to be well informed as Gerson's actually are; if not, they

would merely be emulating the structure they question. In order to gain effectiveness, they need to be freed from established axioms, regarding literary, ideological or racial assumptions, so that they do not commit the same restraining mistakes. This is why this dissertation is not a re-drawing of boundaries, since it would mean the imposition of new ones. It is more a challenging of inherited boundaries through boundary-crossing works and writers.

Sonia Saldívar-Hull is indeed very critical towards feminist revisionism. In her opinion, despite being designed to re-cover women's lost voices it actually overlooked some of them. It fostered a new centre/periphery dichotomy, although this time within feminism. I totally agree with her when she states that "this blindness potentially establishes a literary hierarchy no less exclusionary than the traditional male literary canon" (in Broe and Ingram: 182). Once again, the case of ethnic women rises as fundamental. Although she speaks mainly about Chicana writers, the examples of doubly alienated/exiled women writers in early Canada who have been vanished from literary anthologies approached in this dissertation are equally paradigmatic. The already mentioned case of Mary Ann Shadd Cary is very significant. Whereas non-fictional accounts on the immigrant experience by female authors such as that of Susanna Moodie in *Roughing it in the Bush* (1852) have been approached by feminist critics and even canonized, Shadd's *A Plea for Emigration; Or, Notes of Canada West*, published precisely in the same year, has suffered from the overlooking of both feminist and mainstream criticism. Critical works such as Robin W. Winks' *The Blacks in Canada, Homespun Heroines and Other Women of Distinction* by Hallie Q. Brown or Peggy Bristow's *Essays in African Canadian Women's History* that have recovered her figure and contributions actually share an ethnic viewpoint, although some are also rooted in feminism. Facts like Winks' incapability to get a copy of her work<sup>15</sup>, the late and exclusive re-edition of *A Plea for Emigration* in 1998 by Richard Almonte, or the lack of access to it in Canadian public libraries until 1977 speak of the equation of no reprint/no existence, and consequently no diffusion and no value, still affecting early ethnic Canadian Literature in English. Equally eloquent is the oblivion affecting *Miss Numè of Japan* (1899) by Winnifred Eaton/Onoto Watanna which cannot only be

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<sup>15</sup> In *The Blacks in Canada* Winks mentions Shadd's work *A Plea for Emigration* but recognizes to "have been unable to locate" it (395).



claimed as the first novel in English Canada but in North America by a female Asian – and more specifically Chinese– author. Once again, it is necessary to turn to critical sources focusing on her ethnic ancestry as, for example, *Edith and Winnifred Eaton: Chinatown Missions and Japanese Romances* by Dominika Ferens to find references to her figure and work<sup>16</sup>. The dismissal of Shadd and Eaton’s can be thus considered as two of “these omissions [that] are part and parcel of the endemic racism that fuels the Canadian intellectual tradition” (Bristow: 9). Following Marlene N. Philip, I also wonder what would happen in Canada if names as Mary Ann Shadd, and I would add also Winnifred Eaton, were remembered as part of the country’s collective memory (55).

As the analysis of Eaton’s *The Heart of Hyacinth* (1903) developed in Part III demonstrates, difference and identity are key issues in this novel whose author’s position as both a woman *and* ethnic literary agent make her contribution relevant in relation to the neglects of some feminist revisionism. Difference is precisely what feminist critics need to deal with since otherwise, their own claims would be weakened. From Saldívar-Hull’s viewpoint, it is necessary not only to “integrate race and class issues with gender issues” but weigh the decentering authority of feminist critics as exilers (in Broe and Ingram: 183). If as Mudge affirms inspired by Adrienne Rich revision is an act of survival, feminisms cannot afford the exclusion of some writers and less on the basis of inherited postulates (in Broe and Ingram: 199). In this sense, the questioning of Saldívar-Hull regarding Showalter’s feminist approach fosters awareness on the fact that the female literary tradition she refers to is one subjected to a patriarchal rule and not also to a racist one. This is actually the challenge of feminist perspectives on English Canadian Literature given the complex network of influences, borrowings and loans of a country with such a heterogeneous cultural content. Regarding women writing in early English in Canada the question would be which women; those coming from European countries during colonial times as Frances Brooke, from the United States during the Black diaspora as Mary Ann Shadd Cary or, perhaps, Canadian-born emigrants of mixed ethnic ancestry such as Winnifred Eaton? Are all of them in equal situations as writers? Can we establish such a tradition only among women writers

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<sup>16</sup> Although the corresponding section dedicated to Winnifred Eaton and her works in Part III other critical non-ethnically focused sources are cited, it has to be noted that they are scant.

regardless of their cultural framework within Canada or should we consider both gender and ethnicity? In order to find answers for all these questions, and many others, it is first necessary to have access to women's literary contributions and discover, for instance, who actually got published in Canada during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and why. This is precisely what this dissertation attempts, to unearth their works and analyse them within their contexts so that links among them can be suggested before trying to establish a female linear inheritance. In my opinion, the main obstacle for these matrilineal relations to be fully expressed lies in the fact that they are still nowadays within a patriarchal superstructure which, although less strict and rigid, is maybe more perverse than before.

On the other hand, feminisms can be said to be even more challenging within Canada's literary sphere as they attempt to undo the fallacy of its generally assumed non-patriarchal structure and nature. They have to deal not only with dismissal on the basis of gender but with the effacing of gender as hindrance in the regard of women writers on behalf of mainstream criticism. They undermine "the sanguine notion that Canada has been good to literary women" (Gerson 1994: 3), and disrupt the idea that those intensely required literary recoveries Showalter mentions are less plentiful or less important (1979: 29). As this dissertation demonstrates, although some women novelists from the period surveyed in this dissertation such as Frances Brooke, Susanna Moodie or Sara Jeannette Duncan have been taken into account in the process of describing/constructing Canadian literary tradition and identity, many others have been left out like Lily Dougall, Joanna E. Wood or Winnifred Eaton. In fact, even when some of these early female authors have been included within mainstream Canadian literary *canon* –and not canons– their work has been frequently evaluated as unworthy of high literary status as in the case of *The History of Emily Montague* (1769) or other of their works have been overlooked. Perhaps, such hesitancy is related to Canada's colonized culture which complicates the analysis even more. This research can be inscribed into what Barbara Godard –following Raymond Williams's ideas on national literatures– calls a third phase after those of "imitation of the dominant literary pattern, [...] assimilation and internalization" (1987: 14). It is a "backward step" which in her opinion is not only necessary but extremely useful as some works "are reactivated, revitalized" (1987: 14). In the case of English Canada, this looking back process is

perhaps more relevant given its colonial past, during which its cultural framework imitated, assimilated and internalized foreign structures and standards. Taking into account this country's awareness of the consequences of colonialism in what concerns its literary context and its advantaged position once those first stages have been identified and analysed –and somehow overcome– it seems absolutely paradoxical to find that some women writers together with ethnic writers are still unknown or misrepresented.

As the main goal of this dissertation is the rethinking of Canada's literary tradition and identity and its focus is not exclusively on women writers, the gathering and analysis of novels by women before the twentieth century needs to be considered as a previous step before finding literary links among them and other writers. While Showalter maintains that in order to describe the "female tradition" it is necessary "to establish the continuity [...] from decade to decade, rather than from Great Woman to Great Woman" (1979: 35), in *A Literature of Their Own* she also affirms that,

If we want to define the ways in which "female self-awareness" has expressed itself in the English novel, we need to see the woman novelist against the backdrop of women of her time, as well as in relation to other writers in history. (1977: 9)

And this is precisely what this dissertation attempts to do through the recovery of women novelists writing in English in Canada: to analyse the contexts in which they developed their literary careers as well as their treatment by mainstream literary criticism. In this sense, it is a humble contribution to what Godard calls the "ongoing process" of mapping women's literary cartography, which needs further feminist research in order to make women's works visible although, in the case of this dissertation, the voicing of silenced female voices is aimed at rethinking Canada's literary tradition and identity.

Following Showalter's division of the evolution of female writing in three stages –*Feminine, Feminist and Female*– there was a first stage which took place during the nineteenth century and that is mainly characterized by women writers' adoption of male standards in order to be accepted, as their adoption of male pseudonyms or "super-feminine" personae proves. The second and feminist phase ran through the end of the nineteenth century until the second decade of the twentieth century. In this period, women were allowed –or did they, perhaps, allow themselves?– to make their subjection visible employing literature as one of their most important means of

expression. In the last phase, the female, from 1920 onwards, feminists left previous stages to focus on their own experiences as reliable sources “of an autonomous art” (Showalter, 1977: 36). Although according to Showalter’s description most of the women writers included in this dissertation seem to have developed their careers during the first phase, I agree with her in so far it is also necessary “to read [...] between the lines” of women’s novels studied in this research for, in Showalter’s words, “the feminist content of the feminine art is typically oblique, displaced, ironic and subversive” (1979: 35). Frances Brooke’s *The History of Emily Montague* is paradigmatic in this respect because, in spite of following male literary standards, the novel also subverts some of them and contains an underlying feminist message that has often been neglected.

As a conclusion, it has to be noted that feminist approaches to literature are not simply “a part of an interdisciplinary effort to reconstruct the social, political and cultural experience of women” but should be regarded “as a major contribution to English studies” (Showalter, 1979: 25). Regarding the Canadian literary realm, this statement seems crucial as feminisms have fostered other challenging approaches in relation to its identity, as for instance, those dealing with the so-called ethnic/cultural *minorities*. In spite of the intersecting points between ethnic and feminist approaches outlined in the previous section, through the study of, on the one hand, women and, on the other, ethnic writers these critics have also learnt the specific implications of what being a woman and/or ethnic writer has meant and means. As Barbara Godard explains in *Gynocritics* women writers and feminist literary critics in unison refuse the positions to which they have been relegated “by denying that their difference is peripheral or marginal” (1987: 3). In doing so, they also break assumed limits and create more inclusive literary realms. Obviously, their approaches to literature involve the questioning of established literary notions that have frequently kept them in the margins, excluded, misunderstood or undervalued. They challenge the monolithism and monocentrism of mainstream literary criticism leading to the recognition of its patriarchal basis “by introducing variety and multiplicity in thought and expression, by being resolutely eclectic and interdisciplinary in nature” (Godard, 1987: 3). Hence, such attitudes and their new rapprochements to literary texts entail the acknowledgement of power structures within literary realms and of the fact that, against what we have been

and are still told, “knowledge is not objective and neutral, [...] but subjectively and ideologically biased, perpetuating its forms, symbols, and words in a circle of male experience which eludes females” (Godard, 1987: 2). By attempting to break that perpetuation, these critical approaches praise women’s literary achievements while subverting and expanding settled literary boundaries.

### II.3 ETHNIC STUDIES

As Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan explain in the introduction to their chapter “Ethnic Literary and Cultural Studies: Critical Race Theory”, the Civil Rights Movement in the United States –mentioned before in this dissertation– raised a general debate about what were considered as *minority* cultural groups. In turn, it also fostered a great amount of scholarly works on the literary production of these groups. This movement did not mean a one-sided approach to ethnic literature, but spread a great variety of approaches given the heterogeneity of cultural communities, although inspired by the common goal of recovering silenced, disregarded or misunderstood ethnic voices. In general, following Rivkin and Ryan, ethnic critical works seem to be inspired by similar thrusts as those of feminist scholars. Like feminisms, they concentrated on silenced writers and/or works and the process of silencing, established links among writers in order to re-write their literary histories and traditions, and “focus on questions of identity and representation” (962).

One of the first groups to gain a wide range of critical attention was African-Americans; scholars who concentrated on their literary production carried out “projects of revision and recovery” which significantly “parallel[ed] the projects of feminist critics” (Rivkin and Ryan: 959). From then onwards, critical studies spread over cultural groups as Native Americans, Latino and Chicanos, or Asian Americans among many others. The issues these critics raised have been crucial in the development of new literary approaches and the recovery of dismissed writers. Some of the most important studies revolved around the literary implications of (im)migration, bilingualism, territoriality and national/literary boundaries; they also brought to light aspects about cultural mediation, contingency, and hybridity. Furthermore, they raised fundamental

questions about cultural pluralism, multiplicity and diversity not only regarding the general framework of national literatures but within the different cultural communities; and, in connection with the present dissertation, about identity, nation-focused cultural and literary identity, and, very significantly, about “ethnic identity-within-difference” (960-1).

While developing their researches, ethnic critics realized that not only ethnic issues were fundamental in relation to ethnic writers, but that there was a crucial ethnic notion which had been too frequently taken for granted, that is, whiteness. In turn, they challenged prevailing cultural conceptions of apparently *colourless* dominant groups which were unwilling to discern their own colour bonds; they became aware that such inattention to colour was nothing but a strategy to assign otherness and alter the cultural positions inhabited by those they regarded as abnormal (Rivkin and Ryan: 961). On the other hand, besides bringing up the colour bounds ethnic groups had been forced to adopt, such as blackness, they also warn about the dangers of raising ethnicity above all. They are not only critical to their ethnic naming by a cultural mainstream and its meanings but aware of the fact that in “recognizing that what had passed for “the human” or “the universal” was in fact white essentialism, we substitute one sort of essentialism (that of “blackness”) for another” (Appiah: 138). As Gates explains, modern black writers, for example, are actually trying to bring down these barriers since they attempt not “to *posit* blackness, but to render it”; their writings seem to go “beyond the color line, one that takes the blackness culture for granted” (1986: 147). As far as this dissertation is concerned, despite early writers like Martin R. Delany can be said to have developed another kind of essentialism in their attempt of escaping white hegemony, their works need to be regarded as first steps of an ongoing process. Although through their studies ethnic critics suggest “that race is a trope”, as Gates affirms, it “is not to deny its palpable force” (1986: 147). In this way, they started questioning established theories on race and ethnicity, as Anthony Appiah, and recovering previous critics, like for instance W.E.B. Du Bois, dismissed by mainstream criticism precisely because of their challenge of prevailing white racial axioms.

Despite, according to Rivkin and Ryan, Post-Structuralism inspired many of these critics, some of them turned to more historicist perspectives. As outlined in Chapter I, history served them as a site where they found avoided histories of race yet to

tell and from which they were able to discern the construction of the concept of race. Their defence of the founding of race as “a cultural and social category” and of its constructed nature throughout history obviously challenged traditional biologic and genetic theories of race (Rivkin and Ryan: 961); of course, it offered a new ground from which customary historical discourses could be disputed. This was not only crucial insofar as silenced histories were *re-voiced* but because it had tremendous implications on literary criticism. Literary histories, and the traditions and identities they projected, could not be taken for granted any longer and started to be questioned. A great deal of scholarly work focused on dismissed works and writers and the process of silencing which led not to homogeneity but to multiplicity regarding ethnic approaches. They fostered an inquiry into inherited traditions and identities and offered a new, diverse, hybrid and cross-border picture. It is clear then that, once again, Ethnic studies merge with New Historicism.

As explained in *Black is the Color of the Cosmos*, the history of racial domination “acted to erase the memories of an old culture and not to set the foundation of a new one” (Davis and Gates: 4). In the case of blacks, whereas in the United States slavery and its inherent superior/inferior racial dichotomy played a crucial role in disregarding their cultural contributions, in Canada –where slavery did not officially exist– the common assumption that it was a multicultural welcoming country provoked that removed histories were ignored and that a serious debate about racial issues was not carried out. Like feminists, both Davis and Gates demand the revision of inherited histories where ethnic writers are *absent*; they claim for the necessity of re-viewing history so that literary discourses can also be divested of historically constructed and established racist patterns. And very importantly, they also require attention to the socio-historical and cultural context in which ethnic writers developed their literary contributions; theirs is actually a “double history” since as individuals and writers they were immersed in a visible mainstream literary history and simultaneously in their own invisible and rejected communal artistic history bound up through “isolation and oppression” (51). Of course, such doubleness complicates not only their literary productions but the analyses of their contributions since they present “a kind of working equilibrium between elements often identified [...] and elements far less easily defined” (52). Such in-between position is precisely one of the main reasons why ethnic authors’

works have been frequently dismissed which highlights the need of adopting different perspectives which take their hybridity into account. Ethnic critics are then forced to become aware of such double cultural and historical backgrounds, not just to develop vague appraisals but to adopt critical attitudes so that ethnic literary contributions may be praised or bemoaned. This is the case, for instance, of Delany's novel *Blake* whose subversion of reigning racial axioms can be regarded as an innovative challenge although at the same time it is trapped precisely within the superior/inferior, white/black, dichotomy it deplors. As Davis and Gates explain, "the importance rests upon the flowing into the artist's consciousness of new materials never before considered appropriate for a proper art" (53).

But this return to history also implied a revision of literary histories. Ethnic critics realized that they meant the perfect instrument for traditional canonization to conceal their ideological concerns and present them as the *Great Tradition* of writers and works to be remembered. Through their reviews they became aware of the power of anthologization and that, within that anthologizing process, ethnic writing frequently meant absence or otherness too. As demonstrated in Part II of this dissertation, despite current attempts try to harmonize Canada's cultural and literary heterogeneity, the existence of *general* English Canadian Literature anthologies and ethnicity-focused histories proves the situation has not been overcome yet. On one side, some anthologies –not only old but modern– either do not include ethnic writing like for example W.J. Keith's *Canadian Literature in English* (1985), or comprehend punctual ethnic writers who very frequently appear in separated sections; this is the case for instance of *The Cambridge Companion to Canadian Literature* (2004) where a specific chapter about "Aboriginal Writing" and also another about "Writing by Women" appear. On the other side, there are plenty of examples of the so-called hyphenated literary histories as M. G. Vassanji's edition of *A Meeting of Streams: South Asian Canadian Literature* (1985), Donna Bailey Nurse's *Revival: An Anthology of Black Canadian Writing* (2006) or Penny Petrone's *Native Literature in Canada: From the Oral Tradition to the Present* (1990). Most of these attempts answer to an original need on behalf of ethnic scholars to contest traditional canonical allegations by creating their own histories and anthologies as means of unfolding their own traditions and identities. At first, as Gates explains in *Loose Canons* in relation to African-American writing, the production of ethnicity-



focused literary histories was a response to the veiled racism of mainstream anthologies. Some of them in their subversive attempt even suggested the superiority of their own ethnic group over the white mainstream inspired perhaps by some of the writers they studied. The case of Martin R. Delany is particularly interesting in this respect. In an attempt of subverting the old dichotomy of superior/inferior, in his novel *Blake* he presents blacks not only as equal to whites but places them in higher positions. In a similar way to that of early ethnic critics, Delany was participating in the racial debate he tried to fight against. Ironically, both writers like Delany and critics were criticized for doing so precisely by those who ranked whiteness over blackness in the first place.

Although these attempts can be said to be politically inspired as Gates suggests, they served as medium for further revisions. Once they became fully aware of literary histories' central role in the canonization process, ethnic anthologies left aside such an assertion process and started focusing rigorously on thematic and formal aspects of their literary production. This is the case, for example, of Amiri Baraka and Larry Neal's *Black Fire* (1968) in which according to Gates "art and act were one" (1992: 31). But through this production of renewed histories, ethnic critics have reached the conclusion that literary histories, traditions and canons could no longer be defined as a group of paralleling contributions but needed to be regarded as a complex and hybrid mixture of cultural differences.

On the other hand, a great deal of these ethnic approaches has turned around the concept of race –on which racist theories were based– and its implications on literary criticism. They have fostered the deconstruction of the traditional scientific racial postulates which, indeed, are no longer valid today since there is no agreement about the existence of different human races on the basis of any biological difference whatsoever; as "modern genetics shows [...] there is no such underlying racial essence" (Appiah: 39). Of course, the crucial issue is the invention of race as a pretext on which racist theories could be founded; paraphrasing Appiah, what matters is all we have asked race to do for us (45). One of the first outstanding figures who challenged biological theories of racial differences and their consistent inferiority assignment was W. E. B. Du Bois. In "The Conservation of Races" he reverses reigning racial segregation on the basis of genetic inheritance and advocates for the recognition of differences, not as a means of enforcing isolation but of contribution. As an American black himself, he affirmed

blacks' crucial role as social and historical agents and raised the need of focusing on their "common history". In contrast, Appiah explains that this common history could neither be taken as a differentiating axis since it needs to be identified first, that is, constructed/invented just as in the case of mainstream groups, so that there can be any group identification (32). In this way, Du Bois did not manage to fully destabilize reigning racial ideas but replaced genetics by history which "is simply to bury the biological conception below the surface, not to transcend it" (Appiah: 41). So, what is the relevance of Du Bois' theories? In consonance with what Martin R. Delany achieves in his novel, Du Bois was one of the first to give race a different and transcending meaning and blackness, for instance, started to portray "a positive message, a message that is not only different but valuable" (Appiah: 34).

I agree with Anthony K. Appiah that all the current debate about race is more semantic than physic-biologic-genetic. Even currently, the term *race* seems a kind of jumble which holds a great variety of blurred differential notions from skin colour to cultural traditions; in sum, what is considered different, *other*. This does not mean that it is less important since questions of terminology are tokens, symptoms of the ambivalent positions of ethnic groups, of prevailing unequal power relations. If we still need to use terms as race and ethnicity it is precisely because we have not yet overcome the original problem. As Gates affirms in "*Race*", *Writing and Difference* these linguistic signs "spell[ing] out the distance between the subordinate and superordinate" (1986: 6). In relation to this naming debate, Appiah offers a crucial contribution to the analysis of race: the establishment of a clear distinction between race and *racialism*. Whereas racialism was a theory which went further from mere physical differences; race was just a prop, an invention on which racialism could base and present as true its identification between outer and inner differences. If it was "scientifically" proved that there were physical and biological differences, then there was a form to explain psychological, intellectual and cultural distinctions so that the path towards a superior/inferior duality was cleared. Tzvetan Todorov adds that once the implications of racism and racialism were raised, they were substituted by "the ideology of cultural difference" that, in his opinion, portrayed a too broad and vague conception of a unified humankind in which cultural specificities need to be introduced in order to voice "both the diversity of cultures and the differences which exist within one and the same culture" (in Gates,

1986: 373). Otherwise, keeping such imprecise framework could lead to repeat past errors. In accordance with Gates, I think that this approach could be valid if a way of harmonizing difference with “common human identity” that makes mutual understanding feasible was found (1986: 374). The problem is that the term *racial* is still used nowadays in most cultures –although with a distant meaning from traditional genetic theories– to denominate cultural differences.

Of course, these issues concerning race have also affected literary criticism; nowadays, it is still necessary to divest literary discourses of the inherited racial patterns present in literary institutions and their canonization means which keep on leaving ethnic writers aside. But if, as Appiah, Todorov and Gates maintain, racial differentiation is no longer valid, why should it have any relevance in literary criticism? As Todorov questions, does “race explain[s] writing or the other way around?” (in Gates, 1986: 375). Although I agree with Todorov that if ethnic critics focus specifically on differences in the analysis of texts, they will be practising a kind of “cultural apartheid” –and hence emulating the racist patterns they try to challenge–, in my opinion it is necessary to pay attention to the cultural specificities of ethnic writers cultural as well as to other literary frames of reference that might have influenced them (376-8). This is precisely why this dissertation includes analyses of each writers’ specific backgrounds as well as of the more general context of early English Canada in which they were immersed.

So, what is the importance of the concept of race for literary analysis? Appiah offers a revealing explanation of the relation between the notions of race and literature in which the concept nation/nationality plays a central role. According to him, European concepts of nationality were actually based on a racial structure in the attempt of showing harmonious communities. In the case of the Anglo-Saxon race, “Anglo-Saxonism” developed through a complex mixture of mythology and historiography that offered “a framework within which the peoples of England could be conceived as united” (Appiah: 49). Although in European countries like Great Britain it took a long time for such common identity to come into being, it was quickly introduced in colonized countries since it served as a very useful strategy “to justify domination on

the nonwhite world” (50). In this sense, there was an *anglosaxonization*<sup>17</sup> process which, as mentioned in the first chapter of Part I, introduced this constructed unity of an Anglo-Saxon culture into the diversity of colonized peoples. This is precisely what happened in Canada where its *anglosaxonized* culture brought first the predominance of Anglo-Saxon cultural frameworks, then of Eurocentric patterns (British and French) and lately of multiculturalism in which diversity and difference are not fully represented yet. But such *anglosaxonization* had wider implications since the racial agreement on which nations were based also affected the description of national literatures, although state boundaries did not correspond with “nationalities conceived of as sharing a civilization and, more particularly, a language and literature” (Appiah: 50). Just as Great Britain’s *anglosaxonized* culture found its sources in “*Beowulf*, a poem in the Anglo-Saxon tongue” and not in the complex exchange among European peoples (51), colonized cultures as that of Canada looked to that Anglo-Saxon centre and left aside their own particularities in the construction of their own literary traditions. As already elucidated, the role of literary historians has been crucial in this evolution since they strengthened these ideas through the production of national literary histories. Similarly decisive has been the work of ethnic criticism in raising this process and developing challenging analyses of dismissed writers which led them to question the racism of established literary criteria that left ethnic writers out of any debate. It has denounced that “in the New World, Europeans and Africans of European descent have consistently denied that black [or ethnic] people were capable of contributing to ‘the arts and letters’” (52). In this sense, ethnic criticism has been fundamental not only to tell a different story of literature and establish an ethnic tradition, but in the advance of a vision of literature which takes diversity, difference and hybridity into account.

As the title of Rivkin and Ryan’s chapter mentioned at the beginning of this section shows –“*Ethnic Literary and Cultural Studies: Critical Race Theory*”– ethnicity and race usually walk hand in hand. But, are ethnicity and race the same? According to Sollors there is actually a conflict between both terms. Although some critics affirm the fundamental role of race within ethnic studies and others raise the need of establishing a clear distinction between both elements, for him “race [...] is merely an aspect of

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<sup>17</sup> The terms *anglosaxonized* and *anglosaxonization* are inspired by Appiah’s mention to “Anglo-Saxonism” and are included in italics since they are new coinages not reflected in dictionaries.

ethnicity” (Sollors: 36). I agree with the revealing quotation by Irving Howe included in Sollors’s *Beyond Ethnicity: Consent and Descent in American Culture* (1986) that “no one quite knows what ethnicity means: that’s why it’s so useful a term” (20). The history behind the terms *ethnic* and *ethnicity* is eloquent in this respect. Following Sollors’s explanations, they come from the Greek root *ethos* which conveyed a sense of otherness kept when introduced in the English language as it is used to designate those regarded as different, non customary or not fully national, that is, as “pagan” and not “heathens and chosen people” (25). Although they fell into disuse in English, they came somehow to substitute the term *race* during the 1940s since it was charged with extremely negative connotations after Hitler’s massacre in his search for a pure Arian race. This is one of the reasons why Sollors favours the use of the term *ethnicity* and holds *race* just as a part of the ethnicity debate (38-9). During the 1960s and 1970s, they were re-introduced when identity theories based on descent came back and previous identifications on the basis of consent were left behind, as a consequence of the disavowing process that the concept of the cultural identity of the United States as a melting pot went through; ethnicity was no longer expected to get diluted within a melted cultural framework reached by consensus (Sollors: 37). I agree with Sollors that it is paradoxical that precisely in a country like the United States where cultural bounds were originally thought to be more a consequence of consent and not of descent, “one of the most sharply formulated systems of descent-based discrimination” as slavery had such an impact (37). Unlike the American melting pot, Canada’s cultural variety was described as a vertical mosaic by John Porter in *The Vertical Mosaic: An Analysis of Social Class and Power in Canada* (1965) that has not remained uncontested since then, as explained in the next part of this dissertation. Just as “the very term of ethnicity seemed to support an interpretation of America as a country beyond class struggles” (Sollors: 22), in Canada the construction of a multi-ethnic identity attempted to represent its cultural diversity and overcome inequalities. But apart from such praiseworthy attempt, the founding of this image left crucial debates about racist or cultural apartheid behind. One question could be, for example, if it is a vertical structure, who is at the top and who is at the bottom.

As far as this dissertation is concerned, the most relevant issue is that both terms have been actually fostered a “rhetorical boundary construction” (Sollors: 28). In spite

of the original endeavour to divest differential cultural discourses of any racial connotations and superior/inferior dichotomies, the fact is that the term *ethnicity* has maintained some of the limits it attempted to be overcome in the first place. Although all cultural groups should be regarded as ethnic today, the so-called ethnic groups still remain as alien in relation to a mainstream. The case of Canadian Literature in English is paradigmatic in this respect; should not all Canadian Literature be considered ethnic given its multicultural/multi-literary framework? The fact that the ethnic terminology is still employed to refer to non-white and/or non-Eurocentric literary production seems eloquent. Whereas finding compilations of equally foreign authors of British, German or Dutch origin is very unusual, there are plenty of anthologies on Asian, Black, or even Jewish literature. But, do Asian descendants, for instance, shape only one ethnic group? If so, Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese or Korean writers, among many others, belong to the same group? This being so, what is ethnicity ruled by, cultural differentiation, emigration, skin colour or religion? As the analysis of anthologies, compilations and studies on different ethnic/cultural groups of Part II shows, the question of ethnicity remains unanswered to a great extent in English Canada. Paradoxically, rhetorical boundaries have also been established among ethnic communities themselves. Titles such as *Inalienable Rice: A Chinese and Japanese Canadian Anthology* or *Strike the Wok: An Anthology of Contemporary Chinese Canadian Fiction* speak of not only ethnic differentiation but stress ethnicity. Such an emphasis seems to suggest that ethnicity in Canada has evolved from a feature to be suppressed and assimilated under a pre-established mainstream cultural context to a peculiarity to be highlighted. Identity, then, seems necessarily a crucial aspect of ethnic studies since it has been shaken from obscurity, and even shame, to attractiveness.

According to Sollors, all this debate about ethnicity “is a matter not of content but of the importance that individuals ascribe to it, including, of course, scholars and intellectuals” (35). Although I agree with him to a certain extent, in my opinion we cannot forget that it offers crucial information about the framework in which ethnic critics try to develop new approaches that fully represent ethnic contributions. I also coincide with Sollors in so far the terms *ethnicity* and *ethnic* are more convenient than those of *minority* which “calls out attention to numbers” and ascribes inferiority, or *immigration* that concentrates on diasporic communities (39); but I still feel reluctant

given the ascription of otherness both imply. Although ethnicity has been coined to get rid of racialist axioms and start talking about diversity, it still involves a debate where ethnic writers inhabit altered positions; despite it was introduced as a non-segregationist heading there is still a lot to do for ethnic writers to stop being regarded as alien to a central canon or canonized but in the margins. Whereas only ethnic writers who achieve broad success are regarded as *truly* Americans –or Canadians– and their ethnicity is not frequently brought into light as significant, not so celebrated ethnic writings need to be contextualized –unlike with so-considered mainstream texts– and are kept on the margins, as “parochial” and/or ethnic (Sollors: 243). In this sense, perhaps it is the moment to start rethinking the applicability and representativeness of the term for, in the attempt to voice cultural difference and diversity, it actually keeps old barriers. The very fact that it is still necessary to talk about ethnic writers and not simply about writers is a revealing sign. Although their usage entails the endeavour of divesting cultural hybridity debates of old racial axioms, as Sollors affirms: “we may be better served, [...], by the vocabulary of kinship and cultural codes than by the cultural baggage that the word “ethnicity” contains” (39). In any case, it seems that it is not possible to talk about hybridity, difference and diversity without unease yet.

Complexities like these are the terrain in which ethnic critics work in order to unmask of a literary framework as that of English Canada which, although portraying an integrative picture, has actually avoided approaching delicate issues concerning race, racism, and ethnicity. They put renewed critical perspectives into practice that allow the recovery and/or broader comprehension of ethnic writing and move away from its rejection or overestimation on the basis of ethnicity. But, what does ethnic writing mean? As Tony Morrison explains, for ethnic writers like herself writing is actually an act of *becoming* (4). For early ethnic authors writing also signified coming into existence, surviving; just as in the case of women writers explained before, they also had to do colossal efforts to overcome the almost insurmountable obstacles and barriers imposed by hegemonic cultures, although their either ethnic or female *and* ethnic condition complicated their literary agency even more. On the one hand, some of them did not even venture into writing because they had no access to any kind of artistic apprenticeship; it was not only an inaccessible realm but almost prohibited for them (Gates, 1986: 9). On the other hand, those who actually wrote such as the black woman

writer Phillis Wheatley had to prove their literary talent once and again, not before a court as she did, but before the judges of *the* literary canon. During the eighteenth century, a general distrust about ethnic writers' capability of literary creation was spread; following Gates, "writing [...] was taken to be the *visible* sign of reason" which in turn was taken as the ultimate sign of "humanity" so that a racist cultural value system was established and the mainstays of its higher/lower dichotomy were founded (1986: 8). But the issue was not simply if they were able to write or not but to do it according to the forms mainstream cultures dictated; that is to say, the question was not so much if, for example, black artists were capable of writing spirituals or sermons but if they could become novelists, poets or playwrights. Moreover, they were expected to do so in official languages, such as English or French in the case of early Canada, that were not the mother tongues of all of them so that they held complex bilingual positions as already pointed out. As Gates asks, "how can the black [ethnic] subject posit a full and sufficient self in a language in which blackness is a sign of absence?" (1986: 12). When they actually managed to write, they did not count on literary traditions in a Eurocentric fashion from which they could take root and those they did have such as the oral tradition –which curiously brings established literariness concepts into question– were not regarded as literary. By using languages and forms that contained the ideological assumptions that avoided their participation in the first place, they had to overcome traditionally polarized depictions of ethnicity similar to the dichotomic pattern to that used for female characters; both ethnic and women were used as scapegoats for mainstream social archetypes. Just as in the case of the savage or noble savage duality in the literary representation of First Nations, blacks in American literature were used as literary receptacles for "paradox, [and] ambiguity" in which "omissions, repetitions, disruptions, polarities, reifications, [and ]violence" could be inserted (Morrison: 66). I agree with Morrison that it is crucial to analyse these stratagems –tokenism, "Metonymic displacement", "Metaphysical condensation", "Fetishization", "Dehistoriciz[ed] allegory", or "Patterns of explosive, disjointed, repetitive language" (67)– as a means of discovering not only the creation of archetypes but understanding their process of creation, and very significantly, their impact on literary criticism.



How could their works be considered with any kind of impartiality if literary discourses had not been divested from traditional racialist axioms? Ethnic critics started to realize that current critical theories were equally biased and became aware of the need of finding new ways to examine ethnic texts. Works as those of Martin R. Delany or Winnifred Eaton mentioned before show that it is necessary to develop new approaches that pay attention to the crucial particularities of ethnic text and to stop enclosing them exclusively within Western canonical patterns. In the same way that in Appiah's viewpoint African writing has been proven and valued according to its adequacy to "a Great White Tradition of masterpieces" (57), Canada in its search for its literary identity has looked for its own Shakespeare. I agree with him that critical attitudes towards universalism are actually struggling against such constant mirroring in Europe's tradition, against "Eurocentric hegemony *posing* as universalism" (58). But in this struggle, what Appiah calls "nativism" is not the solution for ethnic approaches since although it questions evaluative standards it is embedded within the same framework. In his opinion, focusing only on native cultural particularities requires the acceptance of the constitution of a culture out of those specificities, "that is, in fact, an artifact of Western modernity" (59-60). Regarding Black Literature in English North America, Gates, for instance, pleads for rigorous approaches to texts so that ethnic contributions can start being analysed as immersed within their own "cultural matrix, as well as its "white" matrix" (1986: 79). This situation has provoked "a deep disbelief in all forms of critical performance" since even counter-canon activities are aware of their own immersion in the system they criticize (Davis and Gates: 49). We are aware that as literary critics we are immersed within an institution which has evolved in time and space; dragging lots of misconceptions, slowly accepting challenges and introducing new approaches in the process. It is like a genre, as Appiah explains, so that it has a history (68). Being aware of their own immersion within a critical structure they question, ethnic critics inhabit advantageous positions since they have not only raised crucial issues about biased literary valuation but they are conscious of their own bent. Literature and its criticism can no longer be regarded as a restrained realm with narrow limits within which there is only room for a few chosen writers. It is necessary then to carry out not simply counter-canon activities but an entire rethinking process which, in Gates' words, needs to go "beyond that overworked master plot of victims and

victimizers so carefully scripted in the cultural dominant, beyond the paranoid of autarky, and beyond the seductive ensolacements of nationalism” (1992: 151).

As a conclusion to this theoretical part, it must be noted that the most important point that ethnic and feminist approaches, and the writers they focus on, offer regarding the present dissertation is a new sense of identity. On the one hand, they provide new elements which foster awareness about the creation of identity archetypes through history, and of course through literary history, and thus, about its constructed nature. As mentioned before, although this reliance on history as a fundamental source of information is being questioned nowadays, Charles T. Davis proposes a renewed attention on historical discourses so that the construction processes of inherited identity conceptions are revealed. As he affirms, keeping the old determination of preserving narrow concepts about history would only lead to “the necessity of fabricating one that [...] fails to supply a valid system of references for art” (Davis and Gates: 50); in this way, any description of cultural and literary identity would be, at least, incomplete. And this is precisely one of the tasks of New Historicist, Ethnic and Feminist approaches; the revision of received identity conceptions through the recovery of previously silenced writers and works thanks to an extended reference framework. Furthermore, history not only throws light on how certain writers and works have been excluded from any identity description but, more importantly, about the dual histories and identities of these contributors. The return to their histories offers the possibility of approaching and understanding the duplicitous nature of their works and their cultural and literary identities.

On the other hand, ethnic and feminist critics raise different identity significations that go beyond race and gender. It is precisely in such “‘in-between’ spaces” where different senses of identity are displayed (Bhabha: 2), where a varied and hybrid range of selves express their own wisdom about their meanings of identity. There is no longer a sole and unique conception shared by a hegemonic mainstream but multiple and boundary-crossing identities. In Bhabha’s words, “it is in the emergence of the interstices [...] that the intersubjective and collective experiences of nationness, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated” (2). But for those intermediate positions to be fully revealed, it is necessary to gain distance from traditionally accepted

classification structures based on gender, race or class, so that we are able “to focus on those moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural differences” (1). According to Appiah, their contributions are instructive insofar as they reveal that identity is not a one-sided but intricate, diverse and hybrid concept whose development throughout history is marked by the influence and reaction to a varied range of factors. Besides, in Appiah’s words, they force us to realize that identities “flourish despite [...] their roots in myths and in lies” and that, as a result, they cannot be simply rationalized any longer since there are plenty of factors which play crucial roles in such processes of identification (178).

In this sense, through the attention feminist and ethnic critics pay to traditionally dismissed writers, on the one hand they claim for different critical attitudes to fully comprehend and recognize their neglected achievements by means of a rethinking and challenge of traditional canonicity and the recovery of these writers’ historical and cultural backgrounds; but at the same time both writers and critics show a much more complex literary scene which takes into account difference, diversity and hybridity. They propose a new literary image which gets further away from canonical descriptions and which overthrows its imposed boundaries, national, linguistic, racial or gendered, which have traditionally kept unfitting contributions aside. As a result, their contributions imply the destabilization of old literary histories on which descriptions of national literary identities have been based on. Regarding the present dissertation, the analysis and questioning of Canada’s literary identity show that more than a national literary identity where there is a mainstream and *other* detached contributions –as still prevalent anthologization demonstrates–, it is necessary to incorporate the complexity and diversity that its literary heterogeneity transmits. The polyphony of Canadian voices in which writers from a varied range of cultural, social, religious, historical, economic, and/or linguistic backgrounds have developed their shorter or longer careers would be raised and Canada’s multicultural substrate spread. Identity can no longer be regarded as an immovable and fixed notion which needs no reevaluation. On the contrary, ethnic and feminist approaches claim for the necessity of regarding identity notions as immerse in a constant mutation process which requires a continual rethinking while new contributions are dug up from the obscurity they had been traditionally relegated to. As Appiah affirms, “identity is one we must continue to reshape” (177).



## **PART II**

### **ENGLISH CANADIAN LITERARY HISTORY, TRADITION AND IDENTITY**



Taking over from the theoretical bases expounded in previous chapters, Part II is devoted to their application within the context of English Canadian Literature focusing on the early contributors to the novel genre approached in Part III. As the title of this part suggests, an analysis of English Canadian literary history will be carried out as means investigating the construction of English Canadian literary tradition and identity inspired by the attention that new historicist, ethnic and feminist critics have paid to the connections between literary and historical discourses and their questioning of traditional critical stances.

With this aim, the first chapter includes an inquiry into the establishment of a literary canon in Canada encouraged by the Anglo-Western canon that Harold Bloom describes and supports as well as into the subsequent canonization of English Canadian Literature on such bases; the debate on Canadian canonicity carried out from differing critical perspectives, the contribution of canon-questioning approaches and the founding of literary value and evaluative practices in English Canada are also reflected. In order to bring into question the impact that this canon has had on the establishment of an English Canadian literary tradition and identity, an examination of anthologization as one of the most influential canonical tools is also developed in the second section of Chapter III; it is a diachronic study of mainstream anthologies and literary histories from 1920 to 2004 that focuses on early Canadian Literature in English and specifically on the representation of female and ethnic contributions to the novel.

The intersections between ethnic and critical perspectives outlined in Part I allow the questioning of English Canadian literary canon and history included in the first section of Chapter IV. As explained there, ethnic and feminist critics raise a crucial debate on racism and sexism in Canada so that they also bring into question the multicultural and non-patriarchal image of English Canadian Literature. Moreover, from their challenging critical perspectives they also voice the contributions of early ethnic

and female authors silenced by mainstream criticism. Given the fact that in the period covered in this dissertation only an African American male author, an Asian Canadian woman novelist, a First Nations' writer and many females seem to have participated in the novel genre in English, attention will be paid only to early African, Asian, First Nations' Canadian Literature in English and early English literature by women. By offering access to those dismissed figures and works, the articles, compilations, studies and researches by ethnic and feminist critics mentioned ultimately reveal the different senses of identity that the previous writing of English Canadian literary history has silenced which, in turn, bring into question the construction of a literary tradition and identity in English Canadian Literature.



### CHAPTER III

#### THE CANONIZATION AND ANTHOLOGIZATION OF ENGLISH CANADIAN LITERATURE

In order to seize those different senses of identity Homi K. Bhabha and Kwame Anthony Appiah have explored, to grasp the difference, diversity and hybridity that both critics raise and, thus, acknowledge Canadian literary identity as multiple and constantly in the make, it is necessary to re-cover and listen to those silenced identities that have been frequently shadowed by mainstream literary history. In this way, bringing these voices and their identity senses into light also implies the rethinking and re-writing of previous literary history. In order to re-write English Canadian literary history, taking a look into the previous writing of it seems equally unavoidable so that the construction and perpetuation of literary canon and value are also at stake, as well as the tools employed in such a process of creation and maintenance, such as anthologization.

In the following sections, attention will be paid, first, to the debate about literary canonicity and value in Canadian Literature to analyse different perspectives about its establishment and running validity, and also about their impact on the telling of Canada's literary history on which the settlement of the country's literary tradition and identity has been based. Second, in order to prove anthologization's power as main the canonical instrument through which Canadian literary institutions have created and kept that canon, a research about the presence/absence in mainstream anthologies of alternating voices like those analysed in this dissertation is included. Finally, ethnic and feminist critical works, anthologies and studies in Canada will be approached in the next chapter since they question established axioms of Canadian Literature's canonicity, value, history, tradition, and ultimately identity.

### III.1 THE CANONIZATION OF ENGLISH CANADIAN LITERATURE

There has been a heated debate about Canadian canonicity that still continues today and which, from my viewpoint, raises fundamental questions about canon construction in Canadian Literature. Robert Lecker's critical work questioned established literary maxims and taxonomies which meant a crucial starting point for renewed perspectives, such as those of feminist and ethnic studies, and for other critics such as Frank Davey and Nick Mount to express their disagreement not only with Lecker's views but with challenging criticism.

#### III.1.1 CANADA'S LITERARY CANON AND THE CANONIZATION OF ENGLISH CANADIAN LITERATURE

As it has been already pointed out, Robert Lecker is one of the most important figures within Canadian literary criticism in relation to the questioning of its literary canon. His most relevant works in this respect are *Canadian Canons: Essays in Literary Value* (1991) and *Making it Real: the Canonization of English-Canadian Literature* (1995), already cited in Part I. In both works he explains how literary canon was created and settled in Canadian Literature and its implications regarding literary value, tradition and identity. Besides, he also explores the attention paid, or rather the lack of it, to challenging criticism which has fostered the maintenance of the canon's orthodoxy.

*Canadian Canons: Essays in Literary Value* (1991) includes articles by different critics about the construction of the canon from varied perspectives such as Carole Gerson's feminist approach in "The Canon between the Wars: Filed-notes of a Feminist Literary Archaeologist" mentioned previously. In the "Introduction", Lecker states that any debate about canonicity is intrinsically related to "history, society, and culture" and turns around a central paradox which is mainly historical. He agrees with Paul Lauter regarding the historical paradox that "certain historical constructs give importance to a body of texts, while the weight attributed to the texts sustained the very credibility of received versions of history" (qtd. in Lecker 1991: 5). In this way, Lecker's approach is connected to new historicism since both claim for a need to re-historize literature, literary criticism and canon-making practices and simultaneously raise some of its most significant contradictions. Just as new historicists, Lecker explains that new there are no

universal and immutable truths neither in literary discourses nor in any other kind of discourse, that literary texts and criticism walk hand in hand, and that any counter-canon activity is actually enclosed within the structure it attempts to question. In Lecker's words, "every act of unmasking, critique, and opposition uses the tools it condemns" (Lecker 1991: 5). What both Lecker and new historicists ultimately attempt to explain is that both canonical and counter-canonical critical stances are part of a given historical, socio-economic and cultural background which influences their claims.

Lecker also takes the baton of new historicism to back his ideas on the construction and general acceptance of a mainstream literary canon, history and tradition in Canada based on axioms which actually spring from the specific historical, social and cultural conditions of a given time. In this sense, he affirms that the project, and almost obsession, of discovering, describing and establishing Canadianicity during the 1950s and 1960s influenced literary criticism. As it could not have been otherwise, literature was taken as a crucial means in such process of "Canadianization of culture" (Lecker, 1991: 13). Through the search of a national Canadian identity, country-focused views also influenced literary criticism, the creation of *a* canon and *a* tradition, and the writing of literary history to back nationalistic claims. In this respect, he agrees with Dermot McCarthy about "the topocentric fusion of place, identity, authenticity, and authority in the process of Canadian canon-formation" (qtd. in Lecker, 1991: 10). This being so, the main goal of critical discourses in Canada "was the discovery of the Canadianicity of the literature written in this country" and not the exploration of the literature itself (Lecker, 1991: 9). Canon-building was thus perceived as "representing a dream of national unity" to such an extent that valuable works were only those which supported such national construction process; in this way, the concept of literary value in Canada also started to be built up (14). This process described by Lecker shows a paradoxical circularity; in the search of a national identity, literature was employed as tool to construct it and back the nationalist claims that critics and institutions involved in the search maintained so that identity was ultimately found, but only in works and authors that supported their demands. It can be said then that Canada's literature was regarded as a mere excuse to promote certain views about the country and construct a specific identity, but neither as a primary source where identity resided nor as a chance to unfold the country's literary expression. Following Lecker, the establishment of this

feedback between national identity and literary canon provoked, on the one hand, that unfitting works were disregarded or “explained into safety” and, on the other hand, that serious inquiring criticism was not even attempted or silenced (14). Extending Lecker’s ideas, I agree with him that all this process of settling a canon, and thus a tradition, a literary history, and ultimately an identity, is actually a misconception since, as they depend on each other, they are all constantly in the make, “being made and unmade” in spite of any attempt to “create the impression of a stable canon” (7). This is precisely why Lecker claims that Canadian Literature needs to be re-historized and its canon de/re-constructed being always aware of “the double bind of canonical enquiry” (16).

Literature as a representation of a “dream of national unity” confers, in Lecker’s opinion, value to some works and not to *others*, since “the vehicle of value is genre, and the appropriate genre is mimetic in orientation” (1991: 14). Mimesis as basis for literary criticism is also investigated by Lecker in his work *Making it Real* (1995) that includes a section entitled “The Canonization of Canadian Literature: An Inquiry into Value” in which he explains how canon was quickly and somehow carelessly constructed in Canada. Critical figures like Northrop Frye and Margaret Atwood are included by Lecker as two of the agents who fostered mimesis as the main basis for inclusion in the canon departing from 1965. As Lecker states, Frye settled the foundations of an inclusion/exclusion process by which literary value was ascribed to “works that establish[ed] a relation between national consciousness, literary history, and a kind of idealized mimesis” that was supported by Atwood’s thematic criticism “by valorizing the literary expression of nationalism” (1995: 32). This was precisely the way in which the Canadian canon was constructed so that representational features of literary contributions were taken as basic axioms for them to be taken into account. Once this canonical hierarchy was established works that did not fit within these already accepted boundaries, such as unrealistic or creative contributions were dismissed. The same has happened, in Lecker’s opinion, with delegitimizing criticism, like ethnic and feminist works, which has also been overlooked so that even at present “we do not know why we read the books we read or why we say they are good. We do not know why the Canadian canon includes certain texts and excludes others” (28). The perpetuation of the canon has been then secured for long.

Of course, Frye as well as Atwood's contributions to Canadian literary criticism cannot be totally rejected since they fostered the crucial and shyly attempted before debate on Canadian Literature. Regarding Frye, on the one hand, the chapter on "National Consciousness in Canadian Culture" included in *Divisions on a Ground: Essays on Canadian Culture* (1982) seems to prove Lecker's criticism on his national focus. In fact, Frances Brooke, Susanna Moodie and Catharine Parr Traill's contributions are taken into account more for their expression of Canadianicity than any other literary aspects. On the other hand, it has to be noted that women writers are said to be "among the best Canadian writers", a certainly shocking remark given their later dismissal or undervaluing; besides, despite claiming for "cultural distinctiveness" Frye underlines the difference between "unity" and "uniformity" and highlights the importance of diversity as key to "genuine culture" (Frye: 51, 43). He was actually one of the first to affirm Canadian Literature for in his opinion "what there is now in Canada is a literature of extraordinary vigour and historical significance" (1982: 55). As far as Atwood's thematic criticism is concerned, and as stated in the introduction to her work *Survival* (1972), her intention was indeed describing distinctive themes that would "help you distinguish [...] Canadian literature from other literatures" as Lecker suggests (1972: 13). And that is precisely what she develops in her text through the analysis of survival, the topic of nature as enemy, mother or victim, realistic animal stories as "something 'distinctively Canadian,'" the dual depiction of natives in positive terms as "noble savages" or negative as "inferior [...] or evil", or the similar angelic or devilish dichotomy regarding women characters as representatives of "the Nature-woman metaphor in Canadian literature", to cite just a few (Atwood: 73, 91, 210). Nevertheless, for Atwood literature was actually a source of identity; it was a mirror or a "map" that needed to be approached "as the product of who and where we have been" of such importance that it meant "a necessity" without which Canadian people could "not survive" (1972: 19). Later critics from their different approaches to Canadian Literature in English such as feminists like Faye Hammill –whose work will be mentioned in detail in the next section– noted that Atwood's attempt in designating specifically Canadian themes actually provoked oversights of certain writers. As Hammill maintains, on the one hand, the task of identifying purely Canadian texts is very intricate given the different Canadian ascription of authors. For instance, Frances

Brooke was of British nationality and resided in Canada for a short period, whereas Sara Jeannette Duncan being a Canadian-born and having resided for most of her life in her home country, stopped having a permanent Canadian residency after getting married. From my viewpoint, the Canadianicity of works by authors such as Brooke or Duncan does neither reside on the writers' nationality nor on the length of their Canadian experiences, but is to be found in their texts. On the other hand, approaches like thematic criticism which developed during the sixties and seventies were actually aimed at the construction and establishment of a "distinct, unified national identity which might be expressed in a relatively stable canon of literary texts" and that is precisely what feminist and ethnic critics, among others, bring into question (Hammill: xviii). As far as I am concerned, thematic literary aspects are relevant but they are not only connected to a certain literary expression but to others as well; environmental harshness, extreme weather conditions and survival may well appear in Canadian or Russian literature, for instance, so that they cannot be said to convey original identity signs. Nonetheless, the specific variations of literary themes taking place in a given literature such as Canada's indigenous, French and English expressions of those topics can be actually said to partake in its distinctive literary identity. In any case, it seems that Frye and Atwood's approaches to Canadian Literature were a product of a historical moment, of a time when critical tools were needed in Canada. Their contributions were thus crucial in so far they sharpened the literary debate and opened new paths for further criticism. Perhaps, Frye and Atwood themselves, in the same as we all critics do, would not maintain the same ideas now or at least they would modify some of their previous claims. The fact that they have been and still are contested, and more perspectives are being carried out is a sign of evolution in Canadian criticism.

One of the most revealing paradigms about the creation of a literary canon in Canada from Lecker's viewpoint is the Conference on the Canadian Novel held in Calgary in 1978, which is referred to in both *Canadian Canons* (1991) and *Making it Real* (1995). The conference intended to shape a list of the *best* one hundred novels written in Canada until then. As Hallvard Dahlie explains in his "Introduction" to Charles Steele's 1982 edition of the Conference proceedings *Taking Stock. Calgary Conference on the Canadian Novel* (1978), the construction of Canada's best novels list was informed by the need of constituting and praising the novel genre in Canada "by

virtue of its own intrinsic qualities” since it had not been adequately established and praised from his viewpoint (3). Such avoidance of appraisal within Canadian Literature was rooted in the “conditioning process we all have been subject to in our perception of that literature, and in the skeptical nature of our times” and not necessarily in literature itself (3). Stemming from this thesis, Malcom Ross asked the selected range of critics invited to participate to choose the novels which in their opinion were indispensable landmarks and represented the best Canada had written. This group of critical agents belonged to that “*we*” who had to “list *our* own choices” according to what “[*we*] consider most indispensable”, and who, of course, offered their own view of the Canadian novel and thus contributed to its canonization on their own terms (my emphasis, 2). They had to select one hundred titles, from which they had also to narrow their selection to “the *ten* best Canadian novels”, and, last but not least, also ten literary titles regardless the genre which they considered crucial for researching and valuing Canadian Literature. Although he admits the controversy of the list, Dahlie concludes by stating that thanks to this work Canada could assure that it had a range of novels to be regarded as ‘central’ which was “a respectable achievement indeed” (4). Respectable or not, the creation of a close list of Canada’s best one hundred novels highlights the limitations of canon making since, in order to be covered, it needs to settle boundaries. Establishing the top number of the best Canadian novels in a first instance to one hundred and then restricting it to ten, and not in a higher or lower scale or even leaving it open to critics discretion, seems quite a conventional gesture which actually implies the exclusion of authors not on the basis of the literary qualities of their fiction but of a close given number. As Lecker points out in *Canadian Canons*, according to Donna Bennet and Lawrence Mathews the very choice of the novel genre is itself significant and offers a hint about existing links between genre and value. In their opinion, the election of the novel as epitome of the existence and worth of Canadian Literature showed the privileging of realistic forms by critics (Lecker, 1991: 14). This is one of the main reasons why the novel genre is analysed in this dissertation; some of the dismissals brought up in this work epitomize the restrictive canonical inclusion carried out even in a literary genre claimed to represent Canada’s literary essence. Furthermore, Robert Lecker in *Making it Real* explains that from the ten novels list the number of those selected “according to mimetic conventions of representational realism” was no

other than nine (1995: 34). I agree with Lecker's that this ten novel choice actually suggested that only what was "recordable, verifiable, coherent, and concrete" was good (36). In this way, the role of the novel writer was also at stake; he/she was only taken into account in so far he/she acted as a 'mimetic agent'. But the significance of this selective canonization of novels lies on the fact that what was ultimately established was literary value; valuable works and/or classics in Canadian Literature were just those inspired by "representational realism" (Lecker, 1995: 34).

The implications of the establishment of Canada's value structure go even further since, in Lecker's opinion, there have not been fundamental changes in critical evaluation since the Calgary conference. He maintains that even during the twentieth century the same "realist-nationalist equation" has been kept so that "the informing value remains the same: asserting the existence of the nation by supporting literature that records its existence" and that if there have been any modifications they were aimed at widening and strengthening the already accepted equation "that has characterized the study of Canadian Literature since the 1800s" (1995: 38-9). Actually, Laurie Ricou warns that the Calgary conference also implied "declaring an orthodoxy from which no variation is allowed" (qtd. in Lecker 1995: 36). In accordance with what this dissertation maintains, this is perhaps why Lecker insists on the fact that there is an urgent need of listening to previously silenced critical voices. It is clear for him that such avoidance of canon-delegitimizing perspectives is, indeed, a proof of the hegemony held by its constructors. By despising them, they are not compelled to ask why a certain concept of literary value was established and is still valid, there is no need of acknowledging "their incarceration in facticity" so that their view of Canadian Literature and canon is kept (Lecker, 1995: 29).

Through the construction and settlement of Canada's literary canon, the Calgary conference also fostered a specific vision of Canadian literary tradition and history. From the conference and instauration of some Canadian literary classics, "the notion that there is a Canadian tradition, that is fundamentally realistic, and that Canada's canonized authors all attach themselves to this tradition" derived (Lecker, 1995: 43). One of the consequences being, once again, that works and authors that have not embraced established axioms have been dismissed; while being innovative, creative or experimental they were simultaneously regarded as "antirealist, anticonservative, anti-



Canadian” (Lecker, 1995: 44). One of the clearest examples of Canadian literary criticism’s conformism is perhaps the reluctance to revise Sara Jeannette Duncan’s contribution through *The Imperialist* until as late as 2002 when *A New Anthology of Canadian Literature in English* edited by Donna Bennet and Russell Brown raised her work as a masterpiece and Duncan as “Canada’s first modernist writer” (154). The founding of a tradition in Canada has also fostered the transmission of canonical literary value through time, because as Lecker explains “it provides a temporal validation –a fictional explanation– of why certain literary works tend to appear during certain highly and subjectively defined historical segments” (1995: 40). Tools such as anthologies and/or literary histories were employed to keep the tradition’s hegemony so that the validity of the canon and its value were repeated, maintained and proved. The relevance of anthologization and historization of Canadian Literature is then crucial since they are also means of de-constructing the accepted hierarchical value-structure; they can serve as basis of questioning “how and why these works got where they are” (Lecker, 1995: 47). This is precisely why Lecker claims for the need to re-historize literature, not from a univocal viewpoint but taking multiplicity as basis of a renewing process; it would help unfold “the governing narratives [that] are behind the fictions that surround us, the ones we have so quickly crowned and those that remain hidden, waiting to be found” (1995: 48). All these components, canon, tradition and literary history defined from Canada’s hegemonic literary institution is what composes what is currently called ‘the mainstream’ and challenged from perspectives such as ethnic studies and feminism.

### III.1.2 DEBATING ABOUT CANADIAN CANONICITY: FRANK DAVEY AND ROBERT LECKER

On the other hand, Frank Davey questioned Lecker’s ideas in his article “Critical Response I: Canadian Canons”, to which Robert Lecker answered in another article entitled “Critical Response II: Response to Frank Davey”, both published in *Critical Inquiry* (1990). The first issue Davey brings out is the fact that Lecker’s ideas also contribute to the canon since he selected a specific range of literary events and critics to support his claims. Regarding literary events, in Davey’s opinion, the most significant of Lecker’s choices is actually the 1978 Calgary Conference. As Davey explains, at that time there were many and equally relevant conferences which held challenging approaches but are not echoed in his work. He cites, for instance, the conference held in

1986 at Ottawa's University in which opposition to Canada's literary canon was shown from different approaches such as "ethnic, feminist, and post-structuralist" (674). In spite of these *other* attempts, I agree with Lecker's reply to Davey in so far, as highlighted in the previous section, the privileging of the novel genre, the inclusion of a selected group of canonizers, and the goal of establishing the *best* Canada had written speak of a "canonical hit parade" which in fact had a deep impact on subsequent processes of inclusion/exclusion (1990: 685). As far as literary critics are concerned, Davey suggests that Lecker does not only include some concrete critics as agents in the Canadian critical academy but also omits others –like Weir, Godard or Davey himself, who have actually shifted positions– (674). For Davey there have also been critical perspectives challenging canonized texts as works like *Amazing Space* or *Gynocritics* – included in this dissertation– show about feminism (677). In his defence, Lecker makes clear that he includes Weir and Godard as some of the most relevant contributors regarding "the question of value in recent Canadian criticism or in relation to specific canonized texts" (1990: 686).

The concept of literary institution Lecker introduces is controversial for Davey too. According to him, in Lecker's work the term comes to represent "a unitary Canadian canon and a homogeneous group of critics", while precisely for those critics its significance is closer to Greenblatt's definition of a "complex network of institutions, practices, and beliefs that constitute the culture as a whole" (qtd. in Davey: 678). Davey points out that focusing strictly on the academy and literature provokes that other highly influential factors of canonicity are disregarded; he cites, for example, governmental subsidies, the North American market, university education, and of course the structure of Canada's bookselling as some of the reasons which have prevented "new or generally dissenting texts to get out of publishers' warehouses and into Canadian bookstores, let alone the canon" (678). Although I agree with Davey that the term *institution* is not simply related to academicism but also to the whole cultural framework in which literary devices are inscribed –and that is the way it is referred to in this dissertation– he forgets crucial issues which have equally affected canon-construction in Canada and which are actually suggested in Lecker's work, such as sexism and racism. In his response to Davey, Lecker specifies that his use of the term *institution* is inspired by Frank Kermode's description as "the professional community which interprets secular

literature and teaches others to do so” (qtd in Lecker, 1990: 684). Although Lecker acknowledges the importance of other forces, he maintains that “in Canada, the canon remains the property of academics”<sup>18</sup> since it was shaped by academics conniving with publishing agents; actually, in his opinion, the contribution of academic spheres has been crucial for the canon that would not exist in the way we currently know it without them (1990: 684-5).

Another complaint by Davey lies on the fact that there seems not to have been any canonical activity before 1965 according to Lecker’s work. From Davey’s viewpoint before any canonizing academicism took place, there were attempts which also count as canon-making strategies although perhaps more subtle; he mentions, for example, the access or barring of writers to publication either in newspapers or book-form, and/or prizes (676). From my viewpoint, Davey’s comment is pertinent given the fact that the circulation of texts strongly affects their inclusion/exclusion from literary histories and anthologies. This is precisely what Carole Gerson raises in her article “The Canon between the Wars: Filed-notes of a Feminist Literary Archaeologist” included in Lecker’s *Canadian Canons* (1991). She suggests that prior to 1965, from 1918 to the 1940s, canonical decisions were taken mainly from male literary pulpits, either within the academic, educative or publishing realms; they decided “what got into print and into anthologies, and which works received prizes” and during this period women writers’ presence was curiously very low (47). Besides, in her very interesting 1994 work *Canada’s Early Women Writers: Texts in English to 1859* Gerson mentions a wide range of women writers who had to get involved in self-publishing to get their contributions into public circulation. The most successful of them was Sara McDonald, “recently identified as the author of the anonymous *Sabra, or The Adopted Daughter*, written to free her family from debt” (Gerson, 1994: 24). Like Sara McDonald, many women writers employed literature as means of getting out of economically disadvantaged situations and support their families, since “literary publication, which signalled education and gentility, occasionally offered a strategy that allowed distressed women and widows to solicit charity” (Gerson, 1994: 22). In fact, a high range of the writers included in this dissertation had to look for their own publishing means, aside Canada’s

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<sup>18</sup> It has to be noted that for Lecker Canada’s situation cannot be compared to that of the United States because there academics did not intervene so much in the construction and settlement of a literary canon.

mainstream channels. This is the case of Frances Brooke, who had to use her connections in Great Britain to get *The History of Emily Montague* printed; or Margaret Murray Robertson whose fiction was mainly edited by special religious and educative communities such as the Religious Tract Society and the American Sunday School Union; not to mention the difficulties met by ethnic writers, such as Martin R. Delany whose novel *Blake; or the Huts of America* was not published in book form until as late as in 1970 –edited by Floyd J. Miller– and came out previously during 1861 and 1862 throughout *The Weekly Anglo-African*, of course a specifically ethnic publishing channel.

Exploring the power of publishing and its impact on canonization in Canadian Literature is such a broad and interesting topic that it could be sufficient to write another dissertation. In this respect, it is very interesting according to Davey that Lecker –apart from his critical role– has paradoxically got involved in such forces; he has acted as co-editor of canonizing works such as *ECW's Biographical Guide to Canadian Novelists* (1993). As far as I am concerned, it is also striking that taking into account the challenging attitude of Lecker's criticism revealing absences as that of Joanna E. Wood are noticeable in works such as the previously mentioned. According to Davey, Lecker's editorial projects have even edited the proceedings of the Calgary Conference “to which Lecker awards a crucial and negative role in his construction of a Canadian canon” (680). About his role as publisher and editor, Lecker comments some of the contradictions of literary activity which are actually in accordance to Davey's ideas. First, he recognizes that editing depends not only on himself but on the publishing house whose “multiple viewpoints [...] are not always consistent”; second, he states that publishing can contribute to canonizing or not; and third, that editors' economical involvement somehow affects their role (1990: 688).

Nonetheless, what is relevant at this point is the fact that Davey and Lecker seem to agree in general concepts but disagree regarding more specific issues. For instance, in relation to thematic criticism both mention it as a mainstream literary discourse, the difference being that for Lecker it is mainly due to its national-realistic equation, whereas Davey adds that its favouring of English-speaking literature has equally pushed other contributions to the margins. They also somehow coincide in so far both note the influential feedback existent between circulation of texts and decisions

in anthologizing, both having affected the instauration of a literary history of Canada and thus of a literary canon. The most obvious coincidence between both critics lies on the fact that they both acknowledge their simultaneous role in questioning and contributing to the canon. Davey affirms that “Lecker’s essay becomes another constructor of canonical text and theory” (672), and Lecker acknowledges that “anyone who writes about canons necessarily becomes another constructor” (Lecker, 1990: 685). This is in fact what we all, immersed within this literary framework, do. Lecker, Davey, Gerson or even myself in various discussions in this dissertation question Canada’s literary establishment but from within; our works represent an attempt to open it up, to let renewed approaches and diversity slip into literary debates, to welcome dismissed authors and contributions, perhaps unconsciously or consciously canonizing them too, but casting doubts on, questioning and growing apart from traditional, hegemonic and univocal visions. Perhaps their clearest dissent is based on the differentiation Davey makes about canonical activities which do not pursue the same objectives, while Lecker’s work implies a shared aim. Be that as it may, the consequence has been that some authors and works have been dismissed and that is what the present dissertation attempts to bring out. Finally, while both recognize the presence of other critical approaches apart from those regarded as mainstream, Lecker affirms there has not been a significant impact of those on established Canadian literary canon and history. I agree with him in that:

New anthologies may add few more contemporary writers to each edition, and there would be anthologies of experimental, alternative, minority, or regional literatures in Canada, but no anthology of Canadian literature has been restructured to reflect a shifting version of the Canadian canon or the received version of Canadian literary history attached to the canon. (1990: 687)

This is precisely why this dissertation includes sections on mainstream anthologizing as crucial tools in the canonization of English Canadian Literature and also on ethnic and feminist compilations, researches and studies given the questioning of precisely those prevailing literary histories they convey.

### III.1.3 THE CONTRIBUTION OF CANON-QUESTIONING APPROACHES: NICK MOUNT’S CANONLESS CANON

In spite of their disagreements, both Lecker and Davey acknowledge the presence of canon-questioning approaches in Canada which have raised fundamental

issues and have fostered the research of early Canadian Literature, although a lot of work still needs further development. The challenging criticism of, for instance, Carole Gerson or Lorraine McMullen's feminist studies and Smaro Kamboureli, George E. Clarke or Thomas King's ethnic approaches have *re-covered* not only silenced authors and works but also those "explained into safety" by traditional criticism. In this respect, Nick Mount's research on Canada's literary canon "In Praise of Talking Dogs: The Study and Teaching of Early Canada's Canonless Canon" (1998) is very revealing, in so far he questions the canonizing attempts of nineteenth-century Canadian Literature.

Mount also mentions the decades of the 1950s and 1960s as well as the 1978 Calgary Conference as the period when "Canadian literature have begun to claim their own office space" ('In praise'). In relation to early literary expression in Canada, the edition of the first part of the Centre for Editing Early Canadian Texts (CEEET) in 1985 meant a landmark. It is important to note that Mount makes clear some of the biases, like subsidies and academicism, which might have influenced the production of this work. In any case, it was a starting point in rescuing disregarded texts which from then onwards were worth, at least, of being analysed and taught. New critical works about them were gradually carried out; Mount mentions the 1985 edition of Frances Brooke's *The History of Emily Montague* by Mary Jane Edwards, *A Purer Taste. The Writing and Reading of Fiction in English in Nineteenth-Century Canada* (1989) by Carole Gerson, and the Early Canadian Women Writers series; I would also add Lorraine McMullen's vast work on Frances Brooke and her contribution to the *Silenced Sextet: Six Nineteenth-Century Women Novelists* (1992) together with Carrie MacMillan and Elizabeth Waterston. Likewise, the inclusion of early texts in university teaching and the high rate of articles on them published in academic journals also marked a significant change (Mount 'In praise').

What is interesting from Mount's article is that Canada's previous value-conferring criticism provoked that these renewed perspectives insisted on moving away from traditional evaluative strategies. In his opinion, their obstinacy has stimulated the raising of "some ridiculous claims" ('In praise'). In spite of acknowledging some – although very few– relevant recoveries as that of Sara Jeannette Duncan's works, he mentions some other and inaccurate examples which are significant in so far they are related to the present dissertation. According to Mount, the previously mentioned works

edited by the CEECT included introductions to the texts which actually bestowed value to them despite being “concerned primarily to provide a non-evaluative, historical background to the text” (Mount ‘In praise’). He does not only question such critical approaches to early Canadian Literature because of this but also because he finds their claims inaccurate. This is the case of Mary Jane Edwards in relation to Frances Brooke’s *The History of Emily Montague* since she does not specify “exactly who and how many might see it” as a fundamental literary work for its depiction of Canada (Mount ‘In praise’). Something similar happens with Julia Catherine Beckwith Hart’s *St. Ursula’s Convent; Or, The Nun of Canada*, Canada’s first novel by a Canadian-born writer. In the introduction to Hart’s novel, Lochhead claims its significance on the basis of its wide acceptance by the general public; he also explains that critical revisions have tended to disregard the literariness of Hart’s text and misunderstand its mainly didactic aim. In this respect, Mount comments –not without showing a great sense of humour– that it is “the worst novel I’ve [he has] ever read” and that only a “literary masochist” can enjoy its reading (‘In praise’). But what he ultimately suggests is that, in praising this novel, critics are leaving aside aestheticism in favour of its circulation and readability at that time, and that taking into account other aspects as those Lochhead points out is simply “nonsense” (‘In praise’).

The work *Silenced Sextet: Six Nineteenth-Century Women Novelists* already mentioned, and which, in my opinion, offers a crucial insight into early Canadian women writers, is also questioned by Mount. According to him, Elizabeth Waterston’s reading of Margaret Marshall Saunders’s *Beautiful Joe* is inaccurate since from her feminist perspective the animal narrator of Saunders’s juvenile story stands for women of her time “including Saunders herself” but shows no evidence to support her statement (Mount ‘In praise’). Likewise, Mount does not find confirmation of Carrie MacMillan’s claim about Joanna E. Wood’s criticism of patriarchy through the depiction of female matrons in MacMillan’s approach to *The Untempered Wind*. What critics like Waterston and MacMillan carry out is, in Mount’s opinion, a criticism driven more by critics’ ideological concerns than by the literariness of the works they study. Besides, despite their non-evaluative intentions through their studies they actually value texts; as he states:

Moreover, we assume from the critics’ discussions of these novels that they are superior examples of their kind: not all nineteenth-century Canadian novels, it is

implied, are rhetorically sophisticated enough to contain the seeds of a counterdiscursive reading within them, or imaginative enough to select a cropped persona, or ambitious enough to critique the patriarchy. (Mount 'In praise')

Mount's explanation about the causes affecting criticism on early Canadian literary contributions stems from a similar point to that of Lecker and Davey. For Mount, previous discussions on Canadian Literature –including statements on Canada such as Northrop Frye's conviction on its lack of literariness or John Metcalf's on its inferiority– have not been challenged by renewed perspectives but, on the contrary, somehow supported since “no Canadian critic has offered a sustained attempt at rebutting or even qualifying these extraordinarily contentious statements” ('In praise'). The fact that new critical approaches have not refuted previous value-making criticism turns them apparently into contributors to what they criticize. Following Mount, in spite of avoiding evaluation, what they actually perform is a role as cultural historians more than literary critics. Besides, the debate about Canada's cultural identity also influenced them for, in Mount's words, “Western criticism in general has turned from the thematic to the ideological, from generalizations about frontiers and garrisons to generalizations about empire and gender” ('In praise').

As far as this dissertation is concerned, it is fundamental to bear in mind that new critical approaches actually achieve renewed readings of early Canadian literary texts, which would have been kept silenced otherwise. In this sense, ideologically driven or not, they not only unfold alternating voices but also raise previously unchallenged critical aspects. In my opinion, early Canadian Literature still suffers a general lack of understanding since it is necessary to *re-cover* texts first, contextualize them and perhaps evaluate them later if appropriate. Mount affirms that some of the contributions of feminist and/or ethnic critics insist on questioning universally accepted aesthetic features and I am not so sure that precisely those aesthetic characteristics that have been the basis of previous canonization are as universal as claimed nor that canonized works are as good as they are said to be. I really doubt that some contemporary romances to that of Frances Brooke's novel are more pleasurable and more aesthetically enjoyable than hers. It seems that, in relation to early Canadian Literature, there are currently two trends; on the one hand, complacent judgement, as Mount suggests, or value-despising criticism, as Mount carries out in his article. From my view point, new critical trends do not praise just for the sake of praising, but



highlight previously ignored literary achievements; they go back to Canada's literary ancestors and offer new insights into dismissed or condescendingly approached works. Is Frances Brooke's novel a masterpiece? What does exactly 'masterpiece' mean? And besides, is the Western Eurocentric concept of 'masterpiece' equally applicable to Canadian Literature? In any case, Brooke's contribution needs to be taken into account in so far she fictionalized Canada for the first time in English-speaking Canadian Literature through en vogue literary forms, innovated thematically and formally, suggested feminist issues, and besides it is also, but not only, an important cultural and historical literary source. Unlike Mount, I do not see any problem in taking literary works into consideration in relation to the cultural and historical information they offer *too*. Perhaps, previously canonized texts were also valued for that but when canonization was established it was curiously forgotten. It is maybe true that, as Mount states, "early Canadianists have yet to work out a criticism and a pedagogy appropriate to the unique nature of our field" and that is, indeed, what they are trying to achieve ('In praise').

According to Mount, challenging literary critics who focus on early English Canadian Literature are in fact fabricating a tradition which is a shameful act, from his viewpoint, unlike "not having a literature" ('In praise'). I do not agree with Mount's statement since they are not constructing a tradition for the very fact that the texts are right there, still waiting to be read. Brooke, Delany, Wood or Duncan's works are not inventions but are real examples of Canada's early literary expression. In the case they are wrongly creating a tradition, driven by 'ideological' claims and disregarding aestheticism and literariness, immersed within a historic-cultural project more than in a literary one, I cannot help but wonder why that is more inaccurate than the previously constructed canon, tradition, literary history and identity based on universal aesthetic axioms.

#### III.1.4 LITERARY VALUE AND EVALUATION

Taking into account what has been explained previously, what is ultimately at stake in this debate about Canada's literary canon is the very concept of literary value. Barbara Herstein Smith offers a very interesting insight into this concept and its impact on canonicity, and consequently on literary history, tradition and identity in

“Contingencies of Value” (1983). In her article, she agrees with the critics mentioned before regarding the absence of a serious debate on the conferring of literary value. Such a reflection is yet to be developed since, as Smith affirms, it is first necessary to acknowledge that value-conferring strategies have not and do not depend exclusively on literature but also on “a complex set of social and cultural activities central to the very nature of literature” (16). Until defenders of evaluative criticism do not accept the biases of purely aesthetic and universal axioms, it will not be possible to fully investigate the ways in which value has been constructed, applied and reinforced. New historicism, as well as some feminist and ethnic approaches, actually suggests that not only literary texts and authors are immersed in specific socio-cultural environments that need to be analysed but critics too. The previously outlined ideas of Lecker coincide with new historicists in so far both ultimately attempt to explain that both canonical and counter-canonical critical stances are part of a given historical, socio-economic and cultural background which influences their claims. Their evaluative statements are thus influenced by their backgrounds in multiple ways and have affected the whole canonizing process so that their different concepts of literary value equally depend on other factors but the purely literary. In order to examine the weight of this multi-dimensional set of elements on literary value, following Smith, “the nature of literary [...] value” and “the concept of value” itself on the one hand, together with its historical development and its supporting practices such as anthologization on the other, would have to be explored (10).

Barbara Herstein Smith explains that the establishment of a clear differentiation between scholars and critics had some influence on the construction and conferring of literary value. Critics were charged with the role of evaluation by assuming “that literary value was a determinate property of texts and that the critic, by virtue of certain innate and acquired capacities [...], was someone specifically equipped to discriminate it” (3). The eminent English critic F. R. Leavis is pointed out as one of its most relevant agents, whose impact has also been notable in Canada given the predominantly Eurocentric and English-speaking leaning of its literary academy. Following Smith’s explanation, during the 1930s and 1940s a shift took place. Evaluative criticism started to be regarded as inaccurate, as a collection of “vacuous pseudo-statements” which simply reflected the evaluators’ taste and did not foster actual literary development (3).

In this respect, Frye is again signalled as a fundamental actor for his claim that literary criticism needed to get rid of its evaluative strategies to be seriously regarded as a scientific realm and not as an opinion-creating amalgam. I agree with Smith and Frye that “throwing away” value is necessary but, still, the problem is that evaluation has been functioning as a main discriminatory tool for so long that now it is very difficult to know, for instance, if early works of Canadian Literature were dismissed because of reigning value axioms or for other reasons. As Herstein Smith points out, “the structure of criticism cannot be so readily disengaged from the history of taste because they are mutually implicating and incorporating” (6). This is precisely why it is still necessary to *re-cover* those early works as feminist and ethnic critics maintain.

Frye’s suggestion apparently took effect. Traditional critics not only stopped overtly valuing texts but, on the contrary, hid their evaluative practices. Renewed critical approaches also showed their agreement with Frye’s theories by questioning traditional evaluating strategies and rejecting any support of them in their studies. As explained before, ethnic and feminist critics on early Canadian Literature avoided evaluative approaches and focused more on researching, unsilencing and voicing previously dismissed works. Although there are currently critical approaches challenging traditional value conferring, the complex issue is still there because the Western canon has been firmly established and protected by its “custodians”. Value was created and supported by the very valuing acts to such an extent that “the *signs* of literary value are, in effect, also its *springs*” and whose repetition in time brought their authorized perpetuation (Herstein Smith: 30). The repeated circulation of a specific universal body of texts founded them as “the high culture of the orthodoxly educated population of the West”; those who fell out of that hegemonic population and for whom those texts did not have value, were regarded as marginal or inferior and their lack of value taken “as evidence or confirmation of the cultural deficiency” (Herstein Smith: 31). Escaping from such a deeply-rooted structure does not appear to be an easy task.

As it will be explained in the next chapter, a very clear example of such assignation of inferiority and/or marginalization in Canada can be found in ethnic literature, and more specifically in First Nations literature. When they started writing in English, they were not able to find a literary tradition to contribute to, neither in that new linguistic vehicle nor in its cultural and literary ties. Their texts were thus riddled

with their own cultural and literary roots and were frequently dismissed for being ‘too ethnic’ or ‘not ethnic enough’, or condescendingly echoed as picturesque contributions. In this sense, ethnic authors bring into question universal literary claims of the Western canon; when they started knocking on the door of Canada’s English-speaking literary tradition they were dismissed for not holding universal values while their contributions could not be regarded in equal terms to other works developed from within that tradition by any means. As pointed out before in this dissertation, Canada’s Anglo-focused and Eurocentric canon influenced its complex of not having a literature worth of praise. The fact of not having a Shakespearian figure led to the common acceptance of lacking a literary tradition whose early contributions deserved to be unfolded. From my viewpoint, this also brought along a general apathy regarding the discovery of Canada’s literary ancestors, whoever they are, and its own literary expression with all its historical, socio-economic, cultural and of course, literary, intermingling aspects.

### III.2 THE ANTHOLOGIZATION OF ENGLISH CANADIAN LITERATURE

As suggested in Herstein Smith’s article, the investigation of literary value implies the analysis of practices such as the repetition of the valuable texts of English Canadian Literature through time since it has helped perpetuate established canonical axioms. Hence, anthologization rises as one of the main canonizing tools which has also served as basis in the construction and perpetuation of a literary tradition and identity in Canada. The anthologizing of English Canadian Literature shows which authors and works were considered canonical, and thus valuable, at a certain time; likewise, they offer a history of the changes in canonicity through the inclusion of previously dismissed writers and the exclusion of contributors who were considered canonical before, as well as a record of those who have been kept within the canon throughout time. As a result, literary anthologies are a crucial means of challenging accepted canonical axioms as well as established ideas on English Canadian literary tradition and identity. In the light of such a relevance, the following section includes an approach to the connection between literary histories, and tradition and identity; subsequent sections focus on the analysis of the anthologizing of English Canadian Literature focusing on

the early novels and novelists covered in Part III of this dissertation in order to bring into question the non-patriarchal and non-racial image of Canada's literary identity.

### III. 2. 1 LITERARY ANTHOLOGIES, TRADITION AND IDENTITY

Following Robert Lecker, there has been a lack of courage among Canadian compilers since they frequently cling to what has already been canonized and anthologized and do not innovate by reconsidering that inherited list of 'major authors that, in turn, has also "enabling[ed] the creation of a retrospective canon that provides a sense of temporal continuity –the so-called Canadian tradition" (1995: 123). Anthologists' work has actually been directed towards demonstrating "the existence of a Canadian literary tradition" so that the value, evolution and stature of Canadian Literature could also be proved (Lecker, 1995: 121). In order to achieve it, compilers have created and perpetuated that list of canonical authors and works, or 'token figures' as Lecker puts it, to which "the best or more representative" of *other* contributions – such as ethnic and/or women's works– have been added to offer the impression of being inclusive and also "lend further credibility to the inheritance" (121). In doing so, they have ultimately created a vicious circle by which contributions are forced to play symbolic functions previously settled in accordance to compilers' ideas. Consequently, works that have not been found appropriate in the exertion of those roles have been disregarded. Texts, then, are used as testimonies which document and establish the presence of a certain literary tradition according to compilers' claims, and are simultaneously asked to fulfil those roles in order to be included. But, once the concept of tradition has been settled, it needs to be further developed by comprising more and more authors and works as landmarks which perpetuate its existence but not as "sharing the stage with several others" lost on the way (122).

Critical works jeopardizing that enduring tradition have not frequently had a visible impact on mainstream anthologies and literary histories. In the case of early English Canadian Literature, such a lack of influence of, for instance, feminist and ethnic critics who have voiced the restrictiveness of Canadian literary tradition by raising dismissed works and authors is perhaps due to the traditional idea that Canada's early literary history is non-existent or that, if it does exist, it is not worthy of being covered (Lecker, 1995: 125). This is precisely what Carole Gerson explores in relation

to early Canadian women writers; as it will be further analysed in the next section, there has been a systematic exclusion of them from Canada's tradition and canon-constructing processes. Two of the most important reasons have been the fact that their texts did not fulfil thematic expectations since their fictions were mainly domestic, and also their exclusion and lack of participation in academic spheres. The same can be said about early ethnic writers, whose contributions have been overlooked or condescendingly considered precisely for their ethnic content. Lecker's *Making it Real* includes a revealing study in this respect on "Inclusion Rates for Authors in Anthologies of Canadian Literature Containing Fiction, 1922-92". According to his analysis early ethnic writing is absent and women's is misrepresented. There is no author of ethnic origin included and only five out of fifteen of the authors are females. Following the common belief that Canada has covered women writers even at early stages, it is quite paradoxical that only Frances Brooke, Susanna Moodie, Catharine Parr Traill, Anna Jameson and Sara Jeannette Duncan are taken into account. Furthermore, the percentage of their inclusion never rises above a thirty-five per cent, being Duncan's low twenty per cent perhaps the most striking. Early female authors like May Agnes Fleming, Margaret Murray Robertson, Susan Frances Harrison, Margaret Marshall Saunders, Joanna E. Wood or Lilly Dougall, and ethnic writers –either male or female– such as Martin R. Delany or Winnifred Eaton brought later into light by feminist and/or ethnic critics are not present.

As Lecker suggests in the conclusion to "Anthologizing English-Canadian Fiction: Some Canonical Trends" works like his or from different perspectives such as feminisms or ethnic studies foster new approaches to Canadian Literature. Many efforts to challenge Canadian monolithism have been made –as those included in the next section– although perhaps not widely reported and considered. In fact, in his opinion, there has also been a delegitimizing process concerning counter-canon criticism, consciously or unconsciously carried out. Maybe the appropriate question here would be why; why has there apparently been a rejection of "defiant" attitudes towards Canada's established literary tradition? What is the use of restraining Canada's literary scope, and above all, taking into account its assumed cultural openness? Again, we are led to suspect about the power of anthologization and stop contemplating it as an innocent canon-making strategy. This resistance towards challenging criticism answers

to a hidden need for perpetuating received axioms so that canon-makers keep their hegemony by approving and re-approving a group of texts through time. As Lecker affirms, “the power of the canon and the power of its members are inseparable: the institution *is* the canon; its members *are* the texts” (1995: 27). In this sense, challenging critical studies demand renewed anthologies which recover silenced voices, investigate literary value, re-think literary history and question the construction and establishment of Canada’s literary tradition and identity.

As far as this dissertation is concerned, literary identity is precisely a crucial aspect intrinsically related to the creation of a literary tradition based on and supported by anthologization. English Canadian anthologies as mirrors of literary tradition are thus essential in so far they inform about how some writers have been included as landmarks, *others* simply mentioned and *others* just left aside, and, consequently, about the mainstays of Canada’s literary identity. As Robert Lecker explains in his chapter about anthologization of English Canadian Fiction included in *Making it Real* (1995), Canada’s search of its own cultural and literary identity had an impact on anthologies for they have been also aimed at reflecting the country’s national character in so far they exhibit the best Canada has written. An analysis of anthologies would then reveal not only changes in authors’ popularity and discriminatory practices but underlying value structures and the “relation between historical forces and canonical activity” (1995: 114). Among those historical powers are, of course, economic factors which have had significant impact on the historization and canonization of literature. As a last resort, these literary practices are immersed within a structure which influences the selection of works on an economic basis either due to editorial restrictions such as book-length or author’s copyright.

In fact, anthologists stamp a certain identity to their literary histories. Thrusts driving their participation as literary historians impinge the axis around which the history they write turns. Very frequently, their choices depend on other factors than the purely aesthetic as, for instance, their academic membership, origins, connections and literary preferences; thus, they need to be taken into account, first, to create awareness about their impact on literary selection, and second, to be able to discern which have come into play in the inclusion/exclusion process. Of course, such factors are subject to changes throughout history and different concepts of literature at different times have

produced different anthologies. As mentioned before, the time when Canada was looking for its cultural identity fostered the establishment of a literary tradition through anthologies and compilations that depicted the nation. In doing so, certain genres were raised above others in so far they were considered better representatives of the country's essence. For instance, realistic and canonical genres according to Eurocentric standards such as the novel were incorporated as fundamental literary contributions at first. Others like juvenile literature were not considered valuable; and some others which in early times were praised, were later rejected when reigning critical trends changed as it is the case of sentimental romances (Lecker, 1995: 127). In this way, anthologies are a great source of information because they reveal changes in critical taste; they show how some widely accepted authors are later left aside, or how disregarded contributions are subsequently canonized as Duncan's *The Imperialist*. Moreover, they are also instructive regarding dismissed writers whose works need to be recovered, analysed and circulated since, otherwise, the perpetuation of the established literary history and tradition of English Canada would be endlessly kept and they would have anything to add to Canada's literary identity whatsoever.

### III.2.1 ANTHOLOGIZING EARLY CANADIAN LITERATURE

This section is inspired by Lecker's "Inclusion Rates for Authors in Anthologies of Canadian Literature Containing Fiction, 1922-92" since it is a close study of anthologies and literary histories aimed at exploring and demonstrating how women's and ethnic authors have been either intermittently considered, misrepresented or excluded from anthologization, and consequently from Canadian literary history, tradition and identity. On the other hand, it is also the result of my own research experience on early English Canadian Literature. When I first approached Canadian Literature in English I naively assumed that all those names repeated over and over again such as John Richardson, Thomas Chandler Haliburton or William Kirby were just the best English Canadian culture had produced and known. The major anthologies I had access to, talked about many writers who appeared almost invariably from one anthology to the next. Later on, I started to realize that the tale that Canada was telling through its anthologies was not fully representative of its complex cultural diversity. When I continued with my research about early English Canadian Literature for the



present dissertation, I had a complete different impression of Canada's critical discourse since some women and ethnic writers had been silenced by mainstream criticism; while they form part of the acclaimed multicultural and non-patriarchal Canadian landscape, their contribution to the country's literary identity has been despised.

In this way, the present analysis is a chronological study of anthologies from 1920 to 2004 which focuses on the representation of early women and ethnic literary contributions to the novel genre within the period covered in this dissertation; that is, from 1769, publication year of Frances Brooke's *The History of Emily Montague* to the twentieth century, more specifically to 1904, when *The Imperialist* by Sara Jeannette Duncan was published. It is divided in two parts, the first being about anthologies from 1920 to 1980, and the second from 1980 to 2004. It is important to bear in mind that many other writers are mentioned in the compilations covered but only those whose literary careers or landmark work were published within this period are taken into account. The two following sections reveal that a cursory survey about female and ethnic writers in English-speaking Canada from early times shows discordance precisely about some of them while there is almost complete agreement regarding canonized writers. This dissonance is visible since whereas the appearance of some of these writers is restricted, other authors have been taken into consideration only for what has been regarded as their one literary achievement which, in some cases, has not achieved the status of significant literary piece despite having been acknowledged as a contribution to a given genre. The widespread recognition of Susanna Moodie is paradigmatic in this respect because it has turned around *Roughing it in the Bush; or, Forest Life in Canada* (1852), as the first non-fictional account about the harshness of settlement in Canada, while her fictional works such as *Flora Lyndsay, or, Passages in an Eventful Life* (1854) have been rarely approached. Similarly, although Frances Brooke's novel is frequently mentioned for having been the first English novel written in and about Canada, its literary achievements are frequently disregarded. Examples as those of Moodie and Brooke, together with all those unravelled in the next two sections, demonstrate that a close study of anthologies and literary histories or stories –so to speak– is necessary in order to discard traditionally accepted axioms and, of course, to bring back to light some authors and contributions so that Canada's literary identity can be rethought. Whereas the subsequent chronological approach shows that an evolution

in the historization of English Canadian Literature has taken place, it also makes clear that there is still work to do.

### III.2.1.1 ANTHOLOGIES FROM 1920 TO 1980

In spite of the fact that the first two anthologies mentioned here are old first-hand documents, they are included as crucial informative sources on Canada's first steps on its way towards the construction of a mainstream Canadian literary history as well as on later ignored or briefly embraced writers and works that were taken into consideration at early times. On the one hand, in Ray Palmer Baker's *A History of English-Canadian Literature to the Confederation* published in 1920, full chapters are only dedicated to novelists as T. C. Haliburton and John Richardson whereas authors as Frances Brooke, Rosanna Leprohon, the Strickland sisters (Susanna Moodie and Catharine Parr Traill) or Gilbert Parker are just mentioned. Perhaps one of the most interesting details is the wrong spelling of Frances Brooke's name as "Francis". Besides, there are only two references to her literary contributions while about Rosanna E. (Mullins) Leprohon, for instance, there are seven.

On the other hand, John Daniel Logan's 1924 *Highways of Canadian Literature* mentions Frances Brooke's novels –in plural, not only *The History of Emily Montague*– and Susanna Moodie within the second chapter entitled "Incidental Pioneer Literature". Logan makes a distinction between Incidental Pioneer Literature "produced by [...] birds of passage" –usually from British origin like Frances Brooke– and Émigré Literature created by emigrants who settled in Canada, as for example, Susanna Moodie whose writings are praised as "unhampered by traditional laws of expression" (44, 47). Such differentiation is important since it marks the intention, or lack of it, of contributing to Canadian Literature on behalf of the writer. From Logan's viewpoint, saving Brooke and Mrs. Anna Brownell Jameson, for incidental pioneer writers Canada was just an excuse to write about their own topics, while émigré writing is assumed to hold continuity within Canadian literary expression. Although Frances Brooke is mentioned as an important figure and her novel was published in 1769, *The History of Emily Montague* is not Canadian fiction's landmark but John Richardson's *Wacousta* (1832). In Logan's opinion, whereas Brooke's novel is an imitation of Samuel Richardson's works, John Richardson's novel is carried out "after the manner of, though not in

imitation of, Fenimore Cooper” (46). Leaving aside the questionable meaning of imitation and the arguable difference between it and inspiration –or “after the manner of”–, Logan seems to overlook that Brooke’s novel did innovate the novel genre; in form, through the use of a renewed epistolary fiction of short letters closer to dialogue, and also in content since her novel contains a challenging message regarding patriarchy, as well as a pioneering fictionalization of Canada as a literary landscape.

Following Logan’s anthology, these first contributors were not involved in the true foundation of Canadian Literature except Joseph Howe and Thomas Chandler Haliburton who are part of “The Nativistic Literature of Canada”<sup>19</sup> that “begins with the historical novels of Major John Richardson” (89). Whereas Richardson’s more acclaimed novel *Wacousta; or The Prophecy: A Tale of the Canadas* was published in 1832, *St. Ursula’s Convent; or, The Nun of Canada* by the also Canadian-born Julia Catherine Beckwith Hart’s was published in 1824. It is difficult to know whether Logan considered Hart’s work a romance or a novel, or if he just disregarded her contribution completely. In any case, Hart’s contribution to early Canadian fiction is not present. Just as in the comparison between Brooke and Richardson, Rosanna Mullins Leprohon’s novels just deserve “a right to a permanent place in the nativistic literature of Canada”, not for their literary merit but for their nationalistic expression, even having been driven by a stronger literary thrust to represent that national essence than that of Richardson (93). As explained previously, Logan seems to be one of those Canadian critics for whom nation-building is crucial in the canonization of authors; his distinction between nativistic and non-nativistic literature speaks of the early critical leanings which set early contributions aside for not being *truly* Canadian and of the exclusion of equally ‘nativistic’ literary expressions either oral or written taking place in Canada before or simultaneously, in English or not, such as those of First Nations. In fact, he goes as far as to state that “if all Canadian imaginative prose were lost, save the romances of Richardson and the satiric comedy of Haliburton, Canada would still have a literature” (92). The problematic his statement introduces lies not only on the fact that it is an exaggeration but that it excludes all other contributions to early Canadian Literature at a stroke. Paradoxically, Richardson “was not a great novelist” in Logan’s opinion but

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<sup>19</sup> Logan considers the former the “founder of the Independent Prose” and the latter of “Satiric Humor and Comic Characterization” (Chapters III and IV).

developed romances worth praising for they “have been read during almost a century since publication, and are still read” (92). Richardson’s success among reading audiences seems reason enough to prove his works’ canonical validity, but it could be questioned if his works’ wide circulation depended and depend exclusively on their literary merit or also on the perpetuation of Richardson as key literary figure from one anthology to another.

Chapter XVI of Logan’s anthology is dedicated to novelists. Frances Brooke is not included in it so it must be assumed that she was not a novelist. Logan’s oversight can be considered as paradigmatic regarding the difficulties of Canadian critics in dealing with alternating literary figures such as Brooke’s who started her literary career in Great Britain, moved to Canada where she wrote *The History of Emily Montague* although it underwent British publication, and went back to Britain. In this section on novelists, the “colored” and “seemingly historic atmosphere” of Margaret Marshall Saunders’s romances *My Spanish Sailor* (1889) and *Rose à Charlitte* (1898)<sup>20</sup> are briefly mentioned; neither further information is offered nor a close approach to her works is carried out (243). Nevertheless, Saunders is again mentioned together with Ernest Thompson Seton and Charles G. D. Roberts as *The Romancers of Animal Psychology*, as Logan calls them, who inaugurated a fiction genre in which “Canadian writers have shown a distinct and unique inventive genius and a corresponding artistry” (251). Although Seton and Roberts have been later acclaimed as the *fathers* of animal fiction, Logan’s claims on *Beautiful Joe* (1894) by Saunders as “one of the literary phenomena of the world” and early representative of the existence of worthy literary substrate in Canada support Elizabeth Waterston’s demands in her chapter about Saunders in *The Silenced Sextet* and undermine its later overlooking (Logan: 253). Anyway, from Logan’s viewpoint, regarding long fiction “it is not until the year 1896 that we come upon a truly legitimate successor to *The Golden Dog*” which is Gilbert Parker’s *The Seats of the Mighty*, unparalleled in Canadian Literature (243). Just as in the case of Richardson, Parker’s “tendency to play to the gallery” is again excused because its valuable features ultimately predominate (247). There seems to be some kind of bull in Logan’s anthology only for some writers while Saunders’s novels full of romance, colour and history do not appear to deserve the same condescension. At this

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<sup>20</sup> Although first published as *Rose à Charlitte*, Saunders’s work was later known as *Rose of Acadie*.

point, Gerson's complaint about the generally accepted good attitude of Canadian scholars towards women writers resonates even louder. In fact, Susan Frances Harrison's ('Seranus') later ignored work *The Forest of Bourg Marie* is included by Logan but as "somewhat unique in early romantic fiction" (my emphasis, 248). Although it is impossible to know what "somewhat" meant for him, his specification introduces a *somehow* relevant inexactness which does not position her work as a fully singular Canadian literary achievement. Nevertheless, according to Logan *The Forest of Bourg Marie* is riddled with excellent descriptions and "a fevered modernity breaks through" (248), unlike from the viewpoint of subsequent compilers who have rarely included it with the exception of feminist studies as Carrie MacMillan's in *The Silenced Sextet* (1992). Finally, in spite of being an interesting research tool regarding later silenced early Canadian writers<sup>21</sup>, two of the most eloquent paradigms of Logan's anthologizing are Joanna E. Wood and Sara Jeannette Duncan. The former is not mentioned in any of the chapters neither under the heading of novelists nor fiction writers whereas her first and most successful novel *The Untempered Wind* was published in 1894. Duncan is included but in the chapter on Humorists; the only and very brief reference to her is about "the fresh quality of the humor of Mrs. Everard Cotes (Sara Jeannette Duncan)" and no mention to her other and many literary achievements is made (327). The fact that her career was being developed almost simultaneously to Logan's history could be taken as reason for such oversight, but the fact that other contemporary works are mentioned and Duncan's 1904 *The Imperialist* is not, cannot be easily excused. It seems more accurate to point out that Duncan's work was generally misunderstood and despised at the beginning. Perhaps, the most revealing aspect of Logan's compilation is his statement about the strong presence of early women writers who "deserve special notice as contributors to the Incidental Pioneer Literature of Canada" (45). It could be questioned where are all their contributions in subsequent mainstream literary histories.

Desmond Pacey's *Creative Writing in Canada; A Short History of English-Canadian Literature* was first published in 1952 and reprinted at least three times later. Its 1964 edition only dedicates one paragraph to John Richardson, Susanna Moodie,

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<sup>21</sup> Such as Agnes C. Laut's 1900 narrative *Lords of the North* and Adeline M. Teskey's *Where the Sugar Maple Grows* (1901).

Rosanna Leprohon and Louisa Murray within the third part of the chapter on the Confederation Era. More detailed information is offered about Sara Jeannette Duncan and Joanna E. Wood, the latter being actually included as a relevant figure of Canadian literary fiction. Another early anthology which offers very useful information on early dismissed authors is Vernon Blair Rhodenizer's *Canadian Literature in English* (1965). Its first chapter is a general theoretical approach to Canadian Literature in which some of its traditional trends are put forward. In fact, Lecker's questioning of the excessive reliance on literature's mimetic values in the Canadian context can be brought up here since for Rhodenizer literature must be "a new creation of artistic truth" (10). Again the concept of Canadian Literature as representative of the nation and, thus, the nationalistic thrusts of its historization are at stake. Regarding Canada as a literary setting Rhodenizer states that it "lends itself admirably to descriptive writing, and Canadian literature is consequently rich in both pictorial and atmospheric description", but forgets the metaphorization carried out by some early writers precisely through their descriptions (2). For instance, in Martin R. Delany's novel, Canada is not merely a landscape but a utopian space far from slavery. Canadian novels, as higher literary pieces than mere descriptive or narrative prose due to their "line(s) of action", are usually "well plotted" and have shown a tendency to rely on history and romanticism; from his viewpoint, the novel genre has moved between realism and romanticism offering a wide range of versions of both types (6, 7). In order to support his defence of didactic fiction, he states that "with regard to idea, every author in every work he [or she] writes to some extent reveals, intentionally or otherwise, his philosophy of life" (8), so that he actually undermines later dismissals of didactic works, many of which happened to have been written by women. The issue is not if works are didactic or not but "how artistically the teaching is done" (8). Likewise, he mentions "factual literature" as a kind of writing which should not be disregarded since it can also attain a high degree of literary merit as many of the personal and travel accounts of early Canadian Literature demonstrate. On the other hand, Rhodenizer also raises animal stories as one of the greatest achievements of Canadian authors. In any case, in Rhodenizer's opinion Canadian Literature is very diverse and that is precisely its main interest which, on the other hand, seems to have been ignored in its historization. Among women writers, not only Brooke, Hart, Moodie, Leprohon, Saunders and

Duncan are included but also some later ignored figures as those of Agnes Maule Machar ('Fidelis'), May Agnes Fleming, Joanna E. Wood, Lily Dougall and Susan Frances Harrison ('Seranus').

Diversity is also a key issue for Carl F. Klinck in his 1965 edition of *Literary History of Canada; Canadian Literature in English*, although ethnic writers are again absent. Along chapters fifteen, sixteen and seventeen main aspects of fiction between 1880 and 1920 are explored. As stated by Gordon Roper in chapter fifteen on "New Forces: New Fiction: 1880-1920", a strong development in Canadian fiction took place during these times because of "the need of a new literature to body forth a new nation" (263). The literary careers of Mrs. Agnes Fleming –who is actually one of scarce examples of professional writers earning a living from fiction– Mrs. Susanna Moodie, and of Margaret Marshall Saunders; the prolific Agnes Machar, Margaret Murray Robertson and Mary Anne Sadlier; and the publication of a first fiction work "in almost every year from 1888 to 1914" by authors such as Saunders, Duncan, Lily Dougall or Joanna Wood are very good paradigms of such evolution (262). Relevant details on the reasons why most of these early Canadian novelists were published outside Canada are also offered so that their exclusion from the canon on foreign printing basis can be proved inaccurate. In spite of the higher accessibility and affordability of books, the considerable spreading of literacy and the growth of reading public in Canada, "very few volumes of fiction by Canadians were published first in Canada" (266). Cheaper reprints of British editions from the United States, the small size of Canadian publishing, and the predominance of the British and United States' markets, as well as the migration of widely read and professional writers in search of what was then regarded as higher literary British and United States' education, provoked that Canadian fiction works were first published outside Canada –mainly in New York, Boston and London– and later at home (270). Although the situation of Canadian publishing companies changed after 1900, the reading public was still not large enough; Canada's English-speaking population was still narrow; literate Canadians were more worried about practical everyday issues; and there was a common assumption on fiction's lower status as a literary genre and on foreign English-writers' higher quality on behalf of Canadian literate readers. John Bourinot even affirmed in 1893 "that no Canadian had written good fiction, that if and when one did, he would be an imitator of a great

English (or American) writer” (qtd. in Klink, 1965: 271). It seems clear then that Canada’s cultural and literary inferiority complex does not stem from modern critics but that it has been forged throughout time from very early stages of Canadian literary evolution. Canadian literary scene started to move forward around 1900 with the improvement of economic conditions, the growth of population and reading public, and the higher degree of Canadian literary content in fiction works. The claim “for the creation of a unique Canadian Literature which would promote a national consciousness” and the rise of nationalism during Laurier’s times inspired by the United States seemed to open a new literary stage in Canada (272). Unfortunately, Canada’s political unity was still too young for readers and they felt closer to local literary production; perhaps, as Roper affirms, Canada embarked on the task of constructing a national literary identity too soon for “young Canadian writers could have learned from their American contemporaries [...] that a literature should be literature first and only then ‘national’” (in Klink, 1965: 273). Roper also maintains that during these years “the modes of romance and novels often mingled in one fiction” connected through their hero-heroine-villain triad but differentiated by the amusement aims of the former and the larger variety of characters and didacticism of the latter (275). In this sense, romances are to be regarded as early paradigms of the evolution of the novel genre and that is why both forms included in this dissertation are under the heading of novels. Despite the generally accepted idea that romance was a passing literary form it was actually very successful, widely read and there was even an “upsurge in popularity of historical romance between 1886 and 1904” (1965: 281). In order to understand the relevance of these literary forms and re-cover them as components of Canadian literary tradition and identity, it is necessary to highlight that, writers of romantic and/or melodramatic novels did not hold the same literariness axioms as those of current academicism. Following Roper, Beharriell and Schieder’s ideas in chapter sixteen, “they practised a popular art; they addressed the widest audience; they wrote for the here and now, and they expected to have their writing judged in this light” (285). This is precisely what Nick Mount’s previously cited commentary on early Canadian novels neglects; being aware of the specificities of early Canadian literary production, that is, *re-historizing* it, is fundamental to grasp its importance and give fair room to it within Canada’s literary tradition and identity.



In Gordon Roper, Rupert Schieder and S. Ross Beharriell's "The Kinds of Fiction: 1880-1920" also included in Klinck's edition of *Literary History of Canada*, prevailing fiction forms, different Canadian regional landscapes as worthy literary settings, as well as women writers' large participation are unravelled. To the literary figures mentioned above, the names of Agnes Laut and Frances Brooke are added. On the other hand, in "Writers of Fiction: 1880-1920" Roper, Beharriell and Schieder list and analyse the "fiction-writing careers of the more skilful writers of these years" among which the later silenced figures of novelists like Sara Jeannette Duncan, Lily Dougall, Margaret Marshall Saunders, and Alice Jones stand out (313). More dismissed authors such as Grant Allen, James Macdonald Oxley, Thomas Stinson Jarvis, Arthur Stringer or Theodore Goodridge Roberts are actually mentioned as members of such collection "diversified enough to be representative of the Canadian fiction writers of the day" (337). Although these names are just part of the large group of fiction writers who developed their careers at that time, their abundant fiction offers a varied picture of the genre so that their disappearance from Canada's canon and literary history prove that there is still a lot of work to do. For them, writing "was an occupation" to be carried out in a professional way –either as their main profession or not– always keeping in mind the audience to whom their texts were addressed and which "was local and international, not national" (338). They developed a "communal" rather than individualistic fiction through their artful use of prevailing literary forms and methods but have been frequently overlooked in spite of having been so broadly read, both in Canada and abroad. Very significantly, they not only qualified Canada as a suitable literary landscape but offered a diverse image of the country and its literature as constituents of the plural cultural and literary identity of Canada.

Only two years after Klinck's version of Canadian literary history was published, *The Oxford Companion to Canadian History and Literature* by Nora Story saw the light. From the frequently dismissed or undervalued authors pinpointed up to now in this dissertation, her compilation includes a somehow high range of them; Brooke, Moodie, Leprohon, Fleming, Dougall, Saunders, Laut and Duncan, are taken into account but it neglects Robertson, Harrison, and Wood. Surprisingly, many of those names cited by Rhodenizer and Klinck are not present in subsequent histories during the seventies decade. In Robert Weaver and William Toye's 1973 edition of *The Oxford*

*Anthology of Canadian Literature* only Moodie and Duncan are mentioned, and in *The Evolution of Canadian Literature in English: Beginnings to 1867* edited by Mary Jane Edwards in the same year just Moodie and Leprohon are taken into account. The most striking absence is perhaps that of Frances Brooke who, despite being included merely as an early Canadian fiction attempt, she tends to be cited as the first Canadian novel in English in previous critical works. In fact, Carl F. Klinck and Reginald E. Waters's 1974 third edition of the *Canadian Anthology* does include Brooke's contribution although only together with Traill, Moodie and Duncan's. *English-Canadian Literature to 1900: A Guide to Information Sources* by R. G. Moyles (1976) is interesting in so far it distinguishes between 'major' and 'minor' authors. Amongst his selection of eleven major authors, only three are women: Isabella Valancy Crawford –mainly a poet because of which she is not analysed in this dissertation– Sara Jeannette Duncan, mentioned also as Mrs. Cotes, and Susanna Moodie; and of course, none is of ethnic origin. From Moyles perspective, Brooke, Dougall, Fleming, Harrison –cited as Susie Frances Harrison– Hart, Leprohon, Agnes Maule Machar, Saunders, and Traill – wrongly named Catherine instead of Catharine– are minor authors, among which there is not even room for ethnic writers. The ascription of a minority status to female writers and the total exclusion of ethnic contributors later perpetuated by subsequent anthologies seem clear in Moyles's compilation. On respect to this major-minor taxonomy, Robert Lecker's *The Annotated Bibliography of Canada's Major Authors* (1979-1994) paradoxically focuses on contemporary writers as if in early times there was no great writer to be praised.

As the title of John Moss's edition of *The Canadian Novel Here and Now: Critical Articles* (1978-1985) implies, his compilation focuses on contemporary contributions to the genre. Yet it is an interesting work for the present dissertation, above all, because of the introductory remarks through which John Moss raises some of the most important questions of Canadian literary criticism. First of all, he sets forth anthologies' restricted applicability for "usually, they are broad in scope and either random or arbitrary in their selection"; as he states, in general they have been lead by specific thrusts, and supported and perpetuated previous canonical activity (7). On the other hand, although he focuses on contemporary Canadian novelists, some of his remarks can be equally applied to early Canadian fiction writers. Moss declares that his

compilation takes “The Canadian Novel” as a basis which somehow offers an impression of oneness whereas what defines these works is actually diversity; despite being “Canada what the writers have in common”, their works are “dissimilar” (7). Early fiction writers alike share Canada and their texts are equally heterogeneous although they are usually mingled as primitive literary attempts. Just as contemporary authors, first contributors to fiction genres “has[have] a voice and a vision” and their voices can be acknowledged as Canadian since they are “informed by the common traditions and common culture that make us a people, however variegated we[they] may be” (7). In spite of Canada’s centrality, I agree with Moss that it is not the country what bounds them but, on the contrary, “through their work [Canada] achieves definition” (7), so that not the experience of Canada but its effect on writers’ consciousness is what can be taken as common element. This idea is very important in relation to the present dissertation since it fosters understanding on the relevance of the fictions of those early authors approached in Part III as literary shapers of Canada and thus as contributors to its identity. Moss’s comment on current writers’ lack of significant innovation is relevant in so far it does not seem to lead to their dismissal as it frequently did and does regarding their predecessors. Romantic and melodramatic novels from early times have been usually disregarded precisely because they seemed to be deficient in literary novelty while they actually pioneered and/or followed current literary trends. Finally, as this dissertation shows, I also coincide with Moss in that “the study of literature should expand, nor limit, our consciousness” (7). In this respect, just as literary texts are “polyglossic” –following Barbara Godard suggestion that will be further explained in the next section– our approaches to literature must be equally varied or “polysemous” –following Northrop Frye–. In order to fully understand literary production, awareness of works as processes, of the intricate set of factors coming into play either in production or perception of literature help understand, for example, “why a novel will sustain many readings from many perspectives” (Moss, 1978-1985: 12).

### III.2.1.2 ANTHOLOGIES FROM 1980 TO 2004

John Moss also paid attention to early Canadian novelists in his 1981 *A Reader’s Guide to the Canadian Novel*. Following his selection, Brooke, Hart, Moodie, Leprohon, Fleming, Dougall, Saunders, Laut, and Duncan are considered prominent

figures in the rise and evolution of the novel genre in English Canada. In this same year, Douglas Daymond and Leslie Monkman's edition of *Canadian Novelists and the Novel* saw the light; it is a very interesting compilation because it embraces critical texts by novelists themselves on the novel genre. Authors play the role of critics and display their varied perspectives on the genre; they show "the extent to which they share, amplify and extend the critical preoccupations of their time" (1). This is precisely why only Hart, Moodie and Duncan are mentioned for their comments are some of the few which have persisted. Hart's most eloquent remarks in the preface to her novel *St. Ursula's Convent* (1824) deal with the "slow progress of improvement" in early English Canadian Literature as well as with timid literary attempts like hers which "can[could] hardly hope to enter into competition with the finished productions of the old world" (23). Her comments are significant because they elucidate the consideration Canadian writers themselves had about their works, always shadowed by the so-called *higher* and already canonical achievements of Europe, which besides, highlights Canada's Eurocentrism even at early times. On Moodie's behalf, "A Word for the Novel Writers" is a powerful defence of fiction based on its usefulness in order to alleviate the high classes' aversion to the genre at her time and a very interesting source information on Moodie's strength as literary critic and defender of fiction. She addresses her readers who are assumed to belong to high social classes and affirms that there is a common but inaccurate belief that "all works of fiction have a demoralizing effect" (44), facts that speak of literature's situation at her time, more as a luxury than a widely accessible item, and of the original disregard of fiction. She ultimately presents her views on fiction as truthful, didactic and moral; as a useful tool to amend privileged classes' ignorance on the life conditions of their impoverished neighbours. Fiction writers are for Moodie "the benefactor[s] of their species, to whom the whole human race owe a vast debt of gratitude" and their works "step[s] towards the mental improvement of mankind" (48, 50).

In the same year, Joseph and Johanna Jones's *Canadian Fiction* was published and whose first chapter entitled "Brooke to Richardson" introduces the crucial issues of Canada's search for identity and its influence on literature. Early Canadian writers seemed to share a common concern about the fact that they "did have a country well worth writing about" and thus an identity to take part in and promote (16). Following

their explanation, fiction evolved from “utilitarian” prose<sup>22</sup> to “proto-fiction” in the form of settlement narratives and travel accounts (16-18). It was not until 1796 when the first “fiction of Canadian origin” saw the light from Frances Brooke’s hands in *The History of Emily Montague*, written in the form of Samuel Richardson’s epistolary novels and worthy in its depiction and insight of Canadian society. Unlike in Brooke’s case, the only remarkable features of the contribution of Julia Catherine Hart for literary historians seem to be the author and the novel’s Canadian origins. Chapter two is devoted to writers from “Haliburton to Moodie” in which John Galt’s frequently dismissed contributions are also mentioned. It is interesting that, while Moodie’s novels are not even cited –except “Spartacus: A Roman Story”<sup>23</sup> written and published before emigrating to Canada– her most widely-known contribution *Roughing It in the Bush* (1852) is said to show the manners of an experienced novelist. In this respect, Joseph and Johanna Jones seem to agree with Carl F. Klinck in that it is difficult to discern what is fiction and what simply factual personal recollection in her work which is mainly regarded as amusing so that her literary features are somehow left aside. It is revealing that Moodie wrote for money, to provide her and her family with an extra-income for their harsh settlement conditions, because it establishes a different position of women as writers in relation to the preceding figure of Frances Brooke and marks a new stage in female authorship. Moodie is also mentioned as the most salient predecessor of genteel writing mainly represented by William Kirby, James de Mille and Sara Jeannette Duncan in chapter three entitled “Kirby to Leacock”. Although Duncan –also occasionally known as “the ‘Canadian Jane Austen’”– and her works are widely analysed, *The Imperialist* is only referred to as “her best-remembered book” and an attractive piece of fiction for “readers who simply enjoy good writing” (39, 41). It is clear that Jones’s consideration of Duncan’s work seems prudent or even circumspect, to say the least. Timid are also their remarks on fiction by female writers in the period from Moodie to Duncan since they acknowledge the participation only of May Agnes Fleming, Mary Ann and Anna Teresa Sadlier and Agnes Maule Machar but state that “none rose to first rank” (39). The case of Fleming, for instance, refutes such assertion

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<sup>22</sup> According to Joseph and Johanna Jones this type of fiction was very frequently of religious character.

<sup>23</sup> This work is not cited in italics because this is the way in which it appears in Joseph and Johanna Jones’s *Canadian Fiction*.

since she was “one of North America’s most popular and financially successful fiction writers of the 1860s and 1870s” (MacMillian, McMullen and Waterston: 52). Once again, this is an example of some generally accepted criteria by mainstream Canadian critics which have been and still are being undone by feminist and ethnic critics as explained in the next chapter.

One year before, in 1980, Robert Lecker also participated in the edition of *ECW’s Biographical Guide to Canadian Novelists* with Jack David and Ellen Quiqley. Their selection includes Frances Brooke, Catharine Parr Traill, Susanna Moodie, Rosanna Leprohon, Agnes Maule Machar and Sara Jeannette Duncan as crucial figures in the evolution of the genre together with canonized writers such as Haliburton, Richardson, Kirby, De Mille, Connor, Parker, Charles G.D. Roberts and Seton. Despite some relevant absences as those of Fleming, Dougall, Wood, or ethnic writers, for instance, Lecker’s work is interesting as a bibliographical source of many currently ignored titles by these authors. It is important to bear in mind that their anthology focuses exclusively on the novel and it is one of the very few occasions in which Traill appears as a relevant contributor. Although she is mostly known for her non-fiction work *The Backwoods of Canada* (1836) –just as her sister Susanna Moodie with *Roughing It in the Bush; or, Life in Canada* (1852)– many of her contributions to fiction are at least taken into account. As far as Moodie is concerned, she is said to be “undoubtedly the best known among contemporary readers” from the group of “Canadian pioneering figures who found time to devote to literary interest” (27). Her most successful work is cited and her juvenile fiction and novels such as *Flora Lindsay; or, Passages in an Eventful life* (1854) are also referred to. Regarding the first Canadian-born writer to publish a novel, it is revealing to note that Rosanna Leprohon’s main literary achievement *Antionette de Mirecourt; or, Secret Marrying and Secret Sorrowing* (1864) is “her only novel in print today” whereas her other contributions remain silenced (40). Machar’s frequent exclusion from the canon is meaningful since her most known work *For King and Country; A Story of 1812* (1874) won a prize from The Canadian Monthly and National Review. But it was not the only competition she won for her 1870 *Katie Johnstone’s Cross: A Canadian Tale* also “garnered a prize offered by a Toronto publishing house, Messrs. Campbell and Son” and *Lucy Raymond; or, The Children’s Watchword* got the Campbell’s prize in 1871 (46). In this respect, as

it will be explained in the next section following Carole Gerson, not only women writers met more obstacles when they took part in literary competitions but, on top of that, their works have been overlooked by mainstream canonicity even when they obtained official recognition at their time. Finally, Duncan's "extraordinary literary life" is detailed by Thomas E. Tausky who, in addition, highlights the adverse critical comment her best and widely-known 1904 novel *The Imperialist* got because, from his viewpoint, "critics were opposed in principle to the use of a Canadian setting to dramatize the issue of imperialism" (Lecker 1980: 78-9). Tausky's comment is very significant because it points out the restrictions imposed by mainstream criticism at certain periods and opens a research space to be analysed in order to elucidate the reasons why some works were dismissed, as this dissertation attempts. Very probably, this fact together with Duncan's novel modernity fostered its early relegation to the margins of Canadian Literature.

Sara Jeannette Duncan is indeed overlooked in Russell Brown and Donna Bennett's edition of *An Anthology of Canadian Literature in English* (1982) although Brooke, Traill and Moodie are actually included. Unlike this 1982 literary history, William Toye's *The Oxford Companion to Canadian Literature*, published the following year, does include Duncan. It also takes into account Brooke, Hart, Moodie and Leprohon, and even Fleming, Dougall, and Saunders although Robertson, Harrison, Machar and Wood are again silenced. In the chapter on "Novels in English: Beginning to 1900", Mary Jane Edwards underlines Frances Brooke's pioneering figure since *The History of Emily Montague* meant a first shift in the production of fiction in Canada at a time when "there was little in the local society to encourage the creation of Canadian fiction in English"; her novel was one rare example of the genre in eighteenth-century North America (565). Furthermore, Brooke's depiction and analysis of English-French tensions, social diversity through the presence of native peoples, Eurocentrism, or colonialism as literary themes are now regarded as parts of the "national mythology" (568). Her achievement was a precursor followed by the frequently silenced figures and works of John Galt's *Bogle Corbet; or, the Emigrants* (1831), Frederick Marryat's *The settlers in Canada*, R.M. Ballantyne's *Snowflakes and Sunbeams; or, the Young Fur Traders. A Tale of the Far North* (1856) and William Dean Howells' *Their Wedding Journey* (1871). The latter includes a "lengthy chapter on 'The sentiment of Montreal'"

(565). Many of these early novels were published in book-form in Britain, like Brooke's and Ballantyne's, or the United States as Howells' since there was still not a strong middle class with enough purchasing power or even time for leisure reading in Canada. Following Edwards's explanation, it seems that being published in English-speaking environments other than Canada had the advantage of getting audiences with higher levels of literary comprehension and appreciation. Addressing to international audiences had some consequences on these authors' contributions to Canadian fiction notwithstanding. On the one hand, foreign literary trends and writers had an impact on "the kinds of fiction one could –and should– write" as well as on the topics to be fictionalized (567). The favourable reception among international audiences of Canadian romances such as Richardson's *Wacousta*, for example, shows that romances were the trend; the treatment of foreign or national but exotic themes, as in the case of Duncan or Machar, also launched their contributions to international recognition. On the other hand, according to Edwards foreign influences somehow prevented the development of an *authentic* Canadian fiction. In any case, some of these early works already introduced thematic and formal innovations developed by later literary generations as Brooke's novel, "the seminal work of Canadian fiction in English" (568). Many of these first fiction writers were also first published serially in Canadian newspapers as in the case of Leprohon and Moodie whose works were published by *The Literary Garland* from Montreal; for instance, Moodie's *Roughing It in the Bush* was first partially published in Canada in *The Literary Garland* and *The Victoria Magazine* before appearing in London in 1852 in book-form (566). The fact that Edwards classifies Moodie's account as "semi-fictional" is an example of Canadian criticism's lack of agreement since it is usually mentioned as prose and not fiction, but connects Edwards' consideration to that of Joseph and Johanna Jones.

Lecker, David and Quiqley are also the editors of *Canadian Writers and Their Works: Fiction Series* (1983- ) in which, although Joann E. Wood is not mentioned, Susanna Moodie has her own entry, Rosanna Leprohon and Agnes Maule Machar are included within a section about Victorian Canada –all in volume one– and wide critical attention is paid to Sara Jeannette Duncan and her contributions –in volume three–. George Woodcock's remarks on early Canadian fiction in English in the "Introduction" to volume one of that edition are worth considering. First of all, Woodcock



acknowledges that women writers' ostensible relevance even during early times is "striking" for him which is, in my opinion, is a personal remark not lacking certain relevance. Be that what it may, the selection of early fiction writers in this volume actually includes five female contributors who were strongly devoted to writing out of a total of seven. By contrast, Woodcock later affirms that only John Richardson can be claimed to be "the first Canadian-born writer in English of any significance" (18). Secondly, he mentions Moodie and Traill as significant representatives of first settlers and Brooke, Leprohon and Machar as epitomes of "freedom of manners in early Canadian society" (12). As far as this dissertation is concerned, Woodcock significantly brings into question the absence of females figures such as Brooke's from the Canadian canon together with some other male figures that should have been incorporated from the beginning given their evident weight. From my viewpoint it seems paradoxical that although for him *The History of Emily Montague* is a forerunner for being a singular novel achievement, it did not receive careful analysis in Canada until the 1920s thanks to Lorraine McMullen's research and impulse. In fact, for Woodcock she is not to be regarded as trailbreaking as the Strickland sisters who pioneered as settlers and contributors to Canadian Literature because Brooke was "a visitor rather than a resident" (15). In any case, Brooke as well as other authors who were more involved with Canada, like Richardson, Moodie, Traill and Leprohon are very interesting sources in so far they not only show early Canada but "the literature that emerged from it" (Lecker 1983: 14). In order to understand their contributions, it is necessary to pay attention to the ways in which the clash between the old and the new world is explored and turned into literature even if they employed foreign literary forms at a time when English Canada had "not yet developed the system of myths and symbols" that would later shape the country's cultural identity to which these early writers had already contributed (17).

Once more, John Moss is the editor of *The Canadian Novel, Beginnings: A Critical Anthology* (1984 - ) and author of its "Introduction" in which he asserts the existence of a Canadian fiction tradition. Early writers' contributions are in his opinion crucial in so far they "transcend as classics in our tradition" whose existence is precisely proved by these author's writings. Following Moss, just as Canada's historical past has been changeable, its early literary expression may be regarded as "positively mercurial"

and evolving through a varied range of agents who have played significant parts in bringing about early Canadian Literature. In this sense, Canada's earliest novel by Frances Brooke is as essential as its historical garrison times during colonization are; as a result, to approach early fiction works as that of Brooke's, the same diversity they show must be also embraced by critical approaches (7). On the other hand, Moss includes a very interesting section in which he subverts the most commonly accepted and detrimental "myths" of Canadian criticism whose deconstruction may lead to "discover other, more valid characteristics of the tradition" and support some of the claims of this dissertation (13). The first has to do with the accepted hegemonic presence of the land in fiction which in his opinion is present "on a nearly subliminal basis" with the possible exception of Moodie's *Roughing It in the Bush* and Richardson's *Wacousta* (9). Secondly, he also undermines the negative perception of nature as a monster since it is also fictionalized in positive terms. The third misconception deals with the generally assumed lack of optimism and humour of early fiction of which Brooke, Moodie and Duncan's wise, rich, and comic texts are counter-paradigms to such an extent that "humour, satire, wit, [and] effervescent vitality" can be said to be the basis of Canada's solid literary tradition (10). In fourth place, Moss points out the pervasive European and US influences which have brought the undervaluing of early fiction (11). The development of pure Canadian themes as well as the presence/absence of Canadian settings in early contributions have also been some of the common requirements of mainstream criticism while, for Moss, "voice and vision are far more important in characterizing a tradition than content" (12). The sixth myth to be deconstructed is very significant in relation to many of the authors approached in Part III; I agree with Moss regarding the fact that many writers were and are not Canadian-born but immigrants cannot be taken as a strict principle of a non-existent Canadian experience but, on the contrary, as axis to explore the varied significances it has had throughout time. Moss's remark on the need of acknowledging old and different concepts about the country which "do not conform to the present definition" is crucial in order not to exclude past stages and early writing at a stroke due to a lack of understanding on behalf of contemporary criticism. Finally, the inferiority complex regarding the absence of Canadian landmark literary work is also challenged; the works included in his anthology are to be regarded as 'classics' but from different

perspectives, either “aesthetically, [or] culturally, [or] historically” (13). Although broadly speaking I agree with Moss, from my viewpoint his list of seven authors – Brooke, Haliburton, Richardson, Moodie, De Mille, Duncan and Leacock– needs to be extended so that Canada’s early tradition will be unfolded as a wide and diverse lineage of foreign and native-born authors who have strongly contributed as those voiced in this dissertation.

David Stouck’s selection of Canada’s best writers of all times in 1984 *Major Canadian Authors: A Critical Introduction* is actually a clear example of the critical credit given to Moss’s seven myths regarding early Canadian Literature. From early fiction authors only Moodie is mentioned, with the astonishing absence of Sara Jeannette Duncan. Likewise, in W. J. Keith’s *Canadian Literature in English* (1985) blatant absences are also worth nothing. The Strickland sisters, Moodie and Traill, are included under the heading of prose and their contributions to fiction overlooked. In “The Beginnings in Fiction”, Frances Brooke’s *The History of Emily Montague* is cited “as an interesting beginning” for its depiction of the garrison mentality and British life under Canadian harsh climatic conditions but “also [as] a dead end” (42). Keith’s comment on Brooke’s novel is paradigmatic as it reinforces previous value-making comments in relation to this work and speaks of the reluctance of Canadian compilers to innovate. In contrast, Keith praises *The Imperialist* and complains about the cataloguing of Duncan’s figure as a *minor* novelist because in his opinion “she brought a critical intelligence, a professional competence, and above all a stylistic sensitivity to Canadian fiction at a time when they were desperately needed” (49). In consonance with Moss in *The Canadian Novel*, Keith also explores the evolution of early Canadian Literature, its history and tradition in his “Introduction”. In relation to the unfavourable conditions for literary development in early Canada, Keith adds the puritan character of Canada’s construction, the culturally “ambiguous compromise” of the new country with past colonial centres or the lack of creative impulses to distance from colonial ties as slowing down factors (2). Similarly, the original agreement on the absence of a praiseworthy Canadian literary tradition has been carried out without paying serious attention to the actual literary achievements of early Canada according to him. When colonial ties were presumably broken –despite new ones regarding its southern neighbour were being created– and Canada started its search for identity and literature’s

affirmation played a crucial role. I agree with Keith that the word identity is “a Canadian favourite” and I would add that it is meaningful since its constant appearance highlights the country’s anxiety about its identification, either socio-political or cultural (4). Although Canada’s cultural assertion focused more on contemporary literary contributions, they helped realize about its diversity which is still to be unfolded regarding early Canadian Literature.

George L. Parker also undermines Canada’s weak knowledge about its early literary tradition in his introduction to *The Colonial Century: English-Canadian Writing Before Confederation* edited by A. J. M. Smith in 1986. In Parker’s opinion, critical works as those of Roper or Klinck, mentioned in this section, have helped not only recover works but undo “the myth of its supposed dullness and gentility” (Smith 1986: viii). This critical work actually focuses on non-fiction in order for “non-imaginative prose” to gain a place within Canadian literary tradition (x). Nevertheless, fiction writers as Brooke are taken into account. On the other hand, the 1988 revised Canadian edition of *Elements of Fiction* by Robert E. Scholes and Rosemary Sullivan is interesting in so far Duncan and Leacock, for instance, share space with Edgar Allan Poe, Melville, Mark Twain and Flaubert, Tolstoy or Chéjov in the attempt, perhaps, to level Canadian Literature’s stature with internationally canonized literatures. Its introduction is engaging for its exploration of the fiction genre from which the differences and intersections between fact and fiction and romance features are the most significant in relation to this dissertation. On the one hand, following Scholes and Sullivan fact is “a thing done” and fiction is “a thing made” so that fact disappears once it has taken place –despite its sequels– while fiction remains (3-4). History is the area that has been both done *and* made, that is, where fact and fiction intersect. Contrary to what is generally maintained, fact and fiction in history are not opposites but reciprocal terms; they coexist and inform each other. According to Scholes and Sullivan, despite history traditionally meant “inquiry or investigation” it came to mean both what “have[has] happened” and its “recorded version” so that “fact, in order to survive, must become fiction” (1988: 4). In this way, the overlapping between fact and fiction can be so powerful that the task of distinguishing between both frequently becomes very hard, not only regarding what is told but what has been silenced. In consonance with the historical issues outlined previously in this dissertation, it is crucial to note that history

in the end registers some facts and despises others, the same as literary history does; in fact, the history of literature should be the actual account of what has been written but it is ultimately a fiction of valuable works constructed by those telling that literary story. On the other hand, for Scholes and Sullivan romance is simply another fiction formula and there is no lower status to be ascribed to it in relation to more realistic forms; romances are just different in so far they take reality or fact as a basis to express some ideas, however didactic or moralistic.

Like Carole Gerson's *Canada's Early Women Writers: Texts in English to 1859* (1994) –cited in later sections– W. H. New's editions of *Canadian Writers Before 1890* and *Canadian Writers 1890-1920* both from volume 099 and 092 respectively of the *Dictionary of Literary Biography* (1990) are very useful sources of information to re-cover dismissed authors. The former volume pays attention to common canonical authors; dismissed or frequently undervalued writers as Brooke, Fleming, Galt, Harrison, Hart, Leprohon, Moodie, and Traill; and female excluded figures as those of Harriet Vaughan Cheney, Sara Anne Curzon, Eliza Lanesford Cushing, Anne Langton, Anna Leonowens, Mary Anne Sadlier, Elizabeth Simcoe, or Agnes Ethelwyn Wetherald, among many male writers who are also taken into account. Contrasting Gerson and New's sources, the only writers from this last group confirmed as fiction contributors are Eliza Lanesford Cushing and Mary Anne Sadlier. As far as the latter compilation is regarded –along with widely-known authors– Robert Barr, Dougall, Duncan, Agnes Christina Laut, Machar, Saunders, and Wood, together with ignored writers Alice C. Jones, Marian Keith, Madge Macbeth, Isabel Ecclestone MacKay, Dora Mavor Moore, Marjorie Pickthall, and Jessie Georgina Sime are included. The absence of Margaret Murray Roberston is curious but it is perhaps due to the fact that her contribution is mainly regarded as juvenile literature. But the most interesting aspect of these histories is the fact that an ethnic English Canadian author is included for the first time, Grey Owl (Archibald Stansfeld Belaney). Of course, works like these are crucial because they open up research opportunities on early Canadian Literature and demonstrate there are works and authors yet to be unfolded.

In 1993 *George Woodcock's Introduction to Canadian Fiction*, Woodcock again offers a very interesting insight on the evolution of English Canadian Literature. Along the progression in Canada from “literature about a country but not of it” to the rise of an

*authentic* literary expression, early contributors are crucial because they participated in raising a fresh literature and “influenced not only our views of ourselves but also our ways of expressing them” (3). Although Frances Brooke is taken as one of the many paradigmatic “birds of passage”, she cannot be considered a crucial piece of Canadian literary tradition but must be included in Canada’s literary history from Woodcock’s perspective (3). I do not share Woodcock’s distinction between tradition and history for they inform each other; as explained before, there is a feedback between both to such an extent that what is ignored by literary history does not gain access to tradition, as the case of Joanna E. Wood, Canadian-born and resident, proves. Woodcock’s first chapter on “Pioneers and Garrisons” includes Brooke, Richardson, Leprohon, Moodie and *others* who are not even mentioned. The title of chapter two “Has-Beens or Lasting Names?” is significant because it suggests one of the most frequent crossroads of Canadian criticism regarding early writers; that of taking the “Grand Has-Beens” into account because they were prominent at a time despite having been forgotten later. He actually compares Parker “dismissed as a writer ranging from mediocre to bad” to his contemporary Sara Jeannette Duncan who was less popular but is gaining more recognition unlike Parker (20). Duncan is closely analysed in the next chapter entitled “Madly Off in All Directions” to express the diverse responses to similar conditions that authors show. Diversity is once more highlighted as one of Canadian Literature’s main features to be fostered and even encouraged; according to Woodcock, “the more they[authors’ differentiated voices] differ from each other, the better” (35). It is clear that his comment runs against nationalistic claims in search of a common and truly Canadian voice; the problem is again the fact that diversity has been frequently narrowed for some alternating voices are rarely heard. As far as Duncan is concerned and in relation to Woodcock’s comment on early “birds of passage”, it could be questioned the extent to which she should be considered or not as another temporary writer since she moved to India and only one of her novels is set in Canada. The explanation he gives for this is that she “never cut her mental ties with Canada”, a subjective remark notwithstanding. In any case, Woodcock’s is one of the few compilations in which Duncan is considered “possibly the best Canadian fiction writer before the 1930s” and traditional Canadian criticism’s resistance to acknowledge her achievements are clearly stated (40).

R. G. Moyles 1994 edition of *Improved by Cultivation: An Anthology of English-Canadian Prose to 1914* also focuses on variety, although this time applied to prose. The main goal of this anthology as stated in its introduction is to emphasize Canada's literary wealth and diversity before the twentieth century and see its intersections with current fiction (8). Traill, Moodie and other ignored non-fiction writers are included in the second part on "Memoirs and Descriptive Sketches"; Brooke is paradoxically mentioned in "Satirical and Humorous Sketches"; and Dougall, Duncan, and Marjorie Pickthall in the fifth part on "Short Stories". According to the present study of English Canadian anthologies, this is the second rare example in which a First Nations' English writer is taken into account in any genre, George Copway. As Penny Petrone explains in *Native Literature in Canada: From the Oral Tradition to the Present* (1990), Copway or Kah-ge-ga-gah-bowh's ('Firm Stading') autobiographical narrative was published in 1847 as *The Life, History, and Travels of Kah-ge-ga-gah-bowh (George Copway)*, re-edited six times later and which appeared as *Recollection of a Forest Life* in 1850 in London. Its significance lies on the fact that it was not only "the first ever written by a Canadian Indian" but "the first tribal history written in English by a North American Indian" so that Copway can be said to be the first member from First Nations to participate as a writer in English (Petrone, 1990: 45, 43).

The second edition of *The Oxford Companion to Canadian Literature* by Eugene Benson and William Toye (1997) is significant because Fleming, Machar, Robertson and Saunders' contributions to Canadian fiction and the novel genre are voiced. Whereas Fleming is mentioned as "one of the first Canadians to pursue a highly successful career as a writer of fiction" (406), Machar is included as a versatile and prolific writer and Robertson stands out for her twelve chiefly didactic and religious novels and her contributions to juvenile literature. On the other hand, despite Donna Bennet and Russell Brown's *A New Anthology of Canadian Literature in English* (2002) does not cite these four women writers, it is the first compilation in which Sara Jeannette Duncan is said to be "Canada's first modernist writer" (154). Important details of her literary career are offered as the use of different pen-names before her full immersion in journalism in which she arrived to be "the first woman to hold a full-time position" (154). Her Canadian novel *The Imperialist* is referred to as "Duncan's masterpiece" and literary patriarchy is made clear since its underestimation answers to

Canadian critics' inability to recognize women writers of the time as authorized conveyors of such witty and innovative insight into a knotty topic for Canadian audiences as imperialism (155). Her ironic analysis of Canadian society is also evidenced and her role as predecessor of Leacock suggested. In this respect, it can be said that regarding the consideration of Duncan's literary figure there has been an evolution from even absence to appraisal as a pioneer author.

In fact, Duncan's novel is again included as founder of Canadian fiction modernism in the *Encyclopedia of Literature in Canada* (2002) by William H. New. She is mentioned as "arguably the most accomplished novelist before the First World War" and her incursion into realism through *The Imperialist* as the passage to a new era (829). Previous to Duncan's achievement, the evolution in the novel genre started with Frances Brooke's *The History of Emily Montague* that somehow fostered women's partaking in literature, introduced "satire, realism, and [...] romance" and is not to be despised as a mere sentimental novel since it also "highlights the advantages to society of listening to the opinions and observations of independent-minded women" (829). From Brooke onwards, different types of novels were carried out, from the gothic romance of Hart through Moodie's autobiographical account, Leprohon's didacticism, Richardson and Kirby's fictionalized history, or satirical and humorous works as Leacock's, to Duncan's realism. In addition, at the beginning of New's entry on the novel there is a distinction between "popular fiction" and more innovative forms worth noting; being the former usually traditional and "formulaic" and the latter less conventional, a ranking that somehow implies a higher-lower scale by which novels can be discriminated seems to be introduced.

Finally, *The Cambridge Companion to Canadian Literature's* 2004 edition by Eva-Marie Kröller is a very revealing compilation for the close analysis of Canadian Literature's anthologization developed in this section. The inclusion of independent sections dedicated to "Aboriginal Writing", "Writing by Women", or even to "Canadian Literary Criticism and the Idea of a National Literature" show a more reliable intention of grasping Canadian literary diversity as well as of taking critical writing, its perspectives and impact on the construction of Canada's literary history, tradition and identity into account. On the other hand, Penny Van Toorn's chapter included in Kröller's anthology raises some of the most basic misconceptions regarding "Aboriginal



Writing” such as the common underestimation of native oral tradition as inferior to written literature. Oral forms are not a previous stage of cultural development towards the peak of written literature but are regarded “as a source of meaning [...] and as a resource” by First Nations writers (24). Variety plays a crucial role since oral traditions vary to a large extent from one part of Canada and/or North America to another. Similarly, aboriginal writing is not a lineal progress towards the adoption of the Roman alphabet “but rather an array of co-evolutionary lines of development in which diverse writing systems were devised in different places” (27). The issue of writing in relation to First Nations is intricate in so far it depends on what is considered writing, so that the question of European/Western standards applicability to aboriginal production is at stake. As Van Toorn explains, First Nations writing could have begun with missionary teaching of young aboriginal generations, with transcriptions of oral texts by members of religious orders, with pictographs, or under colonial establishment during the nineteenth century. As explained elsewhere, when First Nations adopted a foreign language as English for some of their literary productions, they were trapped by foreign cultural patterns. Some like Peter Jones or George Copway managed to develop their own texts –however biased– and “founded the Canadian Native literary tradition” that did not imply the total rejection of their cultural ancestry but rather a mixture of oral, literary, European and aboriginal cultural elements (29). Among these early contributors, aboriginal women writers did not stand out perhaps because, “like most of their non-Native contemporaries”, their contributions “were confined to private and domestic spheres” (30). This comment is a bit awkward from my viewpoint since it mixes a too varied array of women; in order to have a clearer idea, analysing the different ways in which women were subjected in aboriginal communities and the influence of an imported patriarchal super-structure within which these communities were gathered after colonization would be necessary. In chapter seven on “Fiction”, Marta Dvorak’s comments on the literary development of Canada as in other postcolonial cultures from “imitation or emulation” through “assimilation” recall those of Elaine Showalter but Dvorak adds another stage of reconsideration of what “had been considered marginal” (155). In this way, Frances Brooke’s novel is the product of a colonial period when romance, autobiography and travel accounts were the trend and authors, who remained only momentarily in the colony, felt closer to the colonizing

cultural centre. Brooke's contribution seems to have been significant for Dvorak establishes relations between her novel and Leprohon's in their "use of the particular to describe the general", with Kirby and Parker's for the inclusion of a French-Canadian setting, and Duncan's approach of "serious political issues" (157, 158). For Dvorak, Moodie and Traill's "hybrid texts" fall into the category of "the picaresque episodic mode"; Moodie's text is significant in so far it shows a clash between old and new paradigms and precedes Haliburton in employing dialectical forms (156). On the other hand, Duncan is regarded a pioneer writer who forwent authors such as Hugh MacLennan, is classified neither as purely realistic nor modernist, and her witty analysis is included as the first work in which "an emerging national consciousness" seems to appear (158). According to Dvorak, modernism –which was actually vaguely and occasionally present in Canada in her opinion–, with its groundbreaking techniques and themes, seems not to be applicable to Duncan. Other salient female fiction figures of the period covered as Fleming, Dougall or Wood are mentioned neither in Dvorak's chapter nor in Coral Ann Howells' "Writing by Women". It has to be noted that this chapter is mainly devoted to female authors after 1960 and they are actually considered successors of those early pioneers, "inheritors of a long tradition of women's writing in Canada" (195).

To conclude, this diachronic study of English Canadian literary histories and anthologizing shows that the history that Canadian compilers have been writing and constructing up to now is firm regarding some canonical authors whereas hesitancy is revealed in relation to early contributors. In this way, general agreement on the relevance of John Richardson, James De Mille, Thomas C. Haliburton, William Kirby, Gilbert Parker and Ralph Connor can be observed. Despite the fact that Frances Brooke, Julia C. (Beckwith) Hart, Susanna Moodie, Catharine Parr Traill, Rosanna Leprohon, and Sara Jeannette Duncan are usually mentioned in nearly all the compilations mentioned before, their literary achievements are generally overlooked. Although Brooke is frequently taken into account for the first novel in English written from and about Canada, some critics highlight the significance of such an early contribution. As far as Julia Catherine Beckwith Hart's *St. Ursula's Convent; or, The Nun of Canada* (1824), the only features worth noting are the Canadian origins of both author and novel. The Strickland sisters, Moodie and Traill, are almost invariably cited for their

prose works although some doubts about the lack of fictional features of Moodie's work are pointed out. The only compilation where Rosanna M. Leprohon is said to have contributed to Canadian Literature with more novels apart from the frequently mentioned *Antoniette de Mirecourt* (1864) is Robert Lecker's *ECW's Biographical Guide to Canadian Novelists* (1980). Sara Jeannette Duncan's case is perhaps the most revealing. While her work is absent from early literary histories, her figure has gone through a reconsideration process from silence and dismissal to the rising of her novel *The Imperialist* (1904) as a landmark in Canadian Literature.

On the other hand, much less agreement is shown with regard to frequently forgotten women writers like Agnes Maule Machar ('Fidelis'), May Agnes Fleming, Margaret Murray Robertson, Lily Dougall, Margaret Marshall Saunders, Joanna E. Wood, and Susan Frances Harrison ('Seranus'). An overview of the histories analysed in this section shows that some of them were taken into account mainly in early literary anthologies but have rarely been recovered by more current compilers except for some notable exceptions as that of Carl F. Klinck's *Literary History of Canada; Canadian Literature in English* (1965). From this group of writers, Joanna E. Wood's dismissal is, in my opinion, the most significant; she was a professional writer, literary commentator and contributed with many novels from which *The Untempered Wind* (1894) stands out. In spite of being cited but scarcely, no detailed analysis of her novel is carried out in any of the anthologies mentioned. Some male writers from this period were also silenced and appear in some literary histories although briefly like John Galt or Robert Barr, to cite just some. The traces of authors like Mary Anne Sadlier, Anna Teresa Sadlier, Agnes C. Laut or Eliza Lanesford Cushing can only be pinpointed in mainstream anthologies. Finally, ethnic writers in English are almost completely overlooked except for two brief entries on Grey Owl (Archibald Stansfeld Belaney) and George Copway or Kah-ge-ga-gah-bowh which, in spite of being on contributions to non-fiction, are worth mentioning for their novelty. Early ethnic authors as contributors to the novel genre are completely ignored; from the period surveyed in this dissertation, blatant absences as those of Martin R. Delany and Onnoto Watanna need to be highlighted.

Finally, this history of literary histories does not only epitomize the changeability and evolution of Canada's literary historizing but the establishment of literary value and the construction of a literary tradition and identity in which

anthologizing has played a crucial role. Although a relevant place is offered to diversity, sometimes it is only as a good intentions statement. In the next chapter, ethnic and feminist critical works and specific literary histories will be analysed because they do not only challenge mainstream anthologizing but reveal the diversity highlighted by some of the compilers mentioned above.

## CHAPTER IV

### **CHALLENGING ENGLISH CANADIAN LITERARY HISTORY, TRADITION AND IDENTITY: FEMINISMS AND ETHNIC STUDIES.**

Taking into account what has been exposed in the previous chapter, it seems clear that the contribution of ethnic and feminist perspectives is crucial since both either in intersection or separately, foster the questioning of Canadian literary history, tradition and identity. In this sense, in order to investigate the ways in which English Canadian literary history, tradition and identity are challenged by feminist and ethnic critics, it is necessary to pay attention to the fundamental issues that both approaches have raised. In fact, the interrogation of the canonization of English Canadian Literature, the analysis of the participation of counter-canonical criticism, and the investigation of literary value and evaluation in Canada carried out in Chapter III, are some of the most significant aspects that have encouraged feminist and ethnic critical work. Likewise, the study on anthologization included in the previous chapter is reinforced by what both feminist and ethnic critics have commented on their different contributions to Canadian literary criticism. At the same time, while reflecting on these issues, they have also carried out the essential task of opening a debate on cutting-edge aspects such as sexism and racism in English Canadian culture and literature.

In this respect, the present chapter offers an approach to the fundamental concerns of both ethnic and feminist studies mostly in relation to early Canadian fiction in English, since this is the main focus of the present dissertation. With this spirit, the ways in which they have challenged Canadian literary history, tradition and identity, their analysis of racist and sexist practices and of the construction of Canada's multicultural and non-patriarchal literary identity are investigated. Furthermore, a study on the crucial voicing of ethnic and female writing in English Canadian Literature that

both approaches have carried out is also included because it actually corroborates the analysis of mainstream anthologies outlined in Chapter III. Besides, through their unfolding of silenced voices, they have offered renewed tools and differential analyses that help understand ethnic and women writers' literary achievements and question their marginality. Finally, by means of granting access to texts otherwise ignored, ethnic and feminist critics have opened a new path into the diverse senses of Canadian identity these literary pieces entail.

#### IV.1 WHY DO WE READ WHAT WE READ?<sup>24</sup>

As it has been made clear in chapter III, “why do we read what we read?” has been precisely the question that mainstream critical discourses have not approached in Canada and which, in turn, has led counter-critical perspectives to challenge Canada's literary canon and value, and by extension Canadian literary history, tradition and identity. What ethnic and feminist critics and compilers have been carrying out through the voicing of silenced writers is actually writing different literary histories of Canada. In this sense, it may be thought that Canadian literary history and tradition are not what we have been told up to now, or at least not only that but also what ethnic and feminist criticism brings up. Nevertheless, the repercussion of the unfolding carried out by ethnic anthologies went and still goes beyond the only attempt of rescuing silenced writers since it implied and implies the questioning of Canada's literary canon and history. Consequently, Canadian literary identity is also at stake.

##### IV.1.1 QUESTIONING ENGLISH CANADIAN LITERARY CANON AND HISTORY THROUGH THE NOVEL GENRE

Through the approach and analysis of ethnic and women authors' contributions, critics realized that the literary canon in Canada had been exclusionary and started challenging its axioms and inclusion/exclusion practices. Questioning established

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<sup>24</sup> The title of this section and more specifically the question “Why do we read what we read?” is taken from Robert Lecker's *Canadian Canons. Essays in Literary Value* since his work has inspired the inclusion of the present debate (1991: 4).

postulates involves a cross-examination of the power structure which fostered and sustained them for, as Robert Lecker points out, “canonical enquiry is deliberately aimed at destabilizing authority through its analysis of the intermingling structures that uphold the political, economic, social, and cultural institutions that house the prevailing versions of literary history, tradition, form, and taste” (1991: 4).

Although during first stages new anthologizing perspectives did not have a strong impact, in the 1990s a great deal of challenging criticism started to unravel somehow inspired by what counter-anthologies had brought to light. In this sense, Canadian canonization, and thus literary value and the established tradition and history of Canadian Literature, started to be discussed and today “canonical theory [still] continues to focus on how literature is the product of ideological forces that remain largely unexamined” (Lecker, 1991: 4). As pointed out previously, in 1991 Robert Lecker edited a crucial work within Canadian literary criticism: *Canadian Canons, Essays in Literary Value*; it is a compilation of articles by different critics who, from diverse viewpoints, analyse and question Canada’s canonization processes and offer a pioneering examination not only of the limiting and static image Canada has offered about its literature up to now but about the problems and paradoxes of counter-canon activity. In the introduction, Lecker explains that there has not been a serious attempt at questioning Canada’s settled literary axioms and uncovers the history of literary criticism in Canada. During the 1950s and 1960s, Canadian critics started looking at its artistic expression as means of discovering Canadianicity, and thus, of constructing a cultural/literary identity so that the critical works they produced were nation-focused, that is to say, they were aimed at reflecting the country’s essence to such an extent that “to find the literature was to find the country” (9). As a result, literary contributions which did not mirror critics’ prototypes about what Canada meant for them were disregarded misrepresented or condescendingly approached as the already cited cases of early ethnic and female authors which will be thoroughly analysed in Part III demonstrate. Following Lecker’s suggestion mentioned elsewhere, the insistence and hurry in discovering and/or creating a literary canon with which the country could feel identified perhaps brought along the creation and establishment of a tradition which had not been reached by general consensus but by members in power at that time. In fact, such an attempt of self-identification was more inspired by the country’s cultural

complex in relation to its Eurocentric colonial past and its mighty neighbour, the United States, than by a factual endeavour of self-discovery.

This is precisely what Robert Kroetsch suggests in his “Contemporary Standards in the Canadian Novel” incorporated in Steele’s edition of the Calgary Conference *Taking Stock. Calgary Conference on the Canadian Novel (1978)* published in 1982. As Kroetsch explains, the work of settling the list of the best Canadian novels was inspired, on the one hand, by a similar British attempt carried out in F. R. Leavis’s *The Great Tradition* and, on the other hand, by the parallel process developed in the United States which implies that Canada’s canonization project was informed by a European cultural frame and that it was analogous to an alien but close model on the other side of its southern frontier. In this sense, despite trying to identify their own literary expression and thus growing apart from past colonial ties and current colonizing influences, Canadian critics were embracing “the paradigms of other literatures [which] patently and blatantly don’t enable us[Canadians] to respond to our own weather” as well as emulating precisely what they wanted to differ from (13). Such a Eurocentric, and thus white and male-oriented, spur is noticeable in the register of the best Canadian novels resulting from the Calgary Conference because it embraces some novels by female authors, although few, and leaves aside ethnic contributions to the genre so that the literary identity it portrays is neither non-patriarchal nor multicultural. This being so, does it mean that novels which were not included were not central, less central, marginal? Kroetsch offers an illustrative and arguable seven-kind list of novels to be considered *and* praised in Canada: historically worthy, meta-fictional, or shamanic novels, alien fictions by explorers and travellers, novels which offer a sense of place, which represent Canada as home, or which “give us the courage to be afraid” (17-18). Canonizing distinctions such as this by Kroetsch are precisely the ground contested by interrogating critical perspectives as those of ethnic and/or feminist critics.

As a matter of fact, Carole Gerson states in her already mentioned article “The Canon between the Wars: Filed-notes of a Feminist Literary Archaeologist” included in Lecker’s *Canadian Canons* (1991) that canon-making strategies like those carried out in the Calgary Conference “reduced the contribution of women to a bare token” (50). Gerson’s examination of Irene Baird’s case as a literary author is very significant with regard to canon formation in Canada between the wars and answers to Lecker’s ideas



that canonical interrogation needs to develop a close analysis of all the forces implied in the production, distribution and appraisal of literary works such, for instance, literary prizes. Following Gerson, Irene Baird did not win the 1939 Governor General's Award for *Waste Heritage* not so much because her work did not meet required aesthetic features, but because as a writer she lacked the necessary personal connections within Canadian literary institutions. Apparently, it seems that the other candidate who got the award, Franklin McDowell, had better contacts; the writing of his work had been actually induced by no other than the president of the competition section in Toronto, W.A. Deacon, who did not think of "absented[ing] himself from judging this contest" (53). Being the consequence that the author and work finally canonized is usually the one who and which gets prizes, examples like this one undermine Bloom's perspective on the independence of apparently aesthetically-focused canon-making practices since they are not so innocuous in some cases but depend on people at power in literary spheres at a given moment. In the case of Canadian Literature, Gerson explains that as the power agency shifted, so did the resulting canon and tradition; canons and the subsequent literary values they support and foster are thus changeable, "a *construct* fashioned by particular people for particular reasons at a certain time" (46). Just as Lecker argues, Gerson also maintains that the establishment of *a* canon and *a* tradition, is actually a delusion both are plural and constantly in the make so that ideas on their universality and permanence seem to be the result of "the interests of academics, pedagogical concerns, government intervention, and marketing strategies" (7). Such a transformation can be observed in Canada through, for instance, the current appraisal of Sara Jeannette Duncan's novel although it was preceded by a long process of underestimation of early female writers. Following Gerson, during the period between 1918 and the 1940s the position of women authors in Canada was especially unfavourable and today praised female writers such as Duncan were disregarded. The shift in literary evaluation from a mainly female readership to eminently male circles as those of edition, publishing and university education that took place in this period affected the flourishing of anthologies and literary histories on Canadian Literature of the 1920s as well as the creation of the Canadian Authors' Association. One of the most revealing cases highlighted by Gerson highlights is Lorne Pierce's series of *Makers of Canadian Literature* because the works of some early women writers such as Frances

Brooke, Rosanna Leprohon, Susan Frances Harrison, or Sara Jeannette Duncan, which “should have been self-evident in the early 1920s” as agents in the making of Canada’s literary expression, were in fact overlooked (49). These examples refute the common idea that Canada has been *good* to literary women from the start and the non-patriarchal biases that the inclusion of *some* of these female authors seems to imply; the recognition of the literary contributions and achievements of women writers in English Canada has been both slow and difficult. I totally agree with Gerson that a process of ‘un-writing’ is needed in order to rethink Canada’s literary canon, history, tradition and identity not only “to undo the marginalization of women in the prevailing canon of Canadian writers” that she emphasizes, but also the relegation of ethnic writers (56).

Apart from questioning canon-making paradigms in Canada as the Calgary Conference, Robert Lecker also warns about the perils of counter-canon criticism like his or the one carried out in this dissertation in *Canadian Canons* (1991). I agree with Lecker that works which question canonicity actually work from within it; although they offer new perspectives and foster its rethinking, they use its same tools. As he explains, first challenges of canonicity were carried out by post-structuralists as Foucault, then by cultural historians “who maintained that criticism had created literature in its own image” and later by new historicists who did their bit by interrogating not only literary canons but the history, society and culture they were embedded into, as mentioned in Part I (4). They stated that criticism and counter-criticism belonged to a same system and used similar strategies although for very different ends. Divergent are precisely the goals of the anthologizing attempts of ethnic and feminist critics in Canada aimed at undoing the literary history and tradition established by mainstream literary discourses, not without some controversy notwithstanding. Linda Hutcheon’s compilation *Other Solitudes: Canadian Multicultural Fictions* (1990) is for Lecker a clear epitome of the danger of assimilation of some these challenging attempts. Whereas it is a significant work since it was the first to hold a multicultural scope as a way of distancing from the constrictions of ethnicity, it was somehow promoted by the politically enforced shift from bilingualism/biculturalism to multiculturalism once that Canada’s multilingual and multicultural essence was too evident. I agree with Hutcheon when she affirms that “the multiracial and multicultural nature of this country is made real to us [...] by Canadian

writers” (5), but I do not share her opinion that the substitution of simple minority writing for “‘visible minorities’ marks a significant new development” (3). From my viewpoint, this new nomenclature still maintains the hierarchical structure of major/minor which is actually visible in the title of her work *Other Solitudes*, that is, peripheral to the two original solitudes of Canada and inhabiting the altered positions implied by otherness as already explained in this dissertation. Although Hutcheon’s case is illustrative of the fact that “the double bind of canonical enquiry may be inescapable” in the questioning project, as Lecker affirms, “remaining conscious of it is a rewarding start” (16).

Some of these controversies regarding Hutcheon’s work are also highlighted by Smaro Kamboureli for whom the multicultural focus of *Other Solitudes: Canadian Multicultural Fictions* actually implies an institutional appropriation of what multicultural and/or ethnic writing means, and its consequent normalization. From Kamboureli’s viewpoint, Hutcheon’s overt acceptance that Canadian Literature has always been multicultural –as well as her suggestion that its literary canon has thus been created by those multicultural agents– overlooks any reflection about the discriminatory practices carried out by mainstream criticism and leaves aside an enquiry about the process of appropriation of ethnicity. In this sense, ethnic identities are adapted to prevailing axioms and subsumed within a generalized praise of multiculturalism so that they are under institutional control, with the consequent writing of a literary history “that reproduces a reality constructed through institutional forgetting” (Kamboureli: 163). By turning from bilingual/bicultural into diverse and plural, Canada has settled a new “benign master narrative” for this superficial celebration of diversity leaves aside discrimination, marginalization and tokenism and keeps uncontested past constructions and hierarchies (174). As Kamboureli affirms, in this way Canada is actually described not as a real enclave but “as a virtual nation” (172). Nonetheless, Hutcheon seems to be aware of some of these controversies, especially about those regarding racism and the narrowness of diversity in Canada. On the one hand, she states that a serious debate about racism is yet to be developed so that Canada’s indulgent literary history also needs to deal with its own “history of intolerance” (11). On the other hand, she warns about the risks of reducing cultural diversity to mere tokenism since “both the lived experience and the literary impact of multiculturalism in Canada vary according to an

intricate set of variables [...] the time and conditions of immigration, age, gender, class, religion, race” which affect writers’ literary contributions (6). This is precisely what this dissertation attempts: the unfolding of silenced writers and works taking into account their specific conditions as literary agents.

Following this debate, Kamboureli also raises some of the paradoxes of critical works such as Lecker’s *Canadian Canons* since in her opinion it is a destabilizing attempt which does not actually subvert basic axioms. While his work is groundbreaking regarding its questioning of Canadian literary value and canonization, the absence of references to ethnic literature is so remarkable that, in her opinion, “the reference to the plural ‘canons’ [...] is merely a conciliatory gesture” (159). Be Lecker’s attempt merely conciliatory or not, it is important to take into account that works like his are a step further regarding Canadian criticism; his challenging enquiries move beyond traditional indulgence and bring theoretical and/or conciliatory postures closer to the practical rescue and reconsideration of dismissed texts. In any case, all of them, Kamboureli as well as Lecker, Gerson and Hutcheon participate in a fundamental debate within Canadian criticism which needs to be developed further more and somehow endlessly so that questioning is kept alive. From my viewpoint, the idea is not so much the achievement of a certain status in which more and more ethnic and women writers are canonized but the constant challenging of established statuses that enables further criticism so that diversity is the realm in which critical perspectives on English Canadian Literature is developed.

#### IV.1.2 RACISM AND SEXISM: JOHN PORTER’S VERTICAL MOSAIC REVISITED

By challenging canonizing practices in English Canadian Literature and fostering rethinking of its literary history, ethnic and feminist critics also raise a debate about racism and sexism which is necessary for that reconsideration to be fully accomplished. They turn to history in order to undertake the fundamental task of telling Canada’s untold histories of race and gender and force a rethinking of its history and its historically constructed multicultural and non-patriarchal identity. Such an interrogation of history opens new channels for literary criticism to explore the permeability of mainstream literary discourses to those silenced histories that is approached in the next section. As explained in Part I of this dissertation, history and literature intersect.

A very clear example of this intersection can be found in Tseen-Ling Khoo who, from the perspective of a literary critic, offers a very interesting insight on Canadian history in the second chapter of her work *Banana Bending: Asian-Australian and Asian-Canadian Literatures* (2003). As she explains in “‘Spitting in the Soup’: Asian-Canadian Space” regarding Asian emigration, there were analogous rejections in Canada to those carried out in the United States “such as head taxes, internment of Japanese-Canadian citizens during the Second World War, and vilification of Asian communities as threats of ‘uncivilisation’” (39). During the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway, lots of Chinese people were employed and later denied Canadian nationality, an Asiatic Exclusion League appeared in 1907, and the Chinese Exclusion Act lasted from 1923 to 1947. Voicing examples like these helps deconstructing Canada’s lenient history and image and offers a hint about the influence of prejudice on other realms such as the socio-cultural and the literary.

The most decisive attempt in describing Canadian society was John Porter’s crucial study *The Vertical Mosaic. An Analysis of Social Class and Power in Canada*, first published in 1965 –and reprinted every year from 1966 to 1972– which has not remained uncontested. Generally speaking and although Porter himself shows surprise in relation to Canada’s silence regarding issues of ethnicity in the text, his study actually makes Canada’s social and cultural inequality clear by means of his description of an stratified structure that segregated certain communities and social groups on the basis of ethno-cultural components and/or gender. As a matter of fact, Porter’s *Vertical Mosaic* is not only an analysis of Canadian society but also a turning point in order to differ from the ‘melting pot’ of the United States. Whereas the American melting pot with its welcoming strategies started to establish restrictions on immigration since previous tactics were regarded as having “encouraged “poor” stock” (62), the Canadian vertical mosaic seemed exempt from such discrimination so that its benign multicultural image was generally accepted and rarely contested; the necessary debate about racism was subsumed and not firmly carried out. Regarding prejudice affecting not only ethnic groups but also female members within Canadian society Porter’s tract is quite revealing. Although he raises some of the discriminatory practices and racist attitudes of Canada towards certain cultural groups, his text also shows some inaccuracies in this respect.

On the one hand, Porter states that previous racial theories also made their way into Canadian society; “social darwinism” based on the degree of improvement of some “races” as proof of their higher positions was also applied in Canada since some cultures were given certain “entrance status” (61-62). Asian immigrants are again a clear paradigm since they were not only considered mere labour force but also non-assimilable according to Canadian standards so that after having been used as low-rate workers most of them were excluded. As he explains, black emigration was also offered a very specific position at the beginning as domestic workers in substitution of European women who traditionally carried out those tasks (69). In this sense, white women did not hold similar statuses as those of their male counterparts and only improved in the social scale when other groups came to take their established roles. On the contrary, women were generally employed as unskilled labour forces for, as Porter states, “with the exception of Jews all ethnic groups had more females in personal service than in clerical or professional occupations” (81). In Porter’s opinion, the cases of Oriental and coloured immigrants are paradigmatic since they exemplify Canada’s reluctance to take into positive consideration immigrants from other places except Europe; Canadian Eurocentrism comes again into play. Furthermore, he also points out some of the obstacles met by these immigrants given their lack of literacy and knowledge about Canadian languages as some of the “cultural barriers at the time of entry [which] harden into a set of historical relations tending to perpetuate entrance status” (69). From my viewpoint, Porter’s description is really interesting in so far it shows a very different picture of current Canadian cultural essence and the country’s treatment of female members. In early times, foreign cultural groups were discriminated and women offered very low positions in a hierarchical structure that multiculturalism and the country’s insistence on distancing from traditional patriarchal systems seem to have blurred.

On the other hand, Porter’s work shows some of the most important paradoxes of Canadian society and culture. At the very beginning of the chapter about “Ethnicity and Social Class” he states that a charter group is “the first ethnic group to come into previously unpopulated territory” and thus “Canada has two charter groups, the French and the English” (60). The obvious question is, what about First Nations? Apparently, Canada was uninhabited until French and English colonizers arrived and natives are not

to be taken into account as crucial members of the country's ethnic compound, as their total absence in this chapter about ethnicity demonstrates. Besides, he also states that "the ethnic structure of a community in terms of its charter and non-charter groups is determined early and tends to be self-perpetuating" (61), so if Natives were directly overlooked and they meant absence from the start, what was to be expected later on regarding their recognition? It is also important to mention that when Porter analyses ethnicity in Canada in relation to the participation in the labour market he distributes the different cultural groups as follows: first, French and British; second, German, Dutch and Scandinavian; then, *other* European groups; and finally "all *others*" (my emphasis, 77). It is necessary to point out that this analysis covers a time period starting from 1901 leaving aside Canada's ethnic composition before that moment; for instance, black emigration and settlement during slavery in the United States is not taken as relevant factor in the country's ethnic content. Although French and British are also considered as ethnic, and not as de-ethnicized whites, the issue of otherness is also introduced; there are not only *other* European groups whose position within the hierarchical structure is expected to be lower than those of the two central groups, but other unidentified cultures which are placed even in more remote levels. As it has been explained before in this dissertation, otherness is actually one of the most important concerns for ethnic critics since it places ethnic artists and writers in altered positions from the start, that is, it offers them specific entrance statuses to Canadian culture and literature. Similarly, female members within the Canadian societal system also hold altered places since they are regarded as others in relation to a male axis. In this same chapter, Porter's analysis focuses mainly on male members and females are briefly introduced only to support facts about males; for instance, female positions in the labour market are almost exclusively mentioned in relation to a male centre as extra-examples which "reinforce the occupational class differences for males" (80). Porter's statement on the fact that the "participation of women in the work world outside the home probably varies by origin" is eloquent since, although his examination is precise regarding data and facts, there is no such an insight when it comes to the analysis of the situation of females (81).

In 1998 Rick Helmes-Hayes and James Curtis edited a revision of Porter's theory entitled *The Vertical Mosaic Revisited* in which Raymond Breton and Pat

Armstrong correspondingly carried out a critical analysis of his tract from an updated ethnic and feminist perspective. Both Breton and Armstrong agree in stating that since the publication of Porter's work there has been a high degree of change in relation to the situation of ethnic and female groups in Canada. As far as Raymond Breton is concerned, his examination of *The Vertical Mosaic* also raises the absence of First Nations as fundamental actors of Canada's ethnic matrix. Following Breton, Porter's work does not only examine segregation related to ethnicity but presents ethnicity as an obstacle since it prevented a fluid mobility always regarded as the process towards Anglo-conformity (in Helmes-Hayes: 61). Although it could be thought that in Porter's times there was no uprising in favour of Natives visibility and rights, Breton states that before the publication of his work there was actually a profound transformation "in the socio-political organization of Native peoples" and also in their intercourse with mainstream society of which the 1885 North-West Rebellion/Resistance of Métis communities or the creation of the League of Indians of Canada in 1919 are clear examples (62). Despite these changes, a deep questioning of established hierarchies and a serious debating about racism did not take place until the Second World War whose racist claims on the superiority of the Aryan race brought along a more generalized consciousness about race implications and racist attitudes in Canada. The confrontation of a Canadian debate on racism mainly in relation to Native communities ended up with the recognition of them also as Charter Groups and in 1969, influenced by the US civil rights movement and the White Paper that brought the "elimination of the separate status and the integration" of Natives (64). They were finally acknowledged as "Legitimate Political Actors" so that they could stop depending on mainstream policies and start governing themselves. Whereas these facts show that a debate about racism was attempted in Canada at least in this period, it seems ironic that later on with the recognition of cultural distinctiveness and the multiculturalization of institutions as a result of ethnic groups' struggles, a renewed and profound debate about discriminatory practices was not attempted (69).

After this recognition of First Nations, the rise of immigration to the Canada led to the adoption of new social and cultural strategies. Diversity seemed to move from oblivion to appraisal but in relation to "Anglo-conformity" because, as Breton states, that "is the model of incorporation of immigrants that has prevailed in Canada" which



still persists nowadays (in Helmes-Hayes: 88). Furthermore, although Porter maintained that keeping barriers based on race, ethnicity, culture or gender necessarily brought disparity and discrimination along, Breton points out that the multicultural design has been more a conciliatory institutional gesture that has left race, ethnicity, culture and, I would add, gender aside. In his opinion, multicultural policies have been devised as symbolic strategies aimed at patronizing ethnicity and creating “positive attitudes towards diversity” (96). From my viewpoint, the attempt of creating such a favourable environment towards cultural diversity in Canada is not insignificant; the issue is that it should not stop there but be a starting point of an ongoing process by which discriminatory practices should also be addressed. The very fact that Canada is still described as, to use Breton’s words, “multicultural in a bilingual context” entails one of the country’s most crucial paradoxes and speaks of the reality of multiculturalism still trapped in a bilingual dichotomy, that is, in-between two hegemonic languages and cultures. On the other hand, Breton also offers a very interesting insight into the current consideration of cultural diversity in Canada. He explains that nowadays Canadians have contradictory responses to it; they feel somehow proud of the Canadian cultural heterogeneity, whereas it is commonly thought that fully acknowledging cultural diversity somehow threatens national unity as well as dissolves traditional cultural values. In this sense, ethnic cultures are doubly subjected for they are expected to belong without being assimilated, that is, being and feeling Canadian while keeping their cultural roots “only if this fits well in the Canadian sociocultural matrix” (100). Finally, Breton’s explanation of what could be called the other side of multiculturalism is very interesting; apparently, mainstream Canadian cultures –that is white– paradoxically believe to be in danger of discrimination today given the increasing visibility and claims of the still regarded as *minority* cultures. It seems as if otherness had been reverted; those who have been on the hegemonic side and now think of themselves as the *others*.

Pat Armstrong’s feminist approach considers Porter’s mosaic as a starting point for an open discussion on gender issues in Canada and highlights the evident absence of women in his work. I agree with Armstrong in so far women are not only missing because the social factors and power groups analysed in *The Vertical Mosaic* do not hold female members but because the theory developed actually leaves no room for

them. On the one hand, to Porter's justification that such an absence is due to the fact that "few women occupy positions of power because it is not "appropriate" that women should" (264), Armstrong points out that he neither offers any insight into the causes that prevented their participation nor elucidates the significance of appropriateness regarding women's roles in Canadian society (in Helmes-Hayes: 117). On the other hand, Porter's examination deals exclusively with male labour force, does not consider the household as part of it and does not approach the power relations of class stratification that prevented women's equal participation. Equally interesting is the connection that Pat Armstrong –in consonance with other feminists– establishes between gender and other crucial factors such as race, immigration or disability given their relevance in the examination of "power and inequality" (120). In fact, when talking about equality she also raises one of the fundamental concerns of ethnic and feminist literary critics: the unequal positions offered to certain societal groups in Canadian society. For Armstrong "to treat every one the same is to offend the principle of equality precisely because women, the disabled, visible minorities, and Aboriginal peoples are differently located" (122). Traditional assumptions of equality of opportunity lead to the dismissal of a debate about racist and sexist practices in Canada since crucial factors were not analysed in depth, so that the resulting image of its society left the outstanding absence or low representation of women, First Nations and immigrants unexplained. For example, when Porter writes about education as important for inclusion/exclusion within Canada's labour market, and thus of assimilation to prevailing Anglo-conformity, Armstrong affirms that "feminists have demonstrated that the different, and unequal, conditions women face from birth lead to ideas and practices too difficult to overcome by the time they reach school" (122). In fact, women's widespread inclusion in secondary education in Canada took place as late as in the 1960s and women's rights movements struggled for the inclusion of Canadian women in higher education, although their most important achievement was their legal freedom as individuals and not as dependent upon their husbands (134). As a matter of fact, one of the crucial modifications of women's situations since the publication of *The Vertical Mosaic* was their participation in the male labour market from which they also fought for an equality of income. But, in spite of their achievements, Aboriginal women –as Armstrong names them– are still widely misrepresented in higher education and paid

work. As explained elsewhere, I agree with Breton in that women not belonging to mainstream social groups are subjected to a “multiple jeopardy” because of gender and also ethnicity that needs to be carefully considered when approaching ethnic women’s participation either as social, cultural or literary agents.

Through the previous analysis of both Porter’s *Vertical Mosaic* and of its questioning by Raymond Breton and Pat Armstrong, it seems clear that Canada has not been such a culturally open and non-patriarchal country throughout history. If these were the socio-economic conditions ethnic communities, women and ethnic women had to deal with, what about the cultural and literary spheres? One wonders what has been the repercussion of such a social stratification and segregation not only on the consideration of culture and literature but on its production. I agree with Tamara J. Palmer on the fact that “it would seem logical that the tensions and frustrations inherent in ethnic experience in Canada would be expressed by writers” (620), and that is actually what the works of Martin R. Delany and Winnifred Eaton approached in Part III demonstrate. Just as the modern ethnic writers that Palmer analyses fictionalize the vertical mosaic by introducing and developing “ethnic identity and social mobility; the symbiotic interaction between victim and oppressor; and the gap between illusion and reality” in their novels (624), early ethnic writers also did before the concept was even coined. In their works, ethnic authors give expression to the belonging/non-belonging duality of immigration, to their alien positioning, and the identity crossroads to which they are compelled. Writing actually means an escape through imagination, a way to ease the anxieties of inhabiting that in-between world, but also a way of relieving pressure from the mythology of the utopian vision of Canada that early novel writers such as Delany reinforced and challenged (623-4). In this sense, ethnic literature depicts a quite similar crisis of identity to that of Canada herself and shows divided selves close to Canadian hesitance between a utopian image and the real vertical mosaic, to such an extent that it can be said to mean a fundamental agent within Canadian cultural and literary expression. This is crucial since it fosters a new vision of ethnic literary contributions in Canadian Literature; not any longer as peripheral but central; not as separated from mainstream literature but inextricable since they also reflect, investigate and fictionalize Canadian identity.

#### IV.1.3 MULTICULTURALISM, PATRIARCHY AND ENGLISH CANADIAN LITERATURE

By exploring the permeability of literary institutions to Porter's segregationist depiction of Canada's societal and cultural compound, ethnic and feminist literary critics take over from Raymond Breton and Pat Armstrong's critical analysis of Porter's vertical mosaic. Their critical works contest the also multicultural and non-patriarchal claims on English Canadian Literature so that another intersection between both approaches is thus clear; as Enoch Padolsky states in his investigation on "Canadian Ethnic Minority Literature in English":

Just as a feminist perspective on Canadian literature might question whether female authors have been published, distributed, read, taught, recognized, and interpreted on the basis of gender equality and from unbiased or appropriate perspectives, so an ethnic minority perspective might ask. (374)

Regarding anthologization and racism, although Canadian literary institutions have been and continue trying to promote its cultural heterogeneity, they have not equitably developed a serious recognition of discriminative practices. For instance, the low representation of ethnic writers in mainstream anthologies or "the sheer number of anthologies" dealing with ethnic writing, that is, the uneven consideration of ethnic literature in Canada, is a clear paradigm which has rarely been investigated but from specifically ethnic approaches (Padolsky: 365). Besides, the tendency to tokenize ethnic writing when taking it into consideration as part of Canadian literary heritage, and the unawareness or de-emphasizing of crucial issues such as "discrimination, racism, social inequality, and other issues of ethnicity, class and gender" have also been silenced (376-7). The fact that ethnic writing has generally been labelled as *minority*, clearly speaks for Canada's discriminatory canon that has actually been constructed and perpetuated on the basis of such a hierarchy.

One of the most striking paradoxes of this debate about racism in a country like Canada is the very fact that it needs to be raised at all. If it had been recognized from the start that, as Coomi S. Vevaina and Barbara Godard point out, "all Canadians are migrants from another place, with the possible exception of Native peoples" any discussion about race and racist attitudes would not have been necessary (43). In keeping with Porter's description, the problem is that among all those "foreign" Canadian cultures two of them, English and French, have inhabited hegemonic positions as a consequence of colonization. "They are the "Two solitary truths" that Hugh McLennan wrote about in his novel *Two Solitudes*. But there is another fundamental

implication of their rise to power: both are white, so that their preponderance also implies a white-oriented dominating culture. As already mentioned, according to Marlene Nourbese Philip:

A long historical overview of the formation of Canada reveals that this country was [...] shaped and fashioned by a belief system that put white Europeans at the top of society and Native and African people at the bottom. This ideology, for that is what it is, assigned more importance to European cultures. (1992: 182)

I agree with Arun P. Mukherjee in that Porter's two charter groups have been actually the axis around which Canada's literary history, tradition and identity have been shaped. This is precisely why Canadian literary anthologies or "English-Canadian literature courses [...] begin with Susanna Moodie's *Roughing It in the Bush* and not with Native orature" (Mukherjee 'Canadian nationalism'). Following Mukherjee, what these histories tell us is in fact a master narrative written from a nationalistic and mainly white-male pulpit which has left aside accounts which did not fit into their national project. This national focus is in Mukherjee's opinion the main barring for the inclusion of alternating voices as those included in this dissertation. Even outstanding critics as Northrop Frye, Margaret Atwood, or John Moss are questioned for they have also participated in the creation of a Canadianicity reflected through a canonical literature more aimed at growing apart from the United States than to fully discover Canada's literary expression. Again the insistence of differentiating Canada from its southern neighbour is at stake. In doing so, Canadian critics contributed in the construction of a victimized image of Canada that fought against "American domination" and which can be difficultly contested as having also acted as dominating (Mukherjee 'Canadian nationalism').

The already outlined nationalistic impulses of Canada's anthologization and canonization as a means of constructing a national literature get complicated because "Canadian literature was constructed in the service of a Canadian nation conceptualized in terms of these ethno-cultural theories of nationhood" (Mukherjee 'Canadian nationalism'). The unawareness about its predominantly male and white focus was just left unchallenged since there was no questioning about discriminatory practices neither in relation to race/ethnicity nor gender. Furthermore, far from being subtle or temporary, the obstacles such theories set given their apparent worldwide scope were not easily surmountable by those members left outside its frontiers. Their works did not

gain access to literary production, distribution and recognition in equal terms. Following Padolsky, although ethnic writing seems to have gained a wider acknowledgement on behalf of mainstream criticism, “the fundamental marginalization of minority writers cannot be said to have changed, and their presence has neither altered the literary historical categories nor fostered their particular concerns” (368). Mukherjee also questions Lecker since, despite his challenging attempt, in her opinion he contributed to this nationalistic ideology of literary canon in Canada. On the one hand, he does not mention “its whiteness or its Anglo-ness”, while on the other hand, he explains the choice of canonized texts because they include Canadian contents, either in setting or topics (Mukherjee ‘Canadian nationalism’). In my opinion, the problem is that even works by ethnic writers which actually deal with Canadian topics and frameworks have been frequently dismissed so that there must be other reasons for such rejections.

In spite of the great deal of critical work which struggles to raise these issues, undo their effects and question Canadian literary history, tradition and identity, Mukherjee suggests that broader approaches to the country and its culture are still needed. In Padolsky’s opinion, if those wider and renewed approaches are not embraced, Canadian Literature runs the risk of repeating “the same problems of distortion, ‘appropriation,’ and exclusion” of the past (379). Ethnic writers and critics have challenged the ideology on which traditional definitions of Canadian Literature are based; the particularity from which they speak problematizes established universal axioms, just as through raising Canada’s discriminatory practices its benign history and literary history are brought into question. As Mukherjee states, a great deal of Canadian criticism is stuck in Canada’s dichotomous essence so that it “remains profoundly oblivious to Aboriginal and racial minority voices” (‘Canadian nationalism’). They are still labelled as hyphenated, minority, ethnic, or immigrant contributors so they are not fully considered as Canadian yet. And this is precisely what ethnic critics try to deconstruct by stating that the literary agency of ethnic writers cannot be regarded as marginal any longer due to the simple fact that they do not write from the margins of Canadian culture but from the centre of their own cultures, as Dionne Brand puts it (qtd. in Mukherjee ‘Canadian nationalism’). Their texts are not written in accordance to that single Eurocentric tradition which left them aside, so that they “need to be decoded and interpreted by paying attention to their cultural contexts” in case there is an intention of

taking them into account as fundamental agents within Canadian Literature (Mukherjee 'Canadian nationalism'). Padolsky actually agrees with Mukherjee because he also raises the need of critical perspectives which simultaneously consider the Canadian and ethnic backgrounds in which their writings are produced; I agree with him in that "neither assimilation [...] nor ghettoization [...] [are] suitable research attitudes within Canadian literature" (381). According to Mukherjee, all this questioning has fostered a "crisis of legitimation in Canada" ('Canadian nationalism'). Traditional critical axioms are no longer valid neither "does the master narrative of two founding races/peoples/cultures" and I would add, literatures (Mukherjee 'Canadian nationalism').

The work of ethnic critics leads us to conclude that the fact the Canadian government has institutionalized multiculturalism which also fostered the production of ethnic anthologies does not necessarily mean that "minority identities, racist constructions, and other such discriminatory practices have been eliminated" (Kamboureli, 2000: 161). On the one hand, the very fact that hyphenated literatures are drawn together under the heading of minority writing is certainly revealing. The term *minority* obviously implies hierarchies by which certain cultures and their literary expressions are positioned at the bottom, while others are kept at the top. In this way, the margins the Multiculturalism Act pretended to blur are actually kept. On the other hand, the exclusion of some ethnic writers, as those analysed in this dissertation, could also be regarded as a barring of certain literary contributions, if not as a sign of racism. For Tseen-Ling Khoo multiculturalism can be actually perceived more "as a strategy of containment" which tries to join cultures but more within "the interests of national, cultural, and political unity" than as a faithful recognition of Canada's cultural diversity and its past discriminatory practices too (35). In my opinion, current and somehow more politically correct discussions about ethnicity, and not of race, actually hide an old debate still to be fully accomplished. The very fact that in speaking about Black, Asian or Native writing such labelling is still used, while when talking about John Richardson, for instance, there is no need to specify his origins or tribal ancestry is quite revealing. One of the consequences of the ethnic labelling of writers is their non-belonging to a central mainstream, their marginalization from the first place. Furthermore, as Arun P. Mukherjee explains in relation to First Nations authors, for some ethnic writers

“Canadian borders and Canadian culture are exercises in genocidal domination” (‘Canadian nationalism’).

However, according to Carole Gerson, the power structure suggested in Porter’s vertical mosaic is also present in literary institutions in relation to women writers’ participation and evaluation. Similar to what has been previously explained regarding the labour market Canada’s literary spheres have also established and developed taxonomies which have fostered the dismissal or devaluation of female authors’ contribution equally established by hegemonic groups. The settlement of a restricted concept of literary value in Canada, for instance, brought along “the valorization of national themes [...] which implicitly exclude the work of many women writers active before the current era” and was taken as crucial in the early canonizing of works and authors (Gerson, 1991: 46). Following Gerson, during these first stages of construction of a Canadian literary canon, women’s contributions were usually relegated since decision-making was carried by “a loose ‘invisible college’ distinctively masculine” (1991: 47). Once again, anthologization as a fundamental canonizing tool clearly shows segregationist measures taken by those in power at the time; they decided who was to be taken into account as relevant literary figures in Canadian literary history so that they were also to be considered in any construction of its literary tradition and identity. One of the most revealing cases is that of Sara Jeannette Duncan whose large contribution was dismissed at first but later regarded as one of Canada’s significant authors. Other cases, such as that of Frances Brooke, prove that women’s literary agency was sometimes taken into consideration but only in so far as they adapted to “a Romantic/sentimental/domestic model” (Gerson, 1991: 55). Serious analyses of their works and/or revisions of the value conferred to them were not carried out at this stage.

The fact that they are sometimes present in anthologies, even at early times, does not reinforce the idea that “from the very beginning, women writers have played a leading role –if not principal– role in the development of Canadian literature, in English Canada as well as in Québec” (qtd. in Gerson, 1991: 49). On the contrary, as Gerson maintains, it is a myth, a symbolic gesture, since they did not play such a role. In fact, women writers were not even regarded as professional authors but more as symbolic contributors, especially early women writers who “have been vulnerable to both lionization and quick devalorization on grounds that are implicitly or explicitly gender-



related” (Gerson, 1991: 47). It is true that a lot of work has already been done to recover and rethink women writers’ relevance within Canadian Literature, mainly by feminist critics, which has had some degree of influence on mainstream institutions as the inclusion of Sara Jeannette Duncan shows. But, in any case, there is still a lot to do regarding early women authors since “it is [still] necessary to un-write the [...] history of Canadian literature” so that “the marginalization of women in the prevailing canon of Canadian writers” can be changed (Gerson, 1991: 56).

Taking into account what has been explained before, it seems clear that ethnic and feminist critical works question Canada’s accepted multicultural and non-patriarchal image. Applying Gerson’s statement to both perspectives, in order to investigate the ways in which Canadian literary history has been questioned and literary tradition and identity interrogated by both feminist and ethnic critics, the next section focuses on the critical tools both perspectives have carried out and the voicing of the literary contributions of ethnic and women authors and the differential senses of identities they have raised.

#### IV.2 ‘STRANGERS WITHIN OUR GATES’?

J.S. Woodsworth, “the saint of Canadian politics” as John Porter called him in his famous work about Canadian society *The Vertical Mosaic*, published *Strangers Within Our Gates* in 1908 as an attempt to describe Canada’s societal heterogeneity (Porter: 65). The same title is taken for this section not as an appraisal of his work but because it brings out some of the fundamental questions that ethnic and feminist critics suggest. The very choice of the words “strangers”, “our”, and “gates” is quite revealing since they speak of the traditional ideologies running in Canada in relation to its socio-cultural and literary diversity. Woodsworth’s gates are those which enclose a national territory which revolves around an Anglo-Franco core –*I, we*– and within whose boundaries some communities and members –*others*– are regarded as alien or foreign either because of their ethnicity and/or gender, if they are offered a Canadian status at all. These strangers are what Patricia Hill Collins denominates “outsider[s]-within” for whom only marginal positions within hegemonic and discriminatory structures are

possible (qtd. in Wane, Delivosky and Lawson: 40). Very significantly, the borderland spaces they are compelled to inhabit shape their peripheral identities. As it will be explained later in this section, it is certainly striking that some of those societal groups were not even regarded as strangers but were totally absent in early works about Canadian society, culture and literature as First Nations.

The questioning of taxonomies as those implied in Woodsworth's title on Canada's central and peripheral communities is precisely one of the most important areas on which literary ethnic and feminist studies focus. The exclusion of ethnic and female literary contributions epitomizes the restrictive and discriminatory critical practices carried out by mainstream criticism in Canada, and which have consequently affected the construction and settlement of a narrow literary history, tradition and identity. Both approaches allege and demonstrate that women and ethnic writers have been knocking on those gates from early times and that if Canadian literary diversity is to be claimed, rethinking processes which take them into account are required. In this respect, when researching Canadian critical work on ethnic and women's literature, I realized that their researches and studies seemed to share fundamental concerns and challenge similar established axioms. This is not stating at all that their differential analysis and compilations have been thought as parts of a larger and common project; neither does it imply that the places inhabited by the works of female and ethnic writers that feminist and ethnic critics unfold are to be regarded as sharing equal statuses. The present dissertation is a dialogic approach to the existing intersections between both perspectives in so far they question not only mainstream critical overlookings of the authors they study, but also the construction and establishment of a Canadian literary canon and value as well as history, tradition and identity. Given the fact that the present work focuses on early women and ethnic writers, critical works from an ethnic perspective mainly refer to First Nations, African and Asian communities since they developed some literary activity in the period covered here. Similarly, in the case of women writers, critical studies focus on either white or ethnic female authors at these early stages.

First of all, what these ethnic and feminist critics originally carry out is a researching and unfolding process of ethnic and female writing in Canada by means of a wide range of critical works and specific compilations. They partake in a re-historizing

process of Canadian Literature by questioning the exclusion of certain writers' works and voicing their achievements. Furthermore, they also raise a crucial debate on racism and sexism in Canada so that the so-agreed *multi-cultural* and *un-patriarchal* image of Canadian Literature is also brought into question. And finally, what all of them ultimately bring into question is Canada's identity itself; they speak for silenced female and ethnic authors who demand their own identity, the freedom to identify themselves as Canadian writers in their own terms.

#### IV.2.1 VOICING EARLY ETHNIC AND WOMEN'S WRITING IN ENGLISH CANADIAN LITERATURE

Despite the fact that general anthologies and literary histories from feminist and ethnic perspectives are being currently developed more intensely, there is a large and strong previous critical work from both perspectives. Such work developed through articles in literary journals, single and multi-author compilations of articles, entries in literary histories, chapters on one or more early disregarded writers, and/or specific anthologies also needs to be taken into account since it has equally contributed to the unfolding of female and ethnic writing and to question the official version of literary history told in Canada until now. In fact, more general compilations tend to focus on modern and contemporary female and ethnic authors so that the traces of earlier literary participants are still to be found in more scattered critical sources. Moreover, gathering all of them not only helps in offering a very significant and challenging image of the state of literary criticism in Canada, but is also a relevant tool in the process of rethinking and deconstructing canonical literary discourse. These are the main reasons why in this section compilations and histories are included together with other kinds of critical approaches.

With such a spirit, the following sections are an overview of the most significant critical work by both feminist and ethnic critics on English Canadian Literature, and, more specifically, on the early novel writers in English who are the object of the present dissertation. For obvious space restrictions, not every single work from both perspectives is mentioned but only those which either focus on the authors and works covered here or deal with the fundamental questions this research raises. In fact, a whole review of all feminist and ethnic criticism in English Canadian Literature would be

material enough for another dissertation. The chronological disposition of these critical works here is actually intentional since at the same time that a renewed history of Canadian Literature is gradually revealed, a history of Canada's ethnic and feminist criticism starts to be basted. This section thus investigates the different ways in which ethnic and feminist critics have approached dismissed writers, unfolded the varied range of literary aspects surrounding their contributions, and challenged mainstream critical discourses on early English Canadian Literature.

Although at the beginning ethnic anthologies gathered contributions under hyphenated headings such as Native-Canadian or African-Canadian Literature, such naming had no meaning but the marginal one conveyed by mainstream literary discourses. Thomas King explains in his "Introduction: An Anthology of Canadian Native Fiction" (1987) offers a quite basic but useful definition of Native literature as the "literature produced by Natives" since it assembles all types of Native literary expressions, either oral or written (4). One may wonder what the term *Native* conveys; does it refer only to first generations or also to subsequent and maybe mixed generations? And by extension, what about the so-called Black-Canadian Literature, for instance? Does it refer exclusively to contributions of African emigrants from the USA or does it extend to later communities' arrivals from the Caribbean, among others? In fact, the term *Black Canadian* involves an alienated position in relation to a white literary mainstream. Besides, it is important to note that the terms African and Black are usually employed indistinctly whereas Black Canadian Literature gathers a wider range of writers than that of African. Questions like these, some of them still unanswered, give an idea of the difficulties met when approaching ethnic writing in Canada.

In the case of ethnic anthologies, it is important to note that some compilations have been promoted by Canadian institutions. After the Multiculturalism Act a varied range of literary histories were carried out by ethnic critics but with the conformity and sometimes insistence of governmental spheres. This being so, it could be thought that some of these compilations were actually inspired precisely by those mainstream institutions which disregarded their works in the first place. In Smaro Kamboureli's opinion, such incitement actually had some impact in their content and approach; she affirms that the stereotyped image of cultural groups some anthologies portray follows traditional patterns informed by a white mainstream (2000: 150). Be that what it may,

despite such institutionalized efforts there is still work to do since some individual figures remain invisible for Canadian critics and the general public. From my personal experience I know the difficulties a researcher can meet for I was unable to find Martin R. Delany's novel *Blake or The Huts of America* in many Canadian first and second-hand bookshops and finally found it in New York.

Paradoxically in a multicultural country like Canada, ethnic anthologies are a relatively new phenomenon. According to Smaro Kamboureli, anthologization of ethnic writing made its way mainly during the 1970s. *One Out of Many: A Collection of Writings by 21 Black Women in Ontario* published in 1975, for example, is known as "the first anthology of black writing in Canada" which interestingly enough focuses on women's writing (Kamboureli, 2000: 155). Early compilations like *One Out of Many* usually focused on specific cultural communities and did not try to gather different ethnic groups. As I see it, they meant a crucial and powerful first step in the raising of silenced voices. But these first attempts did not have a decisive impact on mainstream discourses and did not arrive to the general public until the 1990s. Regarding the Asian community, *Beyond Silence: Chinese Canadian Literature in English* published in 1997 by Chao is "the first extended critical monograph about Chinese-Canadian literature" according to Tseen-Ling Khoo (52). Likewise, as Kamboureli states, 1990's *Other Solitudes: Canadian Multicultural Fiction* was not only pioneering for being "a multicultural anthology in the literal sense of the word" but also the first one to be echoed by critics as a landmark work (2000: 162). From this short overview, it seems that there has been an evolution in ethnic anthologization, from specific to multicultural collections; but when will a compilation gathering works by all authors regardless of their ethnic affiliation take place? In my view, after the impact of some of these anthologies what is still to be accomplished is a wider effect on mainstream literary discourses and a consideration of the authors and contributions they unfold. Modern ethnic writing starts to be present in general anthologies but there is still a lot of work to do regarding early writers. If their modern writing is currently echoed, it is by no means acceptable that it is a new acquisition that suddenly took place but a product of a longer process, a tradition yet to be unfolded.

#### IV.2.1.1 EARLY AFRICAN CANADIAN LITERATURE IN ENGLISH<sup>25</sup>

George E. Clarke is one of the most relevant critical figures in relation to African Canadian Literature in English. In his 1991 work *Fire on the Water. An Anthology of Black Nova Scotian Writing*, he explores the rise, development and consideration of Africadian (African and Canadian) –to use Clarke’s term– literature. Following his explanation, although Africadian Literature has been present since Africans first appeared in Canada, their voices were not echoed until the 1970s and 1980s. Its beginning is marked by religious forms and sermons as well as by popular modes such as “song, [or] story” (Clarke, 1991: 11). Early written works such as those of John Marrant published in 1785 and David George’s in 1793 or Boston King’s 1798 autobiography were rooted on those previous literary forms and developed spiritualism, communal experience and history as relevant pieces of African Canadian literary identity. Religion, faith and spiritualism had of course a great impact on the development of Africadian Literature and hence on the moral teachings that texts frequently portray. Of course, this religious content needs to be taken into account if African Canadian Literature<sup>26</sup> in English is to be understood and not rejected for being more a spiritual sermon than a literary piece. The community was also an important element for, in African culture, identity is not conceived as an individual experience but communal. According to Clarke, African Canadians actually thought of themselves as an either politically or spiritually “distinct society”, rooted in land property, the defence of freedom and blackness, their independent churches and a sense of “communal democracy” (1991: 16). Likewise, the historical content had a great significance in early as well as in later works; for African writers “history is a narrative which must issue in the attainment of justice and liberty” (Clarke, 1991: 12). In this sense, their works cannot be dismissed on the basis of their spiritual, popular or historical elements since for their authors they are part of literature. On the other hand, despite the influences of

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<sup>25</sup> The term African Canadian –as well as in the rest of the cases of “ethnic” literature– is not included in this dissertation in its traditionally hyphenated form but in a two-word shape since these critics speak about authors who hold both African *and* Canadian connections, none of which is more or less significant; in this way, this unhyphenated form moves away from the ascription of lower statuses hyphens conveyed. Why should African Canadian remain hyphenated when English and French Canadian tend not to be currently?

<sup>26</sup> Just as English Canadian Literature or American Literature is written with capital letters, any other literatures are included in this dissertation in the same form so that, once again, an ascription of inferiority is avoided.

other literary expressions as those of Britain, America or English Canada, it seems that the main concern of African writers is indeed “affirming Black presence, Black dignity, and Black identity against a deracinating and sometimes murdering society which seeks to deny their right to be” as Martin R. Delany’s novel shows (Clarke, 1991: 25).

Before Clarke’s critical activity, other ethnic critics had already started to unfold African Canadian authors and some of the most important aspects in relation to their literary achievements. The title of Lorrin Elliot’s 1985 work *Other Voices. Writings by Blacks in Canada* is very significant since it ascribes otherness to African Canadian writers. Perhaps, it is more a critical ascription for in the “Introduction” he complains about the situation of African Canadian writers in Canada. Their works are rarely printed by the same printing houses which publish renowned authors; the excuse for this situation frequently being the lack of commercial appeal of their works (Elliot, 1985: 3). Furthermore, he also states “that the creative output of Blacks in Canada is yet to be recognized” even if Canadian multicultural policies have tried to foster the visibility of ethnic cultures (1985: 2). It is important to note that Elliot speaks of “ethnic *minority* groups” implying somehow the acceptance of mainstream constructions regarding alternating literary voices (my emphasis, 1985: 2). Lorrin Elliot is also the editor of *Bibliography of Literary Writings by Blacks in Canada* (1986) which despite involving a comprehensive study of Black Canadian Literature<sup>27</sup> does not include any authors before 1900. For instance, neither the already cited Mary Ann Shadd nor Martin R. Delany appears as significant contributors. Again the issue of the need of expanding research to early ethnic texts is at stake.

Mary Ann Shadd is actually mentioned in Hallie Q. Brown’s 1988 compilation *Homespun Heroines and Other Women of Distinction* and the title of the chapter on Shadd is no other than “The Foremost Colored Canadian Pioneer in 1850”. Although it focuses mainly on women in the United States, it is interesting to mention that Henry Louis Gates Jr. in the “Foreword” awards Phillis Wheatley and her poetry the pioneering title of giving birth to “two traditions at once –the black American literary tradition and the black woman’s literary tradition” (in Brown: x). The figures of Shadd

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<sup>27</sup> Given the current interchangeable employment of the terminologies *African Canadian Literature* and *Black Canadian Literature*, both are equally included in this dissertation with capital letters; the same capitalization can be found in the terms *Black/Blacks* since they refer to the origin and/or cultural background of authors just as Canadian, British, or Asian do.

and Wheatley, together with Frances Harper, Ann Julia, Cooper, Harriet E. Wilson, or Harriet Jacobs –to cite just some– on both sides of the border between the United States and Canada epitomize the extensive participation of African women even at early times and challenge the construction of a literary history which has ignored their contributions. These women and their contemporaries started and forged a literary tradition, “not because of some mystical collective unconsciously determined by the biology of race or gender, but because writers read other writers and ground their representations of experience in models of language provided largely by other writers to whom they feel akin” (Brown: xviii). In a similar way, the alternating voices of David George, John Marrant, Shadd, or Martin R. Delany, among others, shaped African Canadian literary tradition and some even partook in the literary development of both Canada and the United States. Just as “the full range of the black woman’s voice, with its special timbres and shadings” needs to be raised in the United States, Canadian literary history, tradition and identity can only be revitalized if African Canadian contributions are taken into account (Brown: xiv).

Critical works as Brown’s are not only eloquent in so far they voice silenced figures but also because of the intersection between feminist and ethnic criticism displayed in them. As outlined in Chapter II, these works and critics speak from an in-between space where gender and race issues need to be raised simultaneously. In this respect, although it concentrates on historical figures rather than on literary achievements, the work *We’re Rooted here and They Can’t Pull Us Up”: Essays in African Canadian Women’s History* (1994) by Peggy Bristow is paradigmatic. As Bristow states in the “Introduction”, the main aim of this compilation of essays is “to write a feminist history” given the fact that, in her opinion, history had been written mainly by males and had left aside women until then; their participation being only “a very recent phenomenon, [and] a product of contemporary feminism” (5). In spite of mentioning some achievements by Black and male historiographers like Robin Wink’s *The Blacks in Canada; A History* (1971) –in which Shadd is actually cited– they are questioned for not including Black women as agents in Canadian history and because gender does not receive any special analysis. Interestingly enough, Bristow is also critical with the oversights of white feminist historiography which has ignored pioneering figures as that of Mary Ann Shadd, for instance, so that Canadian women’s



history is still mainly white-centred. As far as marginalization is concerned, this work is also aimed at highlighting that even when achievement by African Canada women is made evident, it is frequently regarded “as marginal to the dominant historical narrative” (Bristow: 9). In order to undo such marginalization, in Bristow’s work the diverse accomplishments of early Black African women in Canada are unwrapped in the different chapters and race issues in Canada are raised. Historical re-writings such as this of Bristow are eloquent for the necessary intersection between ethnic and feminist perspectives some literary figures, as those of Mary Ann Shadd (Cary) or Harriet Tubman, require. Furthermore, both approaches equally awaken silenced histories, name previously unnamed figures, question race and gender issues in Canada, and challenge settled historiographic axioms.

George E. Clarke is also the author of the article “A primer of African Canadian literature: George Elliot Clarke’s Short but Filled-to-bursting History” published in 1996. In his text, Clarke unfolds African writing in Canada and points out what in his opinion are some of its constant features. On the one hand, he starts declaring the absence of Black writers from mainstream Canadian anthologies and histories whose works are later unravelled, including early contributions, in his article. As he admits at the beginning of his article, “a degree of cultural assertiveness informs my [his] articulation of the existence of an African Canadian literature”; his declaration does not stem from mere lucubration but on the factual participation of Black authors in Canadian Literature in English as he later proves (‘A Primer’). According to his version, crisis has been a constant in Black Canadian Literature, having as first representatives Black Loyalists, and exiles and/or refugees mainly. David George, John Marrant, Peter A. Williams, Mary Ann Shadd, Henry Bibb, Samuel Ringgold Ward and John William Robertson are mentioned as pioneering figures of non-fiction. Although their texts are mainly autobiographical accounts of the author’s Canadian experiences, some also hold a more political focus as Shadd’s *A Plea for Emigration; or, Notes of Canada West*. Works of religious character also saw the light in early times as *History of the Coloured Baptists of Nova Scotia* published in 1895 and written by Peter E. McKerrow, who is said to be Canada’s first text by a Caribbean author (Clarke ‘A Primer’).

In order to fully understand the importance of these and later contributions, Clarke demands a repatriation process of early writers even if they only remained temporarily

in Canada. From my viewpoint, the same as non Canadian-born authors who left Canada such as Frances Brooke, or who actually stayed like Susanna Moodie, or even Canadian-born who also left the country are regarded because their works were written from and on Canada, works like Delany's must also be taken into account. Following Clarke, such a perspective actually allows the consideration of Martin R. Delany's novel *Blake; or, The Huts of America, A Novel* as the first Canadian novel in English by an African author and a significant contribution to the genre. As stated by Floyd J. Miller in the introduction his 1970 edition of *Blake*, Delany's novel is not only important as an early fiction achievement by a Black author but a landmark of African Canadian Literature (xii). Following Clarke's explanation, there has been some controversy regarding Delany's pioneering role as novelist. He disagrees with Lorris Elliott's attribution of the role of Canada's first African novelist in English to Brian Gypsin thanks to his work *To Master, a Last Good Night* published as late as in 1946. As Clarke explains this work cannot be included within the novel genre since it is more an autobiographical account, and besides the right spelling of the author's name is Brion Gysin and the correct title *To Master, a Long Goodnight: The Story of Uncle Tom, a Historical Narrative*. Although I do not share Clarke's requirement of Canadian publication for works to be included as contributors to Canadian Literature, from his viewpoint John Hearne and Jan Carew can neither be acclaimed as Canada's first Black novelists for their novels were not published in Canada, unlike Austin Clarke's *The Survivors of the Crossing* of 1964 "who can rightly bear the title of being the first African Canadian writer to publish a novel in Canada" ('A Primer'). In fact, Clarke clearly states in his 1997 review on Austin Clarke's *The Origin of the Waves* that he "is not the first African Canadian novelist, though he is one of the most esteemed -and most prolific" (47). In any case, these writers' contributions with the exception of Martin R. Delany –whose novel will be further analysed in the next chapter– fall out from the period covered in the present dissertation, but all of them are revealing examples of the evolution of a silenced African voice in Canada.

On the other hand, Clarke's article is interesting in so far he states some recurring aspects which link early and contemporary Black authors in a continual literary process. From his viewpoint, African Canadian Literature is not a unified but diverse literary voice, "a heterogeneous and polyglot discourse -a medley of accents" ('A Primer').

Such appreciation is crucial for it reveals diversity within African Literature, runs against mainstream ascriptions of unity to the literary expressions of ethnic communities and reinforces Canada's literary diversity but from a renewed perspective. Canadian Literature is not diverse because it gathers different voices alongside a mainstream discourse but due to the variety of contributions produced by the different cultural communities. As far as Clarke is concerned, the emigration experience has forged an "exile tradition" in African Canadian Literature which connects early and contemporary writers. Other authors who were already Canadian-born took the baton from their predecessors and also carried out collective stories, following the example of early emigrants' accounts. One of the outstanding aspects of African Canadian Literature is the publishing obstacles authors have met until recently. Despite there having been some changes these authors still need to resort to self-publishing so that their texts can reach reading audiences. Actually, works by African writers in Canada are frequently published only in the language they are written and seldom translated into the other official language. As far as genres are concerned, Clarke states that although fiction and mostly short fiction in current times are employed, poetry has been these writers' main literary mode. But what Clarke ultimately wants to highlight is the actual existence of an African Canadian literary tradition, with "a long history -but also a more recent efflorescence" which has subsequently developed a "distinctive canon" ('A Primer'). If African Canadian Literature is to be understood at all and perhaps taken into account as a fundamental piece of Canadian literary expression and identity, that distinctive canon with all its cultural, literary and linguistic intersections needs to be taken into account.

George Elliot Clarke is also the editor of *Eyeing the North Star: Directions in African Canadian Literature* published in 1997. This compilation focuses on the multiculturalism and diversity of African Canadian Literature in order to undo the generalized tendency to refer to it as a close and still entity. Clarke relies on history to back up his claim of "African Canadian literature to be a species of hybridity" for it has been carried out in oral and written forms, by women and men, emigrant and Canadian-born authors, loyalists, missionaries, political agents, citizens and literary figures (1997a: xii). Its heterogeneous essence is so large that, in Clarke's opinion, it cannot be fully grasped by any literary history even when it focuses specifically on African

Canadian writing. According to Clarke, in spite of their heteroglossia, they all share a marked interest in Africa and its peoples around the world, “the expression of solidarity with Third World peoples” and the employment of a varied range of literary forms (1997a: xv). As he explains, within the Canadian context the predominance of the French-English dichotomy on the one hand, and the insistence on growing apart from the United States on the other, have pushed any debate about ethnic and racial issues to such marginal places that they have been rarely echoed. In fact, there is a crucial difference between the positions African culture and literature hold on both sides of the border; unlike in Canada, Africans in the United States portray an identity based on a historical participation which has already been acknowledged. The common ignorance on Black Canadian history has fostered a historiographic role on literary writers’ behalf who have felt compelled to tell the still untold in their works and who thus challenge Canada’s white historical construction. In Clarke’s opinion, it is still necessary to contest Canada’s image as ‘The Great White North’, that is, as a white paradigm for it is “a fantasy which stigmatizes blackness” (1997a: xix). African Canadian culture and literature need to be legitimated within the Canadian context, to be voiced and incorporated, but not as a mere mirror of the United States.

Precisely white is the Canadian identity within which, *other* and coloured identities, as those of African, First Nations or Asian, communities are distorted, as Clarke explains in his 1997 article “White Like Canada”. From Clarke’s viewpoint, the lack of precision regarding coloured identities is a consequence of the more general identity confusion that Canada is currently facing. I agree with his statement that “it is difficult enough to figure out what means to be Canadian, let alone African Canadian” (1997b: 98). The only common aspect among these different cultural Canadian identities is their non-Americanism. The problem of such an open proclamation of being Canadian precisely because of not being American lies in the fact that certain ideas have been generally accepted despite hiding some false assumptions. For instance, if Americans are racist, it has been then deduced that Canadians are not; hence, a general agreement on the non-necessity of raising any race debate has been also settled. Cases of racism are plentiful and, despite having been usually silenced by mainstream cultural institutions, ethnic critics work precisely to bring them into light so that previous historical and literary constructions are questioned. But Canada’s whiteness does not

only stem from its counter-American inspiration but from its Eurocentric nationalism. Once again, the two solitudes emerge as the two founding forces; the two white races which have forged a mainly white Canadian identity in which “racism was [frequently] made to disappear” (Clarke, 1997b: 109).

One year later, in 1998, Clarke’s article “Contesting a Model Blackness: A Meditation on African Canadian, African Americanism, or the Structures of African Canadianité” was published. One of the most interesting aspects of Clarke’s article deals with the utopian fictionalization of Canada by early African writers. During slavery times, authors tended to depict Canada as a land of freedom, as the North Star guiding their escape from an oppressive society. This is precisely what Martin R. Delany or Mary Ann Shadd develop but in distinctive ways and genres; the former through the novel in *Blake* in which that utopian vision is also critically depicted, and the latter in her attempt to promote black emigration to Canada through her emigrants guide *A Plea for Emigration, or Notes of Canada West*. Following Clarke, descriptions like those of Delany and Shadd introduced a romanticized image of Canada in African culture which would be carried out by later writers. In fact, such benevolent descriptions also helped confer a higher status to the country in relation to its southern neighbour as far as the African community is concerned. In this respect, it must be noted that authors like Delany or Shadd did not merely praise Canada as a liberation opportunity for the African community but also pointed out some discriminatory practices of the country. Moreover, these authors’ plea for a Black move to in Canada has also brought along their general exclusion from the United States’ African Literature since they have been frequently regarded as “a failed version of African Americans” (Clarke, 1998: 9). In this way, some African Canadian writing seems trapped between two forces, that of mainstream Canada and African America, which have both insisted on pushing it to the margins. It is clear then that African Canadian Literature holds a border-crossing position which places it as an alternating and stateless voice whose only nation is that of pan-Africa.

This in-between position of African Canadian Literature is also explored by Rinaldo Walcott in his 1997’s work entitled *Black Like Who? Writing Black Canada*. According to his “Introduction”, Black Literature is “an absented presence always under erasure” either within the context of the United States, Canada or the writers’ country of

origin (xiii). Whereas Walcott prefers the terminology of Black writing rather than African Canadian since, in his opinion, the former is more comprehensive and includes “particular histories of resistance and domination”, other critics in Canada opt for the term *African* (xiv). I agree with Walcott in so far that the term *Black* seems to have been substituted by that of *African*; given the negative connotations of *blackness* as a product of the history of slavery, discrimination and racism, *African* seems more politically correct nowadays<sup>28</sup>. Once again the issue of naming is at stake for, even though it is true that *Black* still maintains lower status significance, both terms do not refer to the same cultural communities. In fact, it is necessary to question its meaning regarding Canadian immigrant communities; does Black refer only to African or Caribbean immigrants or does it extend to all *other* coloured, that is, non-white cultural groups? On the other hand, Walcott’s diasporic approach to Canada’s identification as a land of freedom in African Canadian culture is very relevant. Delany and Shadd are again mentioned as precursors of those utopian visions, but this time they are seen as part of a diasporic and transnational cultural development which needs to be taken into account for early and modern Black Literature to be embraced in a wider and more appropriate way. Delany and Shadd’s literary achievements are not simply considered as mere appraisals of Canada but their critical comments on the situation of the Black community are raised too. Their works epitomize the diasporic essence of African culture since they claim for a border-crossing movement of Blacks, from Walcott’s viewpoint. This is precisely why Walcott maintains that diaspora depictions as those of Shadd and Delany connect their works to later Black writing in a continual and cross-national literary tradition and raise the diversity of Black Literature for “the multiplicities of blackness in Canada collide in ways that are instructive for current diasporic theorizing” (29). The acknowledgement of such heterogeneity would actually enable the realization of how feminist aspects intersect with ethnic discourses. Delany’s novel is actually paradigmatic in so far it does not embrace Black women as active agents within the Black political project the text conveys, whereas Shadd’s prose and journalist works epitomize female operational participation and “challenge both anti-black racism and anti patriarchy simultaneously”

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<sup>28</sup> In spite of such a terminology replacement, in the close study on Delany’s novel *Blake* developed in Part III of this dissertation both terms *Black* and *African* are employed not only in order to avoid repetition but also because the author refers to Blacks and not Africans since this latter naming had not yet been introduced at that time.

(Walcott: 25). In this way, Black critics do not only need to take into account ethnic and feminist issues but the diaspora as crucial elements in Black writing. As Walcott states, “it seems to me that discourses of diaspora require that black studies seriously considers diasporic exchanges, dialogues and differences” (32).

A transnational approach as that suggested by Walcott is actually developed in Moira Ferguson’s 1998 edition of *Nine Black Women: An Anthology of Nineteenth-Century Writers from the United States, Canada, Bermuda, and the Caribbean* in which Black women’s diasporic contributions are analysed. Ferguson’s compilation offers a comprehensive study on the figure of Mary Ann Shadd Cary as an alternating voice. Much later, in 2003, Donna Bailey Nurse took Walcott’s baton for her work *What’s a Black Critic to do? Interviews, Profiles and Reviews of Black Writers*. In the “Preface”, she also explores the role of black critics and the obstacles the English language poses; being a product of white culture, the same that Black writers have felt trapped within an expression vehicle which did not hold any cultural roots for them, Black critics need to get rid of the linguistic connotations in order to develop Black criticism. Likewise, Black feminist criticism must divest language not only from negative ethnic significance but also from its patriarchal implications.

Finally, in 2000 and 2001 two interesting works on Black writing were published by Ayanna Black and Althea Prince respectively. In Ayanna Black’s *Fieri Spirits and Voices: Canadian Writers of African Descent* language is also presented as a fundamental element in Black writing since it epitomizes its “transplanted” condition. According to Black’s explanation, the diasporic estate of African authors first provoked their segregation on linguistic basis and, later on, their compulsory adoption of the master’s language. From here, a new linguistic expression was born; it placed authors in an in-between situation, trapped between their masters’ discourses and their expression of defiance, independence and survival (Black: xviii). This is precisely what ethnic critics need to take into consideration; it is not only necessary to acknowledge the employment of historical allusions to discrimination, suppression and death, but also the multiple and trans-national “cultural, ideological and geographic references” as well as literary roots of African Canadian writers (Black: xx). On the other hand, Althea Prince also suggests linguistic problems but this time regarding the term *culture* which in any case may be described as a human construction and “a means of defining themselves in

their particular worlds” (19). Within Canadian culture, leaving past racist attitudes towards the Black community behind, Black writers are currently seen as racist for they have apparently excluded white contributions; a clear example is the 1994 Conference on “Writing Thru Race” in which non-white authors were accused of discrimination since in some panels only they were allowed to participate. For Prince, The Writers Union is an eloquent epitome since it has gone through a racialization process. Be that what it may, the revealing point of such a racializing either white or black is the fact that it exclusively focuses on race and silences gender issues; a simultaneous debate about ethnic *and* feminist topics is still to be attempted.

#### IV.2.1.2 EARLY ASIAN CANADIAN LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

As far as Asian literary contributions are concerned, anthologies, compilations and critical studies tend to differentiate between writing by South Asian authors and those of Japanese or Chinese ancestry. One of the few examples of a general Asian focus is Tseen-Ling Khoo’s 2003 work *Banana Bending: Asian-Australian and Asian-Canadian Literatures*. Khoo’s work is very significant not only for its broader scope but also for its exploration of Canadian multiculturalism and, above all, for raising racist practices in Canada frequently silenced by mainstream history and literary history. One of the most important issues she raises regarding Asian Canadian diasporic literature and cultural identity is the need of paying attention to “socio-political contextualisation and specificity” (Khoo: 47). I share Khoo’s point of view since, for instance, Winnifred Eaton’s contributions have been ignored precisely for such lack of contextualisation and attention to details; in this way, whereas Eaton’s development of a Japanese persona and her border-crossing position between the United States and Canada have been the two main dismissing reasons, the former was presumably a publishing strategy given the good reputation Japanese topics enjoyed at her time and the latter a consequence of her search for publication. In fact, Eaton’s case is an example of early Asian Canadian Literature and a proof of the fact that “the ‘silence’ in publications has possibly been more a result of neglect and systemic devaluation [...] rather than a lack of voice” (Khoo: 51). Khoo maintains that multicultural policies have actually fostered recent publications of Asian Canadian works, either critical or literary, so that Asian Canadians find themselves trapped between official governmental support and the



maintenance of their communal essence. I also agree with Khoo in so far English Canadian culture still inhabits a hegemonic space in which entrance of *other* communities is allowed but in a structure which positions Québécois literature at the top and *other* under it (36-7). She suggests that open acknowledgements of ethnic cultures, as that of the ‘Asian Heritage Month’, can be actually regarded as double-sided; while the presence of Asian cultures is acknowledged, they are also pushed “along designated paths” (38). Gestures like this also hide a history of racism that remains silenced; much like other postcolonial states, Canadian historiography as well as its cultural and literary history have been mainly constructed by white communities and have left aside non-white presence and contribution until recently. Besides, the constant comparison with its southern neighbour has also brought along the country’s self conception as “a more tolerant and well-blended nation” and the instauration of a benevolent image of the country that works like Khoo’s undo (41).

Nonetheless, Canada’s southern neighbour has also had some positive impact on Canadian literary criticism. For example, the critical work on Asian Literature carried out in the United States before being approached from a Canadian critical perspective has somehow influenced the development of Canadian criticism on the matter. An early and interesting example is *Aiiieeee! An Anthology of Asian-American Writers* published in 1975. Although it focuses mainly on Asian writers who developed their literary careers in the United States, some of the most significant ideas concerning Asian literary production later embraced by Canadian critics are introduced. In the “Preface” to the compilation, for instance, the multiplicity of Asian culture in America is affirmed in an attempt to raise the complexity of their cultural backgrounds and challenge reductionist visions. Not only the fact that “Asian-Americans are not one people but several” is highlighted but also the in-between positions of Asian writers (Chin: ix). The cultural background from which they speak is neither fully Japanese or Chinese nor American, so that they are both and none at the same time; they hold a “dual personality” or a divided self trapped in a double identity, that of their culture of origin back in Asia and of their country of adoption in the United States. In fact, as stated by L. K. Hsu, such duplicity intersects with women writers’ double condition in so far, despite significant differences, “the double identity of a minority group is not dissimilar to that of the professional woman. She is a woman and a professional” (qtd.

in Chin et al: xvi). The alternating estate of these ethnic literary voices has prevented the acknowledgement of their singularity; in addition, the predominance of white American culture has also contributed to the rejection or undervaluing of their contributions.

Given the fact that the English Chinese writer Winnifred Eaton is one of the few Asian authors to develop some literary activity in the novel genre in English before the twentieth century, attention will be mainly paid to critical works which focus on Chinese Canadian Literature in English. *Inalienable Rice: A Chinese and Japanese Canadian Anthology* meant the first anthologizing attempt on Chinese literature in Canada as early as in 1979. It opened an unexplored path later followed by *The Yellow Peril: Chinese Americans in American Fiction, 1850-1940* in 1982, *Between Worlds: Women Writers of Chinese Ancestry* in 1990 or *Many-mouthed birds: contemporary writing by Chinese Canadians* in 1991. In *The Yellow Peril* by William Wu, Edith Eaton or Sui Sin Far is cited as “the earliest writer of American fiction to have Chinese ancestry” but her sister Winnifred Eaton is not, perhaps due to the Japanese topics and characters of her works (54). Amy Ling’s 1990 *Between Worlds* is a very eloquent critical work because it focuses on women writers and dedicates a full chapter to the pioneering figures of the Eaton sisters, that is, Edith Maud Eaton, also known as Sui Sin Far, and Winnifred Eaton Reeve or Onoto Watanna. Later on, *Beyond Silence: Chinese Canadian Literature in English* by Lien Chao saw the light in 1997; Chao’s compilation is actually mentioned by Khoo for being “the first extended critical monograph about Chinese-Canadian literature” (52). In the introductory remarks, Chao affirms that this hyphenated Canadian Literature is still labelled as “minority” but that from its marginalized position it “raises a resistant voice against European cultural hegemony in Canadian literature” much like Black or Native writers’ literary contributions do (1997: xiv). Chao’s compilation and previous critical works like W. H. New’s “Inside Gold Mountain” (1994) are generally considered as works merely citing disregarded names while, from my viewpoint, they have carried out the fundamental task of unsilencing dismissed literary voices so that new paths of research have been opened and epitomes of Canada’s multicultural fallacy brought into light.

In 1996, one year before *Beyond Silence*, Chao had already participated in Winfried Siemerling’s edition of *Writing Ethnicity: Cross-Cultural Consciousness in Canadian and Québécois Literature* with a chapter on “Anthologizing the Collective:

The Epic Struggles to Establish Chinese Canadian Literature in English”. Chao’s text is very interesting because it raises racist practices in Canada and the linguistic obstacles of the Chinese community, as well as for its inclusion of early authors and the analysis of ethnic anthologizing. Contrary to what is generally maintained, Chinese immigration is not a recent phenomenon since, according to Chao, “Chinese have been settled in Canada for 138 years”; a time period in which Chinese immigrants have been subjected to the racist practices mentioned in previous sections (1996: 145). Similarly, literary authors, who have been knocking on the door of mainstream Canadian Literature for long, have been frequently ignored in spite of writing in English and employing mainstream genres as the novel, for instance. Early contributions as those of the Eaton sisters are very clear paradigms; both started writing before the twentieth century but their literary achievements have been overlooked except by specific Asian or Chinese critical approaches. Sui Sin Far mainly produced short fiction before the twentieth century, whereas Onoto Watanna had already published six novels before 1904. Actually, the fact that both authors were writing, publishing and residing in the United States and Canada has provoked certain struggles regarding their ascription to the Chinese Literature of both countries. Unlike in Canada, critics from the United States have insisted on their roles as precursors of Chinese Literature “with Edith Eaton as the first Chinese American woman writer” (Chao, 1996: 146). As Chao suggests, it would be perhaps more accurate “to accept that the Eurasian sisters are literary ancestors for both Chinese Canadian and Chinese American literatures” (1996: 146). Their Eurasian descent and their alternating character influenced their writing and creation of different literary personae; they pioneered in both literatures, innovated and supplied new topics and forms long before later Chinese literary voices had any impact on mainstream literature.

In fact, Chinese contributions have rarely been echoed by Canadian criticism until critical works by scholars interested in recovering these literary achievements started to be published. According to Chao, one of the first attempts at raising Chinese Canadian voices was the Asian Canadian Writers’ Workshop held during the 1970s. Promoted by Vancouver Chinese immigrants, it launched Chinese Literature, questioned historical oversights and raised a debate on racism in Canada (1996: 147). It also helped in reinforcing the communal sense of Canada’s Chinese community and

fostered the creation of precisely collective critical compilations as anthologies. They answered to the communal needs of Chinese Canadians and established a dialectical exchange among the writers included since, for Chao, anthologies are comprehensive regarding literary genres and a powerful means because they either insert silenced literatures into the mainstream or at least “grant[s] recognition to an emerging literature [...] [as a] part of Canadian literatures written in English” (1996: 150). The use of language as a exclusion basis cannot be held any longer since not only most writers started to use English in their works in order to raise their voices and reach mainstream audiences, but nowadays it is actually and “ironically, the only written language that they possess” (Chao, 1996: 148). In this respect, the borrowing of anthologizing and the use of the English language alike, both as tools of expression of a mainstream culture which had denied access to other cultural groups, have turned to be contested and contesting spaces for previously ignored literatures. From my viewpoint, given the relatively low impact of ethnic anthologies on Canada’s mainstream literary history, I am not so sure that specific anthologies actually gain access and contest previous axioms so quickly; likewise, the canonizing process of their works still holds a lower status within Canadian Literature because of the marginal and hyphenated positions offered to them. As Chao suggests, the publication of one anthology is not enough; it is more a question of continuity from the path opened by previous compilations since they have cleared a space in which further research, recovery and unfolding is possible.

Another work by Lien Chao, this time in collaboration with Jim Wong-Chu, is *Strike the Wok: An Anthology of Contemporary Chinese Canadian Fiction* (2003). Despite the fact that it focuses mainly on contemporary writing as the title suggests, it is interesting in so far it goes back to the first anthology of Chinese Literature mentioned above. Chao ascribes a political agency to *Inalienable Rice* for, in her opinion, it marked the beginning of the literature by writers of Chinese ancestry. Thanks to this early compilation, Chinese Canadian writing was born, not because it did not exist before but due to the creation of a pulpit from which Chinese authors had the opportunity to speak up, break the silence to which they had been relegated until then and start asking for their own literary history and identity, not only for Chinese writers but Asian. *Inalienable Rice* was a first attempt, from which other critical works have stemmed and have fostered a more widespread recognition so that, in Chao’s words,

“Chinese Canadian literature has grown into an acknowledged force in Canadian literature today” (in Chao and Wong-Chu: x).

In spite of the fact that no South Asian author seems to have written and published any novel in the period covered in the present research, for emigration from South Asia to Canada is mainly a recent phenomenon, critical works which focus on South Asian Literature are also very eloquent; they raise fundamental critical concerns of ethnic writing and participate in the continual critical process of Canadian ethnic studies. In this respect, M. G. Vassanji’s “Introduction” to his 1985 edition of *A Meeting of Streams: South Asian Canadian Literature* also points out terminology issues affecting ethnic criticism since the use of the term *immigrant* to refer to Asian Canadian Literature ascribes a lower status in relation to mainstream Canadian Literature; it does not refer to an international, multilingual and cosmopolitan author or individual but more to “one who has not quite made it” (2). Language concerns are again raised by Vassanji in his article “South Asian Literature in Canada” of 1989 but from the perspective of writers’ employment of the English language as a literary vehicle. As immigrant authors, they are sometimes supposed to use *other* languages whereas some of them have English as their mother tongue. In this way, their ethnic condition meets with the Anglo-Saxon linguistic, cultural and literary framework so that their works need to be considered in the trans-cultural light of their contributions and the “international nature of this literary system” (Vassanji, 1989: 805). The chapter on “South Asian Canadian Novels in English” by Frank Birbalsingh included in Vassanji’s 1985 edition of *A Meeting of Streams: South Asian Canadian Literature* is interesting in so far it explores the main aspects of South Asian writers’ contributions to the novel genre. The in-between and border-crossing positions of these novels bring along a differentiated consideration for they can comprise either Canadian or Asian literary features and topics or both simultaneously. Similarly, the fact that South Asian novelists are inspired by Western literary forms does not mean that their literary viewpoint has also to be westernised. Ronald Sutherland in “The Mainstream of Canadian Literature” also included in Vassanji’s *A Meeting of Streams* explains that the space inhabited by Canadian writers who are neither English nor French is still “the field where the least has been done” (in Vassanji, 1985: 73). Following his explanation, one of the most distinguishable topics in Canadian Literature is still the tension between those two

hegemonic linguistic communities; while “diversity and multiculturalism” should also be regarded as intrinsic to Canada’s literary essence, not only currently but at early times too, they have not yet been fully acknowledged as such (in Vassanji, 1985: 76). In fact, as suggested in the introduction to Diane McGifford’s 1992 edition of *The Geography of Voice: Canadian literature of the South Asian Diaspora*, recognizing Canada’s multicultural literary identity would help forge a new concept of Canadian Literature that would acknowledge ethnic *and* women’s contributions because it would “value cultural perspectives outside the dominant *white patriarchal* one” (my emphasis, xv).

#### IV.2.1.3 EARLY FIRST NATIONS’ LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Similar issues to those unfolded by Black and Asian Canadian critics are addressed by critical works and compilations on First Nations’ Canadian Literature in English. Leslie Monkman’s 1981 *A Native Heritage: Images of the Indian in English-Canadian Literature*, for instance, is very interesting because it raises racist views in relation to native communities by focusing on the depiction of First Nations peoples by mainstream writers. Monkman unfolds a challenging explanation of the predominance of Canada’s white culture through literary depictions as those of early female writers such as Brooke or Moodie that also participated in a racializing process either through the image of natives as savages or noble savages.

Two years later, in 1983, Penny Petrone’s *First People, First Voices* was published; it is a landmark in Canadian ethnic criticism for being one of the first critical attempts of gathering First Nations Literature in English including early authors. As she states in the “Preface”, the “aim is to show the beginnings and development in Canada of an Indian literary tradition in English”<sup>29</sup> (vii). The same as Clarke does regarding African Canadian writing, what Petrone ultimately tries to reveal is the actual existence of a First Nations’ literary tradition in English. Following her explanation, native communities started employing the English language as a means of expression as early as in the beginning of the nineteenth century; their first writings in English –together with the distinctive oral and/or written literatures in native languages– conform the

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<sup>29</sup> The employment of the term “Indian” by Petrone is perhaps due to the early nature of her critical attempt, while it is no longer used given the racial, foreign and negative connotations it held.

bases from which later writing stems and are thus crucial pieces in the forging of a literary tradition. The analysis of the significance and dismissal of these early authors and works implies the questioning of the very term of literature that needs to be “interpreted in its broadest sense, embracing not only imaginative prose and poetry but also letters, speeches, sermons, reports, petitions, diary entries, songs, essays, journals and travel writing, history and autobiography” (Petrone, 1983: vii-viii). Joseph Brant or Tecumseh were some of the first to produce official literature in English whose writings share a portrayal of “a sense of loss”, not only of practical power as a consequence of colonization, but also of “dignity” and “nationhood” (Petrone, 1983: 36). Regarding nationhood, Joseph Brant’s “Letter to Lord Sidney, His Majesty’s secretary for colonial affairs” is eloquent in so far he speaks of “all the Indian nations” so that First Nations’ diversity seems to have been already raised at early times. Later, the religious conversion of some native members, their participation in missions, teaching and writing at home and abroad brought along varied literary contributions. From this time, the figures of Peter Jones, the previously cited George Copway, as well as George Henry, Peter Jacobs, John Sunday, Henry Steinhauer, and Allant Salt stand out as “the first literary coterie of Indians in Canada, and the first to write extensively in English” (Petrone, 1983: 77). For them, their knowledge of the language of mainstream society offered the opportunity of expressing and depicting themselves; it meant a chance to make understand their own views and feelings, their culture and identity, and to undo the pervasive axioms to which white culture had subjected them until then. Some of these, such as George Copway, were extensively published –as the six editions of Copway’s work later known as *Recollections of a Forest Life* prove– and even gained public recognition. During the late nineteenth century, Native Literature took another step; legends, tales, and myths started to appear in written form. According to Petrone, these early writers and works show an evolution from translation and emulation to more imaginative literature and all form part of “the real roots of the Indian literature” (1983: 169).

Petrone also contributed to the unfolding of First Nations Literature through a later work published in 1990, *Native Literature in Canada: From the Oral Tradition to the Present*. Like in her previous work, this compilation shows the evolution of First Nations’ Literature, unfolds its literary tradition, and employs the term *literature* in a

wider sense so that it also includes oral forms. Chapter II focuses on writers from 1820 to 1850 where the previously mentioned figures of Peter Jones, George Copway, George Henry, Peter Jacobs, John Sunday, Henry Steinhauer, and Allant Salt are here analysed in detail. Although they mainly contributed to non-fiction they deserve a short mention in this dissertation in so far they are paradigmatic cases of the first steps of a written Native Literature in English. Their autobiographical accounts –as Copway’s *Recollections of a Forest Life* (1850), “the first ever written by a Canadian Indian” (Petrone, 1990: 45) – histories, travelogues and tracts can actually be equated with the widely accepted early works of Samuel Hearne, Susanna Moodie or Catharine Parr Traill. Later, as Petrone suggests, a new literary form was born, that of “protest literature” as a consequence of depriving First Nations of their lands and thus of their nations, that is, “the source of their very identity” (1990: 60). According to Petrone, the uniqueness of these first contributions “that wove history, traditions, beliefs and personal experience” and the cultural identity they give expression to turn them into a pioneering body of literature (1990: 70). In spite of this, “by the end of the nineteenth century [...] [they] had become *peripheral* to Canadian development and history” (my emphasis; Petrone, 1990: 63). On the other hand, First Nations’ writing from 1850 to 1914 is unravelled in Chapter III of *Native Literature in Canada*. During this period, only sporadic publication of their works took place so that scarce cases of Native authors such as those of Peter Dooyentate Clarke, Louis Jackson, John Ojijatekha, also known as Brant Sero, or Pauline Johnson can be mentioned. Pauline Johnson’s figure is paradigmatic; she was not only a First Nations’ member trapped between two cultures and identities that had to find the equilibrium between both, but also a woman and an author. To Petrone’s statement that “it is difficult enough to be a woman of one world; [and] [...] more difficult to be a woman of two worlds” (1990: 84), I would add her role as writer since its implications were very different in both cultures. In any case, these voices went silenced during this period; just as First Nations communities were increasingly locked up in reserves, their literary achievements were also kept within their marginalizing walls.

Interestingly, Simon Pokagon’s work *Life of O-Ji-Maw-Kwe-Mit-I-Gwa-Ki, Queen of the Woods* (1899) is not mentioned in any of Petrone’s works. Perhaps, the fact that his tribe resided in the United States as well as in Canada and was forced to



settle in different places of North America has influenced this dismissal. In fact, in order to find detailed information about Simon Pokagon and his works the researcher has to turn to very specific sources which deal with the Potawatomi tribe as the studies of R. David Edmunds or James Clifton. One of the few critical works from a Canadian perspective in which Simon Pokagon is taken into account is “Introduction: An Anthology of Canadian Native Fiction” by Thomas King published in 1987. In King’s text, the author’s name is actually wrongly spelled as “Pokogan” while in the dedication to his work *Queen of the Woods* in the third edition of 1901 the writer introduces himself as “I Pokagon” (1). According to King, Pokagon’s work is an early paradigm of the employment of the conflicts between Native and non-native communities as a literary topic and belongs to what King calls a “collection of literary works by individual authors who are Native by ancestry” but not a tradition which, from his viewpoint, still needs to be outlined from the forms and themes employed by these as well as later authors (4). Although I agree with King’s definition of Native literature as the one created by Natives –despite it is so general that it is almost impossible to disagree with it– I do not share his racial view on the fact that “being Native is a matter of race rather than something more transitory as nationality” (4). In my opinion, it is more a matter of culture for accepting race as a defining category actually implies the incorporation of traditional racial theories and their segregationist and undervaluing axioms. In fact, King is not sure about the applicability of these racial bases for if race offers entrance to cultural and literary uniqueness as well as to particular views of the world, what about authors of mixed ancestry? Either “full-bloods raised in the cities, half-blood raised on farms, quarter-bloods raised on reservations, [...] Indians who speak their tribal language, [or] Indians who speak only English” would be left aside (King: 5). Furthermore, I also share King’s views regarding what First Nations literature has usually been expected to be. Too frequently authenticity has been considered one of its most intrinsic qualities so that innovation and creativity have been somehow prevented and overlooked.

Simon Pokagon is neither mentioned in Daniel David Moses and Terry Goldie’s 1998 edition of *An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English* nor in their 2005 re-edition. The former collection is interesting in so far the presence of women writers before the twentieth century is stronger than previously mentioned anthologies

on Native Literature. To the list of more widely-known early authors mentioned before, female figures such as those of Alma Greene, Susan Martin, Catherine Sonegoh Suton, and Mary Augusta Tappage are added. Gah-wonh-nos-doh also called Alma Greene is significant for the publication of *Forbidden Voice: Reflections of a Mohawk Indian* whose title actually uses her Native name as the translation for Gah-wonh-nos-doh is 'forbidden voice'. Susan Martin is mentioned together with her husband Martin Martin both as particular representatives of literature from the Labrador coast. In relation to the negative consequences that mixed marriages had in some occasions, the case of Catherine Sonegoh Suton, whose Ojibway name was Nah-nee-bah-wee-quay, is revealing. Born an Ojibway, she lived in England and married an English man. When back in Canada, the border-crossing character of her life provoked her rejection from governmental economical support because of her half-Native situation, and later from buying land precisely for being a Native member. Her case is paradigmatic of Canada's inability to deal with alternating figures, just as it has occurred with their literary contributions. Likewise, Mary Augusta Tappage's marriage with "a non-status Shuswap" provoked the denial of her ethnic membership (Moses and Goldie, 1998: 520). Of course, it is not only eloquent the fact that women or men lost their ethnic affiliation when marrying non-status ethnic members but the very fact that there were status and non-status ethnic members, that is, the existence of two politically established classes of Natives. Although none of these writers contributed to the novel genre, their non-fiction works, short stories and poetry are important achievements to which orature should be also added. In fact, the term *orature* is discussed by Moses and Goldie in their "Preface"; they prefer the use of this term rather than "oral literature" because the former does not contain the negative connotations the latter does in relation to so-assumed higher written literary forms. As they state, "a lot of Native people have been working with words without publishing" and it should be considered as such by literary criticism (xvi). Another fundamental terminology issue Moses and Goldie deal with is the naming of First Nation's Literature as that coming from a 'fourth world,' that is, from a further and lower position than that of the three previous worlds (xxiii). In their opinion, this situation speaks of the appropriation and power exerted by mainstream cultural groups which seem to possess Native culture to such an extent that "there is a sense that white appropriation of Native voice is trying almost to swallow Native

culture and have it inside” (xxii). Despite both critics’ attempt to raise crucial issues concerning First Nations’ Literature, and praise it, I do not share their idea that “as a literature it is quite young” (xxi); it is not possible to know how old or young it is because it has existed much long before it was recorded by critical works and, furthermore, it has been developed for centuries but in different forms to those of canonical Western Literature, either through oral or written genres. Finally, in Moses and Goldie’s 2005 edition of their compilation the same authors of their previous work are mentioned with the exception of Susan Martin, who is not cited, and the inclusion of Ghandl from the Haida culture.

#### IV.2.1.4 “PRACTISING FEMININITY”: EARLY ENGLISH CANADIAN LITERATURE BY WOMEN<sup>30</sup>

As in the case of ethnic critics, feminist critical works also display a great diversity in their approaches so that it would be more accurate to speak of Canadian feminisms rather than of feminism. In fact, feminist perspectives intersect with ethnic mainly when dealing with the literary production of ethnic women authors. Despite the fact that they all seem to participate in the common project of raising silenced voices and the implications of previous critical oversights, their distinct perspectives and focuses unfold different aspects concerning their contributions and achievements. As this section reveals, perhaps the most outstanding difference between both approaches is the higher amount of scholarly work carried out from feminist perspectives until nowadays.

The existence of a female literary tradition in English Canada has also been one of the concerns of feminist critics. Although Joanne Hedenstrom’s 1978 article “Puzzled Patriarchs and Free Women: Patterns in the Canadian Novel” concentrates more on twentieth-century women novelists, her analysis of the topics, the stereotypes of hero and heroine, and the values developed by both male and female novel authors offers her the possibility of bringing into light the connections among women writers’ novels and voicing the oversights of mainstream criticism. Whereas male writers act as

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<sup>30</sup> Part of the title of this section is taken from Misao Dean’s *Practising Femininity. Domestic Realism and the Performance of Gender in Early Canadian Fiction*. Toronto: Toronto UP, 1998.

“puzzled patriarchs” and pessimistically focus on survival, “free women” writers centre their attention on the possibilities of escape and change. In consonance with Margaret Atwood’s *Survival*, from Hedenstrom’s viewpoint, women’s more comprehensive, differing, positive, and rebellious perspectives link their contributions so that they can be said to conform “a distinct group within the whole of Canadian literature” and hence, a “definite tradition” which is still to be acknowledged (2).

In the same year, an interesting article on the frequently overlooked participation of women authors in the configuration of Canada’s national literature was published. But “The Distaff Side of the Confederation Group: Women’s Contribution to Early Nationalist Canadian Literature” by Margaret C. Whitridge is also revealing regarding women writers’ status at the time; unlike non-white cultural communities, they were offered entrance in the crucial task of constructing literary Canada, so that they can be said to have held more powerful positions within Canadian culture than ethnic groups. According to Whitridge, the 1867 Confederation, the appearance of the Canada First Movement and the Royal Society of Canada in 1882, gave birth to a nationalist movement among Canadian intellectuals. Of course, literary authors of the time known as “the Confederation group” or “the Group of the ’61” –because they were all born around that year– held a prominent position. Curiously enough, the women writers who belonged to this group, actively participated in Canadian letters and emulated their male contemporaries by crossing national boundaries in search of more widespread publication, have not received equal official recognition. It is the case of Anges Maule Machar, Susan Frances Harrison or Sara Jeannette Duncan, among others. Even though Harrison’s contributions as a novelist are not approached in detail, Whitridge’s article is one of the very few in which her prominent role in Canadian musical culture as performer and creator is highlighted. It is important to note that these three authors together with many other colleagues, “who flourished in the nineteenth century in Canada are now obscured and they have been denied the literary place they sought avidly and which some merited” (32).

In 1984, Mary Kelley contributed to feminist criticism through *Private Woman, Public Stage: Literary Domesticity in Nineteenth-Century America* in which she investigates the connections between female literature and domesticity. Although, as she explains, the novel genre either by female or male authors was regarded as

dangerous and even pernicious at first, the domestic realm from which women novelists started to contribute conferred their novels a different viewpoint, language and certain mysticism –although in my opinion such mystique was more a product of alien consideration– which provoked their positioning in a different place to that of male novels. Given the fact that these household frameworks were “the only life she could have” and thus the main root of her fiction, women writers employed domestic settings not as mere literary records of it but as means of expressing their experience (Kelley: 221). The domestic character of their early literary attempts brought along their regard as literary forms which did not require any singular ability whatsoever since “the woman cannot[could not] be a creator of culture because she has[had] no choice of being; her destiny is[was] not hers to shape or control” (221). Following Kelley’s explanation, although it meant an opportunity to exert their literary power and raise their voices, they had to hide their boundary-crossing agency behind the walls of morality for women were expected to convey moral concerns in their literary works. Their domestic arrest entailed the assumption that they were “necessarily more aware of the mutual dependence and needs of all human beings” in the eyes of mainstream society and literary criticism, to such an extent that women were raised as the “moral elite” (Kelley: 288). Their elitism was, first, alien for them since they did not choose it and it was, of course, a paradoxical “assertion of superiority [which] stemmed from a condition of inferiority” (Kelley: 299).

In the same year, Elizabeth Waterston explored women’s participation in English fiction in Canada as characters, writers and readers in her article “Women in Canadian Fiction” (1984). Regarding the issue of literary representation of women unfolded in Chapter II, Waterston explains that prevailing novel examples of males, as for instance John Richardson’s, reveal that women were usually led to destruction or mere survival in Canadian fiction despite, in Waterston’s opinion, female characters by male writers were generally “fine” and, in comparison to works in the United States, “at least women *do* appear” (1984: 101). Female novelists differed from males in so far they included more powerful women characters, heroines who did not resign from more participative, challenging and enduring life experiences, as in Susanna Moodie’s biographical account. I agree with Waterston in that “female protagonists deserve a better term” given the terminology issues the term *heroine* implies since it is not an

equal counterpart to that of literary hero (1984: 101). Regarding the role of women as agents in early Canada's literary fiction, Waterston mentions Frances Brooke, Susanna Moodie, Rosanna Leprohon, Margaret Marshall Saunders and Sara Jeannette Duncan as some of the most significant figures. Although their lives were quite disparate, they seem to share the late age in which their most-known novel was published and the inclusion of "at least one controversial character" (1984: 103), as Frances Brooke's *Arabella Fermor* or Joanna E. Wood's *Myron Holder*. Another significant issue raised by Waterston deals with best-sellers, being these "books that sell, in any decade, copies equalling one-tenth of the population in that period" (1984: 103). Apparently for academic criticism the fact that a book was extensively sold at its time is reason enough for its dismissal; dismissals that have not been equally practised over other works such as those written by white males. This is the case of Saunders' *Beautiful Joe* which was Canada's first international best-seller but has not been considered in equal terms to Ernest Thompson Seton and Charles G. D. Roberts' achievements, or Joann E. Wood's successful literary career both in sales and recognition at her time that has been very frequently obviated. As Waterston explains, what this type of criticism does not take into account is precisely readers, that is, an intrinsic part of the very act of writing for what is written is immediately "waiting for and needing a perceiver or receiver" (1984: 103). The role of women as readers is thus also undervalued for they are regarded as "unfine" when responding to best-selling works (Waterston, 1984: 105). According to Waterston, the lure feminist critics can find in English Canadian fiction does not only lie on "the women who 'live' in it as characters" but also on the information it offers about on women as writers and readers.

Another feminist critical work published two years after Waterston's article was *A Mazing Space: Writing Canadian, Women Writing* (1986) edited by Shirley Neuman and Smaro Kamboureli. Regarding the present dissertation, it is a very significant compilation because the articles included stem from diverse feminist approaches to literature that also take into account ethnic *and* feminist perspectives. In this sense, the well-known Barbara Godard participates with "Voicing the Difference: The Literary Production of Native Women" in which, just as ethnic critics, she questions the very concept of literature since her attempt is including oral literature by women so that female writing can also be reformulated. I find very interesting her mention to Frances

Brooke's *The History of Emily Montague* for including the first character that expresses women's claim for difference, Arabella Fermor, epitomized through her desire of "go[ing] squaw", that is, of becoming a First Nations female member and hence freer (in Neuman and Kamboureli: 87-8). Although later in the novel Arabella moves away from this idea, her gesture is significant for Godard in so far it links Brooke's work to later women's novels for their depiction of native women not only in positive terms but as admirable and imitable. The most important aspect of these representations is not only the use of native women characters by non-native authors but what First Nations women writers have to say about it. The same feminist critics appropriated the critical territory related to female production at first, these women writers fear that a similar possession process can take place regarding native women characters. As it will be explained later, just as women and ethnic figures have been dichotomously depicted in literary works as either good or evil, the perpetuation of squaw images could "become the literary norm against which all later creative productions would be measured" to such an extent that their own representations would be left aside for not following the 'norm' as it happened with many previous challenging works by white female and ethnic writers (Godard in Neuman and Kamboureli: 88).

In relation to the analysis of ethnic *and* feminist issues in English Canadian Literature the previously and extensively mentioned *Intersexions. Issues of Race and Gender in Canadian Women's Writing* edited by Coomi S. Vevaina and Barbara Godard in 1996, and *Back to the Drawing Board: African Canadian Feminisms* edited in 2002 by Njokin Wane, Katherina Delivosky and Erica Lawson are worth noting. The latter is relevant in its investigation of feminism from a specifically African Canadian perspective separated from both white and African American feminisms. As Wane states in Chapter One on "Black-Canadian Feminist Thought: Drawing on the Experiences of My Sisters", white feminisms and African American theorizing are not fully valid to enunciate African Canadian women's experience; both have left the specific issues affecting them aside or even instrumentalized them for their convenience so that "a multilayered feminism that incorporates the ideologies of African, African-American and White feminisms and that places black-Canadian women in the centre" is needed (in Wane, Delivosky and Lawson: 32). Wane's reference to Mary Ann Shadd as one of the figures on which African feminisms in the United States are rooted is

meaningful; whereas she acknowledges Shadd's relevance in feminist thought, her participation in Canadian culture and thus her contribution to African Canadian feminism is obviated. In this respect and following Wane, articulating a common African Canadian feminist discourse is a complicated task not only because the African *and* female experience in Canada entails plural meanings but also because of the border-crossing character of figures like Shadd's. I agree with Wane that in spite of the difficulty it implies, efforts like hers or that attempted in this dissertation are necessary to establish a dialogue so that all these silenced experiences are taken into account and granted authority while renewed theories start to be outlined. The achievement of an articulated and diverse discourse is crucial in so far it would raise silenced voices, tell untold histories and thus challenge mainstream historical and literary discourses and, furthermore, bring not a single unified African Canadian female identity but "Black women's multiple and hybrid identities" (Wane in Wane, Delivosky and Lawson: 37). Once again, diversity plays a crucial role but this time in relation to both ethnic *and* feminist thought.

One of the hindrances Wane finds for the articulation of a specifically African Canadian feminist discourse is the lack of attention paid to African Canadian women; one of the few works focusing on them are Peggy Bristow's *We're Rooted here and They Can't Pull Us Up*: *Essays in African Canadian Women's History* (1994) or Marlene Nourbese Philip's mentioned previously. Another influential obstacle is the hegemony of mainstream Eurocentric critical thought which has dismissed any other critical discourses regarded as non-academic. In Wane's words this is "a type of academic elitism that embraces traditional structures of domination" and that has been "constantly engaged in ignoring or suppressing the Other" (in Wane, Delivosky and Lawson: 49). The scant appearance of African and feminist critical approaches in English Canadian criticism is significant, to say the least. Moreover, African Canadian feminist discourses have also been demeaned by some anti-racist discourses for they are assumed to superimpose gender issues to anti-discriminatory claims. Such an accusation is eloquent for it demonstrates that "anti-racist theory has merely put a coat of paint on the issue of Black female subordination" because, as Wane states, it overlooks the fact that in being African women both gender and race need to be equally addressed (Wane in Wane, Delivosky and Lawson: 186). Wane's analysis is paradigmatic for it highlights



the intricate position of critics who apply both feminist *and* ethnic perspectives and attempt to shape new critical discourses. It is necessary to acknowledge and investigate those intersections/intersections already analysed in this dissertation since, according to Wane, they would actually allow “an interactive model to develop strategies of resistance that will help both women and men in society understand racism, patriarchy, sexism and other oppressive systems” (in Wane, Delivosky and Lawson: 47).

Janice Fiamengo’s 2002 article also investigates the intersections between feminism and ethnic issues. “Rediscovering our Foremothers Again: the Racial Ideas of Canada’s Early Feminists, 1885-1945” unfolds the racial theories, sometimes condescending and sometimes challenging, developed by early white feminists in Canada. It has to be mentioned that the title of Fiamengo’s text takes up Lorraine McMullen’s *Re(dis)covering Our Foremothers* (1990), as Fiamengo’s heading makes clear, perhaps in an attempt of recovering, questioning and also actualizing the feminist critical contents of McMullen’s compilation. From my viewpoint, this article is very significant in so far it mentions and extensively analyses the figures of Sara Jeannette Duncan and Agnes Maule Machar. Although it pays attention to both writers mainly in relation to their ideas of race, it is eloquent since both are regarded as early Canadian feminists, groundbreaking authors and crucial literary figures in Canadian literary history. In fact, Fiamengo even establishes a connection between both writers for they kept similar ideals on Canadian national identity “rejecting the materialism of the age and seeking a Canadian nationality founded on pure ideals rather than self-interest” (‘Rediscovering’). On the one hand, Duncan is cited as an innovative author for her feminist views and her analysis of imperialism and its connection with race issues (Fiamengo ‘Rediscovering’). Although I agree with Fiamengo that her novel *The Imperialist* (1904) raises some of the most blatant discriminatory practices affecting First Nations that the utopian depiction of Canada implied, I do not share her views on the fact that it is an “impassioned tribute to an ideal of Canada inheriting the best of British civilization” (‘Rediscovering’); I do not agree either regarding her idea that the representation of these communities in Duncan’s novel suggests that they were doomed to disappear since, despite their efforts to belong, they were not rendered positions within white Canadian society. On the other hand, in Fiamengo’s words, Machar “was one of the first in Canada to argue for a socially oriented Christianity”

(‘Rediscovering’). Following Fiamengo’s analysis, Machar’s “Christian evangelism” led her to maintain that Canada was actually a divine project whose chosen performers were of British origin. Although in many of her writings she praises the work and courage of missionaries in civilizing and converting First Nations, she was also aware of the outrages their missions sometimes involved. Machar’s articles actually express that her racial philosophy opted more for an equal recognition of all races and religions, for granting difference a space and avoiding hierarchical structures that dismissed it within Canadian society. In this respect, she showed inclination for a groundbreaking posture given “the scientific racism of much late-nineteenth-century thought” and her challenging regard of white as only one community within a diverse cultural space called Canada (Fiamengo ‘Rediscovering’). As explained in Part III of this dissertation, Duncan and Machar’s examples are paradigmatic of early feminist discourses and for bringing up race and diversity issues as crucial for Canadian identity.

Likewise, Jennifer Henderson investigates the participation of Canadian women writers in the construction of race in *Settler Feminism and Race Making in Canada* published in 2003. Early Canadian women authors “occupied the site of the *norm*” and contributed to the construction and development of racial theories. In this respect, Fiamengo and Henderson’s ideas differ; whereas Fiamengo maintains that despite belonging to power strata, female authors were not conscious of the social racialization they participated in, Henderson does not excuse their involvement in racial constructions although acknowledges the subjected position of their pioneering roles. Given their ‘normalized’ positions, women writers were placed at the crossroads of taking up the pen –and thus contesting male literary realms– but acting as moral agents too and hence supporting institutional theories of imperialism. In Henderson’s opinion, it is necessary to escape from the “simplistic sexual allegory of feminine otherness colonized by imperialist objectives” (17). In fact, according to Henderson there were some early women who actually challenged their subjection and pursued their feminist aims by distancing themselves from imperialist discourses (10). Frances Brooke, for instance, as a colonial member herself, despite challenging established conventions, somehow contributed to racial discourses by employing the noble savage image of First Nation’s characters. This is why Henderson maintains that the antithetical tenets of

feminisms need to be taken into account so that “the contradictorily universalist and exclusionary discourse of liberalism” is raised (27).

Barbara Godard is also the editor of *Gynocritics: Feminist Approaches to Canadian and Quebec Women's Writing* published in 1987 and already mentioned in Part I. The general ideas Godard presents in her “Introduction” actually connect this compilation to Shirley Neuman and Smaro Kamboureli's work for the diverse feminisms they hold and to Elizabeth Waterston's article for their consideration of women's writing as aimed at birth. Following Godard, feminist perspectives challenge mainstream literary criticism because they deal with “intertextuality, polytonality, heterogeneity, and fragmentation” and a renewed concept of integration is revealed; besides, through their unfolding of women's texts they also unravel “a different history” which simultaneously questions previously told literary histories (1987: ix, vi). Godard's chapter on “Mapmaking: A Survey of Feminist Criticism” is a very interesting investigation on Canada's literary feminisms and their challenge of previous monolithic critical approaches as that of thematic criticism. Feminist critics do not only unravel women's texts but also overthrow traditional axioms of literary criticism as well as “remap the terrain of critical theory” (Godard, 1987: 3). According to Godard, feminisms have evolved and gone through two main stages which are not exclusive but maintain a feedback relation; first, reprehension of male works and criticism from which the so-called “‘images-of-women' criticism” stands out; and second, focus on female literary production with the subsequent rethinking of traditional ideas on canon, tradition and identity (1987: 5-6). I agree with Godard that despite both perspectives are necessary, the second stage of archaeology and actual analysis is crucial so that the achievements of women writers can be brought into light. And this is precisely what this dissertation carries out from both ethnic and feminist perspectives, an examination of previously settled critical axioms which prevented the participation of some writers together with the analysis of their texts. In any case, critical works from both stages have fostered what Godard calls an expansion of Canada's literary canon (1987: 11).

Among feminist literary archaeologists in Canada, Carole Gerson has extensively contributed to the unfolding of early Canadian women writers' participation with her already mentioned 1994's work *Canada's Early Women Writers: Texts in English to 1859* being one of the most significant in this respect. Likewise, she has also

contributed to the challenging of established critical axioms in Canada through her previously cited chapter “The Canon between the Wars: Filed-notes of a Feminist Literary Archaeologist” included in Lecker’s *Canadian Canons: Essays in Literary Value* (1991). Some years before these two contributions, in 1989, she also published *A Purer Taste: the Writing and Reading of Fiction in English in Nineteenth-Century Canada*, a very relevant critical work for this dissertation since it focuses on fiction and the novel genre and is a significant source of information of later dismissed authors. Just as Mary Kelley, Gerson points out the disavowing consideration of the novel in Canada at the beginning of the nineteenth century and adds that, later on, it was even praised during the Confederation era since its nationalistic impulses saw an ally in it. The former attitude bought along the disregard of certain fictional works such as *St. Ursula’s Convent; or, The Nun of Canada* by Julia Catherine Beckwith Hart given the higher status granted to poetry. Similarly, fiction was required to fulfil moral and didactic aims and contain strong factual content to be accepted at that time, as the Strickland Sisters’ works show. I agree with Gerson that one of the most revealing implications of such expectations relied on the fact that they depended on critics’ consideration of what was morally, didactically or factually acceptable. Furthermore, narrowing fiction to instruction implied that critics somehow glimpsed “the potential subversiveness of the imaginative world” and reduced readers to defenceless receptors who needed an instructive guide to protect them from going off course (Gerson, 1989: 24). In fact, in a Quixote-like manner, many readers as fiction characters were depicted as deviated because of having read the wrong texts as in Rosanna Leprohon’s *Antoniette De Mirecourt* (1864), Susanna Moodie’s *Matrimonial Speculations* (1854) and Agnes Maule Machar’s *For King and Country* (1874). As mentioned before in this dissertation, Moodie was one of the few literary commentators of the time who dared praise authors who defied established norms and included deviated characters and behaviours for they approached human suffering. The increasing involvement of women in literature and fiction either as producers, receivers, commentators or characters represented another threat for it “added a sexual dimension to the subversiveness of popular novels” (Gerson, 1989: 29). From my viewpoint, this is crucial in so far it reveals that female participation in fiction was reluctantly regarded from the very

beginning so that it may have had some impact on the critical consideration of their contributions.

Another challenge of early fiction writers was finding appropriate material for their new narrative forms in Canadian soil. The recently introduced novel genre “suffered more than any other literary form from the absence of a solid foundation of acknowledged social and historical experience” (Gerson, 1989: 42). They were trapped between the literary traditions they left back *at home* and a new landscape and history to be fictionalized; as Gerson states, their early works are actually to be praised “more for the ingenuity of their authors’ importation of literary conventions than for their faithfulness to the Canadian scene” (1989: 45). This is the case, for instance, of Susanna Moodie’s *Flora Lyndsay* (1854) which meant her main attempt of joining the novel genre and Canada; it is important to mention that Gerson’s is one of the few critical works which takes Moodie’s novel into account since she is mainly remembered as author of non-fictional works such as the famous *Roughing It in the Bush*. In Gerson’s opinion, there were two main ways of including Canada in fiction, either simply as the setting where the plot took place from start to end, or as the environment where characters were allowed to live unusual experiences and behave differently although they finally went back to their homeland; Frances Brooke’s *The History of Emily Montague* (1769) is a pioneering work in this respect later followed by other writers such as Julia Catherine Beckwith Hart, Agnes Maule Machar or Margaret Marshall Saunders. Even though the Confederation and its nationalist thrusts fostered the employment of Canadian elements in fiction, most authors found themselves at the crossroads of using Canadian material and not gaining international recognition, or seeking success and leaving Canada behind since Canada did not respond to commonly acclaimed settings neither as “comfortably familiar [n]or intriguingly exotic” (Gerson, 1989: 48). According to Gerson’s explanation, although Saunders’ widely successful *Beautiful Joe* (1895) was set in Canada and included mainly Canadian characters, it had to be Americanized so that it gained recognition outside Canada. On the other hand, the political establishment of a confederated Canadian state and its pursuit of a national identity had a strong impact in relation to Canadian history as element of fiction. As Gerson suggests, literature was regarded as another nation-building tool so that history also made its way into the prevailing literary forms of the time and historical romances

were thus elevated to the highest position by critics of the time, as in the case of John Richardson's novels. As a consequence, fiction was filled with 'heroic' and 'romantic' rather than realistic and perhaps less convenient historical episodes so that romance fictional forms proliferated. But this intersection between fiction and history involved the acknowledgement of historiography as unbiased and brought along two differing perspectives on behalf of writers; for some of them history was a useful basis for the established instructive aim of fiction, whereas others considered the inclusion of history a way of misrepresenting it (Gerson, 1989: 93). But this focus on history had a deeper implication regarding literature. Given the fact that historical elements were actually regarded as fundamental pieces of worthy Canadian fiction and taking into account the country's short history since colonization, some critics maintained that Canada would have to wait for centuries before having enough historical resources to be fictionalized and mastered by any Canadian writer, that is, before a Canadian literary masterpiece or a Canadian Shakespeare rose.

According to Gerson, one of the few challenging authors in nineteenth-century Canada was Sara Jeannette Duncan, whose defence of and contribution to realistic fiction proved that other novel forms were possible. Duncan's support of literary realism did not mean that she rejected romance since in her opinion it could also be well crafted. Very significantly, as stated by Gerson, one of the best examples of such consonance between realism and romance from Duncan's viewpoint is actually Frances Brooke's novel. Duncan praised realistic works and more significantly their renewed female characters so that she can be said to have maintained a feminist perspective. For Duncan, realism was a way of enlarging the novel genre and growing apart from romance since it responded to the audience's "desire to project themselves into a world which satisfied their fantasies and reinforced their prejudices" (Gerson, 1989: 62). Far from having any general impact, realism was surpassed by romance in Canada for it reemerged during the last decades of Victorianism and those who took a different direction in fiction had to go foreign, either in fiction or in real life, as Duncan herself did. In any case, whereas authors who wrote didactic, moralistic, and/or historical romances were actually following the conventions of their time, since otherwise their works would not have been echoed by contemporary critics, innovating authors such as

Duncan, who were silenced at their time for not being ruled by accepted literary axioms, have equally been dismissed until recently.

Although it may seem that mainly women critics have paid attention to the production of women writers in English Canada, George Woodcock actually reverts this fact since in his work *The Century that Made Us: Canada 1814-1914* (1989) he includes a chapter on women's leading participation in Canadian society and culture entitled "Pioneers! O, Pioneers! The Roles of Women". Another very interesting article by Carole Gerson entitled "Anthologies and the Canon of Early Canadian Women Writers" is included in *Re(dis)covering Our Foremothers* compiled by Lorraine McMullen and published in 1990. On this occasion, Gerson affirms that the figures and achievements of many Canadian women writers have actually been recovered thanks to feminist criticism. Although she maintains that "Canada has produced an unusual, even predominant, number of women writers" and who represented a forty per cent of early Canadian authors until 1950, in such an important anthology as *Canadian Writers/Écrivains Canadiens. A Biography Dictionary* their contribution to Canadian letters is reduced to only a nineteen per cent (in McMullen, 1990: 55). According to her explanation, this case is only the tip of the iceberg; women writers' misrepresentation in Canadian anthologization is actually a consequence of the patriarchal thrusts of academics and compilers and the *masculinization* of culture in the United States and Canada.

Lorraine McMullen also counts as another important feminist critic in English Canadian Literature known for her extensive critical work on Frances Brooke and her contribution to the unfolding of many women writers' contributions. From my viewpoint, one of the most important works on early women writers is *The Silenced Sextet. Six Nineteenth-Century Canadian Woman Novelists* (1992) in which McMullen, Carrie MacMillan and Elizabeth Waterston offer an extensive analysis of the achievements of six early female authors: Rosanna Mullins Leprohon, May Agnes Fleming, Margaret Murray Roberston, Susan Frances Harrison, Margaret Marshall Saunders and Joanna E. Wood. The detailed analysis these three critics offer about these six women's literary figures and achievements actually runs against the literary history Canadian mainstream criticism has been telling in Canada, just as the analysis of prevailing anthologizing developed in Chapter III shows. These six women writers were

convinced of their participation in literature and innovated through their “impressive literary skills –strength in structuring fiction, stylistic polish, a penetrating sense of social interchange and interpersonal tensions, and power in communicating (and subverting) the patterns of myth and romance” (McMullen, MacMillan and Waterston: 3). But, although they all shared a common commitment to writing, their varied origins and responses to literature speak for “their diversity [that] warns us against stereotyping” (McMullen, MacMillan and Waterston: 4). Such heterogeneity is crucial in so far it undermines the tendency to consider early women writers as a homogeneous group and reduce their variety into sameness. Once again, ethnic studies and feminisms intersect since feminist critics lay claim to diversity just as same ethnic critics do, not only within Canada’s literary context in general but within ethnicity too. As stated in the “Introduction” to *The Silenced Sextet*, in spite of the heterogeneous responses to literature they all had “an enduring urge to write” in common (McMullen, MacMillan and Waterston: 4). Furthermore, they considered themselves as Canadian authors and were aware of their contribution to their country’s literature and identity; they were sensible to Canada’s historical and cultural situation at a time when a search for identity roots was taking its first steps. In this sense, they can be connected to many of their contemporaries since all showed “a strong love of Canadian ways, Canadian scenery, Canadian mores and ethos”, and frequently held personal connections with other Canadian writers as in the case of Wood and Kirby (McMullen, MacMillan and Waterston: 9). It is very significant to mention that according to McMullen, MacMillan and Waterston some of these women writers as Robertson or Harrison actually praised Canada’s cultural diversity; this being so, it can be affirmed that they pioneered in acknowledging cultural difference in Canada, so that the currently appropriated institutional discourse on multicultural issues is not a recent achievement because it was attempted long before.

The works and experiences of these six writers show the cultural crossroads between tradition and innovation at which women authors were at their time. On the one hand, some of their texts portray a strong religious and didactic content which can be said to speak for their “moralistic upbringing” while, on the other hand, they were educated women who underwent international experiences which also influenced their writing (MacMillan, McMullen and Waterston: 7). This is why McMullen, MacMillan



and Waterston maintain that this group of writers held different positions in relation to their female counterparts in Great Britain and the United States; their situations were neither as trapped by the narrow social system of the former nor as identified with romantic halos as the latter. The stronger situation of publishing houses in both Great Britain and the United States, together with Canada's weak literary market fostered the publication of their works abroad before appearing in Canadian editions which could be one of the reasons of the later dismissal of their works by Canadian criticism. Besides, as women authors in Victorian Canada they did not count on enough support neither in attempting literary agency nor regarding publishing means so that they "were in no position to counter patriarchal disregard" and many had to turn to self-publishing (McMullen, MacMillan and Waterston: 11). Very significantly, their female condition also implied another kind of silencing because they were first compelled to practice self-censorship in relation to feminist issues and when gaining access to circulation "their true messages were bypassed or ignored" (McMullen, MacMillan and Waterston: 12). In fact, the implications of these six women writers' cases go even further for they also speak for other Canadian women authors since "their fate is part of a general story about women writers now being uncovered by literary and social historians" and support Gerson's challenge of the common assumption about Canada's benevolence regarding female literary figures (MacMillan, McMullen and Waterston: 5). Notwithstanding, the generalized silence on their literary achievements and frequently incorrect information about their lives and works speaks for the reluctance, or at least passivity, of Canadian criticism to move beyond the tried and proved since other nineteenth-century authors considered as canonical are actually and accurately approached. It is important to point out that "many of these writers were women" so that the disregard of literary contributions from Victorian Canada seems to have affected more female than male texts (McMullen, MacMillan and Waterston: 11). As explained in the introduction of *The Silenced Sextet*, first of all, fictional genres of this period lost their widespread recognition after the First World War; then, these authors were silenced when their works were no longer reprinted; and finally, critical attention on this period usually shows stronger inclination for already canonized texts and writers (McMullen, MacMillan and Waterston: 11). In this sense, what McMullen, MacMillan and Waterston's ultimately carry out through their close feminist analyses is not only

the unfolding of the literary figures and achievements of Leprohon, Fleming, Robertson, Harrison, Saunders and Wood but also the questioning of traditional canonization and anthologization so that they significantly contribute to challenge Canada's established literary tradition and identity.

Although Helen Buss's *Mapping Our Selves: Canadian Women's Autobiography in English* published in 1993 does not deal with fiction women writers, it includes a rather interesting chapter on female literary authorship. Buss's recovery of Marie Cardinal's ideas in *The Words to Say It* for her "Literary Women: Finding 'The Words to Say It'" is very pertinent for the present dissertation. On the one hand, Buss's rescues and actualizes female authors' troubles in authorizing themselves as literary agents since the obstacles they met started right at the moment of taking up the pen and finding the words to say it, to write themselves in a male dominated linguistic and literary realm. Something similar is suggested by Mickey Pearlman in his 1993 edition of *Canadian Women Writing Fiction* in whose introductory remarks it is stated that "the issue of identity was the linchpin of Canadian writing by women" (4). Furthermore, such an act of identification through writing did not answer only to an inner need of female authors; it was their way to express themselves, present their own views and hence of challenging previous assumptions about them as women *and* writers. The same happens in Buss's opinion with critical theories which when male-centered imply "a male-defined view of female creativity, one inevitably announcing female lack" (148). On the other hand, Cardinal's statement also raises the issue of the meaning that writing had for women authors since it was actually a challenging act through which they attempted to subvert previously established stereotypes; besides, a connection is established between ethnic and feminist issues, this time regarding the narrow patterns to which both had been subjected to. For all this to change, from Buss's viewpoint, there is a need of change in feminist criticism. New forms and approaches are required if female voices are to be fully heard and stop being seized and re-seized either by traditional or renewed patriarchal perspectives which even when proven inaccurate "continue, [...], to operate in the world as if nothing had changed" (Buss: 148).

The critical work *All my Sisters: Essays on the Work of Canadian Women Writers* by Clara Thomas published in 1994 is another good source of information on the participation of women in early Canadian fiction. It is indeed one of the few studies

in which the figure of Mary Ann Sadlier is approached, although briefly. Other early female authors such as Frances Brooke, May Agnes Fleming, Catharine Parr Traill, Susanna Moodie, Lucy M. Montgomery, Anna Jameson, and Sara Jeannette Duncan are also included; very significantly connections are established between them and other writers, either male or female, early or modern, so that their roles as fundamental pieces of Canadian literary tradition in fiction are highlighted. Duncan and her works are actually described as fundamental pieces in Canadian literary tradition in fiction, as “a bridge between Gordon’s on the one hand and Hugh MacLennan’s and Margaret Laurence’s on the other” (Thomas, 1994: 30). But the relevance of these connections goes even further because they all contributed to challenge women characters’ stereotyping as domestic, virtuous and enduring figures. Moodie’s defiant self-representation as a character in *Roughing It in the Bush* (1852) actually connects her text to Duncan’s novel *The Imperialist* (1904); some of their women characters are depicted by both as going off established roles the same as Hugh MacLennan does in *Barometer Rising*. According to Thomas, Anna Jameson’s “hope for the future” of women facing settlement’s extreme difficulties and not counting on positive resolution is recovered by Duncan and developed by later novelists like Frederick Philip Grove or Margaret Laurence (1994: 53). On the other hand, Traill, Moodie and Jameson are also connected for their literary identification of alcohol as one of the main obstacles preventing the evolution of civilization in English Canada. Reading Thomas’s approach to fiction women writers, it seems that Duncan is to be regarded as an in-between innovative literary figure who recovered themes and forms of previous pioneering female authors and broke new ground for later writers. Thomas also affirms female authors’ strong presence in Canadian Literature when she sets out the questions on why are so many outstanding Canadian women writers and why is Canadian fiction dominated by women writers (1994: 23). The explanation Thomas offers for women’s wide participation revolves around the increase of fictional writing by women due to the appearance and rapid growth of female readership in the eighteenth century. Early women writers were actually answering to the market’s needs not only in Canada but also in the United States. Interestingly, the US book market is positively regarded by Thomas because it offered more publishing and distribution opportunities for female

fiction produced in Canada; as she states it “has been a godsend” so that later dismissal of their works on the basis of foreign publication turns again inaccurate (1994: 23).

Publishing is also an important factor in Molly G. McClung’s opinion. As explained in *Women in Canadian Literature* (1977) the Canadian literary market expanded mainly along the 1850s and “a Canadian writer no longer had to send manuscripts to London (or New York) to ensure publication” (16). What is interesting about McClung’s ideas is that such an expansion of Canada’s literary market should not be taken as a complete breaking-off with colonial cultural ties. The influence of British literary axioms was still prevalent during the nineteenth century as the appearance of fiction and poetry works in the romance tradition shows. But in this period there was a clever and imaginative literary figure inscribed more in the new realist trend in fiction, that is, Sara Jeannette Duncan. The originality of her sharp and distant literary approach to Canada makes her, from McClung’s viewpoint, the “first native-born yet detached novelist” of English Canada (19). The problem was that her innovations were neither praised nor echoed by contemporary criticism. McClung’s statement both on Duncan’s ground-breaking literary perspective and the lack of recognition of her achievements at her time can be taken as an explanation of her later dismissal and/or low consideration by mainstream critics; as she was neither praised nor even considered as a landmark of Canadian Literature in the nineteenth century, later attempts of writing Canadian literary history based on previous critical work equally left her aside.

Misao Dean in her 1998 work entitled *Practising Femininity: Domestic Realism and the Performance of Gender in Early Canadian Fiction* goes back to Helen Buss’s ideas but this time to question previous feminist criticism on early Canadian women writers. For Dean, the “intellectual poverty of critical approaches” is actually rooted on a mainly twofold analysis of early texts either from historical or theoretical perspectives that has simultaneously brought along “a turn towards contemporary experimental and non-realistic texts, rather than a more rigorous commentary on early works” (1998: 6). Just as Robert Lecker, Dean questions mimesis because in her opinion there is not necessarily a mimetic relationship between what is depicted in literary works and real life, but rather there is an illusion of mimesis; it needs to be equally taken into account when having the temptation of levelling so-regarded feminine literary features and female authors’ “gendered selves” (1998: 11). In her opinion, previous critical works

have frequently regarded gender as an intrinsic part of women writers' "gendered 'inner self'" and is to be discovered in their exertion of femininity in fiction through the development of so-considered feminine literary elements as domesticity, forms as autobiographical accounts and romances, and didactic aims. Paradoxically, such assumed feminine literary aspects have been taken as proofs of the existence of those gendered selves, of "a feminine essence" which has not been seriously approached neither questioned for these proofs have been assumed as irrefutable signs whereas for Dean "such an essence [...] is a fiction" (1998: 6). But, despite in Dean's opinion gender actually entrapped female subjects, it also offered authority for those women authors who took up the pen to such an extent that similarly authorized positions were not provided to *other* and more subjected members due to their ethnic and/or economic conditions. This fact is important in so far it reveals Canada's literary hierarchy in which white male authors were at the top, white females below and then *other* non-white groups. Diversity is again a crucial element but this time in the development of literary authority by women authors as Catharine Parr Traill, Susanna Moodie, Rosanna Leprohon, Jessie Sime, Joanna Wood, Lily Dougall or Sara Jeannette Duncan, all of them mentioned in Dean's work and some of them approached in detail. In fact, their texts are paradigms which challenge the commonly assumed idea that Canada was a realm where women writers could get rid of Eurocentric gender ties, where their true 'inner selves' could be freely expressed; in her opinion, "these women re-situated themselves within gender by using the concept of the gendered inner self to re-authorize their actions as feminine" (1998: 13).

Gender is also a fundamental issue for Pilar Cuder-Domínguez in her article on "Negotiations of Gender and Nationhood in Early Canadian Literature" (1998). As already pointed out in this dissertation, the frictions between Canada's two solitudes, that is, English and French communities, have not only been historical but a frequent literary theme in which Carl Murphy sees a metaphor of marriage for early authors actually wanted to express "a vision of Canada as a happy marriage of French and English who have freely chosen each other" (qtd. in Cuder-Domínguez, 1998: 117). I agree with Cuder-Domínguez that what is significant is the general oblivion on the gender implications of such a metaphor. If it is to be taken as a marriage metaphor, a female element is also implied so that she stands for a community to such an extent that

“a woman’s struggle to choose and control her fate (often in the shape of a husband) awakens associations with a people’s right to self-determination” (117). In this sense, women and the nation, that is, gender and nationalism are gathered together. It has to be added that just as during colonial times Great Britain was considered the mother country, later nationalistic theories have been similarly gendered. This approach serves Cuder-Domínguez as basis for analysing the visions of nation and women portrayed in Frances Brooke’s *The History of Emily Montague* (1769) and Rosanna Leprohon’s *Antoniette De Mirecourt* (1864). Thanks to Cuder-Domínguez’s critical approach, frequently dismissed female authors and their works are actualized and raised as fundamental agents in Canadian literary fiction in English for their feminist messages and because both “remolded the existing social order according to their creators’ ideals, and offered readers a blueprint for the kind of nation they envisioned” (119).

Finally, for Faye Hammill as expressed in her 2003 work *Literary Culture and Female Authorship in Canada 1760-2000* gender is also an important element above all in relation to genre. Although some of the early genres developed by women authors are currently gaining more critical recognition as sources offering access to Canada’s first literary stages, the literary forms employed by women writers in early Canadian Literature have generally been regarded as marginal. This being so, gender and genre need to be taken into account together; autobiographical accounts, diaries, travel literature or journals by early literary women show the obstacles they and their female characters met, and which are particularly female. Hammill mentions Frances Brooke and her character Arabella Fermor, for both –the former through her novel and the latter as an epistolary writer within that novel– epitomize the role of the female author in a colonial society which offered them new literary material but also narrowed their artistry because of the harsh practical circumstances and ‘poor’ cultural framework surrounding them. The brand new literary material found in the colony also placed them at a crossroads. As Carole Gerson also suggests and following Hammill, they were trapped between a literary tradition back in the *mother country* and a full range of innovative possibilities; they produced “hybrid” works since different elements from travel, didactic, political and sentimental literature can be found in them. Such hybridization is crucial because it tells us that English Canadian Literature is not only diverse and hybrid for its multiculturalism but that it has been a hybrid product even

from early times, in-between the already established literary tradition of the colonizing culture, the already existent but overlooked native culture, and a new mixed literary expression to be born from such a cultural clash. Hammill's approach to Brooke, Moodie and Duncan, is certainly relevant in so far she explains that their works help raise what being a female author in Canada meant, either in relation to literary or more pragmatic aspects such as book circulation; and more importantly, the creative force they found in Canada turns them into pioneering agents in the investigation of "the possibility of a clearly-defined national literature and also the position of the writer – particularly the female writer– in a political and/or cultural colony" (Hammill: xi). Despite acknowledging "continuity" regarding their different literary responses as women authors, I disagree with Hammill in relation to the absence of a literary tradition and development among these women's works but I agree with her that creating narrow lines to separate, for example, colonial and postcolonial writers is not accurate. As she explains, such divisions have in fact fostered the marginalization of certain literary agents as Brooke or Duncan who have been disregarded by mainstream criticism because they "have been so firmly categorized as 'colonial'" that current Canadians cannot feel identified with their texts (xxiii). This is precisely what this dissertation attempts since the important element is not how much Canadian they were but how Canada influenced their literary creativity; besides, their texts highlight the variety in which Canada could be taken as an appropriate literary element and show "each author's conception of what it means to be a Canadian writer" (Hammill: xx). Hammill's ideas are crucial since they help question previous dismissals of boundary-crossing authors for whom Canada was a creative force at some point. As mentioned elsewhere in this dissertation, the issue of writers' Canadianicity is very relevant since, in Hammill's opinion, it does not count as a rejecting or undervaluing aspect but, on the contrary, as a reinforcing one. Frances Brooke only resided in Canada for five years, whereas Moodie stayed for the rest of her life although she felt more attached to Great Britain and Duncan despite being Canadian-born left her native country. Their different statuses in relation to Canada invalidate previous attempts of constructing a uniformed national literature, tradition and identity based on a firmly fixed canon, which left them aside in order to be established. Their alternating voices show a new image of Canadian Literature, one in which diversity and difference are not only taken into account but

essential. Following Hammill, the work of these women writers is precisely linked by their “sense of difference” not only in relation to their physical environments, but also to a literary creativity at the crossroads of tradition and innovation. In this sense, their texts show both their different literary contribution under Canada’s influence and at the same time a “commonality of experience” (Hammill: xxiv).

To conclude this section on early ethnic and women’s writing in English Canadian Literature, it must be noted that although some critics think that the current interest for ethnic contributions has a sell-by date, in my opinion it is the beginning of a deeper, longer and harder process. Different cultural communities within Canada keep on contributing to its cultural expression and will continue doing so since they are actual parts of its multicultural essence, although precisely this heterogeneity, when politically claimed, has neglected their contributions at the beginning. Something similar happened with feminist approaches; they were regarded as mere challenging attempts which would not last long, but the increase and development of feminist discourses on English Canadian Literature has demonstrated the opposite. The relevance of ethnic and feminist anthologies and criticism is crucial since they awaken an exchange among them without detriment to their own discourses and establish a discussion with mainstream criticism. They simultaneously “bridge their differences” and challenge instituted literary conceptions (Kamboureli, 2000: 132). And this is precisely what the present dissertation aims at: a dialogue between ethnic and women’s writing so that they all come to fully take part in Canada’s literary identity.

#### IV.2.2 EARLY ETHNIC WRITERS, FEMALE AUTHORS, AND IDENTITY IN ENGLISH CANADA

If as George Elliot Clarke affirms “all art is a cry for identity” literature as art itself also participates in disclosing different senses of identity (1991: 25). But what is ethnic and/or female writing or, in other words, what are the cries for identity that ethnic and women authors imprint on their texts? In this respect, the unfolding tasks and development of renewed tools carried out by ethnic and feminist critics are crucial in so far they offer access to women and ethnic authors’ writing and ultimately reveal the diverse senses of identity they voice, otherwise silenced. The distorted experiences and divided selves –to use Lorraine McMullen’s words– of female and ethnic authors



employing literary languages, themes and genres alien to them can be unwrapped and their messages revealed.

One of the most important obstacles when approaching early ethnic writing in Canada is tokenization since prevailing criticism has stamped a certain identity on it; ethnic literature has been what mainstream literary discourses have affirmed it is and which too frequently means non-white literature, labelling under which the differing, diverse and alternating ethnic identities have been blurred. Such a pre-definition by foreign voices makes the task of attempting renewed readings more difficult because it is first necessary to get rid of their assumptions. Tseen-Ling Khoo suggests that in order to relieve of the influence of inherited misconceptions, ethnic texts should be “read as both inside and outside” the classifications they have been relegated to, so that they can be fully comprehended (46). But the complexities of ethnic writing go even further since some writers do not fit into those clearly defined categories or their texts move beyond established ethnic identities. As a Canadian-born of mixed Chinese ancestry who took a Japanese literary persona, the case of Winnifred Eaton is paradigmatic in this respect. In her texts, she developed a Japanese and not Chinese identity perhaps in an attempt of making them more attractive for her readership by *exoticing* her works, avoiding contemporary anti-Chinese prejudice and thus living out of the pen. As a literary figure she epitomizes and challenges tokenization in a very powerful way for she broke the bonds of Chinese stereotyping although by taking on a different one. Moreover, her case also raises fundamental questions about the relation between ethnicity and femininity because she also transgresses male ethnic tokens by being a woman author and white female stereotyping by means of her mixed-ethnic condition. The figure of Onoto Watanna offers a paradigmatic view of the complexities ethnic writing is subjected to and calls our attention to the great many aspects ethnic critics need to take into account when analysing texts and approaching their identity senses.

Another significant factor to be taken into account is the already mentioned bilingual positions some early ethnic writers inhabited. Although some of them, as for instance Black emigrants from the United States during slavery times, had already adopted English before arriving to Canada, others either used their own languages or had to *translate* their literary expressions into a foreign language to be heard by mainstream literary circles with which they could not feel identified since, as Petrone

affirms, it was “a language that for them had no spiritual or cultural roots” (1990: 69). Such is “the [Canadian] conflict of heteroglossia” that, in Barbara Godard’s opinion, works as “as a deterrent to participation in a national tradition” (1990: 157). As she explains, despite Canadian official bilingualism, the real linguistic status of the country is of “polyglossia”, for ethnic writers also develop their literary expression in languages other than English or French. Such polylinguism is actually “experienced as diglossia” since ethnic writers have a varied choice of languages at their disposal but not in a free and unmediated way given the “ideological as well as aesthetic implications” imprinted on them (Godard, 1990: 157). In this situation writers can choose between writing in an alien but official language or in their own tongue so that they “interrupt and disrupt it by emphasizing the diglossia” (Godard, 1990: 158). In this dissertation, the works by early ethnic Canadian authors who opted for English shows that *even* when writing in one of the official languages their contributions have also been left aside.

Just as in the case of language, for their works to arrive to a more general public ethnic writers employed literary forms foreign to them in which they could not find ties to their cultural and literary identities. They adapted their works to alien frameworks with the consequent strangeness of their contributions and authors’ anxiety because of such an in-between position. Although in doing so they were also performing a break with their literary traditions, some managed to insert their own identities by means of innovative contents that have not been frequently welcomed by mainstream critics and have often led to the dismissal or condescending criticism of their works. *Blake; or the Huts of America* is a very clear example since Martin R. Delany inserts many references to slave culture and literature into the text which is riddled with poems and allusions to slave narratives coming from the Black literary tradition in North America. Even when employing a mainstream genre as the novel and developing a strong Canadian content, his contribution has been rarely echoed in Canada except by Black critics. The use of autobiography by early First Nations’ writers is also paradigmatic for their introduction of elements of their own traditions which simultaneously served to innovate in the genre to the extent of creating “a distinctive literary form” according to Penny Petrone (1990: 70). Their autobiographical accounts were full of their communal experiences, legends, stories and traditions, and of oral elements inherited from earlier times. Paradoxically, whereas in some occasions mainstream critical discourses dismissed their contributions

because by adopting prevailing literary forms they were regarded as “not ethnic enough”, when introducing their own cultural and literary roots into Western genres they were considered as “too ethnic” (Vevaina and Godard: 24).

As outlined in Part I, early ethnic authors had also to deal with previous representations of ethnic characters that settled expectations regarding their own depictions. In the case of First Nations for instance, Thomas King explains that representations moved from images of “Indian as an inferior”, described in early travelogues, to that of “Indian as dying”, common in Romantic literature; these depictions were answered by some native authors through the creation of their own images to counteract the negative connotations that white stereotyping usually portrayed (8). Similarly, according to Margaret Atwood’s *Survival*, literary representations of First Nations moved between the image of the *noble savage* and that of “Indian as inferior [...] or evil” (1972: 91); the former being a patronizing image of them as innocent and harmless creatures who did not need to be fought against but assimilated, and the latter a decadent incarnation of evil to be wiped out. As Leslie Monkman points out in *A Native Heritage* (1981), depictions of Indians as evil or savage predominate in early English Canadian Literature. Either because of settlement or religious reasons, early Canadian writers in English like John Richardson or Catharine Parr Traill contributed in spreading out the wild, uncivilized and even fierce representation of First Nations’ members. While Richardson develops the savage condition and also an *exotization* of First Nations by describing their life and culture in *Wacousta* (1832), Traill focuses more on the religious aspect for First Nations’ pagan religious ideology and resistance to Christianity which are presented as proofs of their wild and uncivilized character in her works *The Backwoods of Canada* (1836) or *The Canadian Crusoes* (1852). Nonetheless, early fiction works also developed the noble savage image that placed native peoples in higher positions as in the case of Frances Brooke’s *The History of Emily Montague* (1769), in which First Nations are praised for their more harmonious relationship with the nature, although they are stereotyped too.

One cannot help but wonder what effects all these expectations had, first, on ethnic writers’ authorship, and after, on their authority since, as Carole Gerson affirms, “authorship premises authority” (1994: 28). Their employment of alien languages and literary forms and previous depictions of them as *others* pushed them to the margins so

that they had to authorize themselves as authors but starting from an altered pulpit, from a space on the other side of an apparently non-ethnicized centre. There is then a dual identity in their role as writers since, as Linda Hutcheon states, they are “caught between two worlds, [...] between two cultures and often languages” (9). Very significantly, Linda Hutcheon also explains that precisely from that in-between position “the writer negotiates a new literary space” (9). Similarly, according to Francesco Loriggio, such a border position could also be interpreted in a different way since inhabiting those spaces outside the centre offered ethnic authors “a certain insidership, hence an authoritativeness” about the images imposed on them (584).

On the other hand, feminist critics express similar concerns to those of ethnic approaches that also allow unraveling the different senses of identity that early English Canadian female literature conveys. Lorraine McMullen in her 1980 article “The Divided Self” sets out the question of what is female literature by asking if there is “a feminine voice, or a feminine style, or a feminine way of looking at the universe” (53). In order to answer such an intricate question, McMullen takes the representation of women characters by both male and female authors to investigate, firstly, the ways in which they had been depicted by others, and secondly, the responses of women writers themselves and thus the ways in which feminine identities were portrayed when they took up the pen. Just as in the case of ethnic authors, previous depictions of women by male authors imprinted otherness on them since they ascribed altered and dual identities to them as charming, harmless and hence assimilable, or powerful, dangerous and reprehensible. Female characters represented the angel or the demon or, according to McMullen, the “virgin and seductress, Eve and Virgin Mary, good and evil, fair and dark” as William Kirby’s *The Golden Dog* (1877) or Frederick Philip Grove’s *Settlers of the Marsh* (1925) show (1980: 53). When women authors started depicting themselves and giving expression to their own identities, their inclusion of differing women characters moved away from male antithetical representation and was actually their response to their “conflicting attitudes to her[their] society and her[their] own role in it” (McMullen, 1980: 53). Frances Brooke can be said to be a pioneer in early English Canadian Literature in this respect because of the employment of two contrasting and complementary figures. While Emily Montague apparently embodies the conventional female role, Arabella represents rebellion and insubordination to

patriarchy, and both are means for Brooke to “voice[s] her feminist views through one, while through the other she remains a spokesman[woman] for many of her society’s values” (McMullen, 1980: 54). Such a split as representative of women writers’ identities is to be found in many later female novel writers in Canada such as Duncan, Martha Ostenso, Ethel Wilson, Margaret Atwood or Audrey Thomas, according to McMullen. Despite this continuum, in “Images of Women in Canadian Literature: Woman as Hero” (1977) McMullen highlights a shift in female representation through the introduction of the female hero –and not heroine– that shows features traditionally categorized as female but also other regarded as male and goes through a parallel “mythical quest or journey, [...] a voyage of self discovery”, that is, of identity exploration, to that of their male counterparts (134).

Margaret Atwood in her famous critical work *Survival* (1972), mentioned before, also pays attention to the twofold and opposing literary depictions of women in a chapter whose title is certainly revealing, “Ice Women vs. Earth Mothers”. Given the utmost relevance of nature in English Canadian Literature, Atwood adds “Nature-as-woman” mainly in poetry and “Woman-as-Nature” in fiction as frequent female metaphors in English Canadian Literature (200). Through Atwood’s analysis of different poetry, fiction and theatrical literary pieces, the complexity of this metaphor is revealed “not just an Ice-Virgin-Hecate figure, but a Hecate with Venus and Diana trapped inside” (210). Joanne Hedenstrom recovers Atwood’s ideas and compares male and female characterization to establish a distinction. Regarding nature, for instance, male characters tend to establish their patriarchal authority in tune with the power they exert on women so that a correspondence between nature and femininity can be established, as Atwood suggests, but which is precisely the model “the female-created heroine in Canada resists and escapes” (Hedenstrom: 4). For Clara Thomas the dual model of women’s representation in early Canadian fiction is linked to domesticity. According to her, early female authors seize and challenge the dichotomy between the strong, struggling and enduring woman who successfully overcomes obstacles and is delighted in the performance of her mother-wife-housewife role, and the more challenging but still virtuous woman who steps out of her domestic realm (1994: 43). This is precisely what Sara Jeannette Duncan portrays in *The Imperialist* through the characters of Mrs. Murchison and her daughter Advena, the former as an adapted

woman who even enjoys her role within patriarchy and the latter as representative of a more rebellious female identity although she is ultimately 'saved' by a convenient marriage. As Thomas explains, unlike her sister Catharine Parr Traill, Susanna Moodie as an author and her autobiographical character in *Roughing It in the Bush* can be said to be "the Canadian ancestress of all the Advena Murchisons who step out of woman's accepted place [...], and who adapt to women's conventional place painfully, or not at all" (1994: 50).

Although some early women writers such as Moodie did break the mould and inserted literary versions of female identities which largely differed from previous stereotyping, the dual and contradictory literary depiction of women influenced their performance of writing. When these early women took up the pen, femininity had very specific meanings which they were somehow compelled to follow. Just as ethnic writers, women authors faced the biases of a literary language in which their identity was twofold. Except for the significant difference that the bilingualism of ethnic writers was in some cases literal, women also held bilingual positions when taking up the pen. Female writers were confined within a linguistic vehicle created by others who had already established conventions that hindered their free expression, in which they were unable to find the necessary cultural roots to feel identified with, but in which they had to find their own means of articulating themselves. Likewise, As Carole Gerson explains in *Canada's Early Women Writers: Texts in English to 1859*, in early English Canada there were some specific genres that were regarded as "acceptable for women", as for instance the romance novel, which also had an impact on female writing (21). These literary forms were generally related to the domestic roles female held in society and were required to portray the didactic and moral values women were assumed to endorse as mothers and housewives. On the other hand, women's domestic bounds also settled the literary contents that could be voiced or should be kept inside the household. According to Gerson, Traill and Moodie's personal letters are paradigmatic in so far they "highlight the reticence and self-censorship of their public texts" (1994: 22). Being private writings not intended for publication, they serve both authors as means of expressing aspects of female experience not considered suitable for literature in Victorian Canada.

Female stereotyping has been an important source for feminist criticism and the so-called image-of-women criticism has actually raised fundamental parallelisms between women's characterization and their position as authors in English Canadian Literature. In fact, the restricted double-sided depiction counts for one of the psychological hindrances "women must overcome if they are to be writers at all, handicapped as they are by their deeply ingrained conditioning to serve as others, which deprives them of the ruthlessness to become major artists, and by their time-consuming roles as wives and mothers" (Godard, 1987: 7). May Agnes Fleming, for instance, is an example of a juggler woman author divided between household obligations and her role as writer for "like the modern career woman she had to balance between the demands of her two lives, professional and domestic" (McMullen in MacMillan, McMullen and Waterston: 52). Incursion into writing of women such as Fleming was often seen not only as deviation from but denial of their domestic roles because "women who wrote did so within a framework of dominant cultural myths in which writing contradicts motherhood" (Buss, 1993: 147). Although the extent to which all these hindrances affected female authorship and authority in early Canada is very difficult to identify, it seems clear that feminist critics offer some revealing clues in this respect. They help uncover the conditions in which women exerted their literary authority, voice authors and texts otherwise lost for Canadian letters and reveal connections among women writers so that evolution and continuity are also displayed. Just as Lorraine McMullen maintains that "it is possible to trace through later Canadian women novelists a mode of characterization similar to Frances Brooke's" (1980: 54), it can be said that other early women writers laid the foundations of a feminine literary culture that later writers continued and improved.

These complexities affecting ethnic and female writing that ethnic and feminist critics raise illustrate that when early English Canadian authors ventured into writing they were pushed into identity 'schizophrenia', trapped in-between a literary language that misshaped them and the new language they created when taking up the pen. Although the following quotation taken from 'Have We Got a Theory for You!' by Maria C. Logones and Elizabeth Spelman speaks of African American women authors, in my opinion it also voices the identity crossroads at which early English Canadian ethnic writers, ethnic women authors and female literary agents found themselves since

it is actually rooted in the doubly jeopardized positions of ethnic women at the borderland of ethnic and feminine identity.

We and you do not talk the same language. When we talk to you we use your language: the language of your experience and your theories. [...] We cannot talk to you in our language because you do not understand it. [...] we either use your language and distort our experience not just in speaking about it, but in living of it, or that we remain silent. (qtd. in Wane: 29)

Moreover, apart from such identity ‘paranoia’, the writings of early ethnic and women writers in English Canada are plunged into a cultural framework whose identity denies them. As Clarke explains, the texts of early African authors in English Canada do not only raise their voices and give expression to their identities, but do so “against a deracinating and sometimes murdering society which seeks to deny their right to be” (1991: 25). In this sense, on the one hand there is a Canadian identity that “denies their right to be”, by for instance silencing their works, and on the other, there is the identity these authors’ texts claim and which fosters the de-construction of precisely that disallowing Canadian identity.

Clarke’s remark on the fact that Canada’s two hegemonic cultures “have never had a vision of Canada as anything but a *white man’s* country” is very relevant in so far it raises the ethnic *and* gender-based bias of Canadian identity (my emphasis, 1997: 106). Raymond Breton’s revision of Porter’s *Vertical Mosaic* coincides with Clarke since he also points out Canada’s two dominant cultures as shapers of Canadian identity; as he explains, the tensions between them contributed to the creation and development of the identity debate in Canada although it was addressed from their predominantly white and male sovereign positions and gave form to their –and not others– interaction (in Helmes-Hayes: 72). Later on, the higher visibility of women and ethnic communities in Canada involved the construction of a collective identity that apparently included them as well. The problem was that their containment too frequently meant that either their lower statuses were kept unchallenged or that their grouping into categories such as Natives, Blacks or ethnic women “de-emphasized internal differences and emphasized commonalities” (Breton in Helmes-Hayes, 1998: 65). The case of Canadian ‘Indians’ or ‘Natives’ is significant in this respect since their self-naming as First Nations is, in Arun P. Mukherjee’s words, a “brilliant rhetorical intervention” for it contests previous nation-focused constructions of collective identity in Canada as well as challenges the hegemonic positions of Canada’s two solitudes



(‘Canadian nationalism’). As far as whiteness is concerned, there seems to be also an equivalence between this perception of Canada as a “white man’s country” and the physical whiteness of “the Great White North”. In fact, Voltaire noted that Canada was “nothing more than thirty acres of snow” and the Québécois poet Gilles Vigneault very graphically remarked that “it is not a country, it is winter” (qtd. in Clarke, 1997: 107). Images like these seem to have influenced the identification of the country with whiteness since, as Clarke states, “there is one symbol to which it[Canada] has always been able to cling: geography” (1997: 106). But what is significant about this Canadian whiteness is the apparent absence of colour it entails since white is no longer seen as *a* colour but *the* colour, while *other* colours are erased and/or melted underneath that white layer covering the whole Canadian soil. As Clarke states, this white predominance in Canada has overlooked the fact that colour has been “whitewashed” so that non-whiteness has become peripheral (108); coloured cultural groups have been considered as the *others* and employed merely as scapegoats of white Canada.

Just as the white male Eurocentrism of Canada’s hegemonic cultures has moulded Canadian identity, Anti-Americanism has also had some degree of influence in its shaping. In order to differ from its southern neighbour, Canada has been thought to be what the United States are not so that, for instance, Canada’s vertical mosaic is regarded as a paradigm of multiculturalism and diversity that has nothing to do with the racial issues of the American melting pot. As Clarke ironically remarks, “there are no racists [in Canada] save those who watch too much American television” (1997: 101). This being so, a racial debate has been considered unnecessary in Canada and race issues have been silenced. Clarke takes the reception of Mukherjee’s work *Darkness* (1985) as paradigm of Canada’s reluctance to acknowledge its own race biases; Mukherjee’s suggestion that racism does exist in Canada provoked the decrying of her critical posture towards a country that welcomed her and the silencing of both her contestation and the race polemics it raised. Far from being an isolated case, Mukherjee’s example must be added to all those cases of discrimination highlighted by ethnic critics and mentioned previously in this chapter. Literature, as scapegoat of such an antithetical identity construction, actually reveals an important distinction between the United States and Canada. Whereas in the United States there is an awareness on the contribution of literature in the establishment and maintenance but also deconstruction

of the melting pot identity, in Canada there has not been a so generalized acknowledgement on the contradictions of the vertical mosaic ideal, its influence on literature and the part it has played in founding a national identity (Palmer, 1989: 621). In spite of this Canadian reluctance to deal with its own identity paradoxes, I agree with Clarke that the interrogation of issues such as those concerning race has brought along an identity crisis affecting the whole country because it is being forced to acknowledge its own contradictions and exclusionary shaping after having displayed a conciliatory and heterogeneous identity.

Regarding the identities that texts by early ethnic and women authors voice, Mickey Pearlman states that “identity [...] evolves not only from place and site, from birth and perception, but in reaction to someone else’s perception on you” (5). In contesting the “perceptions on them” through their writings, they are not simply portraying their identities in their own terms but also giving expression to the different significances of Canadianicity, that is, to diverse Canadian identities. Early Canadian novel writers challenge the previously unchallenged space of Canada’s literary identity and negotiate different responses “of what constitutes a Canadian writer and the larger, more important question of Canadian identity” (Pearlman: 11). Furthermore, their participation in literature entails a reformulation of both ethnicity and gender which grows apart from the unchanging dichotomist perspectives that mainstream literature portrayed so that “they redraw the blueprint of power relations” as well (Kamboureli, 2000: 134). Both as “strangers” within Canada’s gates develop what Collins calls “identities as outsider[s] within” from which they are asked to meet established expectations but are also able to question them (qtd. in Wane, 2002: 40). According to Pearlman, “the issue of identity was the linchpin of Canadian writing by women” not as a group but in the differential ways in which their works struggle to give expression to their divided selves (4). Likewise, texts by ethnic authors voice their displaced identities; they focus on “the theme of quest for identity” and fictionalize *The Vertical Mosaic* through the expression of their dual essences and paralysed at the gates of Canada’s paradox between utopia and reality (Palmer, 1989: 641). Thus, both female and ethnic early fictions seem to pose similar questions on “Who Am I?” “Who can I be?” or “Where is home?” that Clara Thomas sets out and which have to do with themselves and Canada at the same time (24). In their varied attempts to find answers to

these dilemmas, on the one hand, “they offer encoded messages, messages related to the reader’s needs and sense of identity”, while on the other hand, they suggest different and renewed identity options (Waterston, 1984: 104).

To conclude, early ethnic and women writers ultimately claim for their own senses of identity; for free identifications with the Canadian imaginary, for a Canadianicity with heterogeneous meanings and for literary diversity. Approaching their dismissed texts and grasping the multiple and hybrid identities they portray actually means participating in deconstructing the fallacy of Canada’s multicultural and non-patriarchal traditional literary identity. In this sense, if Canadian literary identity is to be fully regarded as such, that is, free from race and gender biases, the literary contributions of early ethnic and women writers should be taken into account and considered as identity agents. From my viewpoint, the central problem relies on the fact that a way of reconciling all these senses of identity has not been found until now. As the analysis of mainstream and counter-canon criticism on Canadian literary canon, tradition, and history carried out in this Part II shows, what can be found currently in Canada is a mainstream literary identity, on the one hand, and a wide range of scattered identities still considered as marginal, on the *other*. Thanks to ethnic and feminist criticism and research different Canadian identities have been raised but there is not yet a discourse which embraces all these voices and preserves their difference, diversity and challenge.



### **PART III**

#### **THE NOVEL IN ENGLISH AS PARADIGM OF CANADIAN LITERARY IDENTITY: FROM FRANCES BROOKE TO SARA JEANNETTE DUNCAN**



What follows is a close study of silenced or undervalued novel writers in Canada –briefly outlined in previous sections– from 1769, year of publication of the first Canadian novel in English, that is, *The History of Emily Montague* by Frances Brooke, until 1904 when Sara Jeannette Duncan’s *The Imperialist* saw the light for her novel is a landmark in the evolution of the genre in Canada. Of course, given the space and time restrictions a dissertation work like this implies, not every single novel author from the period covered will be analysed but only those whose absence or underestimation raises fundamental questions on crucial topics regarding Canadian literary history, tradition and identity. The longest studies included here deal with Frances Brooke and Sara Jeannette Duncan to whom a chapter is dedicated on the basis of the inaugurating character of both authors’ novels. In the case of *The History of Emily Montague* (1769) by Frances Brooke, despite being generally claimed as the first Canadian novel in English, its achievements have rarely been highlighted by mainstream criticism. On the other hand, *The Imperialist* (1904) by Sara Jeannette Duncan is a landmark of Canadian fiction in English since it marks the transition to modernism; although critical attention to her novel has increased recently, further study on its contribution to Canadian literary identity seems still necessary. A strong effort has been made to take into account as many novels and novelists as possible, but just those whose dismissal seems blatant will be closely scrutinized. Together with the examination of their lives and literary contributions, an analysis of one of their novels –usually their most important contribution to Canadian letters– is included. With the intention of following a clear chronological discourse, the different entries on authors are ordered according to the year of publication of the novel approached and not in relation to their birth date. However, some exceptions can be found because of style reasons as in the case of Rosanna Leprohon whose novel *Antoniette de Mirecourt; or, Secret Marrying and Secret Sorrowing* was published in 1864 before Martin Robertson Delany’s *Blake; or, the Huts of America*, although the latter is explored later than the former.

Given the fact that most of the silenced voices mentioned here belong to ethnic or female writers, the contribution of both ethnic *and* feminist studies offers fundamental critical instruments. They propose differential tools that encourage literary researches like the following, first, to dig out and have access to silenced writings which

without ethnic and feminist critics' work would be kept in obscurity; and second, to approach their texts from renewed critical basis that help apprehend their messages, comprehend their innovations, and challenge established critical axioms in Canadian Literature in English. One of the most important issues raised by these critics is the necessity of approaching these authors individually; of taking into account their specificities whether historical, socio-cultural, literary or even personal for their works to be seriously analysed and their achievements highlighted. This is precisely what is carried out in this Part III which consists of different entries on early English novel writers in Canada whose extension and depth vary depending on the author and/or novel in question. There are also more silenced works as well as authors who are not included or succinctly mentioned which would deserve further analysis but whose contributions cannot be more rigorously approached for space restrictions or even impediments in locating their works; in any case, they will be taken as fundamental literary agents in English Canadian Literature for later researches, articles and publications. In fact, the difficulties in gaining access to some of these works are proofs of the archaeological work still to be done on early Canadian Literature in English. Those contributors who are closely investigated are those who have been totally silenced or somehow canonized but frequently in a condescending way or not as important agents in the evolution of the novel but in other genres, frequently non-fiction, on behalf of mainstream criticism in Canada; who are representative cases of critical overlooking from Canadian canonical literary history; whose absences are blatant given their strong literary careers and success at their time; or who are proofs of Canada's literary diversity at early times.

The choice of the novel genre is, obviously, not a matter of chance. The fact that some of Canada's literary voices have been silenced even in an institutionalized genre as the novel, speaks powerfully for the narrow boundaries of Canadian Literature. If in relation to such an 'official' literary form which has been employed to settle part of Canada's literary tradition, as *The Calgary Conference (1978)* shows, they have been dismissed, one cannot help but wonder what happens to other boundary-crossing literary forms. By extension, the very concept of literariness is also at stake; if works following established axioms are not even considered, those which challenge Canadian literariness as First Nations orature, for instance, have even less possibilities of being taken into account as fundamental agents in Canadian Literature. The fact that most of



the early novels analysed here follow the conventions of romance may have had some influence on their consideration; mainstream critical axioms in English Canada have shown a tendency to consider romances more as formulaic and *lower* fiction works than contributions to the evolution of the novel genre. Curiously enough, fictional romances were mainly written by women writers, addressed to female audiences and are still today of primary interest to women and feminist critics. Very significantly, dismissals like these highlighted in the following sections are also eloquent in so far they question the construction of Canadian identity. In a country so concerned with its cultural identity like Canada where strong efforts to define it have been made from various spheres as the literary, it seems at least paradoxical that institutional discourses have discarded certain voices which are actually part of that identity. As explained in previous chapters, their absence from Canadian canon and thus from its literary history, tradition and identity also raises crucial issues on racism and sexism in Canada and questions its multicultural and non-patriarchal image.

In relation to history, novelists play a further relevant role. This is what James C. Simmons points out in *The Novelist as Historian. Essays on the Victorian Historical Novel* (1973); early novelists, mainly from Victorian times, are also historians in so far they, inspired by Sir Walter Scott's novels, represented "the actions of fictitious personages played out against a historical backdrop" (35). Despite they were criticized for growing apart from the genre's main didactic aims at first, historical romances were later regarded as useful means to spread historical information among reading audiences and authors were lately demanded to stick to "a close factual fidelity to the historical material" (Simmons: 36). In this sense, silenced writers also partake in the writing of Canadian historiography but, as their contributions have been overshadowed, the histories they portray and their rewriting of Canada's history have been equally ignored. Furthermore, voicing their writings also takes part in another rewriting process related to history, that of de-constructing Canadian literary history. If as these works demonstrate, Canadian literary history is not only what it has been said to be until now, its literary tradition and identity are also at stake. Hence, these three concepts of history, tradition and identity are challenged. Curiously, the mainstream image of Canadian letters has been claimed to be inclusive and ethnic and female participation consequently affirmed to be significant; but there is a double paradox in this respect

since, on the one hand, early ethnic and female writing has frequently been overlooked and, on the other hand, the following close study of the novel demonstrates that the contribution of both female and ethnic authors is actually significant. Despite having been dismissed under Canada's multicultural and non-patriarchal identity, what these works ultimately prove is that Canadian Literature has in fact been forged by ethnic and women's contributions from early times, so that they can be said to play crucial roles in the evolution of Canadian literary history and the shaping of its tradition and identity.

## CHAPTER V

### FRANCES BROOKE'S CONTRIBUTION TO ENGLISH CANADIAN LITERARY IDENTITY: *THE HISTORY OF EMILY MONTAGUE (1769)*

In spite of the heated debate on the Canadian membership of Frances Brooke's novel given her British ancestry and nationality, the British publication of her novel and Brooke's return to her mother country, *The History of Emily Montague* (1769) is not only the first novel in English from and about Canada but also written for a Canadian audience. This novel –the second in Brooke's literary career– was written during her Canadian experience from 1763 until 1768-9 and published when she returned to Great Britain in 1769. It is an epistolary novel composed of 228 letters exchanged among the different characters that develop a romance plot which connects Brooke's work to the



*Portrait of Frances Brooke in  
Frances Brooke's House  
Museum, Maison des Jesuites  
(Québec)*

British literary tradition of the sentimental novel. In the different epistles, there are extensive descriptions of the landscape, climate and harsh life conditions of the colony that are a challenge of adaptation of British literary axioms to a new reality; native characters even with own voice –and not only cited by main characters<sup>31</sup>–; information

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<sup>31</sup> It is important to note that in general when a Canadian character is referred to in the novel, it is usually a French resident of the colony like Mme. Des Roches; on the other hand, native characters are named "savages" as if the fact of not sharing Europe's civilization manners meant they did not have the right of being equally considered Canadians. This fact speaks for the author's imperialist position in relation to Canada.

about the attempt of creating a micro-British society in a Quebec garrison; as well as references that show a comprehensive approach to the political and religious situation.

It seems clear that *The History of Emily Montague*<sup>32</sup> is entrapped in-between two literary traditions in English, that of Great Britain on which the novel is rooted and that of Canada yet to be developed although already existent in different languages and forms. Despite its British roots, Brooke's novel goes beyond mere adaptation or imitation. As far as form is concerned, letters are shorter or subdivided in parts which correspond to the different days or hours in which they have been fictionally 'written' by the characters; they are thus closer to dialogue and offer wider realism to the work:

TO MISS MONTAGUE, AT QUEBEC  
LETTER 29 I will be at home, my dear, and denied to every body but you.  
I pity you, my dear Emily; but I am unable to give you advice.  
The world would wonder at your hesitating a moment.  
Your<sup>33</sup> faithful  
A. FERMOR (68)

As this example shows, letters are numbered, addressed to a specific person, signed by the addresser and include the geographical position so that readers' tasks are facilitated. Besides, every character and writer of letters "has a highly individual style, so individual that the reader almost never has to check the signature of a letter to tell who wrote it" (Messenger: 151). This polyphony entails the absence of an omniscient narrator "or single and authorised point of view" according to Robin Howells and gives the novel a dialogic character in which each interlocutor shows an own perspective (441). Diversity is then crucial since technical and thematic diversity are connected to each other. In fact, for Brooke as well as for her characters "variety [is] infinitely pleasing", and so is demonstrated throughout their differentiated attitudes and ideologies (19). It seems as if the employment of such technical heterogeneity spoke for the defence of a social environment which should preserve these diverse viewpoints. In point of fact, Brooke's epistolary strategy has a crucial relevance in the novel for it mirrors the characters' inner thoughts and feelings and thus allows the portrayal of a

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<sup>32</sup> All the direct references to Brooke's novel that appear in this chapter come from Malcom Ross's 1983 edition of the work. In order to facilitate readability, every unidentified parenthetical reference included in the text comes from this edition of *The History of Emily Montague*.

<sup>33</sup> This is an original misspelling from the 1983 edition of Brooke's *The History of Emily Montague* by Malcom Ross. In order to be faithful to this primary source, misspellings in quotations from Brooke's text have been maintained and not corrected; any spelling error found from here onwards in such references comes from this 1983 edition and will not be again highlighted for matters of readability.

much more complex psychological image. Furthermore, it is the vehicle of the “literarization of the feminine in language” mainly through the character of Arabella Fermor –who together with Ed Rivers writes the higher number of letters– because she subverts the use of male epistolary structure by re-directing it to very different aims (Sellwood: 61). In this way, another innovative element is introduced: social criticism.

Irony and humour are other significant formal aspects that offer a more objective perspective on a group of characters that does not suffer so intensely for love and are much more pragmatic. This is the case of Arabella Fermor, an intelligent and independent woman who overtly shows her practical views of life and who is one of the most challenging and attractive characters of the novel. Her vision actually places her in a somehow higher position in relation to other characters so that she is able to utter ironic commentaries on British society. For example, when she speaks about “the English privilege of choosing a husband” her sardonic tone needs to be grasped for she perfectly knows and makes clear that convenience marriages were a common practice at that time (55). On the other hand, it has to be noted that Frances Brooke follows the technique of her time of offering readers a privileged position in relation to characters; her audience has an omniscient perspective so that she gets a deeper involvement of readers. For instance, in letter 48, an unknown fact for characters is revealed to us, readers: “very strange news, Lucy; they say Colonel Rivers is gone to marry Madam Des Roches” (128).

Regarding content, despite *The History of Emily Montague* follows the conventions of the sentimental novel –that is, a group of characters connected through a couple whose difficulties to get married are the central plot axis– some innovations are also found. The novel’s plot revolves around three main characters, of a middle-high social class, whose love stories develop in unison and have a positive resolution back in Great Britain. They are: Emily Montague and Colonel Edward Rivers, hero and heroine of the novel; Arabella Fermor and Captain Fitzgerald; and finally, Lucy Rivers and John Temple, sister and *bon viveur* friend of Edward Rivers respectively. This last couple is in Great Britain while the other two are in Canada, in Québec. The letter exchange among them serves also as a connection between the colony and the *mother country* “holding together the writers and the world” (Howells: 44), and as comparative means of both societies.

The character of Emily Montague shows some of the most typical features of a romance heroine: her great sensibility and moral righteousness together with a high capacity of sacrifice for love turn her into the paradigm of the virtuous woman of her time. She is exemplary of “a woman of honour [who] never appears so amiable, or displays half so many virtues, as when sensible to the merit of a man who deserves her affection” (30). Paradoxically, she also shows a subversive character given her independent talent to decide and/or act which is visible through her rejection of the husband chosen for her by her family, not only in one but in two occasions. Just as Emily, Ed Rivers is apparently the classical romance hero but does not stick to traditional guidelines marked in previous novels. In fact, Frances Brooke presents some of her feminist<sup>34</sup> views through Ed’s character, as the validity of feminine thinking and feeling or equality between men and women, among others. According to Katharine M. Rogers “it is therefore through Rivers that Brooke expresses another typically feminine insight” (163). From my viewpoint, this is one of the skills which shows Frances Brooke’s intelligence and wit since the ideas portrayed through him take on wider relevance in her moment precisely because they are voiced by a man; at the same time, they epitomize women’s powerless position in eighteenth-century society for they were not even allowed to express themselves in their own voice.

On the other hand, the character of Arabella Fermor as well as assisting as mediator, serves as Emily’s counterpoint. Her pragmatism, feminism and independence are certainly surprising, just as her criticism of British society with Canada as basis. The opposition and complementariness of these two female characters offers a much more complex image than the traditional one. It is not a simple ascription of rightness or wrongness to one or another character, but the distinct nuances of characters stand for the existence and appropriateness of different female behaviours in a same social environment. Both Emily and Arabella can be said to be parts of the author’s divided self that Lorraine McMullen and other feminist critics of Canadian Literature in English have pointed out; the former character epitomizing adaptation to expectations in order to be accepted by mainstream literary discourses and the latter as representative of

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<sup>34</sup> It is important to bear in mind that Frances Brooke cannot be claimed to be a feminist writer in the same terms it is currently understood. In Brooke’s case it is necessary to be aware that she wrote in the eighteenth-century, a time in which feminist theories had not been defined yet; it is more an ascertainment of women’s unfair situation which would precede and foster modern feminist ideas.

subversion and the writer's challenge of patriarchy. One of the strengths of Brooke's *The History of Emily Montague* is then her presentation of a feminine viewpoint, through her independent and valid female characters and not as man's appendix; this fact has led some critics to affirm that the author actually contributed to women's liberation movement in literature:

[...] writers like Frances Brooke, a woman of feeling who tempered sensibility with good sense and pathos with humor, helped women not only by expressing feminine experience but by creating a climate which feminist issues could be raised. (Rogers: 171)

In this way, it is also innovative that in spite of Emily's central role as heroine she is overshadowed by Arabella's subtlety, common sense, self-confidence and even impudence. As it could not be otherwise, her male counterpart, Captain Fitzgerald, is also much more practical and witty than Ed Rivers so that he adapts to her lovers' needs. Arabella –Bell– can be said to epitomize what has been called the *female coquette* although she also contests this mould; she is a realistic woman who plays with and captivates men but always within the boundaries of morality in what she calls “an advantageous match” (98). She is perfectly aware of women's power so that while the time of getting married arrives she does everything possible to enjoy; as she states in relation to men, “the wisest, the wildest, the gravest, and the gayest, are equally our slaves, when we have proper ideas of petticoat politics” (84). In this way, on the one hand, her knowledge of the social frame in which she plays turns her into a pragmatic woman as the following statement in relation to Fitzgerald shows: “I will consider this affair seriously; one must marry, 'tis the mode; every body marries [...]” (65); while on the other hand, she goes beyond established rules for she even utters her intention of teaching her lover to flirt for their relationship not to fall into routine: “I'll teach him to coquet, Lucy” (141).

Bell's attitude is, of course, a matter of criticism on behalf of some of her traditional male counterparts. While for her coquetting means fun, for some men it is totally reprehensible and can actually lead her to destruction; as Ed Rivers states “her spirit of coquetry is eternally carrying her wrong” (150). In my opinion, criticism towards her behaviour stems from her free and challenging temper which distances her from most of her female contemporaries. Even Ed, who seems aware of women's unfair situation, compares marriage to “peaceable possession” (245). A similar concept of

marriage as possession of women is also shown by some female characters who, in doing so, demonstrate their total acceptance of patriarchal rules; for instance, Lucy Rivers in a letter to her brother speaks of Emily in the following terms: “a woman so formed to inspire you with tenderness, and whom it is so impossible you can ever hope to possess” (112). However, other characters as Fitzgerald are more subtle, perhaps not due to his own personality but because of his relationship to Bell. In fact, he and his father plot their marriage behind Bell’s back, making her believe she is the one taking the decision. Of course, it can be said that this fact somehow speaks for women’s mistreatment and lack of real power in eighteenth-century society. In my opinion, given the feminist critique underlining the novel, all these comments actually form part of Brooke’s social analysis.

It seems clear that there are two love concepts which differ radically, mainly represented by the two main female characters and reinforced by their male couples. One of these conceptions is more traditional and idealist, and makes characters suffer the vicissitudes of a difficult love story whose obstacles are sometimes created by those involved in the relationship; for them love is “the most precious gift of Heaven” (115). Whereas the other is much more practical and realist; it allows women to play meanwhile inevitable marriage takes place. These differences are clearly observed in letters 107 and 108, written by Bell and Emily respectively. Arabella comments that she prefers Fitzgerald to other men but also that “*count[s] the hours of his absence in my existence; and contrive[s] sometimes to pass them pleasantly enough, if another agreeable man is in the way*”, so that there is nothing to worry about if she “see[s] him flirt a little with others” (154). To such a daring, Emily’s reaction is that of telling Bell “you know nothing of love” and recognizing that she could not bear the cooling of Ed’s feelings towards her at any moment (154). The existent abyss between both women characters is also relevant because it offers Bell a higher critical stance; as she comments on both Emily and herself, “she loves like a foolish woman, I like a sensible man” (159). Very significantly, Bell’s remark is directly linked to McMullen’s idea on the appearance of the female hero in modern times, of which Bell can be said to be a precursor. Following McMullen, this new feminine character turns against established roles of mother, wife and lover and holds features traditionally ascribed to *both* men and women. This is precisely what Bell epitomizes in the novel for she challenges female



tasks and appears to be in-between female and male worlds. Furthermore, the depiction of contradictory as well as complementary female characters such as Emily and Bell also speaks for diversity so that Brooke's novel can be said to question mainstream axioms of uniformity regarding the representation of women in literature.

In their complementarity, both characters share a common idea on marriage which, far from being something simply temporary in women's lives, has a crucial relevance for it can mean "happiness or misery for ever" (68). Emily overtly claims women's right to choose the man she wants to marry in liberty for it is her "free, unbiased choice" (109). In this same line, Bell criticizes the too frequent strategy of convenience marriage of her time:

Parents should chuse our company, but never pretend to direct our choice; [...] a conformity of taste and sentiment alone can make a marriage happy, and of that none but the parties concerned can judge. (110)

The appearance of these contrasting but reciprocal love ideals is an innovation of Frances Brooke's novel in relation to the basic elements of sentimental novels. In this way, the fundamental virtue concept of her time is reformulated but in very different terms; it bases ethic behaviour on reason and not merely on feelings. Logics and common sense prevail in some occasions, as for example at the moment of being pushed to marry an unloved man. The virtuous woman has not simply to show a great sensibility, that is, "elegance of mind, delicacy of moral taste, and a certain quick perception of the beautiful and becoming in everything" but it is also important that she keeps "principles founded on reasoning and argument" (93). In this way, through interwoven love plots, Frances Brooke introduces readers into the characteristic love affairs of her society and, at the same time, instructs on what is really important: marriage based on love, friendship and mutual respect. According to Ed Rivers:

[...] two persons at once delicate and sensible, united by friendship, by taste, by a conformity of sentiment, by that lively ardent tender inclination which alone deserves the name of love, will find happiness in marriage, which is in vain sought in any other kind of attachment. (47)

The rest of characters contribute to complicate the plot and create tension but are secondary to these four mentioned before. A line could be drawn to separate young characters from their progenitors and/or tutors. The latter would represent commitment to tradition and social dictates, while their children would epitomize the development of a renewed, more open and challenging ideology slowly outlined and in which women

play a crucial role in the novel. Mr and Mrs Melmoth are Emily's tutors<sup>35</sup> who watch over her honour and dignity since her family cannot take care of her properly. Sir George Clayton is a man of good ancestry and better fortune chosen by the Melmoths as Emily's husband, and with whom Emily breaks up after a two-year relationship hiding her true reason at first, that is, her love for Ed Rivers. The relationship between his sister, Lucy Rivers, and friend, John Temple, also ends up in marriage. Besides, Lucy Rivers is Bell's friend so that she is able to intercede on Emily's behalf for her to be accepted by her lover's family. Another character linked to Ed Rivers is Madame Des Roches. It is significant that, given her French Canadian ancestry, she stands out as an individual with own voice and presented in positive terms unlike other of her fellow countrymen and women. As a woman, she is independent and strong, able of living alone and taking care of her possessions without the help of a husband. Her participation in the novel is crucial because she jeopardizes Emily and Ed's love pillars. In relation to Arabella, it is important to take into account the character of her father, William Fermor, a military man at the service of the British Empire who knows her daughter very well and plots her marriage with Fitzgerald. There is only one unnamed character to whom William Fermor writes and recounts on the colony as subject to the Crown. There are twelve letters addressed to this mysterious Lord which act as another tension element in the novel<sup>36</sup>. One example is the following letter 100:

TO THE EARL OF—  
LETTER 100 SILLERY, MARCH 24: My Lord: Nothing can be more just than your Lordship's observation; and I am more pleased with it, as it [...]. (146)

It seems clear that there is a submissive relation of W. Fermor to his addressee. As it is suggested in the text, this anonymous character apparently answers to Fermor's letters but there is no proof of it except for letter 184, almost at the end of the novel, in which he is given his own voice and signs as H—. This enigmatic Lord reappears in Ed River's epistle to Captain Fermor in which Ed refers to "Lord— not being in town [...]" as the person prepared to offer Fitzgerald a higher rank (231). It is in this precise

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<sup>35</sup> Although in some occasions Mr and Mrs Melmoth appear as Emily's uncle and aunt, they are not. As Arabella reveals when writing on Emily in letter 10, "she came to America two years ago, with her uncle Colonel Montague, who died here, and I imagined was gone back to England; she is now at Montreal with Mrs. Melmoth, a distant relation of her mother's" (37).

<sup>36</sup> These epistles are number 72 and 87 (in which William Fermor shares his secret intentions of marriage for her daughter with his addressee) and later letters 100, 117, 123, 130, 131, 133, 135, 138, 152, y 153.

moment when the reader is able to connect the mysterious Lord H— with a story about a young Lady H—, mentioned in a letter from Bell to Lucy “I am extremely sorry, but not surprised, at what you tell me of poor Lady H— [...]” and in another one from Ed to Fitzgerald, “I am sorry for what you tell me of Miss H—; whose want of art has led her into indiscretions” (219, 275).

As pointed out before, the novel ends with the marriage of the main characters back in Great Britain, with their economic and social position improved thanks precisely to such a union. There is one exception, that of Emily and Ed, who seem to be doomed to live a humble existence given their powerless economic condition but who are finally ‘saved’. Following the eighteenth-century novel style, in the last four letters<sup>37</sup> of the novel all the machinery fits in through the almost magical appearance of a mysterious Colonel Willmott who turns out to be Emily’s father. His vast fortune, acquired during her colonial experience in India, allows the couple to improve their economic status –apparently deserved because of their sincerity and courage– but because of having settled their relationship on a love basis and not on convenience. What these letters reveal actually “constitutes, within the novel, a new ‘history of Emily Montague’” (Howells: 449), that is, a story within the story which offers a meta-fictional character to the novel. Likewise, the fact that characters manage themselves within a sentimental context on which they comment and with which they simultaneously contrast gives a double-layered reading to the novel. Their ideas are opposite to their reality which is also fictional, like themselves. The terms are subverted and “the novel deprecates novels; this fiction is not fabulous; this love story is not a romance” (Howells: 445).

As explained previously, *The History of Emily Montague* develops some of the characteristic elements of eighteenth-century sentimental novels but it also pioneers in the genre’s later evolution thanks to its formal and conceptual innovations which situate the novel in the vanguard of the time. Tradition and challenge are thus mingled in the same literary piece. It seems curious that in an attempt of emulating a literary doctrine, its basic axioms are questioned and modified in many aspects, and that the basis of a new tradition start to be settled from a challenging paradigm. Hence, it can be said that Frances Brooke innovates and perpetuates tradition in two literary contexts at the same

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<sup>37</sup> Mainly in letter 226 in which Emily reveals all the details of the story in the first person.

time. In Canada, her work introduces some of the basis of Canada's literary fiction and points out some of the great topics of Canadian expression in English. On the other hand, regarding Great Britain and the sentimental novel, *The History of Emily Montague* is independently developed; realism, irony and humour, feminism and Canada's landscape are Brooke's eminent contributions.

In order to investigate Frances Brooke's contribution to English Canadian literary identity and challenge frequently condescending critical approaches to *The History of Emily Montague*, what follows is an analysis of the most relevant elements raised by Canadian critics as identifying signs of Canadian literary expression. First of all, nature and the topic of survival will be explored, followed by the colonial experience and the *garrison mentality*, the issue of otherness –mainly regarding the concept of *noble savage* and women's relevant roles–, Canada as literary setting and the mixture of romanticism and realism, and finally, social criticism, didacticism and the employment of foreign genres.

In *Emily Montague*, nature appears as a recurrent thematic element in the characters' letters to addressees in Great Britain. Its employment turns around two main versions: a positive one through which nature is depicted as sublime, and a negative in which the environment threatens human life. The *great sublime* concept, coming from eighteenth-century philosophical theories<sup>38</sup>, appears from the beginning of the novel when weather conditions are favourable –mainly in fall and summer–. For instance, in the second letter from Ed Rivers to his sister he describes Canada as follows:

The country is a very fine one: you see not only the *beautiful* which it has in common with Europe, but the *great sublime* to an amazing degree; every object here is magnificent: the very people seem almost another species if we compare them with the French from whom they are descended. (19)

Likewise, Arabella Fermor, although more cautiously, shows her enthusiasm towards that natural environment and advances what will happen later in the novel:

I know not what the winter may be, but I am enchanted with the beauty of this country in summer; [...]. The scenery about the town is infinitely lovely; the prospect extensive, and diversified by a variety of hills, woods, cascades, intermingled with smiling farms and cottages, and bounded by distant mountains which seem to sacel the very Heavens. (35)

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<sup>38</sup> These theories made reference to nature as divine representation since it manifested true human virtues: innocence, kindness and purity. They also implied the appearance of the *noble savage* concept as an ideal and uncorrupted being thanks to lack of contact with civilization.

It is evident that in both quotations, nature acquires a divine character and is employed as counterpoint in comparison to the old continent, in which its rough breaking with nature has led to a hypocritical society. During these days social life is intense and trips between Québec and Montreal are usual. For some characters this sublimity of nature is one of the most significant identity signs of Canada; for instance, William Fermor, in a letter to the mysterious Lord, comments on “the sublimity which so strongly characterizes the country” (188).

For some critics, the introduction of environment is simply a pretext to carry out the sentimental plot. This is the case of K. J. H. Berland who states that “nature is an ally of sensibility, because the Sensible Man [Ed] and the Sensible Woman [Emily] are the children of nature brought to the highest possible stage of development” (290). However, W. H. New in “Frances Brooke’s Chequered Gardens” (1972) takes the opposite option into account so that “the love story which provides a simple plot for the book can be seen as a vehicle to allow the author to explore her ideas about nature and society” (29). As far as I am concerned, Berland’s statement cannot be applied to the whole novel since the introduction of nature as enemy does not correspond to the love story and their employment of environment as means of expression of their feelings. In fact, despite their first deep admiration of landscape, it is early contrasted with the lack of a social background since British characters miss “sight for society, the conversation of those dear to us; the more animated pleasures of the heart” (24-25).

The image of nature with negative connotations appears mainly in relation to winter. At the beginning, when weather is not too harsh characters as Arabella Fermor even praise it: “we have had a great deal of snow, but it melts away; ‘tis a lovely day, but an odd enough mixture of summer and winter” (82). Real problems appear when climate seems to threaten their lives and breaks the ideal state they enjoyed until then:

It is with difficulty I breathe, my dear; the cold is so amazingly intense as almost totally to stop respiration. [...] The strongest wine freezes in a room which has a stove in it; even brandy is thickened to the consistence of oil. (90)

In this way, the topic of survival is introduced. Humans have to confront nature in order to save their lives and social project. As conditions worsen, early optimism leaves way to pessimism: “as to Quebec, I give up all hopes of ever seeing it again” (86). Characters attend to the shattering of their assumptions of Canada as paradise on earth

in opposition to their mother country because of reality's harshness. They are forced to adapt and depend on themselves, not only regarding supplies but leisure; it is both a physical and mental attitude towards environment since they have to keep their minds busy until better times come back. As times goes by, their behaviour is more pragmatic; Ed Rivers, for instance, shows his required adaptation to nature because he keeps on with his tasks despite bad weather "travelling in this country in winter is particularly agreeable" (94), whereas Arabella seems to get used to the new situation and affirms, "I begin not to relish the winter here; now I am used to the cold, I don't feel it so much: as there is no business done here in the winter, 'tis the season of general dissipation" (95). Their lives are reduced to their closest social milieu that in Ed's words is their "little society of persons" (95). Survival depends on themselves as individuals as well as on the community so that nature can be said to foster a behavioural pattern whose main aim is surviving. One of the most relevant consequences of such a pattern is the development of what is called *garrison mentality* that will be analysed later on.

At the same time, direct experience of Canada's climatological conditions helps characters understand the colony's situation better and shows Frances Brooke's own awareness process. Everything they criticized before about Canadians as "their extreme ignorance, and that indolence which nothing but their ardour for war can surmount" has now an explanation (41). According to Ed, harshness provides Canadian population with a warring character apparently absent in Europeans, the same as for Arabella their lack of interest on artistic production is a consequence of their permanent state of fight for survival, "to preserve an existence" so that survival rises as a fundamental factor for Canadians (90). Hence, climatology shapes the country's reality and is highlighted as an original identity sign. Similarly, it also gives form to fiction since it also marks the rhythm of events in the novel. Along the first letters, the weather is pleasant and the sentimental plot takes place slowly for descriptions of landscape and society are paramount. When characters are forced to survive within their "little society" the sentimental machinery becomes prominent. In fact, bad conditions allow Emily to postpone her unwanted marriage to Sir George Clayton since he is in Montreal and she is in Sillery, and reinforce her feelings for Ed because they have to share a reduced space with Arabella, her father and Fitzgerald. It seems logical that love intrigues take place more quickly during the cold season and that the number of letters is higher. Now it is

not an exchange of epistles with Great Britain<sup>39</sup> but among interlocutors in colonial soil, even among characters inhabiting the same house as Bell and Emily<sup>40</sup>.

According to Bell, “the most pleasing view of this miracle of nature is certainly in summer” and she experiences such a miracle when snow melting allows outer contact again (124). When warm weather comes back, there is an information explosion that affects events in the colony and silenced speakers during winter are again voiced. Lucy –who already signs as Lucy Temple and no longer with her maiden’s name, Rivers– early introduces a new premonitory element: her mother’s life depends on Ed’s return to Great Britain. In this way, Emily and Ed are forced to hold their love up; both go back to their mother country but separately. Shortly after, they will be followed by Bell and Fitz, already married, and her father.

Contrarily to what might be expected, Canada marks their life despite leaving it. The voluptuousness of nature they have experienced pervades their views and even leads them to subvert previous comparison terms. Canada is no longer compared to Great Britain, but the opposite, “‘tis the finest day I ever saw, though the middle of November; a dry soft west wind, the air as mild as in April, and an almost Canadian sunshine” (293). Their attitude is also affected by the colonial experience and Ed and Emily seek for a settlement close to nature; Emily will be in charge of the garden not to train or ‘civilize’ it but to emulate Canada as far as possible and “make it a wilderness of sweets” (226). Hence, the garden epitomizes the need of direct contact with nature and mirrors the Canadian reminiscences that remain in her psyche. Similarly, their attitude could be seen as critical towards British civilization and its stubborn insistence on colonizing and/or modifying alien territories in its own image and likeness. According to New’s 1972 article Frances Brooke “in her book reveals the pretentiousness of much English “cultivation” and the need to recognize reality” (33). From here the significant symbolism of the last letter in which Ed ascribes Arabella the following sentence: “Cela est bien dit, mon cher Rivers; mais il faut cultiver notre jardin” (315). Through Bell’s words, Frances Brooke tries to transmit the importance of acknowledging and solving past mistakes in her own social environment since “il faut

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<sup>39</sup> Climate also affects letter exchange for ice prevents the access of boats to Canadian coast.

<sup>40</sup> Letters number 77, 78 y 79 are clear examples of the situation for Emily y Bell exchange letters no longer than a paragraph.

cultiver notre jardin” and stop imposing British social rules on alien territories. Although subtle, this remark is certainly challenging for as early as in 1769 a woman writer seems to adopt a critical attitude to almighty Great Britain and colonialism. Somehow, like Brooke in literature, the characters of *The History of Emily Montague* symbolize the pioneering character as individuals who venture in an unknown reality, making great efforts of physical and mental adaptation in wild nature, and as a micro-society that tries to survive and develop, settling down the basis of a paradigmatic coexistence in a multicultural framework.

As already mentioned, Brooke’s colonial experience was real so that her work can be said to be the result of her participation in British imperialism and to contain strong autobiographical content. The following extract of Frances Brooke’s dedication of the novel to “HIS EXCELLENCY GUY CARLETON”, Canada’s Governor General at the time, is paradigmatic in this respect:

I flatter myself there is a peculiar propriety in addressing it to your excellency, to whose probity and enlightened attention the colony owes its happiness, and individuals that tranquillity of mind, without which there can be no exertion of the powers of either understanding or imagination. (xv)

The previous quotation is also revealing on the author’s position as an individual and artist immersed in an imperialist background. Her work could actually be expected to be a declaration in favour of the possession of Canadian territories as Cecily Devereux maintains in her article “‘one firm body’: Britishness and Otherness in *The History of Emily Montague*” included in Laura Moss’s 2001 critical edition of Brooke’s novel. Devereux’s title ‘one firm body’ makes reference to letter 138 by William Fermor:

The great objects here seem to be to heal those wounds, which past unhappy disputes have left still some degree open; to unite the French and the English, the civil and the military, in *one firm body*; to raise a revenue, to encourage agriculture, and especially the growth of hemp and flax; and find staple, for the improvement of a commerce, which at the present labours under a thousand disadvantages. (my emphasis, 198)

According to Fermor’s words it can be deduced that: the superiority of the British system will end with “past unhappy disputes” and foster the construction of a new economic system “for the improvement of a commerce”; the need of reconciling the two



*central*<sup>41</sup> communities and create a unified colony; and the importance of employing pacific methods as far as possible. It seems clear that English-French tensions were already a significant topic in colonial times and Brooke's novel echoes it. Following Pilar Cuder-Domínguez's 1998 article on gender and nationhood in early Canadian Literature, *The History of Emily Montague* needs to be included within Canadian literary tradition for being the first reflection on this issue as one of the most significant topics of Canadian culture. The fact that the formation of couples during the colonial experience is mainly among British subjects actually speaks for both communities' dissociation; but there is one exception since William Fermor has a relationship with a French Canadian woman, Madam Valliers, which could be understood as proof of the possible reconciliation of Canada's two solitudes. It is very interesting that Captain Fermor finally returns to Great Britain but alone, somehow expressing that such transcultural relationship could only take place in Canada where social restrictions were less powerful. In this sense, Canada is again suggested as a land of freedom and possibilities in comparison to old Britain.

Returning to Cecily Devereux's article, in her opinion *Emily Montague* belongs to the imperialist narrative although the novel shows a pacifying posture towards colonization. Devereux bases her ideas on the fact that the novel's axis is "the representation and affirmation of British "supremacy offshore" with regard to the determined construction and repression of a French 'other'" (460). The fact that Brooke resided in Canada precisely in the period when Great Britain struggled to impose its political, socio-economic and cultural identity, leads the author to participate in such project by creating a "romance of conquest and colonization" (470). In fact, from Devereux's viewpoint the creation of a genre called "romance of colonization" is the only valuable contribution of Brooke to Canada. I agree with Devereux' in so far the conflict of the two imperial powers –French and British– that transfer their rivalries to colonial lands is clearly visible in Brooke's novel. On the other hand, I do not think that it is the main argument of her work since Frances Brooke's main aim is more a social critique of patriarchy as in the rest of her narrative works. Canada's context is neither simply a pretext to expose her arguments nor an excuse to give exoticism to her work,

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<sup>41</sup> The word *central* is in italics to show the imperialist conception of Canadian population which left First Nations aside.

but to widen her posture. According to Jodi L. Wyatt, the colonial context “provide[s] a means to feminist ends” (35).

In any case, different examples of the author’s colonialist perspective can be found along the novel. It is necessary to bear in mind that, in Brooke’s situation, getting rid of colonial ties or turning into a leader against imperialism was not an easy task. She wrote during the eighteenth century when imperialism was at its peak and in which women did not have a voice on political matters. Paradoxically, she could be included within what Edward Said’s calls cases of a passive cooperation on behalf of intellectuals whose progressive views in their own countries turn into the opposite regarding what is carried out outside their frontiers in the name of their countries (28). As I see it, Brooke cannot be said to become the opposite since she defends the same inside and outside British frontiers: women’s equality, although it could be said that she is not so belligerent concerning imperialist injustices.

The colonial mentality pointed out before is present along the novel. The idea of Canada simply as a temporary residence which does not imply settlement like in later literary works by foreigners in Canada such as Susanna Moodie is paradigmatic. In fact, all the characters express their intention of returning to Britain to ‘culminate’ their life after their Canadian experience; this is the case of Emily who states that she has “no view but that of returning to England in the spring, and fixing with a relation in the country” (114). The only character who considers the possibility of making a permanent residency of Canada is Arabella since she prefers Quebec to “any other town in England, except London; the manner of living here is uncommonly agreeable” (221). These words made clear that, despite thinking about Canada as a good place to settle, London is the best city for her. As it will be explained later, Bell’s intentions regarding the colony have further implications since for her it is synonym of freedom. But her dream of staying in their British micro-society in the colony is broken when Emily goes back to Britain. On the other hand, most of Frances Brooke’s characters travel to Canada either for economic or political reasons so that they hold positions of outsiders to the country. Ed Rivers, for instance, only goes to Canada to get some land from the British government. William Fermor is perhaps the most imperialist character of the novel. He writes Lord— to recount on the life in the colony, thus showing his participation as reporter at the service of the crown. In his words the clearest examples

of colonialist views are to be found; in letter 117 he points out what for him are proofs of Canadians, that is, French Canadians “indolence” and their reliance on religion: “their religious houses rob the state of many subjects who might be highly useful at present” (167). But he also shows a more comprehensive attitude for he recognizes the influence of nature and climatological conditions on Canadians behaviour. In this sense, Fermor epitomizes the evolution of the colonial process from fierce opposition to a more open-minded attitude; once colonizers experience the realities of colonized populations they are pushed to acknowledge them. It is certainly surprising that precisely Fermor, given his imperialist position, affirms that “the exchange [between Canada and Great Britain] might be the means of spreading the bond of society and brotherhood over the globe” (178). This bonding idea regarding colonialism is also raised by Said for, in his opinion and being aware of its atrocities, one of the achievements of imperialism was the creation of trans-national bonds (25). The exchange of letters at the beginning of the novel mainly carried out between characters in the colony and their family and friends back at ‘home’ is also an example of the birth of such an international connection.

The identification of Canadian with French in the novel and the subsequent exclusion of First Nations also speak for the colonial posture of some characters. In this way, when Arabella states that “the Canadians live a good deal like the ancient patriarchs”, readers must understand that she talks about French communities and so it is cleared up later in her reference to the social system of first French settlements by which *seigneurs* possessed and administered land (59). These French sections of Canadian population are thus the *others* who threaten Anglo-Saxon power so that colonial struggles foster again the appearance of the two solitudes theme.

While the characters of *Emily Montague* live in the colony they are also shaping a military settlement or garrison, the already cited “little society of persons” (95). Social life is very active during summer and fall seasons even among different settlements but when cold does not allow inter-community exchange any longer, the *garrison mentality* appears. The idea of keeping unity in adversity and the importance of the exertion of political power on subjects so that the community survives are raised as crucial elements. An example of this attitude can be found in one letter by Ed Rivers in which he states that his attachment to his people is so powerful that he cannot enjoy “any other

company” (95). As a consequence of their situation, characters as writers develop a different way of writing, the so-called *defensive writing* which offers them the possibility of reaffirming their communal postures. This narrative form has a wide relevance in Canada for it secures the survival of the community it represents and it precedes literary regionalism. In the case of *Emily Montague* it is no so much a defence against other communities or highlighting a regionalist character, as a plea against an environment that threatens the existence of first inhabitants.

Moving to another element, the issue of otherness or the condition of being other is present in Frances Brooke’s work from the beginning. Along the novel, readers attend to the portrayal of different ideas of otherness. On the one hand, there is the duality between colonizers and Canadians, that is, French and First Nations communities from which the latter can be said to occupy even more altered positions in relation to an English axis; and on the other hand, we find the position of women as others within patriarchy.

Regarding the first type, the simple fact that all letter writers in the novel are British affects the vision on the rest of inhabitants of the colony offered by the novel. It can be said that *I* stands for British and the rest are *the others* who are depicted from the *I*’s eyes who moves from observer to agent in Canadian reality. It is during this first observation stage when the concept of alterity is highlighted and which takes place in the first part of the novel –until letter 12– when the narrative focuses on describing the colony from a British viewpoint. Once colonists settle down in Canadian soil they need to establish some terms in order to interact with the population. In this respect, they develop a terminology that facilitates the identification of themselves and those sharing a common space with them that reinforces their superiority status. As pointed out before, French members are regarded as Canadians while First Nations inhabit more altered positions as noble savages.

The concept of the *noble savage* is a product of eighteenth-century philosophical trends in Britain inspired by previous figures as those of Thomas Hobbes or John Locke but which meant a reaction against previous pessimism. The idea of the *noble savage* is inscribed within the so-called sentimental approaches for they did not maintain humans’ intrinsic corruption but ascribed it to the social system. In this way, *noble savages* were assumed to hold higher kindness for their direct contact with nature, which gave them a

sense of innocence and virtue non-existent in the ‘civilized’ world. Some of these theories are reflected in *The History of Emily Montague* but in different terms. In this respect, letter 11 will be analysed in detail due to its elaborate portrayal of Indian population<sup>42</sup>. Ed Rivers writes on his personal experience “at the Indian village of Lorette” to his sister Lucy (38). On the one hand, Ed focuses on physical description and states that:

They are of copper colour, which is rendered unpleasing by a quantity of coarse red on their cheeks; but the children when born, are of a pale silver white [...]. They are in general tall, well made, and agile to the last degree; have a lively imagination, a strong memory; and, [...], are very dexterous politicians. (42)

But his main interest is on their social framework. The first aspect that calls his attention is their independent character, either communal since “they assert and maintain that independence with a spirit truly noble” or individual for “Lord of himself, at once subject and master, a savage know no superior” (38). It is very significant that in this letter First Nations characters are given a voice for their words are reported directly, unlike any other non-British character: “‘You mistake, brother,’ said he: ‘we are subjects to no prince; a savage is free all over the world’ ” (38). The fact that a First Nations member is self-named as “savage” offers an idea of the influence of Eurocentric ideology on their psyche, although it could also be taken as proof of Ed Rivers manipulation of his words. Religion is also an important element for Ed and it is actually employed as basis for his criticism of French Catholicism. In his opinion, First Nations members “anciently believed in one God, the ruler and creator of the universe, whom they called the *Great Spirit* and the *Master of Life*; in the sun as his image and representative” (39). Significantly, the abolition of their religious beliefs on behalf of Jesuits’ converting stubbornness is abominable and he boasts about their incompetence because they have only achieved the institution of “a few of the most plain and simple truths of Christianity on their ancient superstitions” (39). In relation to their political system, Ed Rivers highlights that they do not have a predefined legal structure or “positive laws” but they are guided by their honour and equity senses. He also raises the

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<sup>42</sup> Of course, in Frances Brooke’s novel native members are referred to as Indians due to the well-known misrepresentation of colonialism and, besides, because the modern naming of First Nations did not exist. Furthermore, it has to be noted that with the term “Indians” Ed Rivers specifically refers to Huron communities “almost exterminated by long and continual war with the Iroquoise, [who] preserve their independence in the midst of a European colony” (38).

existence of a “council of ancients” aimed at the administration of justice, and which together with the rest of elements leads to coexistence in perfect harmony and order “which appears to us surprising” (40). He also pays attention to language and artistic expression. Despite being “sublime and melodious” (40), their way of communicating has, from his viewpoint, a lower conceptual background in relation to English language. Likewise, their pictorial skills are “extremely rude” (40), just as their dances are nothing but pantomimes. In this way, Ed Rivers shows again a colonialist perspective.

The aspects to which he attaches more importance are marriage and female roles in native society, which connect with the central thematic axis of the novel. Regarding marriage as life union, First Nations consider it “as contrary to the laws of nature and reason; and asserted that, as the *Great Spirit* formed us to be happy, it was opposing his will, to continue together when otherwise” (39). In fact, through Ed’s remarks, Frances Brooke reaffirms her theory of the relevance of reason and common sense to criticize marriage practices of the time which in fact were economic transactions. Something similar can be said on the role of women, “the sex we have so unjustly excluded from power in Europe” (39). Women’s higher contribution to political issues in native society is used as counterpoint of their situation in Britain:

I am pleased with this regulation, as women are, beyond all doubt, the best judges of the merit of men; and I should be extremely pleased to see it adopted in England: canvassing for elections would then be the most agreeable thing in the world, and I am sure the ladies would give their votes to much more generous principles than we do. (39)

The previous quotation is very significant since through a male voice, the author highlights the fight for equality between men and women that was taking place in Britain. Furthermore, Brooke goes ahead her time by defending women’s right to vote<sup>43</sup>. But Ed’s commentaries have wider implications since, for instance, the *noble savage* conception is reinterpreted in more realist terms: they are not so innocent and ideal beings but have a social system and structure and their own linguistic and artistic expression. The most relevant aspect of Ed’s account is his criticism of his mother country through which imperialist ideologies of First Nations as inferiors and Europeans as superior are subverted; that is to say, the British *I* is momentarily *the other*. In fact,

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<sup>43</sup> In Great Britain women did not gain the right to vote until 1918 when only women over thirty were allowed to vote. This being so, Frances Brooke’s contribution mirrors feminist movements that started to contest patriarchy and is an unequalled sign of modernity.

when colonists move from mere observers to participants in the Canadian experience, they epitomize the alter-egos previously represented by First Nations and French members; they are also *the others* in relation to their mother country. That is why they constantly search for references back at home, as if the anguish of separation provoked a sense of loss, of not being in the centre any longer. This situation is stressed when cold season makes communication with Britain even more difficult: “I sent a thousand sighs and a thousand tender wishes to dear England, which I never loved so much as at this moment” (85). There is only one character that crosses established alterity boundaries which separate British from the rest: Madame Des Roches. Her friendship with Bell y Emily changes her French and bland status for another in which she is depicted as another British character. At first, readers only know she possesses some lands Ed wants to buy, but little by little more personal data are offered as, for example, that “she is very kind” (71). Once Bell and Emily learn that their theory of marriage between her and Ed is simply absurd, they become interested in her independent character and even develop friendliness towards her.

It seems clear that the issue of otherness in Brooke’s novel is quite complex; there is not one centre and many *other* altered positions but a shift of places and viewpoints so that characters are central and peripheral at the same time. In fact, the vagueness such an alterity framework brings along in the novel is a reflex of the country’s real situation. From the start, in the novel as well as in society, the concept of Candianicity is blurred; all the inhabitants of Canadian territories consider the rest as foreigners whereas, at the same time, they are aliens for the others. Self-identification impediments inherent to Canada can be said to be have been inherited from these early times and Frances Brooke’s novel acts as its first paradigm in Canadian fiction in English. In fact, along the narrative readers sometimes find it difficult to identify what the term *Canadian* refers to; for instance, a “Canadian gentleman” who is in Great Britain is mentioned in letter 164 but we do not know if he is a British citizen who lives in Canada, a French-Canadian or even a member of First Nations.

On the other hand, as far as women’s altered position within patriarchy is concerned, the clearest example is to be found in William Fermor’s letters. He does not only show the imperialist attitude by which non-British individuals are regarded as inferior but patriarchal as well. In letter 135 he exposes his posture and shows his

conviction on “the inferiority of women’s understanding to ours [men’s]” (193). His defence of patriarchy can also be observed in his critique of Emily’s breaking up with George Clayton for, in his opinion, “the fair lady [Emily], after an engagement of two years, took a whim that there was no happiness in marriage without being madly in love” (132); and through his secret plot to arrange his daughter’s marriage without her consent. It seems natural that for a traditional eighteenth-century male as Fermor his daughter’s engagement in peak economic and social conditions was highly important.

As a matter of fact, marriage was also extremely relevant for women since it meant one of the two solutions for women of the time. Females could either dedicate their life to God or marry as Lucy Rivers shows in her early interest in Canadian convents and later option for marrying John Temple. Of course, such dichotomous choices for women were, in fact, survival strategies in a patriarchal structure that perpetuated its hegemony by keeping women away from social and/or political agency. As pointed out in Part II, in Pilar Cuder-Domínguez’s opinion there is a similitude between marriage practices and the enforced union between colony and mother country; she calls this parallelism “the marriage metaphor”. As already explained, she states that female efforts to rule their lives very frequently in relation to marriage practices remember those of colonized territories in their search for independence (117). In fact, William Fermor’s imperialist role and his plot to marry his daughter Arabella are very significant in this respect. In this sense, the negotiation over women’s situation in society carried out in *Emily Montague* goes ahead what Canada as nation will experience later on. The fight for female autonomy can be said to pioneer Canada’s struggle to affirm its identity against colonial powers. Hence, Brooke’s novel acquires a new dimension and connects with later works on which similar acts of negotiation are developed as *Antoniette De Mirecourt; or, secret Marrying and Secret Sorrowing* (1864) by Rosanna Lephrohon. In Cuder-Domínguez’s words, “in their novels Brooke and Lephrohon test the borders of gender and of cultural allegiance, even if they stop short of any serious challenge” (128).

On women’s respect, *The History of Emily Montague* is a challenging novel for readers attend to polyphony of differential female voices. The preeminence of female characters and their groundbreaking perspectives is clear from the beginning of the novel. Feminist ideas are highlighted mainly by the character of Arabella Fermor, who



is the most significant feminist banner in the novel, but also by Ed Rivers as already outlined. In comparison to them, other characters, either female or male, give expression to the ideological framework of the patriarchal context to which they belong. In their letters, the different aspects oppressing women are debated, showing two contrasting postures: one more traditional and attached to established rules, and other more challenging which calls those rules into question.

In a letter to the editor of *Emily Montague*, Frances Brooke herself overtly recognized her intention of addressing her novel to a feminine audience, since it was predominant in the eighteenth century. This fact also explains the force of female content and the powerful feminist message the novel contains. Female themes prevail along the whole novel. Most of the elements introduced in its pages converge in one way or another with this axis; imperialist ideology and the problem of otherness, as well as the criticism of both, are actually aimed at fostering understanding on female issues. In this way, the different perspectives of women characters depending on their geographical positions –that is, in the colony or in Great Britain– or in consonance with their origin<sup>44</sup>, epitomize different sides of the same question. It is important to note that the social criticism of the novel is mainly concerned with Great Britain and the analysis carried out is employed to bring into question or praise the situation in this country. In order to investigate female themes through the characters of the novel, they will be divided into two groups: those who are in colonial territories and those who stay in Britain. From the former group they will be distributed according to their community, First Nations, French –frequently referred to as Canadian– and British.

The most significant aspect about native women, in contrast to British, is their liberal character and active participation in society. In Ed Rivers' words about his first contact with First Nations' context, it seems that native women follow British social rules on female dedication to domesticity once having got married since “these wild roses are accessible; liberal to profusion of their charms before marriage, they are chastity itself after” (22). In this same letter, Ed also raises crucial differences with Europe because, unlike females in the old continent, these women “acquire a new

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<sup>44</sup> The term origin instead of nationality is deliberately employed for the period of time the novel describes and in which it was written the concept Canada as a nation did not exist. Likewise, using the terminology of nationality would leave First Nations characters out of the debate since at that time they were not considered nations as they are now.

empire by marrying; are consulted in all affairs of state, chuse a chief on every vacancy of the throne, are sovereign arbiters of peace and war” (24). The freedom of native women in getting involved in political matters provokes Ed’s reflection on his own country and leads him to subvert the terms established through colonial experience by which natives were regarded as savages and Europeans as civilized.

In the true sense of the word, we are the savages, who so impolitely deprive you[women] of the common rights of citizenship, and leave you no power but that of which we cannot deprive you, the restless power of your charms. (40)

It could be said that the previous quotation summarizes the critique of women’s situation underlined in the novel. Through Ed, Frances Brooke mirrors the scant possibilities of social involvement their female contemporaries had at their disposal. But for Ed not everything regarding women within a native framework is positive. For example, in letter 4 he introduces an anecdote of a First Nations woman who cuts a British prisoner arm “and gave[gives] her children the streaming blood to drink” (24). From my viewpoint, such atrocious story is more a product of the widespread legends on natives that circulated at that time. In fact, Ed recognizes that he learnt about it through a Jesuit missionary and thus plays down its importance<sup>45</sup>. It is also necessary to mention a passage in which Ed affirms that “the only way to civilize them[the savages] is to *feminize* their women” (101). It seems clear that in this occasion Ed is showing off his imperialist posture in which patriarchy leaks and that prevents the accurate comprehension of the situation that he usually shows; according to him, “at present their manners differ in nothing from those of the men; they even add the ferocity of the alter” (101). At the same time, his remarks are very significant because they imply the insistence of British society in keeping well differentiated roles for men and women and maintaining specific axioms regarding femininity; they also offer a clear idea on the establishment of accepted feminine roles and behaviour from males’ viewpoint.

Together with Ed Rivers, Arabella Fermor is the character that dedicates more time to share and reflect on First Nations population. She admires their virtues, the interrelating liberty between men and women, and female political roles. In an

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<sup>45</sup> It is important to note that Frances Brooke and her husband, John Brooke, were not only members of the Anglican Church but John was its representative in Quebec. Hence, both were very interested in ousting Catholic power in Canada and the inclusion of such an anecdote could be understood as an attempt to discredit the religion they competed against.

emotional fit she even shows her intention of marrying “a savage” (50). Her relationship with native women is the most relevant because she is one of the few characters who lives and writes about a direct experience with them. In one of her first letters to Lucy Rivers –letter 16– she recounts how a group of native women approaches the military settlement as follows: “six women, and two or three children, without one man amongst them” (50). She is fascinated by their spirit of survival and independence from men and comments that “[they] made a fire, on which they laid some fish to broil” (51). Driven by curiosity she comes nearer to them, starts a conversation in English and discovers that “the desire of seeing their brethren, the English who had conquered Quebec, had brought them up the great river, down which they would return as soon as they had seen Montreal” (51). Then, she offers wine to them and witnesses a strange situation in which these women behave in a totally uninhibited manner. Bell observes the scene with admiration and envy since she is never allowed to behave so freely. Later on, when she gets to know their social framework better and becomes aware that among them there are also unfair practices towards women, her perspective moves from benevolence to disappointment.

On the other hand, in Robert Merret’s opinion the semiotics of wine has further implications in the novel. Following the analysis of “Signs of Nationalism in *The History of Emily Montague*” he carries out in his 1994 article, there is a unilateral relation between the symbol of wine and imperialism. As he explains, Arabella’s wine offering to native women signifies the imposition of foreign values –male, military and aristocratic– over Canadian population to such an extent that “in making wine reinforce British culture, they also use it to demean Indians inhabitants and the French” (237). Likewise, the symbol of wine also highlights the question of cultural displacement by which repeated adaptations of British traditions in Canadian culture stand as obstacles in the development of an own identity concept. From my point of view, this fact provides the novel with another dimension for it gives expression to the first signs of continual interference of alien cultural structures in Canada. These signs would actually act as paradigms of the country’s national identity as well as obstacles of its self-defining identity process. In other words, British influence on Canada offers some distinctive elements –such as language– but they would turn into burdens in the search of cultural independence.

As far as female characters of French origin are concerned, they are generally employed as comparison pole of Great Britain. They usually appear depicted with negative connotations, with a much less refined sentimental education and know-how. In my opinion, the novel seems to suggest that this critical perspective on French women is a product of their threatening position towards female British protagonists, a very interesting aspect indeed given the colonial framework. An illuminating example is Mademoiselle Clairaut, to whom Bell refers in letter 82 in the following terms:

Do you know, my dear Lucy, that there is a little impertinent girl here, a Mademoiselle Clairaut, who, on the meer merit of features and complexion, sets up for being handsome as Emily and me? (125)

In fact, for Ed “there is not perhaps on earth a race of females, who talk so much, and feel so little, of love as the French” (24). It seems paradoxical, but what he criticizes about the French will be later revealed in relation to British society. Besides, Ed Rivers shows his opposition to French practices as arranged marriages despite he is totally conscious that the situation in Great Britain is the same (76). Another women of French ancestry, Madame la Brosse, plays a relatively important role because she competes with Arabella for the love of Fitzgerald; as it could not be otherwise, Bell does not have nice words for her, she is “a woman to whom he [Fitzgerald] knows I have an aversion, and who has nothing but a tolerable complexion and a modest assurance to recommend her” (148). It is not a real competition but more a flirt of Fitz led by Bell’s previous dissolute behaviour with another man on which she comments that “he had the insolence to dance with Madame la Brosse to-night at the governor’s. I’ll never forgive him” (148). It seems that through this apparent paradox Frances Brooke is trying to demonstrate the mistaken excess to which coquette behaviours may lead. The connection between Madame Villiers and Bell’s widow father is also relevant. They maintain a relationship although there is no specific record of it. The fact that she attends to her step-daughter’s wedding to Fitzgerald makes us think they share something beyond mere friendship. She is an open-minded woman, not too attached to rules and free enough to have a relationship without getting married.

The most relevant French female character of the novel is Madame Des Roches, a widower who lives in Canada and competes with Emily. Unlike Bell’s French counterpart, Mademoiselle Clairaut, Madame Des Roches is an intelligent and educated woman. In Ed’s words, she is “an agreeable person, great vivacity, an excellent

understanding, improved by reading, to which the absolute solitude of her situation has obliged” (71). She is also represented as an independent woman, self-sufficient and able to manage her business alone. The beginning of the relationship with Ed is precisely due to some economic issues since she possesses some lands that he wants to buy. At the beginning she is regarded as an ‘enemy’ by Emily and Bell; their opposition leads us somehow to sense the struggle between both countries in colonial territories, which would create a certain confrontation substratum present in Canadian society. But what is really significant about Madame Des Roches is that, despite early differences, she strikes up friendship with Emily who affirms that “if I was not Emily I would be Madame Des Roches” (197). According to Ed, Emily is Madame Des Roches’s favourite so that Bell even feels jealous of their friendship. Finally, all of them, Emily, Madame Des Roches and Bell understand each other perfectly and even share residence at Sillery for some time. After the Canadian experience, Madame Des Roches and Bell’s friendship turns out as more lasting. When Bell leaves Canada, she only farewells one person, “Adieu! *Ma chère* Madame Des Roches. I embrace her; I feel the force of its being for the last time” (239). But their relationship goes beyond geographical barriers and continues in written form. In this way, Madame Des Roches is the only non-British who writes letters; although there is no direct record of it, Bell mentions her letters in her writings.

Among British female characters there are those who moved to the colony and those who stayed in Great Britain. From the latter group, the figure of Lucy Rivers who keeps a more or less constant contact with his brother Ed and Arabella stands out. At the beginning she seems to represent the traditional woman of her time. Although, at first, readers sense her inclination for religious life through the interest for convents in Canada she shows in her letters to Ed, along the novel we learn that she has a relationship with John Temple and they even think about getting married. On his behalf, Ed’s knowledge of his friend’s libertine attitude makes him doubt on the appropriateness of their union and tells John that he “only fear[s] from your long habit of improper attachments” (144). It is important to note that in Lucy’s familiar framework there is no father so that Ed plays the paternal role. In her letters, Lucy does not seem to be a self-confident and independent woman but in her final attitude she does. On the other hand, another aspect of British society which is brought into question is the opposition among women that does not facilitate the necessary change and

mirrors the lack of consideration of different ways of living. In this way, Mrs Melmoth warns Emily on her inconvenient friendship with Arabella because in her opinion she “is too young as well as too gay to be a protection” (87).

It seems clear that Emily and Arabella’s relevance in the novel is higher to any other characters’. The figure of Emily as representative of the female heroine within the eighteenth-century sentimental tradition and Bell’s feminism have already been analysed; but both also subvert their roles and offer a much more complex perspective on the female psyche.

In point of fact, Arabella is the character that has aroused more attention on behalf of critics. According to Ann Messenger “her presence and her letters transform *The History of Emily Montague* from a simple “sensibility” novel to a novel of ‘sense and sensibility”” to such an extent that she places Brooke’s novel within “a tradition that reaches back beyond the beginnings of the novel and forward to Jane Austen” (151). Many connections have been established between *Emily Montague* and other earlier and later novels thanks to the character of Arabella Fermor. This is the case, for instance, of *The Rape of the Lock* by Alexander Pope whose main character, Belinda, is based on a real woman called Arabella Fermor or of the heroine of Charlotte Lennox’s *The Female Quixote* who is also called Arabella. Even Jane Austen seems to have been inspired by *Emily Montague* but with very different aims in her first writings. Juliet McMaster actually demonstrates the possibility that Jane Austen used Brooke’s work as basis for *Amelia Webster* and *Love and Friendship*. On the other hand, it has also been maintained that the character of Arabella could have been motivated by a real person. In the house-museum of Frances Brooke in Quebec<sup>46</sup> there are records that prove that, for the character of Arabella, Brooke was inspired by Anne Marie Bonfield, daughter of John Taylor Bonfield to whom Brooke’s family rented the Maison des Jesuites where they resided<sup>47</sup>.

The portrait of complex female characters, who are complementary and who show an inner individual division, is one of the great innovations of *The History of*

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<sup>46</sup> This museum is actually in the residence that Frances Brooke inhabited during her Canadian experience; nowadays it is a convent and in the past it was the Maison des Jesuites. Her home can still be visited, and some personal objects of the author as well as the first edition of *The History of Emily* published in London in 1769 can be found.

<sup>47</sup> In the museum it is also stated that the character of Ed Rivers was based on another real person, Henry Caldwell, a businessman France Brooke met in Canada.

*Emily Montague* regarding the novel genre tradition in Britain. Arabella is the character who voices the social dichotomy women face when she states that “*a propos* to women, the estimable part of us are divided into two classes *only*, the tender and the lively” (my emphasis, 161). In doing so, the novel highlights one of the social problems females had to cope with during Frances Brooke’s times since they had but two choices, that is, either adhering to tradition and standing for sentimental heroines as Emily or challenging established norms and being regarded as unorthodox and even deviant as in Bell’s case. As already pointed out, far from sticking to such apparently insurmountable duality, Emily and Bell as the two main characters of the novel bring this dual trap of society into question not only through their complementarity which breaks established social barriers but, very significantly, also by the inner division they are forced to endure.

On the one hand, whereas Emily Montague is apparently the classic sentimental heroine attached to social rules, her opposition to norms is also visible when she rejects Sir George Clayton as husband. In fact, Emily herself –after having refused George– stands by her decision in a letter to Mrs Melmoth in which she overtly expresses her opinion on the absurdity of the situation and her love for Ed:

[...] happy it is for both that I discovered this before it was too late (...) What wretchedness would have been the portion for both, had timidity, decorum, or false honour, carried me, with this partiality in my heart, to fulfil those views, entered from compliance to my family, and continued from a false idea of property, and weak fear of the censures of the world? (137)

After this rebellious gesture, she turns back again to her role as woman of her time, keeps an exemplary moral rectitude and marries Ed Rivers. Both share the same idea on marriage as the most appropriate means to achieve happiness; in Ed’s words, “I have by no means forsworn marriage: on the contrary, though happiness is not so often found there as I wish it was, yet I am convinced it is to be found no where else” (94). Their sincere union is actually far from the practice of marriages based on social and/or economic convenience so common in the eighteenth century. Along the novel, the importance of marriage for love is highlighted and Ed and Emily are the most significant paradigm. One of the clearest examples in this aspect can be found in a letter from Ed to his friend John Temple in which he maintains that “of all the situations this world affords, a marriage for choice gives the fairest prospect for happiness; without love, life would be a tasteless voice” (145). But woman’s internal breach, between her desires and the dictates of her social background, has a stronger relevance in Emily’s

case for she is the character who utters the situation. In letter 65 to Lucy Rivers, another letter written by Emily to her friend Arabella is included<sup>48</sup> in which she says, “how fatal, my dear Bell, is this mistake *to half our sex*, and how happy am I to have discovered mine in time” (my emphasis, 109). This quotation is very eloquent because it gives expression to the setbacks that inner division provoked on women and the peace found when being able to reconcile both selves.

On the other hand, the character of Arabella also shows a paradoxical attitude towards her inner problems. In Bell’s case, her contradiction lies on her constant rebel attitude until society –represented by her father– imposes some limits on her. In this way, she exhibits her critical posture from early in the novel; in letter 15 she warns Emily about her attitude in life and tells her, “take care, my dear Emily, you do not fall into the common error of sensible and delicate minds, that of refining away your happiness” (47). Little by little Bell expresses her ideas, launches her attacks and enjoys herself by pulling the strings society puts at women’s disposal, but always keeping awareness on the fact that she will have to get married inevitably. The interconnection of both sides in a same character suggests a paradox which mirrors women’s position in-between challenge and attachment to social rules.

It is surprising that when most characters are back in Great Britain, Bell announces her marriage to Fitz has already and secretly taken place, with the only presences of her father and Mrs Villiers. In letter 158, addressed to Lucy Temple, she recounts the details of the event; Bell makes clear that it happened that way because of her father who “wanted to keep it a secret for some very foolish reasons” and that she does not agree with such conduct since she is against “secrets, [for] they are only fit for politicians, and people whose thoughts and actions will not bear the light” (222). In any case, Bell resigns and accepts her destiny –or perhaps it may be more accurate to call it fate– going against her previous behaviour. The fact that from this moment she signs her letters as A. Fitzgerald epitomizes her acceptance of the situation. But the previous extract from letter 158 also shows that she somehow goes against rules; she reveals her secret, objects against her father’s will and carries out one of her last subversive acts in the novel. Jane Sellwood actually maintains that Arabella’s married condition does not

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<sup>48</sup> This strategy of including a letter within a letter can be regarded as metafictional since fiction, in this case, epistolary fiction is talking about itself.



imply the end of her so-called coquette times as the character already suggested previously in the novel. In point of fact, in her last letter –number 22– Bell sums up the two love stories, Emily and Ed’s and her own and shows her hesitancy on her new situation by stating that she is “not, however, quite sure I[*she*] shall not look abroad for a flirt” (313); precisely, at the end she shows again her coquetry and open mind, and her doubts seem to be resolved for “a divine colonel in the guards” breaks in and suddenly closes her letter with “Adieu!” (314). It seems clear that Bell rejects traditional marriage criteria; on the contrary, she is resolved to continue with her flirting despite being married so that she continues her fight against the patriarchal social context. It could be also said that Bell and Fitz’s marriage is not so unexpected for readers because, due to their omniscient perspective, they witness the intrigues between her father and future husband. In the letters William Fermor writes to the unknown Lord—, he reveals both his deep knowledge about his daughter’s personality and on the tricks for the marriage to take place. For example, letter 87 unveils that he is informed about all the details of Bell’s love affairs and adds that he “however know[s] too well the free spirit of a woman, of which she has her full share, to let Bell know I[*he*] approve[s] her choice” (132). Later on, he also ponders over the possibility of showing her daughter his opposition towards Fitz for her to feel closer to him because he is aware that “there is something very pleasing to a young girl, in opposing the will of her father” (132). Finally, in letter 133 everything has been arranged between W. Fermor and Fitzgerald “but without saying a word to Bell” to avoid problems (191). In this way, Bell’s position moves from ‘belonging’ to her father to being the ‘property’ of her husband but believing that it was her decision. Hence, her father stands for not only the patriarchal background that does not offer Bell the freedom to choose a husband or even the possibility of demonstrating that she will actually do what is expected from her and considered right by society, but also for the imperialist framework that does not allow a colony to choose.

At the end of the novel, when Emily and Arabella meet again in British lands once married, their situation notably changes. They are not Miss Montague and Miss Fermor any longer but Mrs Rivers and Mrs Fitzgerald. It is somehow ironic that independent and strong characters as those depicted by Frances Brooke change their father’s family name for that of their husbands when signing their letters, as if a change

of personality or splitting when being the same women had taken place. In my opinion, this strategy –which reflects social traditions of the time– is also a subtle means on behalf of the author to question the situation of women. In this way, both characters accept their fate, the one imposed by their social framework. But their fight is not finished yet<sup>49</sup>. During the eighteenth century, most married women were not allowed to keep their friends; Emily and Arabella challenge this custom by doing everything they can to keep in touch: they still write letters to each other and attend to social events together. Furthermore, they improve their education and fulfil their intellectual needs within marriage; something also unusual for the time. For Jodi L. Wyatt, marriage is no more than a mechanism which disguises the true tasks both carry out since “companionate marriage allows not only female intellectual empowerment, but also the perpetuation and actualization of the female homosocial bond” (50).

“Cela est bien dit, mon cher Rivers; mais il faut cultiver notre jardin” (315). This previously cited remark appears in the last letter of the novel, written by Ed. The fact that these words are attributed to Arabella becomes especially important. In this way, the novel reaches its climax through Bell and hints again its feminist message of avoiding the spread of Europe’s patriarchal system in Canada and gives unity to the novel. Despite social criticism is developed from Canada and frequently addressed to Canadian population, it is actually aimed at bringing into question Great Britain, a country where women are prevented an existence in liberty and which tries impose the mistakes of a patriarchal structure in alien territories as those of Canada. In any case, the novel does not offer a precise conclusion for, in the closure, it reintroduces what has been highlighted in previous letters. It is an open ending that follows the trend of epistolary novels without a concrete closure which offers readers the possibility and freedom to carry out different readings of the novel. As Sellwood maintains, “the interpretation of events does not culminate at the end of the narrative, but occurs along, in a series of ‘enlightened present moments’” (Sellwood: 70).

As explained above, *The History of Emily Montague* is riddled with female characters that are simultaneously differentiated and complementary. Through them, Frances Brooke expands and increases acceptance of different female identities and

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<sup>49</sup> Some critics have stated that the relationship between Emily and Arabella is a “romantic friendship” and even a certain homosexual character in their connection has been suggested (Wyett: 48).

develops a critical analysis of the injustices of patriarchal society. But the complexity and complementarity of these fictional women are also paradigmatic within Canada's literary context. As already pointed out, this is what Lorraine McMullen investigates in her article "The Divided Self" in which she places Frances Brooke's characterization in a pioneering position followed by later Canadian women novelists in English. Brooke's as well as other novelists' introduction in positive terms of ordinary and extraordinary female protagonists who contrast but supplement each other is in McMullen's opinion their way to "give voice to their divided selves, caught between acceptance of conventions of the patriarchal society in which they have been brought up, and rebellion against it" (1980: 54). Following McMullen's analysis, a line could be drawn from Brooke's work to Audrey Thomas's *Mrs. Blood* (1970) and going through Sara Jeannette Duncan and her novel *Cousin Cinderella* (1908), Martha Ostenso's *Wild Geese* (1925), *Swamp Angel* by Ethel Wilson (1954), and even Margaret Atwood's 1969 novel *Edible Woman*. What Lorraine McMullen exposes is not the appearance of female duality in identical form in all these works, but she demonstrates its evolution since Frances Brooke's introduction of the technique in Canada. In this way, early female writers show a perceptive attitude towards women's issues in the Canadian context, as Sara Jeannette Duncan for example, whereas later authors such as Audrey Thomas and Margaret Atwood exhibit deeper complexity by means of a psychological division in their characters. Therefore, *The History of Emily Montague* can be said to forego what would take place later in Canadian Literature. Moreover, from Lorraine McMullen's viewpoint, Frances Brooke "personifies through two women characters the conflicting trends in her own mental life, and at the same time voices the conflict increasingly evident in the mental life of contemporary women" (1980: 54). As already mentioned in previous chapters, such fictional split actually mirrors the position of female authors, divided between their traditional domestic roles of wives and mothers, and a newly-achieved agency through writing. In fact, although such a metaphorization of the contradictions of her time by means of two distinctive female characters is not exclusive of Brooke, her "double image of women is artistically a brilliant conception" for McMullen (1982: 362). In my view, Brooke's depiction of a sentimental heroine and a *new woman* has a higher relevance for the author was not only giving expression to a social change being forged at a time when women demanded wider participation,

independence and power but contributing to a literary transformation where realism was also taking its first steps. These are some reasons –together with the rest of aspects analysed in this chapter– why Brooke’s novel deserves an important place within Canada’s artistic expression as paradigm of the country’s literary identity.

But the relevance of Frances Brooke’s *The History of Emily Montague* within Canadian letters is even more significant since the novel means the first attempt to employ Canada as valid literary setting of fiction in literature in English. According to Carole Gerson, the early appearance of Canada as setting –not only its landscape but also its different social groups and traditions– is characterized by the employment of Canadian environment as “a place of trial and adventure but [where] deserving characters are ultimately permitted to return to their states in Europe” (Gerson, 1989: 43). Leaving aside the irony of Gerson’s remark, Canada’s powerful and grandiose environment penetrates the imagination of its peoples and fascinates artists so that nature becomes a fundamental element of artistic expression in Canada. The inclusion of descriptive passages, symbolic or not, in early Canadian writing is paradigmatic. But it is not just a simple exposition from observations; the power of nature is such that influences the characters and rhythm of literary works: summer as the explosion of life, and winter as a period of reflection and meditation. In Frances Brooke’s novel both seasons are reflected and their appearance somehow coincides with Atwood’s theory that “there is a sense in Canadian literature that the true and only season here is winter: the others are either preludes or mirages concealing it” (1972: 49). In this sense, Frances Brooke’s novel holds further significance in so far it is the first effort in adapting foreign artistic standards to a new setting and acts as paradigm of the early authors’ difficulty “in adapting their literary assumptions to Canadian settings” (Gerson, 1989: 43). *The History of Emily Montague* is thus the first exponent of Canada as a literary setting and settles a pattern later followed by Canadian novelists such as Julia Catherine Beckwith in *St. Ursula’s Convent* (1824), Agnes Maule Machar’s *The Heir of Fairmount Grange* (1895), *Colin in the Ninth Concession* (1903) by R. L. Richardson, or Marshall Saunders’s *Esther de Warren* (1927).

Early novelists as Brooke try to give expression to and understand Canada’s wild and inhospitable landscape in their fiction. In order to do so, two main techniques are employed: romanticism and/or realism. Romantic strategies, as consequence of the

influence of a pre-romantic trend, tend to focus on landscape as sublime, *the great sublime*, or even picturesque. Although according to George Woodcock realism was not an appropriate approach to depict Canada for early fiction writers lacked “the combination of mythology and ideology that would enable them to emerge from mere escapism and present a countervision more real than actuality” (Atwood et al, 1977: 73), it also made its way into early Canadian fiction. In fact, the most relevant defender of realism in early Canada is Sara Jeannette Duncan who “formulated the most serious defence of moderate realism to be found in pre-modern Canada” (Gerson, 1989: 52). In an article entitled “On Realism and Romance”, Duncan analyses the influence of realism in early Canadian fiction and states that it should not oust romanticism completely (Lochhead: 59-61); she advocates for a “qualified realism” and criticizes the realist school because, in her opinion, they are mistaken in their idea that they “can persuade the whole novel-writing fraternity to take the same path” (Lochhead: 60)<sup>50</sup>. This does not mean that Duncan rejects realism and defends romanticism, but shows her preference for an in-between way and affirms that both techniques are actually compatible. The clearest paradigm in her opinion of their coexistence is actually *The History of Emily Montague* by Frances Brooke.

As pointed before, Canada in *Emily Montague* is not only a physical setting but social and mental; its significance is such that it changes the behavioural patterns of characters who live the colonial experience, and at the same time, it also permeates the rhythm of the novel. In fact, Canada is more than a simple landscape or a social context. It means a new nature order for in Bell’s words “this is a divine country, and our farm a terrestrial paradise” (225). The representation of the Canadian background as an Eden territory where dreams can be fulfilled unlike in Great Britain is developed along the whole novel. Such a utopian vision of Canada is another achievement of Brooke’s novel developed and/or challenged by later authors as Martin R. Delany whose novel will be analysed in the next chapter. The two main characters who give voice to this symbolism are Arabella Fermor and Ed Rivers.

From all the characters in the novel, it is Arabella Fermor the one who shows a more intimate relation with Canada. In some sense, she can actually be considered the

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<sup>50</sup> It has to be noted that the realist trend in Canadian literature is not ruled by the principles of European realism and naturalism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

main character of the work, against what the title foretells. Both facts –her connection to Canada and her relevance– together with the feminist theories of the novel can lead to forebode that it is not mere coincidence. The most visible example of the link between Bell and Canada can be found at the end of the novel –in letters 170, 171 and 172– through the nostalgia she feels when being forced to leave the colony.

I have even a strong attachment to the scenes themselves, which are infinitely lovely, and speak inimitable hand of nature which formed men: I want to transport this fairy ground to England. (236)

Arabella feels so attached to Canada that before leaving she even shows her respects “to the tutelary deities of the place for *the last time*” (237). This fact is very significant since, in doing so, she acknowledges the existence of First Nations gods, of their religion as differential element and not as inferior to British. It seems that all Canadian elements have become so rooted in her that she even doubts of what her native country would bring and states that “perhaps nobody may love me in England” (237). Her farewell to Canada is also eloquent: “Adieu! Canada! Adieu! Sweet abode of the wood-nymphs! Never shall I cease to remember with delight the place where I have passed so many happy hours” (239). It is worth considering why it is precisely Arabella the character with a stronger connection to Canada. From my viewpoint, the colonial experience is for Bell a period of freedom, where she can carry out her ideas in her own way. Curiously enough, fun ends up right before going back to Britain, through her marriage with Fitzgerald. In this way, Canada means for her the possibility of creating a new order in which women can express themselves and where she is not so subjected to the patriarchal rules of a social environment as the British. For this reason, at first she is fascinated with the matriarchy of native populations and affirms: “I will marry a savage, and turn a squaw” because they allow their women to “ramble five hundred miles, without asking where she is going” (50). But her disappointment comes when she discovers that such a freedom redoubt of First Nations is somehow untrue because husbands are also chosen for women. In any case, Bell’s remark on her initial desire to become a squaw is certainly paradigmatic. First of all, it reinforces her deeper relation to Canada not simply through its nature and landscape but its peoples too. Secondly, it implies a subversion of the otherness framework established in colonial societies by which colonizers are at the centre while colonized populations are simply peripheral, the *others*; Bell breaks Eurocentric bonds since she is not simply able to recognize the

superiority of First Nations' society in certain aspects but expresses her wish to cross the line and become one of them, that is, an *other*. Finally, her acknowledgement and appraisal of Canada's native populations raises Brooke's novel as a pioneering fiction work whose baton will be taken by later novelists such as Lily Dougall and Sara Jeannete Duncan, as it will be outlined in the corresponding sections.

Canada also symbolizes an ideal space of freedom for Ed but in relation to love; there she can love Emily without monetary obstacles for their union since it is a place where "fortune has no power over minds like ours; we possess a treasure to which all she has to give is nothing, the dear exquisite delight of loving, and of being beloved" (208). Once he is sure about Emily's reciprocity of feelings, and knowing his economic possibilities are scarce to live as they are due to in Britain, he affirms his intention of "certainly now fix[ing] in Canada" (162). It can be said that Canada paradoxically functions as utopia and prison; that is to say, Ed is somehow entrapped although Canada has not put him in prison but his own native country because he is not 'allowed' to go back if not following the basic economic conditions the patriarchal system dictates.

The complex significance that Canada holds for Arabella and Ed introduces a deeper symbolic framework in the novel by which Canada becomes related to the freedom dreams of the two characters that show a deeper connection with the country. Likewise, it provides a wider meaning to the novel superimposed to the sentimental plot; Brooke's novel does not merely deal with love stories but implies the first fictionalization of Canada as utopia. Moreover, the use of Canada as literary setting is validated as axis to develop boundary-crossing literary themes.

On the other hand and as outlined previously, *The History of Emily Montague* offers two reading levels. There is the love story of Ed and Emily which functions as thread of the novel, and Frances Brooke's social criticism. The main technique to convey Ed and Emily's feelings is based on romanticism or sentimentalism. The magnitude and pureness of their love are so strong that they permeate everything around them. Their letters are full of romantic passages in which they try to voice their feelings. In a letter from Ed to his sister Lucy, he expresses himself as follows:

Every hour, my Lucy, convinces me more clearly there is no happiness for me without this lovely woman; her turn of mind is so correspondent to my own, that we seem to have but one soul: the first moment I saw her the idea struck me that we had been friends in some pre-existent state, and were only renewing our acquaintance here; when she speaks, my heart vibrates to the sound, and owns every thought she expresses a native there. (115)

Similarly, when Emily is sure about her feelings towards Ed, she admits to her friend and confident Arabella that she “turn[s] pale, my[her] heart dies within me[her], if I[ ]she observe[s] his eyes a moment fixed on any other woman; I[ ]she tremble[s] at the possibility of his changing [of sentiments]” (154). But the excessiveness of her feelings is even higher when she addresses her lover directly as the following extract shows:

Let me but see those eyes in which the tenderest love is painted, let me but hear that enchanting voice, I am insensible to all else, I know nothing of what passes around me; all that has no relation to you passes away like a morning dream, the impression of which is effaced in a moment: my tenderness for you fills my whole soul, and leaves no room for any other idea. (179-180)

The descriptions of both characters about Canada’s landscape are also affected by their state of mind and feelings. When their love is repaid everything seems marvellous, even harsh Canadian winter. It is curious that when the rest of characters condemn the country for its climate conditions, Ed is the only for whom winter is “particularly agreeable” (94). On the contrary, when external or self-created obstacles make their union impossible, landscape is not so sublime.

On the other hand, the strategies that offer realism to the narrative are more diverse. Some descriptions try to depict the colony in a truthful way, as when describing cities: “the road from Quebec to Montreal is almost a continued street, the villages being numerous [...]” (28); or in letter 5 in which Ed gives detailed information to Lucy on the main convents in Quebec and the religious aspects of each institution, their location and even habits. Repeated mentions to historical facts and figures of colonial times in Canada also offer a sense of realism; for instance, “the war and the incursions of the Indians in alliance with us” (81), the reference to Canada’s governor in the dedication of the novel, or the possibility that Bell and Ed are based on real people. The characterization of complex men and women, with differentiated attitudes and ways also plays a crucial role as realist strategy. In this way, Arabella is not only a coquette and frivolous woman, but sensible, intelligent, ironic and educated. Likewise, the appearance of biographical data connects the novel with Brooke’s real experience; the dangers of the trip from the colony to Great Britain are a reflex of it. When Ed arrives to Dover, he writes William Fermor telling him about the details: “we had very tumultuous sea a great part of the voyage, though the wind was fair [...]. On entering the channel of England we saw an empty boat, and some pieces of a wreck floating” (228). The



epistolary technique with specific data on the act of writing (place, day and even hour); interferences of French language mirroring daily coexistence of British and French: “*comment trouvez vous les dames sauvages?*” (21), or “*jusqu’au demain, ma très chère*” (115); the inclusion of passages in direct and reported speech as “‘It is well’, said she; ‘my sisters at Quebec [...]’” and “Fitzgerald says, he should be jealous of him in your esteem, if he was fifteen years younger [...]” (40 and 303); and the inclusion of letters within letters also bring the novel closer to realism.

The appearance of constant references which establish a direct relation between *Emily Montague* and its literary context must also be noted. There are allusions to classic works and authors as Horace, philosophical trends of the time<sup>51</sup>, the Bible<sup>52</sup>, Shakespeare<sup>53</sup>, or even internationally successful works as the Quixote: “I am a perfect Quixote in love, and would storm enchanted castles, and fight giants, for my Emily” (271). Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* deserves special attention in relation to Brooke’s novel in which native Canadian populations are said to “have entire coats of beaver skin exactly like Friday’s in Robinson Crusoe” (90). This quotation is especially relevant because *Robinson Crusoe* was published in 1719, during the time when Frances Brooke developed her literary career and which, consequently, could have influence her novels. It is also important to mention that there are short poetic pieces of the author inserted in the text<sup>54</sup>. Perhaps, the most extensive mention is related to Alexander Pope<sup>55</sup>, given the number of references of the novel; Emily Montague, Ed Rivers, Arabella and William Fermor allude to Pope’s works in their letters. Maybe the most significant is the direct quotation of some verses from *Eloise to Abelard* in letter 171 from Bell to Lucy:

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<sup>51</sup> Montesquieu and Rousseau are mentioned; there is even a debate about their theories. In the case of Montesquieu, there is a translated extract on the position of women in society, which in Brooke’s opinion offered through Arabella’s words is totally acceptable for “it gives every woman her chance” (182). Rousseau is brought into question for his insistence in proving that “the most uncultivated nations are the most virtuous” (213).

<sup>52</sup> In a letter from John Temple to Arabella Fermor in which he writes on her friendship to Lucy (her future wife) he affirms that “she loves you *passing the love of a woman*” (Brooke 1983, 181). According to Jodi L. Wyatt this quotation reminds to “the biblical passage where David professes that Jonathan’s love for him “surpassed the love of women!”” (45).

<sup>53</sup> “I shall certainly be glad to see you, my dear; though I foresee strange revolutions *in the state of Denmark* from this event” (Brooke 1983, 48).

<sup>54</sup> One example of these short poems appears in letter 95: “When sweet Emily complains, / I have sense of all her pains; / But for my little Bella, I / Do not only grieve but die” (141).

<sup>55</sup> From here the connection established between *Emily Montague* and some works by Alexander Pope, mainly between the character of Arabella and Belinda from *The Rape of the Lock*.

*'Deepen'd the murmur of the falling floods,  
And breath'd a browner horror on the woods'* (237)<sup>56</sup>

In fact, according to Ann Messenger these references to Pope “besides [...] redeeming the *History of Emily Montague* from the tedium that usually sinks the standard novel of sensibility, [...] extends the scope and significance of the novel considerably” (167). From my viewpoint, the most relevant quotation is “‘Cela est bien dit mon cher Rivers; mais il faut cultiver notre jardin’” given its significance within the novel. All these references show the author’s interest for culture, and of course for literature, as well as her self-teaching and knowledge on her intellectual background despite not having received an academic formation. Furthermore, they reveal a deeper connection between the text and its literary context for “formal literary quotation, in this work, is a manifestation of both social and textual intercourse which we may call high cultural interlocution” (Howells, 1993: 445).

According to what has been explained before, realism and romanticism meet in *The History of Emily Montague*, appear as perfectly compatible and widen the significance of an apparently classic sentimental novel. But not only the combination of romanticism and realism make clear that *Emily Montague* is not a mere romance as mainstream Canadian critics frequently consider it because it is an eminently critical novel which holds a strong didactic component. Furthermore, Frances Brooke’s novel is also an early paradigm of the use and adaptation of foreign literary genres in English Canadian Literature.

As far as the critical character of Frances Brooke’s novel is concerned, through the diverse letters a critique on eighteenth-century society which mainly focuses on patriarchy is developed. Nonetheless, didacticism is also present in the text as for instance in the attitudes of the main characters who finally achieve what they defend, that is, a marriage based on shared sincere feelings. In spite of holding didactic messages, *Emily Montague* distances itself from moralism since moralist writers are questioned for not reaching their aim of showing readers “the road to happiness” and for, on the contrary, concluding that such state of happiness does not exist (48). The fact that this criticism appears in one of Arabella’s letters has a special importance because Bell is the most

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<sup>56</sup> This quotation appears in italics as in Frances Brooke’s text.

visibly critical epitome of the novel. In this way, she makes clear that her aim is not so much showing a unique behaviour pattern universally valid but stating the disadvantage of one part of the population, women, in their individual search for happiness. Furthermore, the questioning of literary moralism also situates the novel in a different tradition; despite containing a didactic reading, *The History of Emily Montague* does not try to impose its ideas but just exemplifies a different attitude towards life and its advantages.

The three fundamental objects of feminist criticism in the novel are: marriage, education and religion, which actually constituted the basic axis of Frances Brooke's social context. In relation to marital practices, it has been already analysed that characters through their distinct attitudes show their opposition to established rules, as Bell and Emily do, and validate behavioural diversity regarding love. As previously highlighted, the common practice of arranged marriages is brought into question in Brooke's text being Fitzgerald's didactic comment on what a marriage should and should not be in the penultimate letter the clearest example,

It should always be considered that those who marry from love, *may* grow rich; but those who marry to be rich, will *never* love. (312)

But critical comments on marital practices go even further since some characters also acknowledge women's unequal statuses within marriage; it is again Ed Rivers who voices these differences between females and males for in his opinion "a great variety of rules have been given for the conduct of women in marriage; scarce any for that of men" (165).

Just as marriage is portrayed as one of the mechanisms in the perpetuation of patriarchy and the subjection of women, education is depicted as playing a similar role (165). In Frances Brooke's time, education, or rather the lack of it, assured women's ignorance. It made male power hegemony possible, avoided rebellion against norms, and paradoxically, it also was one of the main strategies women could count on to change the situation. Academic formation was exclusive of men, as the author experienced in first person; she could not enjoy the possibility of attending to school and receiving a formal education. The fact that she was born in the bosom of an accommodate family provided her a somehow good education she had to complete by self-teaching. When being a child her father, mother and one of her sisters died, and she

moved to her aunt's home where her education continued; again, it was a neatly done education but quite incomplete because they did not count with a tutor's advice. Given the author's educative experiences, it is very significant that precisely a male character as William Fermor –the patriarchal banner of the novel– shows a comprehensive approach to the situation of women's education. In letter 135 he maintains that the fact that women are “bred in ignorance from one age to another” is consequence of “the limited and trifling educations we[patriarchs] give them” (193). Equally eloquent is Ed Rivers comment on religious institutions for females since, in his opinion, one of these “cruelly devotes beauty and ignorance to slavery, regret and wretchedness; to a more irksome imprisonment that the severest laws inflict on the worst of criminals” (26). In doing so, he seems to voice again a feminist critique, this time against a society that offers women only two options, either getting married or devoting to religious life.

It is also important to note that the intertwined critiques Ed and Arabella exchange along the novel are aimed at instructing on the convenience of an intermediate position between the excess of sensibility and the abuse of frivolity. Whereas Ed's stance as epitome of sensible men provokes his rejection of the coquette politics, Bell contrasts with him since she questions what he overestimates: sensibility. In fact, for Bell “men are foolish, my dear; [...] [and] women are above this folly” (126). As already mentioned, she is much more pragmatic than her friend Emily and contests her behaviour in some occasions. At first she is cautious and advises Emily to think before rejecting George Clayton once and for all because “he is rich, young, well born, and loves you” (47). When they get closer and Bell realizes that Emily does not feel any affect for George, Bell starts to understand the situation better. For this reason, when Emily finally rejects him, Bell enjoys the situation and states that she “enjoy[s] not a little” (99), since George had taken Emily's hopeless situation for granted “not having supposed her refusal in the chapter of possibilities” (98). It is precisely in this moment when Bell shows admiration for her friend, something that changes radically when Emily starts behaving as Ed's sentimental heroine. Then, Bell tells her that she is “a foolish girl” and advises her to “be wiser, and believe me[her]” and even reproaches her that “this kind of unmeaning sacrifices are childish” (120, 172). Although Arabella criticizes and tries to teach Emily, she is aware that she must respect her behaviour as

well as other attitudes towards love, that is, diversity; as she states, “I find love is a quite different plant in different soils” (154).

Somehow in contrast to these challenging critiques, didactic elements are suggested along the novel; there are three stories interweaved in the novel whose aim is teaching readers on the consequences of certain attitudes. The first one is a fable which appears in a letter from Ed to Lucy on “a hermit, who has lived sixty years alone on this island” (71). The hermit tells Ed his story in the first person: he and his beloved woman in view of their families’ opposition “who had both more gainful views for us” were forced to fly to Canada in order to live their love in liberty (73). Just before their arrival, his partner died in a terrible storm. From then on, the hermit lives in the same place where they were forever separated and where he has built a small memorial for her remains.

‘I every morning visit her loved remains, and implore the God of mercy to hasten my dissolution. I feel we shall not long be separated; I shall soon meet her, to part no more’ (72).

Although this story seems to be in favour of those who fight against unfair marriage practices, it also seems to suggest that flying away from the place of conflict is not the solution but trying to change the framework which does not allow marriage for love so that it can be changed. The second story with a strong didactic component is introduced little by little in different letters. It deals with a mysterious Miss H— who has been led to self-destruction for paternal interests.

[...] she was sacrificed at eighteen, by the avarice of her parents, to age, disease, ill-nature, and a coronet; and her death is the natural consequence of her regret: [...] she died a melancholy victim to the tyranny of her friends, the tenderness of her heart, and her delicate sense of humour. (219)

These events are detailed by Ed Rivers, who as a man and future father epitomizes the possibility of change regarding the common practice of arranged marriages.

The last episode is a seduction tale which brings into question the attitude of certain males. When Ed and Emily have already settled down in Bellfield, there are a woman and her baby in very unfavourable conditions which seem not to correspond to their social status. Ed and Emily’s curiosity as well as their will to help pushes them to visit her to find out her problems and try to solve them. Finally, the woman, Miss

Williams, writes a letter to Emily telling her the story: a friend of hers, Sophia, led by “*the unhappy inexperience of youth*”<sup>57</sup> is seduced by a man who promises marriage to her (280). Sophia, totally in love, runs away from her home to meet his lover but he abandons her. Miss Williams discovers by chance that her friend is in danger for she has had a baby and her health is very weak; she stays with her until she dies and is forced to keep the baby because she “*wrote on account of Sophia’s death to her father, who had the inhumanity to refuse to see the child*” (283). In this same letter, Miss Williams asks Ed and Emily for help; they intercede for her so that the story has a happy ending. Frances Brooke seems to intertwine this episode in the novel to highlight male responsibility in this kind of situations; the story questions both the behaviour of males who promise eternal love already knowing they are not going to keep it and society’s acceptance of their lack of responsibility as well as the attitude of fathers and families who do not take liability for their daughters’ attitude, despite being somehow the victims of the situation. The patriarchal system is again brought into question; in this occasion, for its acceptance of males’ libertine behaviour. According to Sellwood, “Sophia’s narrative in Brooke’s text literalizes the danger of following too closely the patriarchal equation of “Virtue” and feeling” (73). In fact, through this story the duality of eighteenth-century ethics of sensibility is highlighted. On the one hand, there is the too sensible woman who is not guided by common sense and reason, but allows love to blind her; while on the other hand, there is the man with no qualms who flirts with an innocent girl and abandons her. Consequently, it seems that the author advocates again for an in-between way; neither the excess of sensibility nor the total lack of it can bring any good. Very significantly, it has to be noted that Miss Williams’s story also establishes a connection between Frances Brooke’s *The History of Emily Montague* and Joanna E. Wood’s *The Untempered Wind* –that will be closely analysed later– for Wood actually develops a very similar story to that of Sophia through Myron Holder and her child of shame.

On a different matter, the use and adaptation of imported literary genres common in early evolution stages of English Canadian Literature is also carried out in Frances

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<sup>57</sup> All the quotations from this store appear in italics because it is not independently embraced but included within another letter. In doing so, Frances Brooke differentiates between what belongs to the author of the letter and Miss Williams’s story.

Brooke's novel. In this respect, through *The History of Emily Montague* the romance and the novel are simultaneously introduced so that Brooke's work can be said to be paradigmatic in so far it participates in the development of the novel genre in Great Britain and its introduction in Canada. Whereas from romance it takes the sentimental plot, the love thematic and sublimation of physical environment, the novel is visible in the employment of realism through descriptions of life in the colony, the appearance of different viewpoints and characterization of identifiable fictional individuals, and also in the didactic intention underlining the novel. Given the fact that it is a novel written during a colonial experience, it also shows elements from travel literature. In Jodi L. Wyatt's opinion, "Frances Brooke's second novel, *The History of Emily Montague* (1769), [...] marks a moment in literary history when a sentimental novel met a travel narrative" (33). The novel is riddled with common accounts of the genre; this is the case, for instance, of the records of arrival to an unknown territory, its landscapes and inhabitants; of the trips between Montreal and Québec; or the comparisons between both British and Canadian societies. Perhaps, the most illuminating example appears in the first letters, when Ed Rivers recently arrived from Britain writes to her friends and relatives on what he finds in Canada. In the second letter he describes his coming to Quebec,

[...] it stands on the summit of a boldly-rising hill, at the confluence of two very beautiful rivers, the St Lawrence and St Charles, and, as the convents and other public buildings first meet the eye, appears to great advantage from the port. (19)

Such a combination of genres offers a multidisplinar scope to the novel whose eclecticism would permeate Canada's literary expression as later works by John Richardson, Hugh McLennan or Margaret Atwood manifest. For Jodi L. Wyatt the mixture of genres in Brooke's novel is essential since it "blends two popular writing forms: one a purportedly feminine genre, the sentimental novel, and the other a purportedly masculine genre, the travel narrative" (36). This statement holds connections with the feminist critique developed along the novel for feminism in *The History of Emily Montague* can be said to be not only ideological but technical. The blending of literary forms related until then with one or another gender actually supports the novel's theory of social equity between females and males who must socialize on equal terms; if this could be achieved in society, it is possible that something similar could be achieved in literature too. Likewise, by mingling different aspects from diverse

genres, mainstream canonical boundaries among genres as the novel, romance and travel literature collapse.

*Emily Montague* not only connects the novel, the romance and travel literature, but holds a biographical character. It is well known that the author lived in the places described –in Sillery, very near Quebec, Brooke’s house still survives– and even some of the characters are inspired by real people from her colonial experience. In fact, the return of characters to Great Britain could also be mirroring Brooke’s personal experience. In any case, this autobiographical content is especially relevant in so far English Canadian literary expression at first was marked by what Pilar Somacarrera denominates “life writing” of early travellers and missionaries (2004), and because it points a writing pattern that spread along Canadian Literature, as individual genre and feature of poems, essays and novels. Taking into account that autobiography is a way of re-telling history, or in other words, of telling that which has frequently been obviated, the novel voices the experiences of the so-called cultural minorities –although partially– as well as of women in Canada. In this respect, Frances Brooke plays a fundamental role within English Canadian Literature: apart from writing the first novel English and being the first woman novelist who contributed to Canadian letters, she pioneers in giving voice to the experiences and difficulties of frequently dismissed cultural communities as First Nations, and mainly of women, either natives, French, British or Canadian whose lives were marked by the patriarchal and imperial character of their societies. Later women authors as for example Elizabeth Simcoe, the Strickland sisters, Anna Jameson, or even the well-known Emily Carr seem to have taken Brooke’s baton.

The previous analysis of Frances Brooke’s novel on the basis of crucial elements of early Canadian Literature in English demonstrates that her novel offers reasons enough to be considered as paradigm of Canada’s literary identity. Although *The History of Emily Montague* follows the conventions of British sentimental fiction, it is also innovative since it develops a complex characterization, focuses on two main and complementary powerful women characters, carries out a feminist critique on patriarchal society and includes realist literary techniques. Likewise, nature’s omnipresent force and the literary representation of the topic of survival, the fictionalization of the colonial experience and the *garrison mentality* together with the



exploration of otherness in a colonial framework, and the blending of different literary genres offer Brooke's novel a pioneering character within Canadian literary tradition and identity in English. Furthermore, *The History of Emily Montague* is revealed as a challenging novel by an eighteenth-century woman writer in which Canada is, for the first time, a fundamental piece in fiction.



## CHAPTER VI

### ALTERNATING VOICES IN CANADA: SILENCED EARLY ENGLISH NOVEL WRITERS

Frances Brooke's incursion into the novel in English in Canada and the authorization of Canadian content as element of fiction that her novel *The History of Emily Montague* (1769) meant opened a new creative path in the literary realm that later authors took in their different ventures into the novel genre. The already mentioned early anthology by John Daniel Logan *Highways of Canadian Literature* (1924) is a very extensive source of information on the various authors who undertook literary activity. The previous chapter on Frances Brooke and her novel subverts Logan's already introduced ideas on Brooke's mere imitation of the works by the English author Samuel Richardson and challenges his misapprehension on her pioneering intervention in the fiction genre in English Canada in favour of another male writer, John Richardson. In Logan's opinion "Canadian fiction, in any real sense" did not start until 1832 when *Wacousta; or The Prophecy: A Tale of the Canadas* by John Richardson was published (46). By stating this, he seems to forget not only Frances Brooke's novel but later acclaimed works as Thomas McCulloch's *Letters of Mephibosheth Stepsure* – serially published between 1821 and 1822 in the *Acadian Recorder* and then in book-form as *The Stepsure Letters* in 1862 and whose fictional character seems to cause some disagreement among anthologizers–, other generally dismissed fictions such as John Galt's *Bogle Corbet; or, The Emigrant* (1831), and the more controversial novel by Julia Catherine Beckwith Hart *St. Ursula's Convent; or, The Nun of Canada, Containing Scenes from Real Life* first published in 1824. Hart's novel, the contributions to the genre in English Canada of female authors such as Susanna (Strickland) Moodie, Rosanna (Mullins) Leprohon, and the most salient critical discussions on their achievements together with the figures of Mary Anne Sadlier and

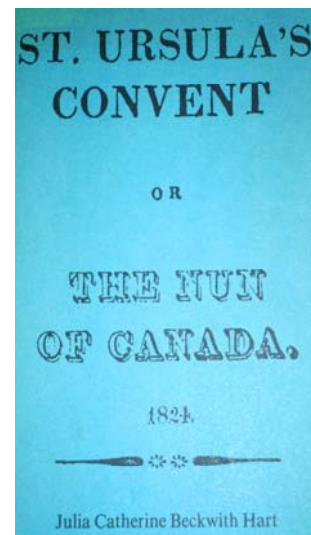
Eliza Lanesford Cushing are briefly approached in the first section of this chapter. But the list of early novelists who have received equally uneven attention from English Canadian mainstream criticism in the process of writing literary history and constructing a tradition and an identity does not end here. Before 1904, publication year of Sara Jeannette Duncan's *The Imperialist*, more literary figures who contributed to the English Canadian novel, either from a female or ethnic perspective, by means of one novel or extensive careers in fiction, devoting all their literary creativity to Canada or alternating with different countries, similarly stand out for their scantily approached and frequently disregarded challenging achievements. In the period from 1769 to 1904, there are female authors who succeeded in juvenile fiction such as Agnes Maule Machar, Margaret Murray Robertson and Margaret Marshall Saunders and in the novel genre as Susan Frances Harrison –whose famous penname was “Seranus”– who are briefly approached in subsequent sections. Besides, early ethnic contributions to the novel genre from the differing viewpoints of the Black male author Martin Robinson Delany, the First Nations male writer Simon Pokagon and the English Chinese Canadian woman writer Winnifred Eaton/Onoto Watanna are also significant and are explored in longer sections. Finally, the literary success of May Agnes Early Fleming, Lily Dougall and Joanna Ellen Wood as early female contributors to the Canadian novel in English is highlighted and close studies on one of their novels as a paradigm of their careers is offered. The figures and novels of these silenced authors are chronologically approached in relation to the publication date of the novel analysed here in order to explore their differing literary responses and bring into question the narrow construction of a Canadian literary identity which has left aside these diverse early contributions.

#### VI.1 FRANCES BROOKE'S LEGACY

After the first fictionalization of Canada by a non-Canadian author as Brooke, *St. Ursula's Convent; or, The Nun of Canada* (1824) by Julia Catherine Beckwith Hart is not generally considered to fulfil expectations on the presumably deeper insight into the country that an author of Canadian origin could offer. In fact, some subsequent literary histories as W. J. Keith's *Canadian Literature in English* (1985) render a

fundamental place to Brooke and her novel within English Canadian fiction although hesitantly, whereas Hart's novel is scarcely mentioned. According to the diachronic study on the historization of Canadian Literature focusing on the novel genre included in Part II of this dissertation a shift in the consideration of Julia Catherine Beckwith Hart appears to have taken place. Whereas from 1920 to 1980 only Vernon Blair Rhodenizer and R. G. Moyles mention her, in the second period covered from 1980 to 2004 her figure and novel are included in at least six compilations. Rhodenizer's 1965 work *Canadian Literature in English* incorporates a brief biographical mention to Hart who was born in Fredericton, New Brunswick, moved to Kingston (Ontario) and even resided in the United States, and to her novel as "the first novel by a native Canadian to be published in Canada" which is generally considered her achievement (706). On his behalf, Moyles in *English-Canadian Literature to 1900* (1976) significantly includes the author and her work in the section on "Minor Authors".

Fortunately, things seem to have changed since not only further attention has been paid on behalf of literary critics and compilers from 1980 but *St. Ursula's Convent; or, The Nun of Canada* has been reissued by McGill-Queen's UP in 2003. Her novel is currently considered a significant early attempt to articulate a vision of an emerging Canadian nation where the best of its English and French-speaking communities, as inheritors of Great Britain and France's influences, finds a place. Hart's mixed Canadian ancestry –English and French– might have influenced her depiction of both communities' somehow unconstrained coexistence which, in fact, marks Hart's novel as one of the earliest literary efforts to fictionalize Canada's two solitudes and, hence, one of the strengths of her work. In spite of this, most compilations tend to mention Hart's novel on the same basis as those before 1880, that is, for being the first work of fiction written by a Canadian and to be published in Canada; insistence that again suggests the tendency of literary historians in Canada to stick to the tried and proved. The Canadian ties of Hart and her novel is what we are informed about in William Toye's 1983



Front Cover of the 1981 facsimile reprint of *St. Ursula's Convent* by Roy A. Abramhamson

edition of *The Oxford Companion to Canadian Literature* and what Joseph and Johanna Jones mention in *Canadian Fiction* (1981), which is one of the few works to refer to another novel by Hart, *Tonnewont; or, The Adopted Son of America* (1825). Hart is also included in John Moss's *A Reader's Guide to the Canadian Novel* (1981), in *Canadian Writers Before 1890. Dictionary of Literary Biography* of 1990 edited by William H. New who also alludes to her novel as inheritor of the Gothic romance in the *Encyclopedia of Literature in Canada* (2002).

One of the most interesting compilations in relation to Hart as a Canadian novelist is the 1981 edition of *Canadian Novelists and the Novel* by Douglas Daymond and Leslie Monkman since it includes Hart's own ideas about the situation of Canadian letters at her time. As already explained in Part II, Hart reflects on the moderate development of literary activity in her homeland which needs to evolve from humble contributions like hers before achieving maturity. As she explains, in Canada "until lately, genius has slept through a long night of ignorance and inaction; and scarcely a dawn of literary illumination is yet discerned" (in Daymond and Monkman, 1981: 23). As a literary contributor during the colonial period, the imperial ties of Canadian culture at that time are clearly evidenced by Hart's acknowledgement of the higher value of literary production in "the old world" so that Canada's Eurocentric paradoxes and inferiority complex are already suggested. But there is hope for Canada since there are some "liberal minds" that, as devotees of literature, have stimulated "her humble career of authorship"; besides, Hart's prospective literary development when "her judgement shall have been matured, and her taste improved by experience" seems to epitomize that of Canadian literary expression (in Daymond and Monkman: 23). It is certainly remarkable from a feminist perspective that such an early Canadian writer as Hart already lays claim to her *female* authorship as valid spokesperson of Canadian Literature. Despite this challenging gesture, she introduces her text by apologizing for the imperfections that her "tale" as "the first production of an author of seventeen" may show (in Daymond and Monkman: 23). The fact that she labels her work as a tale and the age at which it was produced are eloquent since perhaps the novel could be regarded more as juvenile literature.

Somehow in consonance with Nick Mount's comments on *St, Ursula's Convent* in his article "In Praise of Talking Dogs: The Study and Teaching of Early Canada's

Canonless Canon” (1998) explained in Part II, David Chisholme is also critical to Hart’s novel although in a more even-tempered manner in my opinion. Perhaps the great time gap between both critics has something to do with their differing postures since David Chisholme, not a Canadian-born, mostly developed his critical activity during the 1820s and 1830s in different literary newspapers in Canada. Far from describing it as “the worst novel I’ve[he has] ever read” like Mount does, Chisholme struggles in-between criticism and benevolence (Mount ‘In praise’). I agree with Chisholme that if Hart’s novel had not happened to be the first novel by a Canadian author to be issued in Canada it would have very probably fallen into oblivion. In this respect, he also evaluates literary criticism for deflecting from its main aim, that is, “to censure works, not men” –I would have rather preferred the term authors since “men” seems discriminatory regarding female writers– in favour of a more “gentle and impartial a manner” above all in relation to fiction, to “those light, amatory, and romantic tales” (in Daymond and Monkman: 22, 18). The fiction genre is precisely criticized by Chisholme not because it does not hold possibilities as literary form but due to the frequent first incursion into literature of beginning authors through fiction who may have done better in other genre. This is what he suggests to Hart at the end of his review on *St, Ursula’s Convent*; although he expects to find her again as contributor to Canadian letters, he hopes it not to take place again in the novel genre. In fact, the reference to “real life” of Hart’s novel subtitle is the basis for Chisholme’s comment on the higher suitability on behalf of young writers of actually focusing on those real scenes “instead of distracting their minds for the purpose of drawing an unnatural and insipid picture of humanity by means of a tale of fancy in the form of a novel” (in Daymond and Monkman: 19). However devastating this critique may seem, Chisholme later offers a more profound and impartial analysis of the novel. I agree with Chisholme that perhaps one of Hart’s major achievements is the employment of Canadian scenery as literary element, following Frances Brooke, although in his opinion it holds no novelty in its treatment of setting in relation to other contemporary novelists. Simplicity is both an appraisable and reprehensible feature of Hart’s fiction; whereas her use of simple language differentiates her novel from flowery romances of the time, the lack of simplicity in the choice of details is objectionable. Likewise, grammatical slips, plot incongruities, weak characterization, fictional narrowness and excessive didacticism are to be found in *St,*

*Ursula's Convent*. Nevertheless, just as Lochhead is able to find certain relevance in Hart's text, it is also significant for its "account of the liberal, enlightened and philanthropic sentiments it conveys, and the pure, exalted ideas of morality and religion it suggests" from Chisholme's viewpoint (in Daymond and Monkman: 22). In spite of his measuring as far as Hart's text is concerned, given Chisholme's apparent despising of the fiction genre and his veiled disregard of young novelists, not to mention female novelists, one cannot help but wonder if these factors had some degree of influence in his review. In any case, I agree with Chislome that works as Hart's do not necessarily have to be welcomed as masterpieces but take them into account "with cordiality and respect" at least (in Daymond and Monkman: 19). *St, Ursula's Convent; or, The Nun of Canada* by Julia Catherine Beckwith Hart is what it is, a piece of fiction written by a seventeen-year-old inexperienced writer which happens to be the first incursion into the novel genre by an author of Canadian origin and published in Canada.

After the publication of John Richardson's *Wacousta* in 1832, the works by Thomas Chandler Haliburton were issued. Despite his most acclaimed work is *The Clockmaker and Doings of Sam Slick of Sickville* (1836), according to John Moss "the wrong book as been proclaimed the classic" since "the best work Haliburton wrote is *The Old Judge*" published in 1849 (1981: 114). Before Haliburton's 1849 novel, *Belinda; or, The rivals* by Abraham S. Holmes saw the light in 1843 whose consideration on behalf of mainstream criticism has been irregular. One of the few literary histories to mention Holmes is Nora Story's *The Oxford Companion to Canadian History and Literature* (1967). Nine years after the publication of *Belinda* the famous prose work by Susanna Moodie *Roughing it in the Bush* appeared.

This nine-year interval during which not much fiction seems to have appeared in and/or on Canada is striking. Despite other novels by authors like Richardson and Haliburton continued to be published there and outside along these years, literary histories give the impression that a scant novel-writing took place. In fact, some feminist approaches to early Canadian Literature cited in Part II reveal that quite a lot of women writers contributed to the fiction genre around this period. This is the case of Carole Gerson's archaeological study *Canada's Early Women Writers: Texts in English to 1859* (1994) which is a very interesting source on totally silenced early female authors. As explained before in this research, by contrasting this work by Gerson with



W. H. New's editions of *Canadian Writers Before 1890* and *Canadian Writers 1890-1920* both for volume 099 and 092 respectively of the *Dictionary of Literary Biography* (1990) the names and works of two almost completely unknown women writers are brought into light. At least six fiction works by Mary Anne Sadlier seem to have been published between 1845 and 1855, from which *The Red Hand of Ulster; or, the Fortunes of High O'Neill* and *Willy Burke; or, the Irish Orphan in America* both published in Boston by Donahoe in 1850, *Alice Riordan: the Blind Man's Daughter* (Boston: Donahoe, 1851), and *New Lights; or, Life in Galway* (New York: Sadlier, 1853) seem to be incursions into the novel genre. Besides, Eliza Lanesford Cushing's novel *Saratoga; A Story of 1787* appeared in 1856. It is also interesting that Gerson has been able to identify Sarah Macdonald as the anonymous author of *Sabra, or The Adopted Daughter* (Ogdesburg, NY: Hitchcock, 1858) since in the 1965 anthology on English Canadian Literature by Rhodenizer he states that "not even a pen is associated with *The Adopted Daughter; or, The Trials of Sabra. A Tale of Real Life*" published in Ogdesburg in 1858 and in revised edition in Montreal in 1863 (Rhodenizer: 707). Regarding female novelists, in Gerson's research the names of Mary Bennett, Henrietta Maria Bowdler, Jessie Hill Heathcote (Mrs. Edmund), Mary Eliza Herbert, and Margaret Dixon McDougall also stand out as early contributors to the genre that have almost invariably been dismissed except by feminist approaches as that of Gerson<sup>58</sup>. As far as my research experience is concerned, access to these female author's texts is a very difficult task being one of the scant but very useful sources the Canadian Institute for Historical Microreproductions (CIHM); it was created precisely to offer circulation to early works "that contained information about Canada, were written by Canadian authors or had a Canadian imprint" (CIHM 'Preserving and Providing': 1)<sup>59</sup>. Of course, both the information Gerson offers and the access to dismissed early works granted by the CIHM present an opportunity of incalculable value to keep opening up early Canadian Literature which I intend to take in the future.

Coming back to the figure of Susanna Moodie, her novel *Flora Lyndsay; or, Passages in an Eventful Life* (1854) is somehow connected to Frances Brooke's novel

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<sup>58</sup> See Carole Gerson's "Bibliography" in *Canada's Early Women Writers: Texts in English to 1859*. Ottawa: CRIAW, 1994. (32-50).

<sup>59</sup> For further information on the CIHM please visit [www.canadiana.ca](http://www.canadiana.ca).

but rather in divergent manner. Although following Carole Gerson “the closest she[Moodie] ever came to producing a novel about Canada was *Flora Lyndsay*” (1989: 43), in Faye Hammill’s opinion “is not, strictly speaking, “a work on Canada” at all” for only the end of the plot is set there (36). The ambivalent significance of Canada in Moodie’s novel can be said to represent what Margaret Atwood calls “paranoid schizophrenia” in her work *The Journals of Susanna Moodie. Poems by Margaret Atwood* (1970) inspired by Moodie. According to Atwood’s “Afterword”, Moodie’s positioning in between patriotism and criticism, that is, as a “detached observer, a stranger” in Canada suggested in Moodie’s works seems representative of Canadians who similarly feel inside and outside so that they still “move in fear, exiles and invaders” (1970: 62). It is very curious that Moodie finally got to represent an adopted country she did not feel hers at the beginning to such an extent that, in Atwood’s words, she “has finally turned herself inside out, and has become the spirit of the land she once hated” (64). In contrast, the alien positioning regarding Canada that *Flora Lyndsay* entails is somehow interesting in so far it articulates an immigrant perspective still tied to imperial bonds. Generally speaking, although *Flora Lyndsay* is interesting regarding the perspective of a colonialist immigrant to Canada, in consonance with Gerson and Hammill, it can only be said to hold a brief connection with the country so that Canada, unlike in *The History of Emily Montague* by Frances Brooke, does not seem to be a valid literary setting or material neither in the novel nor for the author.

In spite of Moodie’s contribution to fiction through works as *Flora Lyndsay*, mainstream literary critics seem to have been oblivious regarding her role as novelist in favour of her widely acclaimed non-fiction work *Roughing it in the Bush* (1852). The figure of Moodie is widely recognized in almost all general literary anthologies on Canadian Literature in English but mainly due to her non-fictional tract on life in Canada from an immigrant’s perspective. Once again, Carole Gerson’s 1994 research is a very good fount on Moodie’s fiction. Apart from the already mentioned novel *Flora Lyndsay; or, Passages in an Eventful Life* published in 1854, three more novels by Moodie were published, *Mark Hurdlestone; or, The Gold Worshiper* (London: Bentley, 1853)<sup>60</sup>, *Matrimonial Speculations* (London: Bentley, 1854) and *Geoffrey Moncton; or,*

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<sup>60</sup> This novel by Susanna Moodie also appeared as *Mark Hurdlestone; or, the Two Brothers* in New York by De Witt in 1853.

*The Faithless Guardian* (London: Bentley, 1855). Rhodenizer's *Canadian Literature in English* (1965) also includes a work entitled *Dorothy Chance*, presumably "serialized in the Montreal *Daily News*" during 1867 (707). From those who actually mention Moodie's fictional contributions *ECW's Biographical Guide to Canadian Novelists* (1980) edited by Robert Lecker is worth noting; all of Moodie's novels are referred to, although briefly, and Michael A. Peterman –author of the entry on Moodie in the compilation– observes that she is one of the most recognized pioneering authors that "has become a central foundation figure in both critical and creative attempts to define the condition of the imagination in Canada" (27). From a feminist perspective Faye Hammill's *Literary Culture and Female Authorship in Canada 1760-2000* (2003) is also interesting for its analysis of *Mark Hurdlestone* and mention to *Flora Lyndsay* as "an autobiographical novel" although the focus is mainly on *Roughing it in the Bush* (22). Hammill's remarks on Moodie's reluctance of her work to be taken as landmark of Canadian literary identity are eloquent in so far they contradict the later canonization of her figure by mainstream criticism mainly through her non-fiction work. Moodie's resistance to be included as epitome of Canadian literary nationalism together with the strong British cultural ties she held much like her sister –Catharine Parr Traill– can make us suspicious regarding the fact that, as Hammill explains, when Traill referred to her sister in the memoirs she wrote on Moodie as contributor to Canadian Literature "the term [...] simply meant literature about Canada" (44). Paradoxically and as explained elsewhere in this dissertation, Moodie also developed a role as commentator of Canadian Literature and even fostered and praised young writers and novelists' work as participants in a nascent literary tradition in English.

Susanna Moodie and Catharine Parr Traill are mainly known as the "Strickland sisters". They were both daughters of Thomas Strickland, a middle class Englishman who moved from London to Suffolk in order to offer his six-sibling large family a better social position and "educate his daughters in academic and outdoor skills" (Lecker, David and Quiqley, 1980: 28). His intentions were translated into a rich library which served as source of the literary formation of his daughters. The academic education of Strickland's daughters is evident not only in Moodie and Traill's pioneering contributions to Canadian letters and Traill's prolific literary career before moving to Canada, but in their sister Agnes's fame indebted to her work *Lives of the Queens of*

*England* (1840-48). In fact, Moodie's "great aim [...] was to become a famous literary figure and a recognized force in the London world" but her aspirations were partially frustrated by her marriage to J.W. Dunbar Moodie, an English Lieutenant with whom she emigrated to Upper Canada (Lecker, David and Quiqley, 1980: 29). Traill's experience is very similar to that of Moodie since she also married Thomas Traill who was actually a friend of Dunbar Moodie and moved to Upper Canada with him as well. They were not the only siblings to try better fortune in Canadian soil for their brother Samuel also ventured into the immigrant experience in colonial lands. While in Canada their connection continued; Moodie actually changed residence from Port Hope to Lake Katchewanook in order to be close to her brother and sister. Susanna died in 1885 in Toronto whereas Catharine died in 1899.

Despite some critics as David Jackel highlight Traill's *The Backwoods of Canada, Being Letters from the Wife of an Emigrant Officer* (1836) as worthier of attention than Moodie's acclaimed work, it is not going to be analysed here for it is a non-fiction work as most of Traill's works with the exception of some fictions, although juvenile, such as *The Young Emigrants; or Pictures of Canada* (1826) or *Canadian Crusoes: A Tale of the Rice Lake Plains* (1852). For further researches, Traill is also an interesting figure from a feminist perspective since she wrote one of the first non-fiction tracts to deal with the female experience of emigration, *The Female Emigrant's Guide, and Hints on Canadian Housekeeping* (1854).

The widely acclaimed work by Traill's sister *Roughing it in the Bush* has caused an interesting controversy regarding its fictional/non-fictional character. While most critics agree that it entails a non-fictional account of the author's Canadian experience, Carol Shields and Marian Fowler offer a different perspective. In her 1978 article "Three Canadian Women: Fiction or Autobiography" Shields explores the fictionality of overtly autobiographical narrations and fictional accounts influenced by autobiographical experiences. From her viewpoint, authors and specifically female writers are perfectly aware that "the self can never be washed out of her story-telling, just as her creative impulse can never be separated from her personal experience" (50). Just as fiction works are frequently affected by the authors' personal undergoing, non-fictional narrations such as diaries are similarly influenced by the creativity of the writer who can decide to discard certain content when publication is involved. This is

precisely the case of both *Roughing it in the Bush* and *Flora Lyndsay* by Susanna Moodie in Shields's opinion. Regarding the former work, Shields explains that although its imaginative character is lower than that of Moodie's novels, the blending of its didactic aim and autobiographical content mark the work as different to a simple report of personal experiences (51). I agree with Shields that the narrator-persona Moodie includes in her work is closer to fiction than to autobiography for rather than entailing a first-person direct narration it seems to stand for a character, "a heroic presence in an ongoing drama" (51). In this sense, *Roughing it in the Bush* could be said to be a boundary-crossing prose work in-between two genres. On the other hand, *Flora Lyndsay* also raises categorizing issues in spite of being labelled by its author as a novel. In this work there are strong autobiographical bonds too, but they are assumed to compose a fiction work since they have been fashioned into the recognizable literary form of the novel (Shields: 51). These two works are actually clear paradigms of the blurring limits that can be found between fiction and non-fiction; the insistence of literary critics to classify works according to clearly differentiated genres to facilitate literary structuring and explanation rather than focusing on the texts whatever the collapse of established boundaries they entail is brought into question.

For Marian Fowler it is also clear that both works by Moodie are based on her autobiographical experiences but the fictional character of *Roughing it in the Bush* is more evident. Her comparative analysis of the work and *Flora Lyndsay* reveals that both pieces not only share parallel stories but "similar structures and similar heroines" (Moss, 1984: 81). Either in *Roughing it* or in *Flora Lyndsay* there is a central female character inspired by the sentimental heroines of previous novels such as Frances Brooke's Emily Montague. Likewise, both works' plots revolve around this pivotal figure who is somehow forced to emigrate to Canada with her husband and daughter, gets seriously sick during the trip, arrives to the new land at a moment of a cholera outbreak, settles and endures the harshness of the new land and sees her situation finally improved by her husband's nomination for a better post somewhere else in Canada. Much like in *Roughing it*, the structure of *Flora Lyndsay* entails a central narration which is interrupted by another story, in the case of *Flora Lyndsay*, and different anecdotes in *Roughing it* (Fowler in Moss, 1984: 84).

In contrast to the generalized canonization of Moodie as a Canadian literary figure by means of *Roughing it in the Bush*, there are also others critics who are quite critical about the canonical status offered to Moodie's work. David Jackel's article on "Mrs. Moodie and Mrs. Traill, and the Fabrication of a Canadian Tradition" is paradigmatic for its undermining of the widespread critical acceptance of *Roughing it in the Bush* which, as far as he is concerned, is broadly "a pretentious, sentimental, self-indulgent, unstructured and derivative book" (2-3). In his opinion, the prestige of Moodie's sensitivity as eyewitness of Canadian nature is difficult to understand since it does not offer any insight into the landscape; as he states, "the plain fact is that Moodie is neither an observant nor sensitive" (4). In fact, there is not a solid perspective into nature for the text fluctuates from appreciation of sublimity to rejection of harshness much as in *Flora Lyndsay*. Equally reprehensible for Jackel are the positive comments on the author's employment of language for it does not display a solid expression, the same that the appraisal of the duality between "mind" and "emotion" does not show the complexity of relation between both so that the picture on Canadian society she offers is too simple. Moreover, the work does not hold a solid structure being its only linkage the author herself as the first person narrator. The preeminence of her viewpoint is so high as to shadow everything else in the text, even communal experiences. According to Jackel, Moodie did not even have the vision "to take advantage of chronological ordering, the simplest means of giving structure to a narrative personal experience" (10). Such critical analysis offers Jackel the opportunity to review Canadian literary criticism for having canonized this text and hence fabricated a tradition, as the title of his article suggests. He is critical towards previous critical trends as thematic criticism exposed in Atwood's *Survival* for having constructed an artificial canon/tradition which actually "distorts or misrepresents some essential features of our literary[Canadian] history" (2). By praising Moodie's sentimentality and dismissing the realism of other authors such as her sister, Catharine Parr Traill, or even of more complex works as Sara Jeannette Duncan's *The Imperialist* (1904) –indeed, thoroughly analysed in the next chapter of this dissertation– Canadian literary tradition, and I would add identity, is revealed as yet not having come of age for "a mature and vital tradition would not set these qualities in opposition" (Jackel: 20). Much like my work does, Jackel claims for an analysis of individual contributions to Canadian letters as means of finding literary

distinction instead of assenting on axioms as axis on which the study of works can be based so that literary tradition, and by extension that identity, is settled which appears to be the case of Canadian criticism.

In any case, given the higher literary complexity of *Flora Lyndsay* as a novel and taking into account Jackel's devastating critique on *Roughing it in the Bush*, it seems not easy to understand why the figure of Susanna Moodie has been mainly canonized on the basis of her non-fiction whereas her novel *Flora Lyndsay* and fiction have received so few critical attention and, moreover, considering Moodie's role as literary commentator on Canadian fiction explained in Part II. Perhaps, if her contribution to Canadian letters had been analysed also in relation to her fiction instead of focusing exclusively on her non-fiction tract, her prompt canonization would have been more impartial. What is certainly significant is the fact that Moodie's participation in fiction as a *female* author has been so rarely even mentioned. Although it is true that *Flora Lyndsay* cannot be said to be an essentially Canadian novel, it is one of the novels written by a so-acclaimed author whose contributions to Canadian fiction could be at least mentioned. Whereas in the case of Brooke it may seem somehow understandable that her later novels –written and published outside Canada and not holding strong connections to the country– are rarely taken into consideration by Canadian critics, Moodie resided in Canada for the rest of her life, where she died, so that her later works were produced there. Furthermore, the canonization of *Roughing it in the Bush* and the complete dismissal of *Flora Lyndsay* are eloquent in my opinion in so far they again suggest the reluctance of mainstream Canadian literary criticism to innovate and bring into question other writer's similarly pioneering non-fictional accounts as that of Mary Ann Shadd Cary's *A Plea for Emigration; Or, Notes of Canada West* (1852).

Similarly to some works by the Strickland sisters which appeared in the *The Literary Garland* from Montreal, Rosanna Mullins Leprohon's first fiction works were also published in this same periodical. In fact, Moodie herself lauded Leprohon's early works and stated that she was "one of the gifted, upon whom fancy smiled in her cradle, and genius marked her for his own" (qtd. in Lecker, David and Quiqley, 1983- : 198). In 1864 *Antoniette de Mirecourt; or, Secret Marrying and Secret Sorrowing* by Leprohon appeared and is "her only novel in print today" (Gerson in Lecker, David and Quiqley, 1983- : 196). But Leprohon contributed extensively to Canadian letters since, according

to Rhodenizer at least six of her novels were published serially in different periodicals. For instance, *Ida Beresford; or, The Child of Fashion* (1848) or *The Manor House of de Villerai* (1859) which was translated into French; besides *Antoniette de Mirecourt* other two novels appeared in book form, *Armand Durand; or, A Promised Fullfilled* (1868) whose French version was issued in 1872 and which was never published again in English; and *Clive Weston's Wedding Anniversary* published in 1872 which in Gerson's opinion is a tale rather than a novel (Rhodenizer: 712; Gerson in Lecker, David and Quiqley, 1983- : 196). Gerson also mentions Leprohon's early contributions to different genres as poetry, short fiction and the novel when she was only about twenty years old; her later "tales" published in the *Canadian Illustrated News* such as "Ada Dunmore; or, A Memorable Christmas Eve: An Autobiography" (1868-70), "Eveleen O'Donnel" for which she was awarded as well as the compilation of her poetry in *Poetical Works* published in 1881 after her death (in Lecker, David and Quiqley 1983- : 196). Given Leprohon's broad commitment in the fiction genre it is not only surprising that her only novel currently in print is *Antoniette de Mirecourt* but that even this novel has been obviated by some literary histories. In contrast to Mary Jane Edwards affirmation that *Antoniette* is "probably the best novel about English-French relations in Canada published in the nineteenth century" other critics and compilers seem to have regarded it otherwise (1972: 9). In this respect and despite the figure of Leprohon seems to hold a somehow general recognition, there are eloquent inclusions as that of Moyles's compilation *English-Canadian Literature to 1900* (1976) in which she again forms part of the so-called "Minor Authors" and blatant absences as those of *Canadian Novelists and the Novel* edited by Daymond and Monkman or *Canadian Fiction* by Joseph and Johanna Jones, both published in 1981, given the focus of both works on fiction and the novel genre. In the case of the former compilation the nonappearance of Leprohon can be due to the fact that the novelists included also commented on fiction unlike her who "does not appear to have written any reviews or literary criticism", whereas in the latter anthology I do not manage to find the reason/s of Leprohon's dismissal (Gerson in Lecker, David and Quiqley, 1983- : 199). William H. New's *Canadian Writers, 1890-1920* (1990) is another interesting example since it pays attention to frequently dismissed fiction female authors such as Dougall, Maule Machar, Marshall Saunders, and Wood but not to Leprohon.



According to Misao Dean there has been a leaning to discard romances like *Antoniette de Mirecourt* “as examples of an inferior literary form not worthy of sustained critical attention” on behalf of English Canadian critics (1998: 44). Following Dean, some of these critics have either regarded the novel as the lowest of Leprohon’s novels such as John Stockdale or have focused on the treatment of English-French relations the novel entails to the detriment of romance (1998: 45). Gerson offers another interesting explanation on Leprohon’s dismissal. Given not only the focus on but the positive depiction of the French-Canadian community that her novels convey, it seems logical that they “reached a wider audience in French Canada than in English Canada” as Gerson affirms (in Lecker, David and Quiqley, 1983- : 197). It is certainly revealing that despite writing in English, once that *Armand Durand* appeared translated into French it was never reissued in English, that *The Manor House of de Villerai* “is now almost inaccessible in English”, just as the English reissuing of *Antoniette de Mirecourt* took place as late as in 1973 having been published in English only once before that year (Gerson in Lecker, David and Quiqley, 1983- : 197). From my viewpoint, the position of her fiction in-between Canada’s two *solitudes* speaks about the existence of a cultural frontier which divides literary contributions as belonging to either one or the other regardless of the language of composition and which critics seem to find difficult to cross. Once again, much like most of the novelists approached in this dissertation the figure of Leprohon seems paradigmatic regarding the irresoluteness of literary historians and critics in English Canada.

The French Canadian focus of Leprohon’s fiction seems to have some connection to her own biography. She was born in Montreal in 1829, resided there most of her life, and died there in 1879 so that her Canadian origins cannot be taken as basis for the hesitant regard of her figure and contributions. Leprohon’s bilingual condition, the diversity of her cultural environment and the influence of a chiefly French literary circle are to be noted since they are reflected in her fiction. She did not only depict Canada’s mainly bilingual and bicultural situation in novels like *Antoniette de Mirecourt* but Balzac seems to have been a source of technical inspiration for such novel as Edwards suggests (1972: 9). Apart from Balzac, her works seem to have been influenced by foreign authors such as Emerson, Dickens, Scott, Dumas, Jane Austen or Fanny Burney (Gerson in Lecker, David and Quiqley 1983- : 198). In spite of foreign

influences, Gerson suggests that, generally speaking, Leprohon's works did not "deviate[d] from *The Literary Garland's* standard of promoting gentility, good morals, and correct conduct" (198). Regarding the connection and feedback among nineteenth-century female authors it is curious that Fanny Burney's fiction seems to have been inspired by Frances Brooke's novels, especially by the novels Brooke wrote after *The History of Emily Montague*; indeed, Burney met Brooke personally whose fiction could have stimulated some of her works given Burney's youth at that moment. Lorraine McMullen actually affirms that "there is a parallel between [Brooke's] *The Excursion* and Fanny Burney's *Evelina*, published the following year" (1983: 185). Just as earlier and contemporary female authors, Leprohon had to combine her literary activity with her roles as woman which directly affected her literary production. Her literary activity decreased to a great extent precisely when she got married to Dr. Jean-Lukin Leprohon and had to focus on her womanly roles of mother, wife and housewife. As Gerson explains, it is actually impressive that "she managed to write at all, considering that between 1852 and 1872 she bore *thirteen children*, five of whom (including the first) died in infancy" (my emphasis, Gerson in Lecker, David and Quiqley, 1983- : 196). It is also interesting that although sometimes she is mentioned as Rosanna Mullins Leprohon, she is mainly known as Rosanna Leprohon, that is, for her husband's family name much like most of the female authors approached in this dissertation, as for instance Brooke and Moodie.

Brooke and Leprohon are indeed mentioned by Mary Jane Edwards as two of the pioneering authors who depicted English-French relations in their novels in an article entitled "Essentially Canadian". Edwards's analysis actually takes *The History of Emily Montague* and *Antionette de Mirecourt* as basis to subvert Ronald Sutherland's concept on the essential character of English-French relations as the most singular literary theme of Canadian Literature which only recent fiction authors seem to have introduced and developed. First of all, I agree with Edwards that this is not *the* most distinctive theme of Canadian Literature but "only one current in the river of Canadian fiction and only one characteristic that distinguishes it from other national fictions" (1972: 10). And secondly, as the analysis of Frances Brooke's novel in the previous chapter highlights, the connections and tensions between English and French-speaking communities in Canada are not recent inventions. Moreover, Sutherland's ideas have further

implications in my opinion. By speaking of Canada's "two major ethnic groups" he does not only introduce ethnicity as differentiation axis but Canada's predominant biculturalism and Eurocentrism, and thus its discriminating hegemonic cultural structure, becomes evident. As if this was not enough, following Edwards, Sutherland seems to establish a division between the fiction authors he focuses on, such as Hugh MacLennan<sup>61</sup>, who deal with this theme as placed right at the centre of "the mainstream of Canadian literature" while *others* are regarded to be in "the tributaries rather than the mainstream" such as Leacock (qtd. in Edwards 1972: 8). Apart from the thematic value scale this dissociation settles, Sutherland seems to have considered neither Brooke nor Leprohon as contributors to either of those groups. The alienation from Canadian mainstream literature of these two authors –who are casually women–, is thus doubly established.

Contrarily to Sutherland, Edwards considers *Antoniette de Mirecourt* "both a good novel and an important contribution to a study of English-French relations in Canada" (1972: 17). Following her remarks, Leprohon's novel entails a complex analysis of this theme since not a univocal viewpoint but different perspectives are offered. Set in November 176- in Montreal, the novel includes French and English characters with differing positions but who finally join in a society raised as eminently bilingual and bicultural. Among French characters, there are those who hold radical positions against the British and opt for seclusion under British rule as Arthur de Mirecourt, Antoniette's father, who tries to compel his daughter to marry Louis Beauchesme, a French childhood friend, against her will and threatens her with being disinherited if otherwise; and others who instead of confrontation choose certain adherence as Lucille who is decided to play the social game with the British and advises Antoniette to marry one of her British suitors. But as far as Edwards is concerned, plot events ultimately demonstrate that "all these attitudes are imperfect, limited responses" (1972: 19). This is precisely what plot events imply since Antoniette's father is compelled to accept the British by finally consenting to his daughter's marriage to one of them and Lucille's advice is subverted when Antoniette's first marriage to Major

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<sup>61</sup> According to Edward's article and apart from MacLennan, Sutherland only includes Hubert Aquin, Jacques Godbout, Claude Jasmin, and Ellis Portal in relation to the introduction of the theme of English-French relations in Canadian literature.

Audley Sternfield turns into disaster. Despite French characters predominate in the text there are two British characters whose relevance parallels that of the French, Major Audley Sternfield and Colonel Evelyn. Whereas Sternfield is an arrogant opportunistic who wants to marry Antoniette only because of her economic and social position, Evelyn is a kind-hearted man who finally marries Antoniette regardless of her 'sin', that is, of having secretly married Sternfield against her father's will. Although in my opinion the opposition between both characters is somehow archetypical as epitomes of the good and bad *other*, Edwards sees in Evelyn's final acceptance of Antoniette an author's gesture towards "the union of the old and the new orders in Canada and the emergence of a new society" which, by means of coupling a French and a British character in domestic cheerfulness, is revealed as harmoniously bilingual and bicultural (1972: 20). But complexity in the depiction of English-French relations is higher since clash and delusion between both communities are also unravelled. Beauchesme and Major Sternfield fight a duel which epitomizes the conflict between Canada's two solitudes. Similarly, Sternfield's treachery by secretly marrying Antoniette while continuing to court other women stands for the delusive relation between both communities. The resolution of the fight with Beauchesme forced expatriation from Canada and Sternfield's death because of wounds from the duel as well as Antoniette's final happy marriage to another English man are in consonance with the pacifistic ending; the obvious didacticism of the novel tells readers that confrontation and misunderstanding are not the right ways to ease differences. Anyway, Leprohon ultimately "opts at least emotionally for a bicultural Canada [and] [...] claims, moreover, that this choice is essentially Canadian" (Edwards 1972: 20). This is in fact what the author herself states in the Preface to her novel. Besides acknowledging Canada's cultural position in-between "the old world" and America, encouraging Canadians to produce "a literature of their own" and supporting already exerted attempts by authors as constructors of that literature, in Leprohon's opinion, "if *Antoniette de Mirecourt* possesses no other merit, it will, at least, be found to have that of being essentially Canadian" (17).

Pilar Cuder-Dominguez also finds connections between Rosanna Leprohon's *Antoniette de Mirecourt* and Frances Brooke's *The History of Emily Montague*. According to her, both novels' metaphorical romance plots set in the in-between space

of English and French Canada, Britain and Canada, empire and colony simultaneously negotiate gender and politics; what both ultimately explore is the identity of an emerging nation so that both texts partake “in the never-ending, always fluctuating process of building national identity” (129). Just as Brooke’s novel, romance in *Antoniette de Mirecourt* holds “political significance and national relevance” so that marriage and nationhood merge in Cuder-Dominguez’s analysis of Leprohon’s text (124). In keeping with the “marriage metaphor” coined by Carl Murphy, Cuder-Dominguez sees marriage as epitome of the need to overcome differences between English and French-speaking Canadian communities. Antoniette has three marriage choices before her; one with her old friend Louis Beauchesme whom she considers rather a brother and whose equal cultural allegiance “disqualifies him, for such a marriage of “sameness” would amount to cultural incest”; and other two with Major Audley Sternfield, whom she barely knows and who epitomizes deviation from male lead, and Colonel Evelyn, “the true sentimental hero” with whom a deeper understanding takes place (125). For Cuder-Dominguez, Antoniette stands for French-Canada so that her first marriage failure and subsequent suffering –which could have been avoided by gaining previous knowledge on the male counterpart– and successful marriage to Evelyn can be said to highlight the idea that “mutual knowledge within the Canadian nation will guarantee the prosperity of the country and the welfare of all inhabitants” (127).

Just as Cuder-Dominguez suggests, Misao Dean sees marriage in *Antoniette de Mirecourt* as a ‘sexual contract’ so that the novel’s political significance is also raised. Dean turns to Nancy Armstrong –already cited in Part I of this dissertation– to explain the detachment between the personal/domestic and public/political, that is, between female and male spheres that this contract entails. Whereas men exercise their political power outside the household, women are confined inside where they exert moral authority. As Dean explains, the ‘sexual contract’ has further implications for it also implies, first, that “men protect women in return for their domestication” and, second, that “individuals are distinguished, first and foremost, by gender” (1998: 45). In the case of Leprohon’s *Antoniette* such protection, domestication and gender distinction are clearly present. Louis Beauchesme symbolizes the perfect husband mainly as prospective protector of an also perfectly domestic wife like Antoniette (Dean, 1998:

50). In contrast, Major Audley Sternfield stands out as deviation from gender; he fails to protect his secret wife, turns her into a victim and forces her to misguide her female gendered role. This betrayal of femininity is explained by Dean as “a disjunction between Antoniette’s actions and inner self” to be resolved by her later repentance and marriage to a rightly gendered male as Colonel Evelyn so that Antoniette also recovers her female domestic authority (1998: 52). Sternfield’s death conveniently ends their marriage and frees Antoniette. But the implications of the sexual contract are higher since “the discourse of politics [...] invade[s] the romance” (Dean, 1998: 55). Following Dean’s explanation, the employment of the adjective “tyrant” to describe Sternfield is one sign of such overlapping. It seems as if the apparently irreversible marriage/contract between Antoniette, a French Canadian woman, and him, an English man, spoke for the obliged engagement between Canada and Great Britain (1998: 53). Likewise, Arthur de Mirecourt final acceptance of his daughter’s second English husband represented by a good-natured man as Evelyn supposes a correction of his complete rejection of Britain so that “the political issue of structural relations which allow the British to oppress the French is resolved” (Dean, 1998: 55). Moreover, the two differing marital contracts of Antoniette stand for the divergence between military rule, when she confronts her father and marries the wrong man, and “civil government”, when she follows established norms and marries the right man so that she is again “authoritative in her own sphere” (Dean, 1998: 55). Following Dean, what is ultimately at stake in *Antoniette de Mirecourt* by Rosanna Mullins Leprohon is not simply English-French relations but romance as a political contract which stands as paradigm of the whole nation; there is a translation of “imperial power and colonial submission into gender” that from my viewpoint implies both a rewriting of Canadian history and an exploration of different national identities at a historical crossroads (1998: 55).

Lorraine McMullen and Elizabeth Waterston also associate Leprohon’s novel to Canada’s first novel by Frances Brooke. On the one hand, the historical setting of both texts coincides since both novels focus on English-French relations in the post-ward period. In fact, McMullen and Waterston suggest that Leprohon could have been inspired by Brooke’s picture since despite not a witness herself she “has admirably caught the atmosphere reported by the contemporary observer” (MacMillian, McMullen and Waterston: 37). Besides, both authors’ fiction equally focuses on a female

protagonist although Antoniette seems to blend features of both of Brooke's women characters, Emily and Arabella (37). Moreover, McMullen and Waterston see Canada's depiction in *Antoniette de Mirecourt* closer to "garrison life" than to "roughing it in the bush" so that whereas Leprohon's text approaches the garrison mentality conveyed in *The History of Emily Montague* it moves away from Moodie's non-fictional account (in MacMillian, McMullen and Waterston: 39). In consonance with Mary Jane Edwards, McMullen and Waterston also highlight the social diversity and complexity of *Antoniette de Mirecourt* since both English and French Canadians are not univocally depicted. They also coincide with Cuder-Dominguez as far as previous acquaintance of future husbands is concerned. On the other hand, they point out that Leprohon's novel insinuates relevance of having same religious allegiances since Antoniette shares Roman Catholicism with Evelyn unlike with Sternfield and the protagonist's marriages ultimately imply that union between English and French Canadians "may have been difficult but could be very happy" (in MacMillian, McMullen and Waterston: 38).

From my viewpoint, McMullen and Waterston's chapter on the figure of Leprohon is even more interesting since an approach to her literary career is offered. *Antoniette de Mirecourt* is mentioned as part of a trilogy of novels set in French Canada together with *The Manor House of de Villerai* and *Armand Durand* and her poetry and short fiction are also referred to. Their research on Leprohon's literary career reveals a devoted, gifted and creative female writer whose passion and trust on Canada is reflected in her works. From a feminist perspective, McMullen and Waterston bring out Leprohon's challenging inclusion of female characters; far from the triviality frequently ascribed to her romance stories, her novels do not only portray women's concerns but their inner personal development so that they approach female realities. In McMullen and Waterston's words Leprohon's novels "suggest always, as a subtext, a realistic awareness of the truth about women's lives" (in MacMillian, McMullen and Waterston: 50). As both a Canadian and female author Leprohon is raised as a ground-breaking literary agent; she is said to be one of the scarce cases among Canadian authors to harmoniously inhabit a position in-between French and English Canada and a paradigm of acclaimed women novelists "who puzzled the male academy of writers, editors, publishers, and critics by their prolixity, and sometimes annoyed them by their popularity" (in MacMillian, McMullen and Waterston: 14). This being so, Leprohon is

another paradigmatic case of the incongruities of English Canadian literary criticism; I agree with McMullen and Waterston that the vacillating consideration of her contributions challenges mainstream critical axioms since her works, like many of her female contemporary writers, were not only very successful at her time but “can still offer such provocative alternative visions of life to readers in our era” (in MacMillian, McMullen and Waterston: 15). Curiously enough, the alternating character of a female author is again at stake.

*Antoinette de Mirecourt* is also significant in relation to English Canadian literary history for Glenn Willmott in his 2001 article “Canadian Ressentiment”. Taking as basis the Nietzschean reinterpretation of the French concept of *ressentiment*, Willmott exposes that there is “a deep structure in the rhetoric of a certain Canadianicity [...] based upon *ressentiment*” in which literature and literary history have functioned as “‘imaginary revenge’ against the strong” in order to construct a common Canadian identity (134). Canada’s traditional withstanding against British and American influences is in Willmott’s opinion the clearest paradigm of the country’s “now-double *ressentiment*” expressed in literary works such as Leprohon’s *Antoinette de Mirecourt*. The most visible epitome of *ressentiment* in Leprohon’s text is the duel between Louis Beuchesme and Major Audley Sternfield. First of all, it conveys a fictional clash in which *ressentiment* is offered a releasing space. Besides, the fact that Sternfield finally dies and Beuchesme survives although exiled outside Canada implies “a reversal of history” so that, in my opinion, the novel is attractive from a New Historicist perspective in so far it entails a rewriting of historiography (Willmott, 2001: 145). Similarly, in both the character of Major Audley Sternfield and Antoinette’s unfortunate marriage with him, Willmott sees a metaphor of the wretched subjection of French Canadians to the British (2001: 145). Evelyn’s final marriage to the female protagonist holds a twofold articulation of *ressentiment*. Given his forced move to Canada because of his brother’s misappropriation of both his wife and inheritance, Evelyn as “a British man who is alienated from Britain” is raised as “the right man [...] to father Canada”; his marriage with Antoinette manifests “the moral superiority of the victim of betrayal”, that is, the French community (Willmott, 2001: 145). Mme D’Aulnay is also an epitome of *ressentiment* since, for her, British oppressors must be defeated by whatever the means such as romantic plotting by using Antoinette. In this way, Antoinette as main

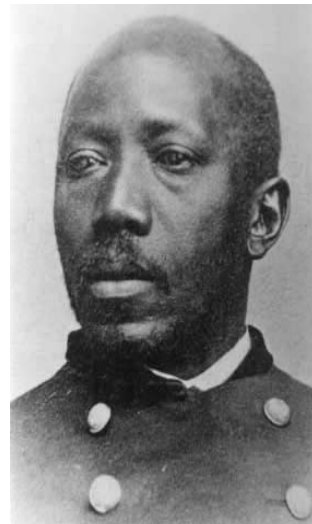


axis of the novel turns romance into “the product of a prior ill will” –although not hers but Mme D’Aulnay’s– (Willmott, 2001: 146). Willmott’s analysis of *Antoniette de Mirecourt* by Leprohon shows a fictionalization of Canadian identity as “group identity based upon negation of an opposing identity rather than the positive creation of a new one” (2001: 135). In this sense, if as Leprohon affirms her novel is to be credited for being essentially Canadian, *ressentiment* is equally handed as essential in Canadian literary identity. Moreover, “the *ressentiment* required to demand of itself [...] such a national tradition” that has characterized the writing of Canadian literary history seems to parallel the resented identity that Leprohon’s work conveys according to Willmott (2001: 135). From my viewpoint, *ressentiment* towards English Canada from a French Canadian perspective that Willmott sees in Leprohon’s novel together with Gerson’s remark on the wider impact of *Antoniette de Mirecourt* among French Canadian audiences could offer an idea of some of the intervening factors that have affected the consideration of Leprohon’s literary contribution on behalf of English Canadian critics and compilers. From my viewpoint, Willmott’s analysis on the basis of *ressentiment* is very significant since the construction of Canadian literary identity by both authors and critics is revealed not as such an innocent project but rather as a vindictive undertaking; being it not so focused on the discovery of what was and is Canadian Literature by unsilencing works and authors, as on a negative arrangement of a literary identity on the basis of what it is not in comparison to others. And this is precisely what this dissertation attempts to de-construct; Canadian literary identity based upon early authors’ actual contributions and not as negation in comparison to British, American or whichever other literatures.

Before Leprohon’s 1864 *Antoniette de Mirecourt; or, Secret Marrying and Secret Sorrowing* appeared, between 1859 and 1862 another novel which has been totally silenced by mainstream criticism and has only been rescued by ethnic critics was published: Martin Robinson Delany’s *Blake; or the Hunts of America*, analysed in the following section.

VI.2 AN EARLY BLACK CANADIAN NOVEL IN ENGLISH: MARTIN ROBINSON DELANY'S *BLAKE; OR THE HUNTS OF AMERICA* (1859-1862, SERIALLY PUBLISHED)

As far as my research experience on English Canadian Literature is concerned, the first time I became aware of the existence of an early Canadian novel in English written by an African-American author was through George E. Clarke's article "A Primer of African Canadian Literature: George Elliot Clarke's Short but Filled-to-Bursting History" (1996) when doing research about early Black literature in Canada. Clarke's text has not only been inspiring for the writing of the present dissertation but it is a very interesting critical source on early African Canadian Literature in English. In consonance with this research, his contribution is similarly aimed at rethinking Canada's literary history but specifically from an African Canadian perspective; in Clarke's opinion, the absence of African authors and especially early contributors demands "chastisement" of the writing of English Canadian literary history ('A Primer'), and I would add that, consequently, its literary tradition and identity are also in question. The diachronic study on the anthologization of early English Canadian included in Part II actually reinforces Clarke's ideas for the contribution of Delany to Canadian letters is not mentioned in any of the critical works referred to. It is necessary to turn to specifically ethnic compilations to find information about his Canadian novel. Moreover, according to Robert S. Levine's *Martin R. Delany: A Documentary Reader* (2003), he is astoundingly absent in the Norton Anthology of African American Literature as well as in most general American literary histories.



*Martin R. Delany, 1812-1885 (internet sources)*

Martin R. Delany's case is a paradigm of Clarke's idea about the need to "repatriate several African - American writers to Canada, mainly on the basis of their one-time Canadian residency" in order to "fully reconstruct early African Canadian literature" ('A Primer'). It is precisely the temporary character of Delany's connection to Canada what may have provoked the oversight of his contribution on behalf of Canada's mainstream literary criticism. Delany was born free on May 6<sup>th</sup> 1812 in the

United States, in Charleston (Virginia), and participated extensively in the country's social and literary life "as a social activist and reformer, black nationalist, abolitionist, physician, reporter and editor, explorer, jurist, realtor, politician, publisher, educator, army officer, ethnographer, novelist, and political and legal theorist" (Levine: 1). In 1856 he settled in the Canadian small town of Chatham (Canada West) where he continued with his medical practice and Black activism. From 1856 to 1858 he participated in the organization of the second and third Emigration Conventions in Cleveland and in Chatham respectively and got involved in Chatham's political affairs. There he met the white radical abolitionist John Brown and participated in the Provisional Constitution Convention held in Chatham in 1858, during which both Delany and Brown debated about fostering Black revolt in the United States. Brown had already taken part in the assassination of proslavery activists in 1856 and the rebellion both spoke about at Chatham's convention was finally carried out in 1859, although only by Brown and his men; in that same year Brown was "captured and hanged for treason" with the consequent differing appreciation of his figure in the Northern and Southern states of America (Levine: 328). At this time Delany was already travelling over African lands after having raised enough funds for his project of finding a suitable place for African American emigration and settlement. This trip did not end his connection with Canada; in December 29<sup>th</sup> 1860 he went back to Chatham and may have resided there at intervals –in-between his different trips to the United States– since his family did not definitely move to Ohio until 1864 (Griffith: xiii). From 1864 until Delany passed away, he experienced several unsuccessful moments in relation with his political activism. Following Griffith's "Biographical Outline" from 1969 to 1882 Delany's projects of becoming Minister of the United States to Liberia in 1869 and 1882, Senator from South Carolina in 1870, Jury Commissioner in Charleston in 1871, and Lieutenant Governor of South Carolina in two occasions (1872 and 1874) were fruitless. During this period Delany also enjoyed certain success since he personally conversed with President Abraham Lincoln, was appointed Major in the Union Army which he left in 1868, and "became editor of the Charleston Independent" (Griffith: xiv). Martin R. Delany died in 1885 at Wilberforce, Ohio, after having taken up his medical activity again in 1884, perhaps influenced by the diverse political failures he went through during previous years.

Regarding his literary activity, despite Delany contributed more actively to American letters as journalist and essayist, while in Canada he also participated in the country's literary activity by writing articles for newspapers and a novel, *Blake; or, the Huts of America* (serially published between 1859 and 1862). In relation to Delany's participation in the literary culture of the United States, it should be noted that he pioneered in setting the *Mystery*, one of the first newspapers on African American issues, which he left in 1847 to collaborate with Frederick Douglass' newspaper the *North Star* as co-editor. He continued with his activism through other writings such as *The Condition, Elevation, Emigration and Destiny of the Colored People of the United States* (1852)<sup>62</sup>, *Origin and Objects of Ancient Freemasonry* (1853) and his conference at the first Emigration Convention held in Cleveland in 1854 –that he organized– on “The Political Destiny of the Colored Race on the American Continent” which is said to be “the most important statement of black emigration published before the Civil War” (Levine: 1). It is relevant to mention that in this paper the author already included Canada as a possibility for free black settlement (Miller: xiv). In 1861 his *Official Report of the Niger Valley Exploring Party* on his experiences in exploring African lands and signing a treaty to settle Black Americans in West Africa was published. After the failure of this treaty, he left his ideas on the suitability of African Americans' emigration and returned to the integrationist perspective he shared with Douglass back in the United States. His *University Pamphlets* and *Homes for the Freedmen* were published in 1870 and 1871 respectively. Finally, after various political involvements in favour of the black cause in the United States during which he almost lost his life, Delany was profoundly disappointed and he went back to his ideas on emigration of African Americans to Africa. In this line, his *Principia of Ethnology: The Origin of Races and Color*, published in 1879, is a work which retakes his “Pan-African pride in blacks' historical, cultural and racial ties to Africa” already outlined in his 1853 work (Levine: 2).

Regarding his contribution to Canadian letters, he supported Mary Ann Shadd Cary's role as Black journalist and editor by submitting articles frequently to her

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<sup>62</sup> It is important to mention that in this work Delany investigated the possibilities of Black emigration to Central and South America and the Caribbean because the inclusion of Cuba in the novel can be also said to hold autobiographical basis.

newspaper *The Provincial Freeman* which in fact is one of the first Black Canadian newspapers. The relevance of Cary's newspaper needs to be highlighted for, apart of being a pioneering attempt by a Black woman in Canada, according to Robin W. Winks –one of the most, if not the most, relevant historiographer of Black Canadian history– it was one of the most significant Black Canadian newspapers (394-5). The connection between Delany and Shadd Cary would continue since both participated in the third Emigration Convention for which Mary Ann Shadd Cary was officially named secretary. Later on, they also maintained a boundary-crossing collaboration once Delany had left Canada either for Africa or back to the United States. On the other hand, although *Blake; or, the Huts of America* was published between 1859 and 1862 in the United States, the author might have devised and written it for the most part during his Canadian period. According to Floyd J. Miller's remarks in his introduction to the 1970 edition of *Blake* "Delany wrote most of the novel while in Canada from 1856 to 1859" (xx). Curtis W. Ellison and E. W. Metcalf Jr. also state that it was during his Canadian experience when "Delany completed a novel, *Blake; or, the Huts of America*, which he had begun writing as early as 1852" (156). Presuming that Delany started configuring his novel around 1852-3 on the basis that the first date the novel includes is November 29<sup>th</sup> 1852, as Miller does, might seem somehow venturous. In any case, the clear contrast with Harriet Beecher Stowe's famous novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* published in 1852 implies that Delany might have started devising his novel sometime after 1852. Some of the historical references of *Blake* –such as Dred Scott's decision of 1857– also suggest that the novel was being developed during this period between 1852-3 and 1857. Furthermore, the fact that the serialized publication of Delany's novel begun in January 1859 in *The Anglo-African Magazine* indicates that he also continued working on the text until this year. Taking into account that the author resided in Canada from 1856 to 1859, it can be said that while Delany might have started devising and even writing *Blake* before coming to Canada; he wrote most of the novel there up to 1859, when its first publication took place. Later on, the author probably put its finishing touches to the novel after the African sojourn as some details on the situation of Africa reveal. Delany's novel was not published entirely until 1861-62 when *The Weekly Anglo-African* edited the full text weekly.

Taking into account Delany's biography, the fact that he participated more to US or Canadian Literature seems irrelevant for contributing to the black cause regardless of national boundaries established by white cultures was actually his main objective. In fact, neither United States nor Canadian nationalisms are to be taken as crucial in relation to the figure of Martin R. Delany. Even though the Canadian Confederation which settled Canada as a federal Dominion took place in 1867, Delany never got involved in Canadian nationalistic claims; on the other hand, although he indeed participated in the US Civil War as Major in the Union Army this was a momentary shift in his career for before and after his military involvement his main goal was the promotion of the Black nation and the search of a suitable and free place for it to be fully developed. In fact, the Canadian and the United States nations as they are currently known did not exist but started to be forged during Delany's times. As his activism and writings on his emigrational views reveal, he focused on African Americans actually as united by common cultural ties which needed a better place to freely develop as a nation far from American slavery. For him, African Americans were "a cultural entity" which not only "had the potential for nationhood" but who actually constituted "a nation within a nation" (Griffith: 21, 28). According to Cyril E. Griffith's *The African Dream: Martin R. Delany and the Emergence of Pan-African Thought*, Delany needs to be considered "as one of the earliest exponents of pan-Africanism" (4). Given the boundary-crossing character of Delany's views, restricting the scope of his novel to a certain national territory seems at least paradoxical. As it will be explained later in this section, *Blake* does not specifically address an American or Canadian audience, but an African one regardless of his readers' place of residence throughout all American territories, either North or South. It seems clear then that Delany is another paradigm of an alternating figure who contributed to Canadian letters but whose personal and literary specificities need to be taken into account in order to understand the relevance of his contribution.

In spite of Delany's pioneering character as pan-Africanist and writer Griffith affirms that when he carried out his study on Delany there was a noteworthy "lack of available research data" on his life and writings (2). As far as this dissertation is concerned, this fact also speaks for the reluctance of scholars on both sides of the US-Canadian border to deal with such a challenging figure as Delany's. Ellison and

Metcalf's diachronic study on the critical responses Delany's work received from his lifetime to the decade of 1970s in the United States is very revealing in this respect. During Delany's times, "critical response to Delany's novel was virtually nonexistent" with the exception of the comments of *The Anglo-African Magazine* given *Blake's* serialized publication in this newspaper (Ellison and Metcalf: 159). Following Ellison and Metcalf's data, it is eloquent that the first biography about the author –in which he participated– was written by a woman writer, Frances E. Rollin Whipper, who hid her real name under the male pen-name of Frank A. Rollin. Whereas after Delany's death his endeavours and writings were not broadly echoed, it is very significant that one of the few to pay attention to him as a historical figure was precisely W.E.B. Du Bois, already mentioned in Parts I and II of this dissertation as a precursor in raising the race debate in North America and whose ideas have been mainly recovered by ethnic critics. The fact that *only* another African American thinker was able to realize Delany's relevance shortly after he had passed away speaks for the segregationist character of American scholars of the time and offers a hint into subsequent dismissals as well. Although during the 1930s interest on Delany's works raised, as Vernon Loggins' pioneering approach to *Blake* suggests, it was again W.E.B. Du Bois who carried out the most favourable comment on his achievements. Despite this shy resurgence in attention, during the 1940s Delany's novel did not receive positive commentaries; its depiction of slave life was praised but the novel was said to be generally "weak in structure and unconvincing in situation" (Ellison and Metcalf: 160). It was not until the 1950s and 1960s, precisely when Black issues started to acquire more importance and attracted critical attention, that Delany gained more widespread recognition. At this time Delany was considered as "the original theorist of black nationalism in the United States" and *Blake* as a groundbreaking novel for its fictional negotiation of blackness over whiteness, its inclusion of a challenging Black voice and its more realistic account of the Black experience than that of his contemporaries such as Stowe's (1852) or William Wells Brown's *Clotel; or, The President's Daughter: A Narrative of Slave Life in the United States* (1853) (Ellison and Metcalf: 161). Indeed, thanks to this raise in interest on Delany some of his works gained reprint so that the equation of no reprint/no existence previously mentioned in this dissertation is again proved. If Black issues had not gained such attention, Delany's works would not have been taken into

consideration; the labour of ethnic studies is revealed as crucial and the prejudice of mainstream criticism against certain authors is also suggested. Subsequent studies on Delany's novel were carried out during the decade of 1970s such as Floyd J. Miller's 1970 edition of *Blake* mentioned in this section. As a matter of fact, most of the critical approaches which focus on Delany's fiction found when doing research and included in this section were published during these years with the scarce exceptions of V. P. Franklin and Bettye Collier Thomas' 2002 article and Robert S. Levine comprehensive work published in 2003.

From my viewpoint, this evolution in the consideration of Delany's contribution to US literature and African American thought and history demonstrates that his achievements do not lack interest but have been affected by an endemic and silenced elitism on behalf of critical institutions which have been mainly white and male-oriented. I share Roger W. Hite's ideas that the insistence of mainstream criticism on focusing exclusively on the aesthetic and artistic features of fiction works restricts the inclusion of *other* pieces whose "cultural significance" is consequently overlooked. Thus, the relevance of Delany's novel as "an important social document, would remain obscure, or, worse still, fall prey to unmerciful attacks by literary critics eager to condemn its obvious stylistic and structural flaws" (Hite: 192). Hite opts for a "rhetorical tradition" as means of developing critical analyses which approach literature also "as a response to social conditions, rather than as merely a mirror of literary canons" so that authors' demands through their literary creations are also taken into account (192). In spite of this critical evolution in the United States regarding Delany's achievements, from a Canadian literary perspective there is still a lot to do for his novel is exclusively mentioned in compilations and critical articles from an African Canadian perspective, and sometimes not even so as in the case of Lorris Elliot's 1986 edition of *Bibliography of Literary Writings by Blacks in Canada* cited in Part II. Indeed –as already explained in Chapter IV in the section about Early African Canadian Literature in English– although in Lorris Elliott's opinion Brian Gypsin's *To Master, a Last Good Night* (1946) is the first contribution of an African author to English Canadian Literature, it cannot be claimed to be the first African Canadian novel since, according to Clarke, it is more an autobiographical account than a fiction work. Both Clarke and Miller agree that Delany's *Blake, or the Huts of America* needs to be raised as actually



the first Canadian novel in English by an African author and, moreover, as a milestone in the evolution of Black Literature in English Canada.

*Blake* describes the long journey of Henry Holland “a black –a pure Negro– handsome, manly and intelligent, in size comparing well with his master” in search of his also slave wife, Maggie, who has been sold by their masters Colonel and Mrs. Franks in Natchez, precisely when Henry is away, because of an old agreement with Mrs. Ballard who intends to bring Maggie to Cuba (16)<sup>63</sup>. In doing so, Colonel and Mrs. Franks fail to keep their promise of never separating Henry, Maggie and Little Joe, their son. Unlike any conventional Black slave, Henry faces his master so that Colonel Franks, feeling completely outraged by his slave’s behaviour, plans to sell him to Richard Harris who is advised by Franks to resell Henry to a famous ill-treating slave owner, Richard Crow. During the three days given to Henry before the transaction takes place, he escapes leaving his son with Maggie’s parents, Mummy Judy and Old Joe. Henry’s master betrayal means a turning point for him and turns his journey also into a black insurrection campaign. Henry’s insurrectionary adventure and transformation into a Black hero starts.

As far as this dissertation is concerned, the most interesting aspect of *Blake* revolves around its early depiction of Canada from an African American viewpoint. Henry’s long journey in search of his wife, liberation and revolt against white oppression seems to be an initiation process not only for himself but also for his Black brethren. His peregrination leads him to different places in which, from Henry’s perspective, his insurrectionary plan has more success possibilities, such as Canada. The very first reference to Canada in *Blake* can actually be found in the title. According to Floyd J. Miller’s notes to Delany’s text in his 1970 edition of the novel, the term *Hut* is autobiographically connected to Canada since “the small cottage in which he[Delany] lived at Chatham, Canada West, in the late 1850s” was called “The Hut”; according to Miller it may also refer to *Twelve Years a Slave* by Solomon Nrothrup in which “slave quarters” are precisely named “huts”. In any case, the term seems a differing codeword to Harriet Beecher Stowe’s “Cabins” (Miller: 315). On the other hand, the first reference to Canada as a utopian land for Black freedom can be found as early as in

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<sup>63</sup> All subsequent references to Delany’s text come from Floyd J. Miller’s 1970 edition; only page numbers will be offered to avoid repetition.

Chapter 9 from Part I when, while still in the United States, Henry shares his runaway plan with Mummy Judy and brings her face to face with the possibility of her own freedom by “make[ing] our[their] escape to a free country” (30). To Mummy Judy’s question on “Wat place yeh call dat?”, Henry replies “with emotion” that place is no other than “Canada!” (30). Two details are significant in this first mention to Canada. First, the fact that Mummy Judy has not even information on such close chances of gaining liberty speaks for the ignorant state Blacks were kept in and which will be later analysed in this section as one of the most important hindrances in the development of an insurrection and thus in the achievement of freedom. And secondly, it is also significant that such liberating meaning of Canada is precisely offered by Henry, who is not only the main character of the novel but the Black man who will become the leader that the Black community seems to need in order to react to white abuse and authority. Shortly after and once Henry’s wife has been sent to Cuba, in a conversation with two of Henry’s supporters, he states that his son is “safe enough, on his way to Canada!” (42). In doing so, whereas Little Joe, that is, the new Black generation, is sent to the safe territory of Canada where presumably a new state of freedom can be achieved and thus Black peoples, their culture and identity have chances to survive and develop, the older generations of Henry and Mummy Judy remain in the United States to fight for their rights and attempt to leave a free world for future generations.

Mummy Judy’s lack of knowledge is actually reinforced by other characters’ ignorance on the same issue. It is again Henry who, in accordance with his insurrectionary intentions, shows his brothers and sisters where “the North Star, slave’s great Guide to Freedom!” is and thus instructs them on the path they should follow to arrive to “Canada and the free States; because both of these[those] places are in the north” (132-3). From my viewpoint, the reference to the North Star is not only meaningful for connecting freedom with Canada, but also due to the dialogue it establishes between *Blake* and slave narratives which are directly cited within the text in this same chapter:

Star of the North thou art not bigger,  
Than the diamond in my ring;  
Yet every black star-gazing nigger,  
Looks upon to thee as some great thing! (133)

As quoted in Miller's notes to Delany's novel the "emphasis on the North Star as the guiding light for the fugitive slave was not unusual" as, for instance, Henry Bibb and William Wells Brown's narrative entitled *Puttin' On Ole Massa* demonstrate (318). This association between Delany's fiction and other contemporary literary forms by Blacks can be said to play a significant part in the voicing and writing of Black North American literature as early as in the 1850s and 1860s. By means of unmediated quotations like this, Delany seems to be both bringing them into existence and offering them the literary worth they seemed not to hold for the white cultural mainstream, so that Black literary culture and identity are equally being raised and praised.

Other references to Canada can be implied from the data on the situation of Blacks in the United States. Historical allusions to Dred Scott's decision of 1857 by which Black population was officially appointed as not being part of US citizenship by the Supreme Court, to John Brown and the 1859 Harper's Ferry raid or to the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act, indirectly refer to Canada. In the case of Dred Scott's decision as well as the Fugitive Slave Act, the situation of Blacks in the United States after their passing affected Canada. Those slaves who managed to arrive there were freed, having the increase of Black emigration and the creation of the Underground Railroad as main consequences in Canadian territories. The 1859 raid seems to possess autobiographical bases for it took place after the 1858 Chatham Convention of Blacks in which Delany participated and where he met John Brown. Moreover, all along the critical commentaries on US slavery included in the novel, Canada seems to be present but as a distant utopian, even sometimes unreal, free country. For instance, in a very interesting conversation among Judge Ballard, Major Armsted and Henry's master, Colonel Franks, Blacks' right to vote in Northern States is discussed. Judge Ballard states that "in some of the states they are permitted to vote, but can't be voted for, and this leaves them without any political rights at all. Suffrage, sir, is one thing, franchisement another" (61). Such debate takes place among people from North or South States while Canada, already introduced in the novel as a paradigm of freedom, seems to remain as a backdrop where those issues do not even need to be addressed. The importance of this connection, although subtle, between the United States and Canada regarding Black enslavement relies on the construction of a Canadian identity complex precisely because of the too frequent comparisons of Canada with its Southern neighbour so that strong

efforts to avoid assimilation have been needed. Furthermore, the constant frontier-crossing between both countries, either ideologically or physically, that take place in *Blake* also speak for the diasporic nature of early Black culture and identity in North America.

Canada is not only indirectly referred to in Delany's novel since part of the novel actually takes place in Canada. It is worth noting that the short stay of Henry in Canadian provinces resembles Delany's own experiences since although his family resided there from 1856 until 1864, he travelled to Africa and England during this period. In any case, it is eloquent that precisely when Henry and other fugitives approach Canadian soil, and thus to freedom, "their Proximity to the British Provinces made them safe, with an imprudence not before committed" of singing the following song:

I'm on my way to Canada,  
That cold and dreary land:  
The dire effects of slavery,  
I can no longer stand.  
My soul is vexed within me so,  
To think that I'm a slave,  
I've now resolved to strike the blow,  
For Freedom or the grave.  
(All uniting in the chorus)  
O, righteous Father,  
Wilt thou not pity me;  
And aid me on to Canada,  
Where fugitives are free?  
I heard old England plainly say,  
If we would all forsake,  
Our native land of Slavery,  
And come across the lake. (143)

In my opinion, the relevance of the inclusion of this song is twofold. In the first instance, this same song seems to have been sung by Harriet Tubman and a group of fugitives "while approaching the Suspension Bridge leading from New York State into Canada" so that one of the most known historical figures of Black activism during slavery is included in Delany's novel (Miller: 318). Secondly, it is a very significant reference to Black literary agency which again demonstrates the significance of Canada as land of freedom and establishes a connection among early Africadian authors, to use George E. Clarke terminology. In this case, Canada is a "cold and dreary land" where the dream of freedom is not as secure as in other works –such as Shadd's– since slaves are not assured a free state as the question-verse "Where fugitives are free?" shows. The

allusion to “the British Provinces” in Delany’s text and “old England” in Tubman’s song is also eloquent since it speaks of the stronger colonial connection Canada held at that time unlike the United States.

While in Canada, the narrator accounts that Henry’s primary intentions are “to invest a portion of the old people’s money by the purchase of fifty acres of land” as well as to “provide for the schooling of the children” (155). The fact that Henry’s two fundamental concerns revolve around the achievement of economic and educational power for Blacks in Canada is meaningful since, first, these two accomplishments are denied for them in the United States, and, moreover, they are represented in the novel as bases of the slavery system. As explained below, according to Delany’s novel keeping blacks poor and ignorant are the fundamental hindrances established by whites in order to maintain hegemony and prevent insurrection.

As in Tubman’s verses, in *Blake* Canada is neither merely that utopian territory where freedom could be achieved without any obstacles since a more realistic approach to the country from a Black African perspective is offered. After their long and harsh journey, when Henry and his companions “safely landed across the river in Windsor, Essex County, Canada West”, Andy epitomizes the excitement and happiness of having apparently achieved freedom. He cannot even believe they are there and nervously asks: “Is dis Canada? Is dis de good ole British soil we hear so much ‘bout way down in Missierppi?” [...] Is dis free groun’? De lan’ whar black folks is free!” (152). In accordance with the strong religious beliefs of the Black community the novel critically introduces, he also thanks god for such a privilege and even “kissed[s] the earth” as if blessing their new homeland (152). It is the narrator who introduces the counterpoint to Andy’s joy by mentioning very significant facts which reverse previous and contemporary idealistic conceptions on Canada. “Poor fellow!” the narrator says, and continues stating Andy’s ignorance on “the unnatural feelings and course pursued toward his race by many Canadians” (152). The omniscient narrating voice addresses facts such as that Blacks are “excluded from the enjoyment and practical exercise of every right, except mere suffrage-voting” all around Canada with the exception of the Eastern province, despite “while according to fundamental British Law and constitutional rights, all persons are equal in the realm” and the shared “patriotism” given Blacks historical participation to defend “Her Majesty’s Colonial Possessions”

(152-3). In contrast to the utopian paradigm of Canada –sarcastically introduced as “the long-talked of and much-loved Canada by the slaves”– the narrator also reports cases of injustice that took place there and which Andy, as many other US runaway slaves, could not even imagine. Blacks in Canada were not only denied some of their rights but, when they asked for restitution, authorities washed their hands off by replying “that they had no power to reach their case” (153). Furthermore, the specific case of “a few of the most respectable colored ladies of a town in Kent County” who were denied the right of going into a public building, respected even in Southern States, is also mentioned; they were “ruthlessly taken hold”, their case was said to be merely “local contingencies” and not restored by any means (153). In the narrator’s opinion, examples like this one could, if known, make a slave such as Andy feel outraged and “almost compel him to curse the country of his adoption” (153). In spite of this, Andy as well as Henry’s family could paradoxically claim to be free, far from the influence of US slavery, out of the reach of slaveholders, more and more oppressive regulations issued by “a president born and bred in a free state and himself once poor apprentice boy in a village” (153).

Furthermore, Canada’s colonial paradoxes are also pointed out in *Blake*. During the stay of Henry in Cuba, having met Placido and Maggie again, and having revealed his real identity as Henry Blake, he leads a Black assembly as “President of the Council and Commander in Chief” in which organizational issues and the future of North American Blacks are discussed. Blake first thanks God for their new prospect and is delighted for the different approach to religion they have finally achieved by which they are determined to take action “for God’s sake” instead of “expecting God to do everything for us, and we nothing for ourselves” (284). It is in this moment when their claims on the original possession of American territories by “colored races” as Indians, the paradox of coloured peoples’ oppression by whites in spite of being more in number and their “moral right and physical power to prevent them” are raised (287). At Blake’s question on “shall we rise against our oppressors and strike for liberty, or will we remain in degradation and bondage”, everyone in the audience replies that “Liberty! Liberty or death!” is their desire, which obviously settles their refusal of standing still and seeing salvation (287). Madame Montego and Placido are among those present. In order to achieve that freedom, Madame Montego sets out the issue of gaining some kind of help “from our sister islands”, that is, the British colonies (288). In Placido’s opinion

that is completely out of the question “because although our brethren there are all free and equal in the law” they are “a constituent part of the body politic, and subject alike to the British government and laws forbid any interference in foreign affairs by any of her Majesty’s subjects” (288). In doing so, Placido voices one of the dichotomies of Canada’s colonial ties since, despite being a free country in what regards slavery, it is dominated by the British Crown so that blacks there are not free to help their brothers and sisters in other parts of the world. In this respect, the tactics of intervention into historical discourses of *Blake* can be said again to function as counterhistory for its re-telling of Canadian history during colonization from an outsider’s perspective. Madame Montego does not understand the difference of striking for liberty or not depending on Black allegiance to the British or the Spanish crown, as in the case of Cuba. Placido explains her that under British rule all citizens are “equally eligible to positions”, unlike within Spanish colonial boundaries where “we are the political and social inferiors of the whites, existing as freemen by sufferance, and subject to enslavement at any time” (288). According to Miller’s introduction to *Blake*, this intervention by Placido actually refers to the historical project of creating of a colony of Canadian Blacks in which Delany participated. After leaving aside his plan of establishing a settlement of US Blacks in Africa and having lectured in England in search of funding, back in Canada Delany embarked on the new plan of a Canadian colony with the support of the African Aid society of England which also failed. This reference is eloquent for the strong autobiographical and historical content *Blake* holds which confers part of “historical significance” the novel entails that Hite suggests (194).

In relation to the present research on Canadian literary identity, the previously mentioned references to Canada mean the first literary fictionalization of the country in realistic terms by an early Black African author. The exemplification of the differential treatments of ethnic members in Canada voiced in *Blake* contrasts with the received notion of Canada as a political and cultural framework where ethnicity is hold and racist practices apparently are not. Similarly to what the narrator explains on the discrimination of Blacks by Canadian mainstream white society, the dismissal of early literary contributions by Black and/or African authors such as Delany’s also subverts the officially established multicultural image of the country. In this respect, *Blake* can be said to be a challenging attempt at demystifying and deconstructing the utopian

devise of Canadian identity as well as being a clear paradigm of the power of literature as counterhistory. Moreover, such critical intervention on the significance of Canada through literature connects Delany's work to other fiction works by other writers, ethnic or not, who have also paid attention to the downsides of Canadian society, history and culture and who have suffered similar exclusion processes from the literary canon such as Frances Brooke, Joanna E. Wood or Sara Jeannette Duncan.

Apart from the Canadian content of *Blake*, it is worth noting that the character of Henry is one of the main challenging elements of Delany's novel. In Hite's words:

Unlike the symbol of black impotence which dominated nineteenth-century literature as a result of a well-meaning white woman's artistry, Delany's *Blake* provided black readers with a potent black literary hero – a symbol that has been long time coming in American fiction. (201)

In a first instance, Henry is described as an intelligent and educated slave who knows how to read and write and whose use of language is closer to that of whites. His words are not portrayed as those of other black slave characters as, for instance, Mummy Judy's remarks after telling Henry about the sale of Maggie: "So Henry! Yeh ain't gwine swah! Hope yeh ain' gwine lose yeh 'ligion? Do'n do so; put yeh trus' in de Laud, he is suffishen fah all!" (15). Unlike Judy's, Henry's way of speaking is reported as perfectly understandable, just as that of the white characters of the novel. For instance, Henry replies to Mummy Judy's religious preaching that:

I'm tired of looking the other side; I want a hope this side of the vale of tears. I want something on this earth as well as a promise of things in another world. I and my wife have been both robbed of our liberty [...]. (16)

In view of the insistence of Mummy Judy he adds, "well, mammy, it is useless for me to stand here and have the same gospel preached into my ears by you, that I have all my life time heard from my enslavers" (16). Henry's words reveal not only his stronger command of his masters' language as well as his higher intellectual background but also advance his future pioneering role within the Black community. Such higher cultural condition positions him in a more egalitarian level to that of whites so that he is presented from the beginning as one of the few able to confront white power. Henry's courage to defy his master, as well as his flight in search of both his wife and a route to defeat slavery are equally revealing. It is clear that Henry is presented not as one more Black docile literary character but a hero, an icon of a Black revolution. It is important to contextualize the novel historically regarding slavery in order to grasp the



challenging attempt of Henry's character. The unfortunately famous Fugitive Slave Act, which had passed in 1850, established that runaway slaves were bound to be returned to their masters when found regardless of the American state, either pro-slavery or not, where they were captured. This terrible Act was precisely the breeding ground for the emigrational ideas of many African American intellectuals such as Mary Ann Shadd Cary and Delany himself.

In consonance with Floyd J. Miller, Roger W. Hite considers Delany's *Blake* a reaction against previous complacent depictions of African Americans. There is, for instance, a clear contrast between Stowe's Tom and Henry who, unlike Tom, is a revolutionary literary hero; he is an insubordinate, bright and clever African American who dares praising Black culture and admonishing religion as both a white control strategy and barrier preventing black insurrection. The relevance of Henry's character is even more profound since, according to Hite, the historical significance of *Blake* is raised through the pioneering depiction of "one of the earliest examples of a black fictional hero in a culture otherwise dominated by Sambo-ish literary images of black men" (194). Similarly, in John Zeugner's opinion Henry's character is also pioneering because he advocates and foreruns modern Black militant positioning. Following Zeugner, Henry goes through three stages to fully achieve his militancy. He first "exit[s] from the system" by escaping and thus defying white power; he later travels throughout America, Canada and Cuba preaching Blacks on their power, voicing the injustices, fallacies and horrors of slavery, and recruiting supporters so that he and his people "organize against the system"; and finally, Henry "strike[s] at it violently", takes revenge and upholds radical measures against whites as a possibility to achieve their goal of freedom (Zeugner: 103). The following suggestion from Henry to slave Lewis Grimes regarding his master implies that even extreme violence is regarded as positive: "Well don't you submit, die first if thereby you must take another into eternity with you! Were it my case and he ever went to sleep where I was, he'd never waken in this world!" (82).

The claims of Henry's character are also reinforced by the remarks of the omniscient narrator of the novel. Both seem to be in charge of spreading proclamations, firstly, on Black power and superiority, secondly, against slavery and white atrocity and, finally and very significantly, against Christianity. Given the author's ideological

development that his non-fiction writings and political activism show, the ideas both Henry and the narrator launch could be ascribed to Delany himself. Hite and Miller actually suggest that Delany's own ideological concerns are fictionalized through the character of a Black leader. Although for very different purposes, similarly to Lily Dougall's employment of fiction as vehicle for ideas –that will be detailed later in Part III– Delany seems to have written his novel as means of giving expression to his ideological framework regarding the situation of African Americans. Given Delany's political activism shown in his non-fiction works, in Hite's opinion it seems actually natural that he also saw fiction as another means of “attacking slavery and instilling a sense of pride in the black men” (193).

The appraisal of Black power and superiority is mainly carried out by the insistence of both Henry and the narrating voice of *Blake* on enrooting self-respect and confidence among their people. For instance, mulattoes are said to “receive their poetic vigor of imagination from the current of Negro blood flowing in their veins” so that their most positive side is related to their black ancestry (116). It is very significant that mulattoes are said to be “the least happy of all the classes” precisely because of their blood mixture “by which their identity becomes extinct” (116). The comparison between the destruction of cultural identity and the fusion of different cultural groups reveals part of the novel's innovative participation in a cultural debate scarcely attempted before from an African American perspective. *Blake* supports Black culture as a framework which needs to keep independence from mainstream cultures in order to survive and rise as a full and non-contaminated cultural entity.

For such free cultural development to take place the novel raises the importance of achieving education and economic power as fundamental bases, mentioned previously in relation to Canada. Black ignorance is portrayed as one of the most important obstacles in the advancement of Black people towards freedom and as a strategy of whites to maintain their hegemony. When Henry has already devised his insurrectionary plan, he comments to his supporters Charles and Andy that his biggest concern is “the present ignorant state of our people in the slave States” (39). Likewise, the lack of knowledge of older Blacks in the novel, such as Mummy Judy's who does not even know what “metallic” means or what a “compass” is, symbolizes the strategic use of Black ignorance on behalf of white society in order to prevent rebellion. The

importance offered to the need of education of African Americans in the novel may well be autobiographical. Unlike Delany's father, his mother was a free African American woman who was paradoxically menaced by Virginian legislators of being arrested precisely because of using her freedom to teach her children to read and write; this is why Delany had to leave Virginia and moved to Pennsylvania. Later on, presumably influenced by his mother's education, Delany attempted to continue with his education at even the highest level and attended Harvard Medical School "but was dismissed because of his color" (Levine, 2003: 1). These events could have been the foundations of the author's concern not only on the discriminatory practices of white society regarding education but on their relevance as means of keeping African Americans ignorant and, thus, preventing revolution. On the other hand, money, or rather the lack of it, is also presented as another anti-insurrection tool so that the achievement of economic power is a symbol of freedom. In chapter 19, Part I, Henry is still immerse in his long journey "from plantation to plantation [...], planting the seeds of future devastation and ruin to the master and redemption to the slave" and once in Texas he tells another slave man, Sampson, that "money is your[his] passport through that White Gap to freedom" (83-4).

Together with the appraisal of Black culture, there is a noteworthy addressing of race issues along the novel. Of course, white characters adhere to the established division of races; this is the case of Mrs. Franks who, in an attempt to support Henry's intentions of meeting his wife in Cuba, assures him that "Mrs. Van Winter, a true friend of *your* race, is shortly going to Cuba on a visit" (my emphasis, 22). Later on, Mrs. Van Winter is again mentioned by the narrator as a figure who "was by all regarded as a friend of *the Negro race*" (my emphasis, 56). The previously cited remarks on mulattoes are also introduced by the narrating voice of the novel and they significantly convey a racial message. The positive estimation of mulattoes' "Negro blood" is a strategy to praise Black culture which actually takes part in the division of races established by white hegemony. Similarly, ideas on racial purity and social stratification are suggested since, as quoted above, mulattoes are said to be "the least happy of all the classes" precisely because of their contaminated condition. This acceptance of race stratification is clearly evident when Henry reveals his real plan and states that he has "come to Cuba to help free *my[his] race*" (my emphasis, 195). Despite the novel participates in the race

division current at that time, the constant praise of Blacks over whites suggests that such a partaking is more part of the questioning of the suppression that Blacks were subjected to than an acknowledgement of white superiority. In this sense, the author seems to share the same concerns of other African American authors who –from George E. Clarke’s viewpoint already stated in Part II– struggle to assert Black culture and identity against a white cultural framework that disavows their existence and participation. The dialogic character of *Blake* can be clearly observed in relation to a contemporary author, Mary Ann Shadd Cary and her 1852 tract *A Plea for Emigration; Or, Notes of Canada West*. Both texts participate in a differential affirmation of blackness. Whereas in Delany’s novel Black culture is presented as superior to an oppressive white framework, Shadd’s non-fiction work introduces both Black and white cultures as equal. Likewise, both authors’ texts are epitomes of the Black diaspora in North America during slavery times since one of their primary concerns is the search of a suitable territory where Black freedom could be accomplished; whereas in Shadd’s tract Canada is clearly a utopian paradigm of liberty for non-white cultures, in Delany’s novel it analogously embodies the possibility of Black liberation and security but with some reluctance. Very significantly, both authors’ texts similarly point out and depict Canada as the ultimate space where Blacks could achieve the freedom and safety they longed for but maintaining contrasting positions. The differing perceptions both texts convey epitomize the diversity of Black ideology, culture, literature and identity at that time which significantly contrasts with the uniformitarian treatment of the so-called *minority* cultures either in the United States or Canada. Both writers’ differing postures do not suggest irreconcilability by any means but speak of the intrinsic diversity of ethnic cultures and literatures immerse in a cultural super-structure which has insisted in homogenizing their heterogeneity.

The connection of *Blake* with other African American literary works is even stronger for the novel includes references to slave narratives and songs –as that by Harriet Tubman previously mentioned– and even to specific African American activists and Black literary figures. According to the explanatory notes Floyd J. Miller introduces along the text in his 1970 edition, many of the songs, poems and references included in Delany’s novel have been inspired by slave narratives. For instance, in Chapter 19 from Part I, there is an allusion to this kind of Black Literature. During Henry’s journey along

American territories he gets on a steamboat in which he meets the already familiar Lewis Grimes; Lewis recognizes Henry Holland and tells him he is now a “stolen” slave while having “being a free man” the first time both met (81). According to Miller, “an incident of this sort was not merely the product of Delany’s imagination” but the reflection of a common practice of enslavers also mirrored in slave narratives such as those by Solomon Northrup and Peter Still. The fact that Delany includes this episode sharply contrasts with the representation of slavery by other authors such as Harriet Beecher Stowe in whose opinion this was not a habitual procedure (316). Later in the text –specifically in Chapter 22 in Part I– when Henry is in New Orleans a version of Stephen Collins Foster’s “Old Folks at Home” published in 1851 is sung by slaves and introduced by the omniscient narrating voice as follows:

Fastened by the unyielding links of the iron capable of despotism, reconciling themselves to a lifelong misery, they are seemingly contented by soothing their sorrows with songs and sentiments of apparently cheerful but in reality wailing lamentations (100).

This comment is not only eloquent regarding the voicing of Black oral literature it conveys but in relation to the critical posture of the narrator. Despite he later acknowledges the power of these literary forms for their “pathos of delicate tenderness”, this previous quotation also suggests a judgemental approach to these literary forms; the reconciliation “to a lifelong misery”, that is, with slavery’s atrocities and miseries and the lack of action that these literary forms conveyed are critically introduced in the novel (100).

The most specific reference to Black Literature is based on the inclusion of the Cuban poet Placido as an actual character of *Blake*. Placido, whose real name was Gabriel de la Concepción Valdés, was a famous Black poet whose writings cost him his life because he was found guilty of instigating insurrection through them. Once in Cuba, both characters hold a conversation in which Henry subscribes Placido’s views and practices. Henry reveals his plan of going to Matanzas<sup>64</sup>, joining a slaver’s boat which will stop on the African coast where he has connections among natives “who will make a powerful force in carrying out my[his] scheme on the vessel”; of course, Henry’s insurrectionary intentions are welcomed by Placido (198). The relevance of this passage

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<sup>64</sup> The name of Matanzas which in English means “slaughters” is a very interesting name for a slavery territory.

in the novel is threefold. First of all, it connects Delany's novel to Herman Melville's *Benito Cereno* first published serially in 1855 for it is an account of a slave rebellion on a Spanish merchant ship. This association suggests the wider scope of *Blake*'s literary links for it also refers to white literature and not exclusively to Black writings. Secondly, it reveals the diasporic and transnational conception of the Black nation, its culture and identity, and explains the terminological difficulties the novel entails. The Black nation is not depicted as being only imprisoned by the bonds of slavery in the United States but also in Cuba so that it is subjected to a constant and transnational diaspora in search of freedom. As far as *Blake* is concerned, the terms Black and African American are neither tautological nor exchangeable; in fact, this fiction work claims for a common and boundary-crossing Blackness regardless of white national frontiers and this is precisely why the employment of the term *Black* prevails over that of African American, Canadian or Cuban in this section. On the other hand, the inclusion of the figure Placido and not any other Black activist as Douglass, for example, who held more integrationist views, implies the advocacy of a differing posture towards slavery in order to defeat it, given Henry's strategies to provoke a Black revolt against whites along the novel.

The significance of this episode is even deeper since it is precisely when holding this conversation with a historical symbol of Black revolt such as Placido that Henry reveals his true identity. At Placido's request on his name, Henry states the following:

I am Carolus Henrico Blacus, your cousin and schoolmate, who nineteen years ago went to the Mediterranean. I dropped Carolus and Anglicized my name to prevent identify, going by the name of Henry Blake. (193)

In fact, it is not the first time that a naming shift, and hence an identity change, takes place in the protagonist. In Chapter 36, Part II, when Henry arrives to a Cuban "Hacienda", he replies to the question of a young woman on his name saying that he is called Gilbert, also to avoid being identified. In this way, readers are confronted with very significant details regarding identity issues. First of all, Henry Holland is revealed not to be the real name of the main character but the way he is called within the framework of US slavery. Besides, the deliberate shift from Henry to Gilbert to protect himself from slave-owners also suggests that these identity changes are actually survival strategies that Blacks were forced to carry out. Furthermore, the final acknowledgement of Henry's true identity as Carolus Henrico Blacus and his affirmation of the intentional

process of anglicizing are also eloquent about the adaptation process Blacks, their cultures and identities had to go through. Henry's forced identity moves can be said to epitomize Black cultural identity in English-speaking North America, equally subjected to constant changes, to varying adaptations to different cultural frameworks within which it has persistently been silenced by the mainstream, regardless of their pro- or anti-slavery backgrounds. This is the case of Canada where –as explained in Parts I and II– Black history and culture as well as some of the country's obscure episodes regarding the Black community have been made invisible despite not being an enslaving land.

From my viewpoint, the relevance of these previously mentioned references to Black Literature in *Blake* are also important from a New Historicist perspective since they contribute to the rewriting of Black North American literature. On the one hand, the inclusion of popular and frequently dismissed literary forms in English by Blacks offers them a credit and literary value too scarcely raised in previous fictional works. Through the inclusion of direct or indirect references to silenced authors within a white cultural mainstream, their contributions are voiced and thus brought into existence. On the other hand, the transnational mention to the literary figure of Placido speaks for the diasporic and boundary-crossing character of Black Literature. In this sense, it could be said that Delany is a pioneer since his novel also opened new paths to approach Black literary agency in North America.

The critical depiction of slavery carried out in *Blake* also revolves around its economic machinery which is presented as slavery's crucial basis unlike its racial ideology. The economic pillars of slavery are clearly epitomized by Judge Ballard who, having been born in a Northern and thus non-enslaving state, becomes interested in slave trade because of his eagerness to prosper economically. With such aim, Judge Ballard goes to Natchez together with Major Armsted to start the new business in collaboration with Henry's master, Colonel Franks. When Ballard and Armsted arrive, they hold a very eloquent conversation with Colonel Franks in which Ballard admits that he did not get involved in slave trade before because he "had conscientious scruples about the thing" (60). Until then, he had *only* bought Blacks for his own plantation and had never participated in further transactions by reselling them. As he states "a little sober reflection set me[him] right on that point" so that he decided "not only to buy and

hold, but buy and sell”, to which the Colonel replies stating “Capital, capital, by George! That’s conclusive” (60). Their remarks are not only meaningful in so far they present the economic basis of slavery but because of the irony they entail. A former non-slavery supporter whose social position is no other than a defender of law and justice actually changes his mind after careful consideration just because of monetary reasons; he is even encouraged by Colonel Franks as if they were not talking about trading with human beings whatsoever. In fact, precisely on the basis of his knowledge on legal issues, Judge Ballard states that the facts that “every free black in the country, North and South, are liable to enslavement by any white person” and “that persons of African descent have no rights that white men are bound to respect” are nothing but “a just construction of the law” (61). As if it was not enough, Major Armsted –who according to Zeugner is “the only liberal figure in *Blake*” (102)– adds his humorous touch and mocks about the Puritanism of those Northern philanthropists who support human rights. Armsted’s unscrupulousness is made evident at the end of Chapter 15 when he states the following:

Certainly! And I would just as readily hold a white as a black in slavery, were it the custom and policy of the country to do so. It is all a matter of self-interest with me; and though I am morally opposed to slavery, yet while the thing exists, I may as well profit by it, as others. (64)

This verbal exchange among Judge Ballard, Major Armsted and Colonel Franks is not only a clear paradigm of the anti-slavery message the novel entails but an excellent example of Delany’s mastery in fictionalizing his criticism on white pro-slavery society. This conversation offers a profound insight into an immoral system whose mainly economic pillars had fostered the creation of a complex racial framework to justify its hegemony. In fact, this last quotation also shows connections between slavery and colonialism. According to John Zeugner, it could be first considered an affirmation “that slavery is but one variant of colonial oppression against various *minority* groups and races” and, given the economic pillars of slavery mentioned before, both structures share “a simple economic rather than a psychological, prejudicial base” (my emphasis, 102). Moreover, the underlying irony of these three figures positioning and the histrionics of characters as Major Armsted also speak of the author’s command in characterization. Despite Hite’s observation on the fact that Henry is the only fully developed character in *Blake* is accurate, it has to be noted that the combination of remarks by different characters as these previously quoted offers a complex perspective



on the different sides of the slavery question (193). In a similar sense, the heterogeneity of Black characters, who are ignorant slaves, brave heroes, full or mixed blood Black African Americans, residents in Canada and Cuba, old and young men and women paralysed with fear or eager to follow Henry's insurrectionary advise, also conveys a much more intricate and sophisticated picture of the Black cause. From a feminist perspective, it has to be noted that female characters do not play crucial roles in the novel, being their main representatives Mummy Judy and Maggie. In other cases, women's voices are indirectly present but usually taking prominent part in the Black cause as in the case of "The Grand Council", in which their rights of participation and opinions are equally taken into account as those of their brothers (Chapter 61, Part II). This depiction can also be ascribed an autobiographical scope since, according to Levine, Delany contested patriarchy by considering women's education deeply important; he even encouraged them "to take their places as political and economic leaders" in his 1844 essay entitled "Young Women" (19). In any case, the conversation among Ballard, Armsted and Franks seems to portray Delany's transgressing ideas that slavery had no moral, ideological neither philosophical foundations but it was merely a matter of white economic profit.

The slavery system is also brought into question in the novel through the inclusion of episodes that reflect white atrocity. Precisely Ballard, Armsted and Franks attend at one of these events in which a Black boy is "trotting around like an animal" forced by his masters' whip which cut the boy's flesh and made him bleed (67). Unable to endure the vision and the boy's mercy requests, Ballard "involuntarily found his hand with a grasp on the whip, arresting its further application"; his act is scolded by Franks, who had remained unmoved, for not being a true "Southerner" (67). Other eloquent details are, for instance, the existence of "Negro-dogs" specially trained to chase and find runaway slaves and kill them; as stated by Old Colonel Sprout, "when you say 'nigger,' you needn't fear they'll ever go after anything but a nigger" (94). Another example appears in a recount of dead slaves by a Spaniard, for whom none is "worth naming" because they were just "a boy and a girl of three years of age –having died through the night for want of air and water" (223). In point of fact, these atrocities are also presented as counterpoints of slavery for whites themselves since, due to the cruel treatment of Blacks by slave-owners, the latter were forced to be constantly worried and

afraid of a black rebellion by which they could be equally oppressed and become victims of similar cruelties. As the narrating voice explains, “a sleeping awake or waking sleep, a living death or tormented life is that of the Cuban and American slaveholder. For them there is no safety” (305).

When travelling throughout the United States, Henry goes from Texas to “the Indian Nation near Fort Townson, Arkansas” (85). There he holds a conversation with Mr. Culver, “the intelligent old Chief of the United Nation” and his nephew Josephus Braser who are actually depicted as slave-owners although “not like the white men”; as Mr. Culver states the difference between white and Indian enslavers is that the latter group “work side by side with black man, eat with him, drink with him, rest with him and both lay down in shade together” (86). In consonance with the appraisal of Blackness mentioned before, Henry firmly replies first that “Africans have never permitted a subjugation of their country by foreigners as the Indians have theirs” so that Africa still belongs to Africans unlike America, “the home of the Indian” which “is now possessed and ruled by foreigners” (86). Henry’s remarks are very significant for he first takes into account the ethnic component of North America; secondly, refers to African history as counterpoint of First Nations history; and finally, offers a visionary insight into the history of dispossession First Nations went through and confronts these ‘Indian’ characters with the paradox of participating in white slavery after having been equally outraged by whites. It seems clear that Henry’s words contribute to the rewriting of North American history since, on the one hand, astonishing aspects on the connection of First Nations to slavery are revealed and, on the other, the history of white colonization, domination and suppression of First Nations territories, culture and identity are clearly stated. Although *Blake* is a fictional work and thus the historiographic value of historical comments like these could be questionable, the author supports the realism of the novel by constantly including footnotes in which different episodes are declared to be “real incidents” (85). The clearest aspect regarding the writing back of history that *Blake* conveys revolves around the reversal of comparison terms between blacks and whites and its consequent shift in meaning. Along the novel, white society is no longer placed at the top of historiography since blacks are said to be “an important element in the commercial and social relations of the world” (262). In this sense, the significance of colours is problematized for white is not

a synonym of superior; in fact, white is introduced as the absence of colour, as intruders in coloured territories “originally peopled and possessed by the Indians –a colored race– and a part of the continent in Central America by a pure black race” (287).

Thus far, it seems clear that Delany’s novel needs to be reconsidered not only as an early literary contribution to North American letters by a Black author but a challenging fiction work for the rethinking of race issues and North American history the text also conveys. The significance of the depiction of slavery from a Black viewpoint in *Blake* is not only based on the actual display of white atrocity but on the retelling of Black history the novel entails, concerning the United States as well as South America, Cuba, Canada, and of course Africa, all of them connected through the history of slavery. In this sense, *Blake* shows the various and complex interconnections among those countries and voices the diasporic nature of black history, culture and identity as well as deconstructs too benign fictionalizations of the history of Black slavery in North America, such as that of Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1852).

From my viewpoint, religion is the most significant element of the slavery system contested in Delany’s novel. I agree with Hite on the fact that “the novel’s tone suggests that religion, and not fear of punishment, stood as the major obstacle blocking a successful slave insurrection” (196). The main paradox raised in *Blake* is based on the contradiction between Christianity, which for instance promotes loving one’s neighbour, and slaveholders who profess this religion but who simultaneously mistreat and kill Black people. Chapter 8, Part I is quite eloquent in this respect. After the slave transfer of Henry from Franks to Harris has been settled, the “public outcry, at the slave prison of Captain John Harris” is announced (25). Before the bidding takes place, Henry is first conveniently derided by Harris who, given the demonstrations of dignity Henry shows, makes fun of him by asking him “have you ever been a member of the Congress?” (24). Immediately after, Henry is handcuffed and the bidding begins at one thousand dollars. Suddenly, it starts raining and the business needs a sheltered place to continue. The place chosen is no other than the church. Without any objections to such a contradiction, the auction continues by offering five hundred dollars more for Henry. As if this was not enough, this paradoxical situation is taken as basis to mock at Henry’s religious beliefs and Harris says to the audience: “Perhaps he’ll give us a sermon. [...]”

Can't you give us a sermon on Abolition?" (26). The tension of the situation is increased through the contrast between the absolute lack of concern of slaveholders and Mammy Judy and Daddy Joe's extreme anxiety expressed in their constant –but useless– interjections claiming for Lord's help. They beg the same Lord whose 'house' is actually being used for such terrible act. Moreover, in the previously quoted conversation among Judge Ballard, Major Armsted and Colonel Franks, Ballard admits that his wife "is the daughter of a clergyman" whom he affirms to be also "a good slaveholder" as if there was no incongruity whatsoever (61). By showing these paradoxes, from a new historicist perspective Delany's novel undoes some of the received notions of Christianity since it informs on how they have been historically constructed to serve white domination. In this sense, the Christian religion and its main device, the Bible, are introduced as other symbols of white domination.

Contradictions like these are indeed the bases that lead Henry to reverse Christian terms and affirm that "if I[he] ever were[w]as] a Christian, slavery has made me[him] a sinner" (103). Henry dares blaming this religion for admitting, and even supporting, the horrors of slavery and which has turned him into something he is not, a sinner. But Henry goes even further and also criticizes his Black brothers and sisters not only for having welcomed the religion of their oppressors but for allowing those religious beliefs to be the scapegoat of their sorrows instead of taking action like him. Religious beliefs and attitudes of Blacks as those showed by Mammy Judy and Daddy Joe who pray their almighty god but do nothing are also part of the criticism on religion the novel entails. Regarding the influence of religion on Blacks, in the comments previously cited from Henry to his supporters Charles and Andy about his insurrectionary plan, he also states the following:

They use the Scriptures to make you submit, by preaching to you the texts of 'obedience to your masters' and 'standing still to see the salvation,' and we must now begin to understand the Bible so as to make it of interest to us. (41)

From the previous quotation it can be deduced that what Henry actually condemns is the colonization of Black culture, history and identity through slavery tools such as religion. This is another example of the pioneering role of Delany's novel in advocating modern militancy for it shows that "Delany sees the whole structure of slavery and white society as assault upon the manhood of Negroes" (Zeugner: 102). Far from being an empty censure, it is also clear that his criticism towards his brothers and sisters about their

psychological colonization is constructive; it is aimed at reversing what they have been taught for their own benefit. In making the Bible “of interest to [them]” Henry implies that the same strategies whites have been employing to oppress them can also be stratagems to achieve freedom. In this way, not only the conflict between slavery and Christianity and the significance of religion as obstacle to freedom are raised but revolution and religion are depicted as complementary. This is what, in Hite’s opinion, the “rhetorical design” of Blake is actually based on, “that *Christianity and slavery*, and not religion and revolution, are incompatible concepts” (196).

Hite also suggests that the combination of Henry’s leadership with his insistence on religious issues arouses connections to a messianic character of his figure. In fact, Henry is depicted in the novel as “the destroying Angel” and “a messenger of light and destruction” (83, 101). His “gospel of insurrection” –to use Hite’s words– and declarations of the narrator on “the redemption of his race” as basis of Henry’s project are also revealing regarding his role as Black messiah. Besides, in Chapter 42, Part II, when Henry holds his conversation with Placido he claims for “drop[ing] the religion of our oppressors, and take[ing] the Scriptures for our guide and Christ as our example” (197). Taking into account Christ’s leading role and fearless defence of his beliefs, the fact he mentioned as an “example” by Henry is certainly meaningful; he subverts the significance of Christianity’s main figure since it now supports his revolutionary plan. In consonance with this subversion of Christianity, the literary intervention of Delany himself could be also regarded as a challenge of white power exertion through literature; by employing an inherited literary genre from the oppressive mainstream for very different aims, such as voicing white atrocity, raising slavery’s insights or writing back North American history, Delany is similarly subverting white culture. Despite I agree with Hite’s viewpoint, there are other signs in the novel which evoke a different denotation of Henry’s central role not so much connected to religion but to revolution in order to achieve freedom. His primary concerns seem to be regaining Black freedom for, in his own words, “whatever liberty is worth to the whites, it is worth to the blacks”, and taking revenge on whites for Maggie (192). The clearest affirmation of his not so messianic intentions takes place while in New Orleans, when after Mr. Seth and others’ acclaim to receive a prayer from Henry by kneeling and “bowed[ing] their heads to the floor”, he affirms the following:

I am not fit, brother, for a spiritual leader; my warfare is not Heavenly, but earthly; I have not to do with angels, but with men; not with righteousness, but wickedness. Call upon some brother who has more of the grace of God than I (103)

The final meeting of Henry and Maggie in Cuba could have been the closure of the novel but it is not. At the end of the novel and once reunited, Henry rises as Blake, the heroic leader of a black revolution which, with Placido's support, intends to defeat the Cuban government and US aspirations of dominating the island. Given *Blake's* non-romantic but realistic plot and primary concern on undermining white oppression and urging Black revolution, it seems consistent that the novel closes with Gondolier's vehement interjection when, "rejoicing as he left the room to spread among the blacks an authentic statement of the outrage", he exclaims: "Woe be unto those devils of whites, I say!" (313). His words prove that Henry's project of propagating his insurrectionary plan of Blacks has been fulfilled. On the other hand, it is necessary to point out that it does not seem to be a carefully thought closure for the novel since the actual plan has not yet been revealed in detail. It is difficult to affirm if Delany intended to enlarge the novel but some critics affirm the novel remains unfinished. In the introductory note to the 1970 edition of *Blake*, Miller explains that Delany's work probably "contains six chapters that have not yet been uncovered" and that they might have appeared "in the first four issues of *The Weekly Anglo-African* of May, 1862"; he even asks for help of any who has information on how to locate them (ix). Given the fact that at the end of the novel Henry is still in Cuba as leader of an insurrectionary army, according to Hite the supposedly absent chapters "might tie together the American slave insurrection plot and the Cuban black nationalist plans" (1974: 201). In any case this ending is somehow significant for it means the beginning of real action after plotting for a long time. Unfinished or not, the present analysis demonstrates that *Blake; or, the Huts of America* by Martin R. Delany needs, at least, reconsideration. From a Canadian literary viewpoint, it is a pioneering fiction work. *Blake* is not only the first novel in English by an African American but entails the first realistic and critical fictionalization of Canada from an African perspective. Delany's text demystifies and deconstructs the utopian devise of Canadian identity by being a clear paradigm of the power of literature as counter-history through its raising of, for instance, the country's colonial paradoxes and its identity complex in relation to the United States.

Furthermore, the novel offers a visionary insight into ethnic issues so that a subversion of current ideas and policies on multiculturalism is also developed. All these aspects connect *Blake* to other fiction works by other writers, ethnic or not, so that the novel can be said to take part in Canadian literary tradition and, thus, in its identity. In this sense, the figure of Delany and his literary contributions need to be taken into account as alternating paradigms which challenge Canada's mainstream literary discourses and the monolithic construction of its literary identity. As far as US literature is concerned, Delany's novel is equally significant for its counter-historical discourse on race and slavery since it offers a profound insight into an immoral system whose mainly economic pillars had fostered the creation of a complex racial framework to justify its hegemony. The colonization, or rather the suppression, of Black culture, history and identity is also at stake as the challenging appraisal of Black power and superiority as well as the critical approach to slavery tools –such as Christianity and the exertion of violence– demonstrate. In this sense, social criticism is fundamental in the novel since education and economic power are brought up as hindrances established by white mainstream society to prevent Black insurrection and, hence, crucial means in the acquisition of Black freedom. Regarding both Canada and the United States at the same time, the alternating character of Delany's text seems also to question nationalistic constructions of cultural identity in North America; it is certainly meaningful that *Blake* has been persistently dismissed as an important literary achievement by both US and Canadian institutions when attempting to describe/construct cultural identities. Regardless of *Blake's* connection to both Canadian and US letters, its main thrust is rooted in Black Literature in English. As explained in this section, the protagonist of the novel is an early paradigm of a black fictional hero which undermines previous condescending depictions of Blackness and whose forced identity subjection, adaptation and shift can be said to epitomize Black cultural identity in English-speaking North America. Delany's text raises and praises Black literary culture and identity by voicing and, thus, bringing into existence Black North American Literature so that the writing of a literary tradition is also at stake. In doing so, the novel also gives expression to the diverse and diasporic nature of Black North American culture and identity and questions the uniformitarian treatment of the so-called *minority* cultures either in the United States or Canada.

VI.3 A BRIEF NOTE ON EARLY CANADIAN JUVENILE FICTION IN ENGLISH: AGNES MAULE MACHAR'S *FOR KING AND COUNTRY* (1874) AND MARGARET MARSHALL SAUNDERS'S *BEAUTIFUL JOE* (1894)

From the period after the publication of *Blake; or, the Huts of America* by Martin R. Delany between 1859 and 1862 and Rosanna Mullins Leprohon's *Antoniette de Mirecourt; or, Secret Marrying and Secret Sorrowing* in 1864, the disregarded literary figure of Agnes Maule Machar stands out for not having even enjoyed the reissuing of her works as in the case of Leprohon's novel. Machar (1837-1927) was born and died in Kingston, Ontario; she was a first-generation Canadian and descendant of immigrant Scottish parents with a highly religious and educated background. Her father, John Machar, a theologian and preacher of the Church of Scotland, was both the second Principal and one of the founders of what today is known as Queen's University, institution which seems not to have officially recognized his daughter's figure, at least during the early twentieth century. According to R. W. Cumberland's 1927 article on Machar, she "was connected by so many ties" to this institution so that he considers this early lack of acknowledgement regretful (332). Very probably her education and environment had some impact on her development of an extensive and successful literary career which seems to have started in her teenagehood (Gerson in Lecker, David and Quiqley, 1993: 46).

In consonance with Cumberland's remarks, Machar as a Canadian literary figure seems to have been similarly overlooked. Aside from some mentions in general anthologies and wider, although scant, approaches to her life and contributions like a 1977 M.A. Thesis, her works are currently "all out of print now" as well as a thorough bibliographical research on her works is still to be attained (Gerson in Lecker, David and Quiqley, 1993: 47). This being so, the case of Machar is paradigmatic in relation to the previously explained equation no reprint/no existence in English Canadian Literature which is reinforced by the still prevalent critical disagreement as far as her fiction production is concerned. Whereas in early critical sources such as Rhodenizer's *Canadian Literature in English* seven works by Machar appear to have been published between 1870 and 1904, later literary histories coincide with some of the titles mentioned in Rhodenizer's compilation but differ regarding others. Rhodenizer, Gerson's entry in Lecker's 1993 edition of *ECW's Biographical Guide to Canadian*



*Novelists*, as well as Lecker, Jack David, and Ellen Quiqley edition of *Canadian Writers and Their Works: Fiction Series* (1983- ) and Benson and Toye as editors of *The Oxford Companion to Canadian Literature* (1997) coincide in ascribing authorship to Machar regarding *Katie Johnston's Cross, a Canadian Tale* (1870), *For King and Country; A Story of 1812* (1874), *Down the River to the Sea* (1894), and *The Heir of Fairmount Grange* (1895). They also agree as far as *Roland Graeme, Knight: A Novel of Our Time* is concerned but cite a different publication year; while according to Rhodenizer it was first published in 1894 and for Gerson and Benson and Toye this took place in 1892. In all these compilations, except Rhodenizer's, *Lucy Raymond; or, The Children's Watchword* (1871) is also mentioned within the fiction produced by Machar. On the other hand, Rhodenizer and Benson and Toye include *Marjorie's Canadian Winter; A Story of the Northern Lights* (1892) among Machar's works but it is not mentioned in both editions of the literary histories in which Lecker participates. Unlike in the rest of these anthologies, in Rhodenizer's *Canadian Literature in English* a work entitled *The Quest of the Fatal River* is said to have been written by Machar and published in 1904, just as only Benson and Toye cite *Lost and Won; A Story of Canadian Life* which apparently had a serial publication during 1874 in the periodical *The Canadian Monthly*.

The previous controversy is even more significant when taking into account that Machar differs from contemporary Canadian-born women authors since she protrudes for being "the sole locally-born woman author of a book published before 1860 to go on a *substantial literary career*" (my emphasis; Gerson, 1994: 20). Her considerable contribution to Canadian letters not only through fiction but also poetry, articles for the most prominent Canadian newspapers of her time such as *The Canadian Monthly and National Review* or *The Week*, biographies, translations and even history books like *Story of Old Kingston* (1908) places her at the centre of the authorization process of the literary role as solid ground for female professionalism. According to Carole Gerson, Machar and contemporary women writers were already receiving the support of a "a younger generation, in the 1850s still publishing their early work in periodicals, whose most visible members would be Rosanna Mullins Leprohon and May Agnes Fleming" (1994: 20). The literary agency of Machar, Leprohon and Fleming seems then to intertwine because of their power exertion as professional women writers and, I would add, through the irregular consideration of their contributions. As a female author and

regardless of her extensive literary career, Machar's preference for her pseudonyms such "A.M.M.", "Canadiensis", her most known pen-name of "Fidelis" and, as Gerson suggests, perhaps others such as "A.A." and "F." is worth noting since it implies that some hindrances against female authorship were still in force at that time (in Lecker, David and Quiqley, 1993: 46). In spite of this, women issues seem to have been under transformation during Machar's Victorian period for International Council of Women held its first meeting in 1888 and she was "the first Canadian to be named a life member" of such an institution (Benson and Toyne: 701). Her contributions to the Canadian periodical *The Week* together with Sara Jeannette Duncan are equally meaningful regarding women's issues since they implied both authors' "commitment to improving the lot of women" (Lecker, David and Quiqley, 1983- : 207). Unlike most previous and contemporary women writers, she remained unmarried so that she was freer to devote to literature, although Leprohon's case is very significant in this respect for having born thirteen children while not abandoning writing.

Apart from developing an extensive literary career, Machar actually received the approval of readers and critics of the time both inside and outside Canada. Three of her early fiction works *Katie Johnston's Cross, a Canadian Tale* (1870), *Lucy Raymond; or, The Children's Watchword* (1871) and *For King and Country; A Story of 1812* (1874) were awarded with different prizes mainly as fiction productions addressed to juvenile audiences following the axioms of the Sunday School library (Gerson in Lecker, David and Quiqley, 1993: 46). The postulates of this 'school' which promoted didactic fiction seem to have been very influential at that period as far as women and children's literature are concerned. In fact, the morality of Machar's works fiction as "an antidote to doubt and scepticism" place her as "an important precursor of the two most popular writers Canada has produced: Charles W. Gordon ("Ralph Connor") and Nellie McClung" (Lecker, David and Quiqley, 1983- : 207). Moreover, Machar's participation in the previously mentioned Canadian periodicals, *The Week* and *The Canadian Monthly and National Review*, actually offer a clear idea on the literary context and tradition in which she was immerse. As stated in *Canadian Writers and Their Works: Fiction Series*, by taking part in these publications Machar and other male and female authors as Duncan "shaped the country's intellectual and literary environment: inquiring and occasionally esoteric, but always genteel and, ultimately,

safe” (207). It seems clear then, that Machar’s works were a product of her time; as a writer, she was strongly involved in the Victorian period when temperance, patriotic and imperial views, and morality were current. The extent of her involvement with Victorian philosophy was so high that she is said to have even felt somehow an alien at the turn of the century, although, “like a true Victorian optimist”, she also tried to adapt to the new situation (Cumberland: 331).

But her engagement, and perhaps lack of wider perspective, has also affected the later consideration of her literary production since as R. W. Cumberland suggests, “she belongs[ed] so completely to the nineteenth century that the twentieth century cannot[could not] accept her with enthusiasm” (333). Rooted in Victorianism is the didactically moral focus of Machar’s fiction which is precisely taken by some critics, such as Cumberland and Gerson, as one of the weaknesses of her novels. Following Cumberland, it is “not surprising that Miss Machar scored no marked success” in the novel genre since “she was interested in causes and ideals, rather than in personalities” and lacked the necessary “high technical skills and broad experience” (333). Despite Gerson suggests that discarding Machar’s fiction because of its didacticism is perhaps a simple task, she also states that her “imaginative work displays the inevitable shortcomings of morally earnest fiction” (in Lecker, David and Quiqley, 1993: 46). From the fiction works she produced, the three early pieces mentioned above –*Katie Johnston’s Cross, a Canadian Tale* (1870), *For King and Country; A Story of 1812* (1874) and *Lucy Raymond; or, The Children’s Watchword* (1871)– thanks to which Machar won three literary prizes are mainly addressed to juvenile audiences. A clear proof can be found in the dedication to *For King and Country* by the author herself where she affirms that it is a “tale” devoted “to All Young Canadians”; her didactic and patriotic aims are also revealed there since she also unfolds her intention to “stimulate them[All Young Canadians] to endeavour, in the strength of that righteousness which alone exalteth a nation, to make the future of CANADA abundantly worthy of its past” (1874: ‘Dedication’). On the other hand, *Roland Graeme, Knight: A Novel of Our Time* (1892), *Down the River to the Sea* (1894), and *The Heir of Fairmount Grange* (1895) were written for an adult audience according to Gerson (in Lecker, David and Quiqley, 1993: 47). From these three, only *Roland Graeme* seems appealing nowadays since it conveys “a serious attempt to deal with socio-economic issues” (Benson and Toye:

701). Although all these works entail a significant starting point for further researches, given the higher success during Machar's times of her juvenile fiction which does not conform to the goals of this dissertation, a thorough analysis of one of her novels will not be included. In any case, this brief mention to her figure and works has been considered appropriate given their significance as paradigms of the fact that there is still a lot of critical and archaeological work to do in relation to early Canadian Literature. Her strong role as female author during Victorian times and the absence of reprints of all her works seems also eloquent and links her to other women writers mentioned in this dissertation as epitomes of the fallacy of Canadian literary history, tradition and identity as non-patriarchal realms.

In the period when Agnes Maule Machar was developing her literary career, other female authors also took the pen and devoted her professional agency to literature. This is the case of the already mentioned May Agnes Early, also known as May Agnes Fleming, some of whose works were published in the 1870s. A full section devoted to her figure and works is included below, mainly focusing on her 1880 novel *Lost by a Woman*. In these years, many other novels almost forgotten today were published to which Rhodenizer's compilation *Canadian Literature in English* offers access. The most generally recognized novel of this period by Canadian criticism is *The Golden Dog* (1877) by William Kirby which according to Logan in the early decades of the twentieth century needed to be considered "as more important in the *development* of Canadian fiction than are Richardson's and Rosanna Mullins' romances, and as worthy of a more significant status in Canadian creative literature" (94).

Twenty years after the publication of Agnes Maule Machar's *For King and Country*, the figure of another similarly dismissed woman writer who succeeded in juvenile fiction stands out. In point of fact, Margaret Marshall Saunders wrote Canada's first international best-seller entitled *Beautiful Joe* and published in 1894 which was "the first to sell over a million copies, and the first to achieve multiple translation: in eighteen languages" (Waterston in MacMillan, McMullen and Waterston: 137). Moreover, Marshall Saunders contributed to the "realistic animal story" known as the first original Canadian genre. *Beautiful Joe* was Saunders' proposal for a contest organized by the The American Humane Education Society which offered a substantial price for a children's story which could emulate Ann Sewell's *Black Beauty* success

since apparently “libraries for the young needed books to *teach* the reader *how* to live in sympathy with the animal world” (Blakeley: 232). It is clear then that her greatest success was actually a guided incursion into literature; it followed certain established rules, was aimed at a specific readership and stuck to common criteria in order to get wider publishing. In fact, although Waterston affirms that it also appeals to adult readers as the story contains a wider message behind the animal adventures, it will not be analysed in detail in this dissertation since it was a story mainly intended and addressed to juvenile readers. In any case, both the success of Saunders’ story as well as her literary career deserve a brief mention since the relevance offered to her figure and works by Canada’s mainstream criticism reinforces the ideas exposed in this dissertation on the silencing of certain early writers, just as in the case of Machar.

In spite of Saunders’ success in such a ground-breaking Canadian genre, Ernest Thompson Seton and Charles G. D. Roberts are still its canonized representatives. One of the Canadian literary histories which praise Saunders’ work is *Highways of Canadian Literature* (c1924) by John Daniel Logan in which her work is mentioned in relation to Roberts and Seton as a major contribution to the genre. It seems very interesting that precisely an anthology written and published during Saunders’ times entails an appraisal of her figure and work as representative of Canadian Literature. According to Logan, her techniques in characterizing animals are closer to those of Seton rather than Roberts both widely mentioned and analysed as fathers of the genre while their works are subsequent to her contribution which has been unevenly acknowledged. Perhaps, as Waterston suggests, Saunders’ ascription of human features to her animal characters might have influenced critics in despising *Beautiful Joe* whereas, from my viewpoint, it could also be regarded as an innovation. On the other hand, the “alienated majesty” Logan ascribes to Saunders’ work given its long international voyage before coming back home as a literary landmark could also be taken as a factor in the unequal treatment of her story (298). Paradoxically, such an internationalization highlighted Canada’s adequacy as a literary landscape.

*Beautiful Joe* opened and marked Saunders’ path into literature. On the one hand, it was her first incursion and her greatest success; on the other hand, it later set some of the most important changes in her literary career. As Waterston explains, it seems that at the beginning it drove her to focus onto the unfortunate as her stories of

orphan girls demonstrate; then, when following her father's advice she wrote a sequel titled *Beautiful Joe's Paradise*, lively human characters acting as social agents appeared in her fiction; and finally, after the revision of *Beautiful Joe* in order to publish an extended version, a maturing process in her characterization became evident. After such a worldwide success she continued her literary career and published many other short stories as those gathered in the collection *For the Other's Boy Sake* (1896) –written while attending at Dalhousie University which had recently opened her doors to female students–. She continued developing her mastery in animal stories as for instance in *Alpatok: The Story of an Eskimo Dog* (1906) at a time when this type of fiction reached an outstanding recognition in North America. Not only Seton published her animal adventures but also Jack London.

Moreover, Saunders also dedicated her literary activity to non-fiction through essays on different social concerns. Such an incursion into social issues must be regarded as challenging because at that time “women had no direct voice on public policy and little access to substantive discussions of problems” (Waterston in MacMillan, McMullen and Waterston: 157). And more interestingly in relation to the present dissertation, she wrote novels too. In Logan's literary history Saunders is not only mentioned due to this story of a dog as her most famous contribution to Canadian letters but because of some of her novels as important landmarks in the evolution of the genre in Canada. *My Spanish Sailor* published in London in 1889 was her first fiction romance; it was signed not by Margaret but by “Marshall Saunders”, that is, by a “de-feminized” author who hid her true female identity perhaps because of the literary restrictions towards women artists in her time (Waterston in MacMillan, McMullen and Waterston: 143). Again, the issues of authority and authorship come to light in a country like Canada where, as mentioned in previous sections, critics have maintained that literary institutions have been lenient to female writers. *The House of Armour* –a novel presumably written during her stay at Boston University (1895-97)– was published in Philadelphia in 1897. Later in 1898 *Rose à Charlitte* and/or *Rose of Acadie* –being the same novel– were published in the United States and Great Britain with a different title due to copyright issues. Just as most of the authors included in this chapter, Saunders was published first outside her native country. After *Rose à Charlitte* other novels by Saunders as *Deficient Saints: A Tale of Maine* (1899) or *Tilda Jane: An*

*Orphan in Search of a Home* (1901), whose protagonist could be regarded as a precursor of the more famous orphan girls in *The Wizard of Oz* and *Anne of the Green Gables*, saw the light. After some years travelling from Halifax, where Saunders kept her residence, to the United States and even Europe, and a period of personal instability, Margaret Marshall Saunders took up her literary career again with a vigorous novel. In *The Girl from Vermont: The Story of a Vacation School Teacher* (Boston, 1910) she brought up women's authority regarding social issues and highlighted the patriarchal crossroads which held back their will to contribute while having to cope simultaneously with their tasks as mothers and housewives. For this novel she created a female hero, Patty Green, through whom she raised her dissent and took sides in the women's rights movement for suffrage that was taking place at that time. The next and perhaps the most interesting of all Saunders' novels is not mentioned in Logan's *Highways of Canadian Literature* maybe because it was published short after his literary history. Of *Esther de Warren: The Story of a Mid-Victorian Maiden* (New York, 1927) Saunders herself wrote: "Esther is my favourite book" (qtd. in MacMillan, McMullen and Waterston: 166). It is not surprising that she liked her novel so much for it is a great achievement in her literary career; it seems the culmination of a woman writer who felt much freer and independent in attempting the pen as the use of a strong woman protagonist and female narrator for the first time proves. Unfortunately, it was published later than Sara Jeannette Duncan's *The Imperialist* (1904) so that a profound analysis will be left for further researches and articles.

It seems clear then that despite her focusing on stories for a juvenile readership, the figure of Margaret Marshall Saunders (1861-1947) deserves careful attention. She was a challenging single woman who did business trips to New York "when single women seldom took a business trip to New York, and never alone!" (Blakeley: 236), and who taught as means of keeping up with her literary career. In fact, Saunders had to endure from low income at the end of her career after having published the first Canadian best seller at home and abroad; as Blakeley explains, she received the economic support of the Canadian Writers' Foundation (137). Moreover, she pioneered in one of the major contributions of Canada to world literature through her animal stories, and challenged literary conventions by voicing women and ethnic members through the introduction of powerful and meaningful female and ethnic characters, as

well as rendering a space to their social claims and restoring their active and crucial literary roles. It seems at least curious that her works have been overlooked by Canadian institutions after having been highly acknowledged in her time as *Highways of Canadian Literature* by John Daniel Logan shows.

#### VI.4 CHALLENGING SENTIMENTALITY: EMPOWERED WOMEN IN *LOST FOR A WOMAN*. A NOVEL BY MAY AGNES EARLY FLEMING (1880)

After my reading of this early Canadian work in English by May Agnes Early Fleming entitled *Lost for a Woman* and published in 1880, I can only agree with Lorraine McMullen that it actually is a fine novel. According to McMullen, “*Lost for a Woman*, which began in October 1879, is Fleming’s best novel” (McMullen in MacMillan, McMullen and Waterston: 74). Following the thread of the rest of novelists and novels approached in Part III of this dissertation, both the author and work analysed in the present section have been equally affected by the apparent oblivion, or rather reluctance, on behalf of English Canadian mainstream criticism to innovate and explore the production of unevenly considered literary figures. Being this the case of a female writer, the so-claimed non-patriarchal character of English Canadian literary history, tradition and identity is again brought into question. In spite of not being Fleming’s most successful novel neither during her times nor later, *Lost for a Woman* is analysed here precisely because of being another frequently dismissed piece within English Canadian fiction, her “best novel”, as McMullen suggests, and her last fiction work in which her evolution as novelist becomes evident.

Before going deep into this novel, attention must be paid to the figure of May Agnes (Early) Fleming and her literary career in order to grasp her outstanding role as an early English Canadian female novelist who “did nothing but write” (McMullen in MacMillan, McMullen and Waterston: 53). Moreover, awareness on some autobiographical details can only foster a renewed study and deeper comprehension of



*May Agnes (Early) Fleming, 1840-1880 (MacMillan, McMullen and Waterston 'Illustrations')*



her novel. Born in 1840 in New Brunswick, May Agnes Early was a first-generation Canadian descendant of Irish immigrants who settled in one of Canada's major ports of the time, Saint John. Daughter of a large family at first, May Agnes and her brother James Patrick remained the only children after the death in infancy of the other three of siblings; the wide age difference between both May Agnes and James Patrick who was almost a generation younger perhaps provoked that she "was thus brought up virtually as an only child" (McMullen in MacMillan, McMullen and Waterston: 53). In spite of her parents illiteracy, she received a strong education at the exclusively female educative institution of the Convent of the Sacred Heart where "read and write the English language correctly and elegantly are[were] decidedly the most important parts of a good education" (qtd. in 54). She seems to have been an eager reader although not counting on a strong support at home; she had to turn to story papers for reading material which may have influenced her early participation as literary agent precisely with stories for that type of periodicals. Just as her education, the environment in which May Agnes grew up as child and teenager in the very active port city Saint John seems to have influenced her professional career as literary author and both are reflected in *Lost for a Woman*. When already making her way into a professional literary career, in 1865 she married a younger boilermaker, John William Fleming, dropped her family name Early and took her husband's surname Fleming by which she is most known nowadays<sup>65</sup>. John William seems not to have matched his wife "in education, intelligence, and material success" but both started an apparently good marriage and had four children (65). May Agnes, from then onwards known as Fleming, "like so many other had an intemperate husband and she supported herself and her children" (Papashvily: 181). In fact, May Agnes seems to have disallowed her husband from inheriting her fortune in favour of her children and clearly stated it in her will. Perhaps her stronger economic power in relation to her husband fostered some kind of complex within a man in a still mainly patriarchal society; his unrestrained character which hampered the family's harmonious existence did not help at all and they got finally

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<sup>65</sup> In spite of the fact that I consider more appropriate to name her May Agnes Early given her later separation from her husband, the surname Fleming is used in this section for matters of better identification of the author. Sticking to her family name of Early could provoke some misunderstanding regarding her authorship which is not at all desirable taking into account the dismissal that her figure and work still suffer.

separated. The success of her early stories brought her a contribution in exclusivity to one of America's –and not Canada's– most circulated newspapers, the *Saturday Night*, where her fame was to be increased thanks to her serially-published thrilling story *The Baronet's Bride*. As a result, another American periodical the *New York Weekly* –which together with the *New York Ledger* were the two prominent American story periodicals of the time– made her a better economic offer and she resigned from the *Saturday Night*. As stated by Papashvily, the *New York Weekly* paid Fleming –who is significantly identified as “Mrs. Southworth's most successful imitator”– “\$15,000 for two stories a year” (181). The serial instalments of her early stories in the *New York Weekly* fostered their later publication in bookform by an American publisher, Carleton, who “paid her 15 per cent royalty” (181). Due to her contribution to this New York periodical and stronger connection to American publishers, the Fleming family moved to Brooklyn in 1875 where she bought a house at her own expense and continued her literary career. Her move to the United States speaks of the alternating character of Fleming as literary figure which, as in the case of most female and ethnic authors mentioned in this chapter, may have had some impact on her consideration by English Canadian criticism. While in Brooklyn, she seems to have been a very conscientious writer since “on May 1<sup>st</sup> each year she began a new story and wrote from exactly nine in the morning until noon each day for six weeks” (181). She was, indeed, devoted to her literary profession. She belonged to that “younger generation” of Canadian female authors that Carole Gerson mentions who participated in “establishing authorship as a valid occupation for Canadian-born women” and supported other women writers such as Agnes Maule Machar (1994: 20). May Agnes (Early) Fleming unexpectedly died in 1880 and left a great deal of wealth for her inheritors.

This brief biographical sketch makes May Agnes' outstanding character as a woman in the mid nineteenth century very clear; she was an independent and strong woman, economically and intellectually, who kept her family going, moved to another country for professional reasons and did not hesitate to separate from her husband. As a woman and literary author of her time she also stands out for not having resigned her profession in favour of domestic obligations since, as McMullen states “there was never any chance that Fleming, unlike her contemporary Rosanna Leprohon, could give up her writing in the early years of housekeeping and childbearing” (in MacMillan,

McMullen and Waterston: 64). It could be said that she stood for the 'New Woman' who, although affected by the social constraints of her society regarding wifedom and motherhood, struggled for her independence both in mentality and income.

Such a personal position in-between freedom and domesticity of Fleming is reflected in her fiction works which, according to Benson and Toye, actually "achieve a balance between the domestic and the exotic" (406). As Fleming herself, most of her works alternate between innovation and tradition, being the latter inscribed within the conventions of sentimentality. At least eight early stories by Fleming were published in different periodicals, such as her first "The Last of the Mountjoys", all written along her teenage years in which her religious school education and the influence of the stories she read in similar papers become evident. From her first novels, *Sybil Campbell; or, The Queen of the Isle* published in 1861 is "a novel with a remarkably intricate plot" and maybe inspired by Edgar Allan Poe whose success brought subsequent reissuing with the same title in 1863, as *An Awful Mystery* in 1875 and as *Queen of the Isle* in 1886 (McMullen in MacMillan, McMullen and Waterston: 60). Regardless of its wide popular acceptance, Rhodenizer does not mention it in his 1965 anthology *Canadian Literature in English*. From 1863 to 1879 at least twenty four novels by Fleming seem to have been published although the authorship of some is still doubtful; this is the case of *The Sister's Crime* and *The Mystery of Mordaunt Hall* which were issued anonymously but ascribed to Fleming in a note of 1872 that appeared in the *London Journal* (McMullen in MacMillan, McMullen and Waterston: 69). Apart from these anonymous works and just as other contemporary female writers like Agnes Maule Machar, Fleming also employed pseudonyms as Cousin Mary Carleton which was to become her most frequent pen-name already used in one of her early stories "The Lady's Choice". The hiding of a female novelist's identity is once again at stake and is meaningful regarding the literary background in which she developed her career; in the case of Fleming, it seems paradoxical that, in spite of being a professionally and economically successful female author, she had to mask behind a pen-name. In this respect and following McMullen's study, it is also very significant that in the 1871 census of her hometown, Saint John, her profession is not even mentioned "despite her popular and commercial success, despite earning an income far beyond that which a Saint John boilermaker could even dream of, and despite her traditional duties as wife

and mother” (in MacMillan, McMullen and Waterston: 65). No matter the pressure that her cultural environment exerted, she was also defiant as the publication of *Eulalie; or, A Wife’s Tragedy* circa 1864 demonstrates; according to McMullen, it is a novel with certain erotic touches which challenges conventions by fictionalizing marriage as starting point of the central characters’ problems, including a half-black female counterpart to the female protagonist and not offering a happy resolution for the heroine which appeared under her maiden name Early (in MacMillan, McMullen and Waterston: 62-3). From the novels published between 1863 and 1879, *The Baronet’s Bride; or, A Woman’s Vengeance* whose serial issuing in the *Saturday Night* started in 1868 is to be noted since it is meaningful regarding Fleming’s participation in the evolution of the detective novel. After an intense contribution with weekly published novels for the *New York Weekly* from 1873 until 1877, her writing rhythm slowed down because of health and family issues. However, she was able to produce another very successful novel *The Heir of Charlton: A Story of Shaddeck Light* first published serially in the *New York Weekly* starting in 1877, and to continue until the highpoint of her career and last novel *Lost for a Woman* in 1879. All of Fleming’s novels enjoyed a wide acceptance by popular audiences of her time, being one of the reasons the increase of reading audiences during the nineteenth century due to the “extension of education and expansion of literacy” (56). Notwithstanding, she was a prolific and successful novelist whose achievements have been unevenly echoed in mainstream English Canadian anthologies so that she has not been taken into account as sound figure in the construction of *the* literary tradition and identity of the country as they are currently known.

Following McMullen, all of Fleming’s novels share aspects such as the sentimental plot, the gothic elements and the inclusion of two central but contrasting women characters. The conflict between these female figures in her fiction recalls the representation of women authors’ divided selves in-between adherence to established domestic roles and their challenging literary authorship again raised by McMullen –and already explained in part II– in relation to other early women writers’ characters such as Frances Brooke’s Emily Montague and Arabella Fermor. Fleming’s role as a literary author is actually paradigmatic regarding the ideas that Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar expose in one of the most important feminist approaches to literature *The*

*Madwoman in the Attic* (1979). Just as her “sisters”, she was “trapped in the specifically literary constructs” of her time but used them to write herself into contrasting female protagonists whose challenge of plain angelic fictionalizations of women affected the regard of her productions on behalf of the mainly patriarchal critical institutions (Gilbert and Gubar: xi). The fact that she was frequently referred to as “the New England housewife” so that it seems that “Fleming’s domestic identity took precedence at least publicly over her professional one” clearly speaks of the cultural background in which she dared to carry a professional role in literature (McMullen in MacMillan, McMullen and Waterston: 72). Moreover, the fact that novels like Fleming’s were and are still labelled as popular and mainly interesting from a feminine perspective may also have had some impact on criticism; according to Kay Mussell “women’s fiction has suffered from insufficient critical attention in comparison to other formulas because women lack the access to outlets of expression and the legitimacy as subjects necessary to provoke scholarly controversy and study” (x). From my viewpoint, the most striking aspect of her dismissal as literary agent relies on the fact that she openly acknowledged her devotion to literature by stating “I did nothing but write”; perhaps, that was her biggest mistake. In any case, the exertion of power through her professional role as woman writer connects Fleming to Agnes Maule Machar and Rosanna Leprohon, the same as the irregular consideration of their contributions does.

From an English Canadian perspective, *English-Canadian Literature to 1900* by R. G. Moyles holds a twofold relevance; first, because Fleming is actually mentioned but under the epigraph of “Minor Authors”, and second, because it is stated that Carl F. Klinck’s 1965 *The Literary History of Canada* is “the only critical notice with could be found” about Fleming (1976: 136). This last quotation is very eloquent in relation to the reluctance of mainstream Canadian criticism to re-cover early authors since as late as 1976 when Moyles’s literary history was published, that is, around a century after Fleming’s works saw the light, only one critical mention to her is found; perhaps, the consequences that such recoveries implied, like the re-consideration of an already established canon, provoked such a resistance. From 1965 onwards, a shy shift seems to have been taking place regarding the critical attention that Fleming’s figure and works have received; following the study of anthologization of Part II, three literary histories until 1980 include her while five take her into account after that year. Once again, it is

necessary to turn to specific critical approaches, in this occasion from a feminist perspective, to grasp the significance of her literary contributions which, at the same time, offer an idea on the degree of disregard to which they have been relegated. As most of the quotations cited here demonstrate, the chapter on May Agnes Fleming by Lorraine McMullen included *The Silenced Sextet* is still today the most thorough source of information about Fleming. But during her time things do not seem to have been very different within Canadian literary spheres regardless of her success; not only most of her novels saw the light thanks to the support of American publishers and story papers but Canadian editors seem to have illegally issued her works, something about which Fleming herself complained (McMullen in MacMillan, McMullen and Waterston: 68). As it could not have been otherwise, her death was mainly echoed in American newspapers which took the opportunity to devote positive commentaries on her literary career; the *New York Telegram*, for instance, declared that she “occupied on this side of the Atlantic a position akin to that won by Miss Braddon in England” (qtd. in MacMillan, McMullen and Waterston: 68).

*Lost for a Woman* is paradigmatic within Fleming’s literary career. Despite her previous novels also challenged established axioms, this novel is especially subversive since it ironically overturns the basis of the sentimental literary tradition while following its conventions. It is a highly complex novel since its plot includes a wide range of characters –some of whom experience different changes in identity– and different international settings, although the story mainly focuses on Canada where the story begins and ends. In the small Canadian town of Clangville there is a boarding-house for men run by Mrs. Hopkins and where Jemima Ann, her niece, works. The circus comes to town and they have to host Mademoiselle Mimi Trillon, “the famous bare-back rider and trapeze performer” and her little daughter Snowball, against Mrs. Hopkins’ will (Fleming 1880: 8)<sup>66</sup>. “That woman will give us trouble, such as we ain’t had in many a long day, afore we’re rid of her!” Mrs. Hopkins exclaims prophetically (24). And that is precisely what happens; apart from giving them a hard time with her lax behaviour which distances her from Jemima Ann’s sentimental ideas on her as a literary heroine, she dies in an accident in the circus so that her child is left alone.

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<sup>66</sup> All direct quotations from *Lost for a Woman* by Fleming come from the 1880 edition of the text included in the section on Primary Sources.

Fortunately, before dying Mlle Mimi courageously defies Madam Valentine, a summer aristocratic resident in town, who apparently is Snowball's grandmother; George Valentine, Madam Valentine's only son, fell crazily in love with a circus woman –who is no other than Mademoiselle Mimi Trillon– married her contradicting his mother, was disinherited and had to earn his own living enlisting in a ship which is wrecked so that he is believed to have died. When Mlle Mimi passes away, Madam Valentine feels somehow obliged to support at least economically her newly discovered granddaughter. With the help of a mysteriously compassionate Mr. Paul Farrar, the nephew and only inheritor of Madam Valentine's large fortune called Vane Valentine settles everything for Snowball's allocation in his aunt's name without being perfectly clear about details. Mr. Farrar brings Snowball to Isle Perdrix in Bay Chaleur, French Canada, where his friends the Macdonalds –a Scottish-French Canadian family– surprisingly adopt her without objections. With Snowball far from the Valentine family, Vane's inheritance is secure. There she has a happy childhood with her step-brothers John and Rene Macdonald, in an idyllic small town close to nature and receives a good education by French Canadian nuns who christen her as Dolores Macdonald. The port city where Snowball spends her childhood, the age gap between the girl and her brothers, and her religious education remind of Fleming's biography. In spite of Vane Valentine's intrigues to ensure his leading role as inheritor, Madam Valentine grows older and feels the need to reconcile with her granddaughter; she goes to Isle Perdrix and takes Snowball with her. Madam Valentine and Dolores, now called Lady Valentine, travel around Europe together with Vane Valentine; Snowball enjoys the luxuries of high society although misses her happiness back in Canada. While in Rome, she meets Rene again who is developing his sculptor career there. Now they are no longer kids, but a woman and a man who become aware of their mutual love but do not express it. To avoid problems with inheritance and following her grandmother's suggestion, Snowball marries Vane Valentine and moves to England with him, his maiden sister and Camilla Routh, his cousin and prospective wife before his plans to inherit all the fortune and marry her fail. There Snowball's misery starts. Vane is a very mean man who has only married her to secure his share in the Valentine's inheritance and the two women support him in making Snowball's miserable. Although Snowball sticks to social conventions of wife's obedience, she counts on Jemima Ann as maid –who

conveniently reappeared in Rome— and keeps free and defiant by doing what she pleases; as Miss Routh states, she “spends her time galloping over the country, like the Indians on her native plains” (354-55). In the meantime, Paul Farrar reappears in Rome, meets Rene, unveils his true identity as George Valentine right when Madam Valentine dies in a train accident, of course, with time to recognize him and make him promise that he will recover his place as baronet and inheritor. “You must claim your right, George. Promise me you will when I am gone” says Madam Valentine (316). Very significantly, George also reveals that Snowball is not his daughter but the daughter of a second secret marriage of Mlle Trillon after he left her because she did not love him. All these news arrive to Snowball with Rene as emissary. Now there is no longer the need to pay homage to the terrible Vane Valentine, she is not a Valentine and has no connection to the fortune; she is free and runs away with Jemima to New York. There they start a new life, as equals in their own apartment, find a job and feel happy.

Fleming’s own experiences as a New York resident and professional woman slip into her novel’s story. But Snowball knows Vane will chase her and so he does; he reappears in New York but at the same time George also does. Before Vane can take any action against her, he conveniently dies in a ship accident. Now George and Snowball are completely free; he gets his inheritance back and she goes back to Isle Perdrix for John’s wedding where Rene has the chance to express his love for her and asks her if she feels the same. Snowball does not answer but “who needs words when hearts are filled with bliss? For love is strong, and youth is sweet, and both are theirs, and they are together to part no more” (456).

Superficially then, the novel seems to stick to the mores of sentimental romances by focusing on love and marriage affairs, including heroes, heroines and villains as well as apparently subjected women and powerful men, and its typical plot complexity, secretcies, and sudden appearances of benefactors. But not all apparently sentimental novels are only such. *Lost for a Woman* also entails an undermining of these conventions by means of direct references to sentimental novels that “poke fun at the genre”, subversive events and the predominance of women characters who are not weak and helpless but strong and resolute (McMullen in MacMillan, McMullen and Waterston: 79). Despite this paradox could seem ambivalent, the fact that Fleming’s



novel challenges the sentimental trend in fiction precisely by embracing its conventions makes its undermining even more effective.

First of all, there are direct ironical references to sentimental novels which significantly undermine the literary tradition to which *Lost for a Woman* seems to belong. The character which introduces the novel, Jemima Ann is a hard-worker, busy all day long with domestic tasks and has only access to outside world through a very small window in kitchen located in the basement from where she can only see “hundreds of ankles, male and female, thick and thin, clean and dirty” (8). The sentimental novels she eagerly reads are her only relief because they offer access “all the romance of life that never came near her” (9). In this way, sentimentality is set in contrast with reality so that romances are raised as escapist means rather than representations of real life. According to Lorraine McMullen, through Jemima “Fleming is obviously commenting on the sentimental novel as escape literature for women [...] whose social situation provided little relief [...] and no possibility of permanent escape” (MacMillan, McMullen and Waterston: 75). Moreover, the relation Jemima Ann has with Mlle Trillon is also meaningful in this respect. At first, she is totally delighted with the presence of Mlle Trillon in her aunt’s boarding-house since she is the closest to a fictional heroine she can think of; as she states “next to a duchess, an actress or a nun is the most romantic people in any story” (12). But her idealistic admiration for Mlle Trillon is soon broken into pieces; she behaves dissolutely, comes back home drunk, does not show motherly love for her kid, overtly states that men and marriage are “a mistake” and says to Jemima that: “I don’t profess to be a sentimental person myself. I leave that for you, O romance-reading Jemima Snow!” (38). Mlle Trillon’s marriage to a loving good man such as George also undermines typical love stories where the hero falls deeply in love with the heroine so that they have a happily-ever-after marriage. She actually asks herself if she married for love and exposes the inevitability of a poor girl as her in marrying “a gentleman, young, handsome as one of the heroes of your novels – tall, dark-eyed, finely educated, and the heir of millions, [when he] falls in love with her” (88). Their marriage fails so that one of the underlying messages of the novel is already suggested: it is not only necessary that a man loves a woman but that she loves him too. Mlle Trillon finally dies, not because of a heart ache but because she is too

drunk to perform; the sentimental heroine is thus subverted and realism slips again in Fleming's novel.

Vane Valentine also comments ironically on sentimental novels. When news arrives about George not being dead, he states that "men don't rise from death after this fashion, except in the last act of a Porte St. Martin melodrama" (400). Sarcastically, it is true, George has "risen from death" and Vane Valentine actually dies precisely as George was supposed to have passed away which is a good example of the humour touches of *Lost for a Woman*. These previous remarks on sentimental novels which Fleming's novel includes can be said to be metafictional since her novel comments on other novels' too evident conventions, that is, on the literary genre it participates in. Metafictional are also some, although few, references of the narrator to the process of writing the novel he/she is immerse in; by stating "we cannot quite say good-bye to Sir Vane Valentine, after Jemima Ann's summary fashion" the narrating voice advances what is to come in the text as well as the close resolution of the novel (422). Paradoxically, these comments on sentimental fiction are included in a novel that develops a plot close to romance but torn by realism. Realistic is the perspective of characters such as Mrs. Hopkins and Mlle Trillon and of the narrating voice. Apart from the contrast between Jemima Ann's life conditions and her sentimentality, she is also forced to face reality by Mlle Trillon's –quoted above– and Mrs. Hopkins; when Jemima says that little Snowball is like an angel, her aunt says with her typical sarcasm that "I never see an angel – no more did you. And if you did, I don't believe they'd a rid at a circus" (24). The narrator also participates in showing the inside story of appearances. Through the first interventions of the Valentines the family is introduced as classy British, aristocratic and with a baronetcy, rich, fine and well educated; but thanks to the narrator readers know that their pride "is quite out of proportion to their purse, if not to their pedigree, madam being the only member of the family out of the absolute reach of poverty" (56). This remark obviously entails a social critique of high society, especially centred on British members, that is unravelled along the text. Realism is also present in the dialectal varieties of different characters whose language varies according to age, class, or origin; Snowball as a little girl skips letters and parts of words, Jemima does not speak English as perfectly as Snowball after school, and illiterate French Canadians seem to have more difficulties in speaking English properly.

But the most realistic episode of the novel is “the portrait of an unhappy wife” (McMullen in MacMillan, McMullen and Waterston: 75). The tension created by the plotting of Vane’s sister and cousin, his tyrannical behaviour towards his wife, and Snowballs’ obedience offer a very realistic depiction of female experience in an unfortunate marriage. Trapped within a conflict of interests, she is forced to share the same house with them where “she ever feels even remotely ‘at home’” (333); although she has a room for herself it is small, and she feels isolated and homesick. In fact, they try to dismiss Snowball’s only companion, Jemima, and finally achieve it regardless of her resistance. But in spite of being aware of her wife duties, Snowball is able to see the reality of the situation and is aware that she and Vane are antagonistic in everything and that all “has been a deadly, desperate mistake” (368). Of course, the reliable description of a woman confined in an unhappy marriage is thought-provoking regarding Fleming’s own experience.

Other salient fictional features of *Lost for a Woman* are the inclusion of an omniscient narrator, the complexity of characters and the depiction of their insights, and the employment of an international setting. The narrating voice offers an equally omniscient position for readers who are directly addressed to. In remarks such as “indeed, lest you should think too badly of Mademoiselle Snowball” or “now, mistress Snowball Trillon, or Dolores Macdonald, as you please”, that “you” is us, readers, so that a deeper involvement with the narration is achieved (135, 208). Characters are not plain but evolve throughout the story. Whereas Madam Valentine is presented as a harsh woman at first, she turns into a compassionate and loving grandmother; just as her son George admits not being any longer that boy “who fell in love at nineteen with a trapeziste, and ran away with her and married her” (322), and Snowball becomes a more temperate female after education in a religious institution and international experiences of high-society. These characters are clear epitomes of another of the underlying messages of the novel: life learning; they change because they learn, because thanks to life events they are able to open their eyes to a new reality. Besides dialogues, character’s complexity is expressed through the portrayal of their insight thoughts, its clearest example being the clash between Mr. Paul Farrar or George Valentine –“as you please” like Fleming would say in her text– and Vane Valentine at the occasion of Mlle Trillon’s accident and death. While there seems to be a polite relationship between both,

the insistent questions of Vane to assure her death and thus his fortune, lead Farrar to think but not express feelings like “You abominable young pig!” (112). Access to insight thoughts offers a multifaceted perspective on characters’ personalities that simultaneously opens a gap between Fleming’s novel and the plainer characterization of traditional sentimentality. On the other hand, the cross-national setting the novel offers is also very innovative from my viewpoint. Although Canadian regionalism is outlined, we are not before a fiction work that turns around the Canadian regional axis of a small town. Reading *Lost for a Woman*, we travel from New England to French-Canada, Italy, England, the United States and back to Canada. In this way, in Fleming’s novel Canada is originally placed as valid literary setting not in exclusivity but within a broader international framework unlike previous and later English Canadian novels. The fact that the achievement of freedom and love –and not of socio-economic improvement– is finally attained in Canada entails a metaphorization of the country as utopian land that links *Lost for a Woman* with other novels analysed in this dissertation either by women or ethnic authors like Frances Brooke’s *The History of Emily Montague* (1769) or Martin R. Delany’s *Blake* (1859).

Returning to sentimentality, some events of Fleming’s novel also challenge sentimental conventions. One of the features that are called into question is the tendency of romances to stick to secrecies being the experiences of Vane Valentine and Gorge clear epitomes. Regardless of Vane’s insistence to plot against Snowball by keeping Madam Valentine ignorant in order to assure his inheritance, the direct intervention of the old woman to recover her granddaughter proves that secrets are useless because truth will ultimately come out in one way or another. Likewise, the lack of information regarding George’s death demonstrates that unawareness of truth can only lead to disaster. “The false report of my death” that George explains to Rene has deceived everyone since all central characters, Madam Valentine, Vane Valentine, Snowball, George and Rene are behaving against their will and thus being unfaithful to their true desires (323); the grandmother suggests Snowball to marry Vane while she only wishes happiness to her granddaughter, Vane loves and wants to marry Camilla Routh but does not, Snowball and Rene’s loving union is hampered, and George is forced to wander alone and change his identity. In fact, despite George remaining anonymous and avoiding confrontation with reality due to an initial lack of courage, the moment to face

the truth comes anyway; he meets again with his mother, gets rid of past ties but has to endure his mother's death. Life sometimes has a very dark sense of humour, Fleming seems to imply. As Rene points out, the novel suggests that "better be miserable, knowing the truth, than happy in a fool's paradise of ignorance" (236). It is also sarcastic that servants or members of working classes are precisely the ones who know all the truth. The clearest paradigm is to be found in Mrs. Tinker –maid of the Valentine family– who voices that Snowball and Rene make "a handsome pair" and regrets her engagement with Vane; she is also the only character who recognizes George Valentine in Paul Farrar while nobody else, even his own mother, does (292). The fact that characters like Mrs. Tinker are not aristocratic but live immersed within that social circle as workers offers them a freer position far from socio-economic ties, with a more down-to-earth vision as well as the vantage point of having access to information; they are thus the perfect vehicles of truth. Another event of *Lost for a Woman* which challenges the sentimental tradition is George's flying away with a woman like Mimi Trillon; following McMullen it actually implies "a reversal of the usual gender roles" since a man and not a woman is "the innocent son [who] had eloped at eighteen with the worldly-wise Mimi and been disowned by his family" (in MacMillan, McMullen and Waterston: 75).

From a feminist perspective, the preeminence of powerful women characters also challenges sentimental mores since there is not only one strong independent-minded woman to contrast with a helpless heroine. Of course, there are also important male characters but they always play secondary roles, being the most relevant Paul Farrar/George Valentine, Vane Valentine and Rene. Whereas it is clear that Vane is the villain by tyrannically confining the protagonist into a miserable existence, it is not so obvious who is the hero; is it Paul or is it Rene? Although both give heroic tokens and intercede in favour of the heroine, Snowball, none of them is finally his saviour; she does not need one because she actually saves herself. Moreover, regardless of the villain's despotism he is trapped within a matriarchy. At first, he depends on his aunt's benevolence to secure his inheritance; once his money and status seem safe after marrying Snowball, he is similarly determined by women fenced in a female crossed fire. His unilateral decision of having his sister as housekeeper, Camilla as "prime minister" and Snowball as wife under a same roof proves not to be so easy a plan to

carry out (263). His sister uses him to plot against Snowball's maid, Jemima; Snowball refuses to dismiss Jemima; and Camilla also rebels against him when her projects are not fulfilled after so many efforts and says to him: "I gave up my girlhood –my youth– to waiting for you. [...] you made me swear –almost– to be true to you. And I kept my word –fool, fool that I was!" (373). Independently of his patronizing plans are regarding these women, he finally dies.

Unlike traditional romances, *Lost for a Woman* does not offer a dichotomous vision on femininity but is riddled with differing women. It starts with the hard-working Jemima Ann and Mrs. Hopkins, continues with the self-made Mimi Trillon and aristocratic Madam Valentine, and finally focuses on Snowball whose centrality reinforces female predominance in the text. In the meantime, other female characters such as Mrs. Tinker, Madam Weesy, Mère Maddelena, Camilla Routh or Mistress Dorothy Valentine intervene too. There are not only plenty but powerful female characters. Just as Madame Valentine is the one who holds the power in the family and decides if the fortune is to be inherited by Vane or Snowball, Mimi Trillon is an independent open-minded woman who does not hesitate to lie and confront another strong woman to ensure her daughter's future. The clash between these two women is one of the best moments of the novel as well as a clear example of the confrontation of differing female powers and positions. In fact, the power all these women exert diverges to a great extent since they put it forth from the different roles they play within patriarchal society; Mrs. Hopkins from her men boarding-house, Jemima as maid, Mlle Trillon as an artist, Madame Valentine from the heights of aristocracy, and Snowball as an unhappy but courageous married woman. Despite their contrast, they are all complementary since together they show the different facets of womanhood within patriarchy.

Just as the absence of two central contrasting women deviates from typical sentimental conventions, the heroine of *Lost for a Woman* is equally subversive and innovative. Snowball is not a static protagonist but evolves from the child and daughter of an independent woman, to the teenager Dolores Macdonald happily living in a 'normal' family receiving love and education, and finally to a woman enduring marriage, Lady Valentine. It is not a coincidence that she goes through name changes for they signify a shift in identity. One of the most clarifying episodes of her evolution

is when, as a kid, she forces her brothers John and Rene to disembark not in the widely-known port but in the dangerous Chapeau Dieu of a nearby island in order to pick up berries. Their boat's name is no other than *Boule-de-neige*, that is, the French version of Snowball which is curiously lost in their venture; they are left alone for six days in the island and finally rescued, but Snowball has changed and her affection for Rene born. This is her first important life-learning experience by which she acknowledges that there is no use in pleasing oneself constantly but that caring for those who love you is paramount.

Snowball's second and crucial learning process comes through her unhappy marriage to Vane Valentine; much like a heroine of sentimental fashion, she resigns herself and agrees to marry him led by her grandmother's wish and her own will to obey and thus submit to the female role of wifhood. During her confinement to an unhappy marriage, Snowball's divided self is made evident. On the one hand, she assumes her function as submissive wife by frequently stating things like "I will endeavour to obey" (352). On the other hand, she manifests courage and defies his tyrannical husband by keeping contact with other men as Colonel Deering –who seems to have fallen in love with her–, going to ride horses alone and wildly –and thus showing the inheritance of her circus bare-back riding mother –, and finally flying away from her husband. But the significance of her defiance is even more powerful since it is not only addressed to her husband but to the whole patriarchal system. First, she overtly expresses that she is not in love with Vane, something a good submissive woman is never expected to do. Then, she resists the patriarchal dichotomous vision of women as either good sentimental wives or deviant coquettes when, as reply to Camilla Routh's comments on the existence of gossips about her and the Colonel, she states that "I am no coquette, I never will be, please Heaven –not for your brother's sake, understand, Miss Valentine– for my own" (367). And finally, she breaks the bounds of an unhappy marriage, an almost inconceivable gesture for a worthy sentimental female character. In doing so, Snowball is refusing to stick to established femininity since she resists epitomizing either the submissive unhappy wife or the dissolute woman, that is, the angel or the devil. In my opinion, this is an extremely interesting innovation of Fleming's novel because Snowball's resistance implies a challenge of fictional conventions regarding the narrow representation of women. In a clear subversion of sentimental fiction's mores, she

finally runs away; she chooses the new woman so that she becomes a clear feminist paradigm of the novel. Snowball's unfortunate marriage experience teaches her a very important lesson: marriage without love can only lead to unhappiness.

Snowball is now half-free and settles down in New York with Jemima who is her equal since "there is to be no more distinction of mistress and maid" (428). They move to a small apartment –which is curiously French– and both start looking for a job, Snowball as teacher and Jemima as housemaid, which from a feminist perspective is meaningful regarding the professional opportunities for women at that time. Even if it is a humble place, "it is their won, their very own, and they are together, happy, and free" (427). It is very meaningful that against Snowball's plan of being the only working woman of both, Jemima disagrees and states that "would never satisfy me[her]" so that she "must do something for my[her] keep" too (431). Jemima's gesture signifies her own claiming for economical power despite her lower status so that social stratification is collapsed and raises the need of equality among women so that a kind of sisterhood is implied. Another life stage, another name, Mrs. Trillon but this time chosen by Snowball herself; she is no longer her mother's Snowball, her adoptive family's Dolores Macdonald neither her husband's Mrs. Valentine. Snowball claims her own identity. It is only at this moment when her courage is rewarded; Vane Valentine dies so she is completely free of past wifhood bounds and George Valentine reappears and recovers his family's fortune thus liberating her from the burden of money. Now ground is opened for her to achieve what she longed for while her unfortunate marriage, "to be anything free, and happy, and beloved again" but in nowhere else than Canada (340). Reunion with Rene and acknowledgement of mutual love take place. In perfect consonance with the subversion of sentimental conventions developed along the novel, the closure of *Lost for a Woman* does not include the heroine's final happy marriage, although it is suggested, but with the union of Snowball's stepbrother John Macdonald and Innocente Desereaux.

The protagonist's marriage experience and failure entails both a social critique of patriarchy and a fundamental feminist message. Before Snowball's engagement to Vane Valentine, the narrator paves the way for readers by commenting on the irrevocability of marriage for women of the time "since marriage or convents are states girls are born to choose between" (270). If not feeling inclined for contemplative life,



“one must marry, it seems; it appears to be a state of being no properly regulated young lady can hope to escape” (271). Snowball is at first reluctant and says things like “it is very tiresome to have to marry. Why need one –at least until one is quite old [...]?” (275). The influence of traditional women such as her grandmother and her advisor Mère Maddelena –a nun running the catholic school where she studied– lead her to stick to social rules and do what is expected of a woman at her age and situation: marry the man who seems most suitable regarding socio-economic position although a much older man who does not love her whatsoever. Once married, she embraces the dictates of patriarchy and submits to her husband’s will that “a wife’s place is beside her husband” (405). In this respect, the pressure exerted by Vane Valentine and his henchwomen can be said to signify the oppression women suffered within patriarchy. But this marriage without love and based exclusively on money is a total failure; adherence to patriarchal axioms is thus proven not to be the right way if against one’s profound desires. Snowball’s final escape and new professional life in New York conveys a feminist plea for female mental and economic independence. I agree with McMullen that “awareness of Fleming’s unhappy marriage [...] adds significance to comments about marriage” (MacMillan, McMullen and Waterston: 77). The author’s own experiences seem to be fictionalized through the protagonist’s to such an extent that “Fleming had emerged from her marriage to create a new kind of independent life for herself and a new kind of heroine in her novel” (McMullen in MacMillan, McMullen and Waterston: 79).

In consonance with the “marriage metaphor” of Pilar Cuder-Dominguez and the overlapping of the discourses of romance and politics raised by Misao Dean in relation to Rosanna Mullins Leprohon’s *Antoniette de Mirecourt* (1864), a similar reading of Fleming’s *Lost for a Woman* can be developed. Once again, the marriage between Snowball and Vane Valentine is the most eloquent since it implies a simultaneous negotiation of politics as well as of gender explained above. As the narrator states, once they arrive to England Snowball becomes aware that “she had bound herself for life to a tyrant” (335). The employment of the term *tyrant* and the fact that Snowball is frequently referred to as a queen and suitable “mate of a king” suggests that something else apart from gender is at stake (266). The tyrant, Vane Valentine, is an old aristocratic and rich Englishman whereas Snowball is a young evolving Canadian

woman; their union can be thus said to speak for Canada's position within the imperial background. The only character that does not see the queen inside Snowball is precisely her husband. Vane's control on the Valentine fortune while its legitimate inheritor at first is Snowball and his oppression towards her in collusion with his supporting sister and cousin speak of the imperialistic role he plays in the novel. No wonder why she is referred to as "a wild American" and her freedom compared to that of "the Indians on her native plains" by Camilla (355). Vane's disdain for colonial members as Jemima is equally eloquent regarding imperialism; the fact that he actually calls Jemima an "atrocious Yankee woman" and wants to dismiss her once and for all is symbolic in relation to the shift of the United States' submission to the motherland (351). Similarly, the strong connection between Snowball and her maid, that is, between Canada and the United States, as well as their final escape together is also meaningful in relation to the higher affinity between both countries and their similar although differing growing apart from the empire. Subjected to a foreign power without having had much choice where nothing but unhappiness is found, Snowball's final flight raises questions on Canadian independence from the British Empire. Likewise, the raise of her true identity when she is free from past ties points out the only possible path for Canadian national identity to come to light: the end of imperialism.

Interestingly, Canada is metaphorically compared to Great Britain in a conversation between Madam Valentine and Snowball before the marriage takes place. To her grandmother's remark that she has "known poverty, too, there on your[her] island", she replies the following: "I was very happy there on my island, gradmamma – ah, happy, happy!" (373). According to their words, the island, that is, Canada seems to stand for poverty but happiness whereas Great Britain seems to represent wealth and sadness. There is a clear agreement between these comments and their differing attitudes, Madam Valentine being the old British woman who feels the need to escape from Canada to better places such as the United States and Snowball the young girl who longs for the Canadian little town where real life, true people and feelings can be found. "I would give a year of my life for one day of poor old Isle Perdrix, and its sea fogs, and bleak whistling winds" Snowball acknowledges (305). Her childhood in a beautiful and wild Canadian town contrasts sharply with her later experience in old England; there is no longer a castle-cottage nearby nature as that of the Macdonalds where "she is

monarch” but “an ugly, old-fashioned mansion of Queen Anne’s time” with domesticated gardens (123, 329). This distinction between uncontrolled and subdued nature in Canada and Britain respectively recalls female characters’ freedom in wild Canadian natural spaces and their more restrained existence in their gardened British houses in Frances Brooke’s novel *The History of Emily Montague* (1769). In consonance with Brooke’s text, in *Lost for a Woman* Canada as a bright and newly born nation is raised over the worn out and stagnant motherland so that issues on imperial hegemony and otherness are brought into question. Supported by Snowball’s return to Canadian lands at the end of the novel, Canada shifts positions from peripheral within the imperial framework to central as an independent nation so that Canadian identity as different from the motherland is suggested. Canada is revealed as the appropriate place where freedom and happiness can be achieved although in lack of strong economic resources. Once again, Canada as utopia is brought up.

Canada’s economic weakness is also the basis for a comparison with its more developed Southern neighbour, the United States. Broader possibilities seem to be abroad and not at the Canadian home, for instance, for a future sculptor as Rene who has to move to New York to study. New York is also the place where two independent women, Snowball and Jemima, start a new professional venture and try to improve economically so that the idea of the American dream is suggested. Even the Valentines prefer the United States –in their case Philadelphia– where they will move after a short sojourn in “*this* beast of a town” such as Clangville (90). It is very important to take into account that Clangville, curiously named as a “New England town”, is not the Canada that Snowball longs for and returns to, but the French Canadian spot of Isle Perdrix (44). In fact, this small island in Bay Chalette is “a green dot in a blue waste of waters”, a small town that “rests placid, unchanged, almost unchangeable” differs from those “grimy New England manufacturing towns” as Clangville (120). Furthermore, the two brothers Rene and John are described in terms of their stronger connection to English or French Canada, Rene being “a lender, dark-skinned, dark-eyed, French-looking boy, very like his dead Canadian mother” while John is “the handsomest boy in Canada [...]and] fair, like his Scottish forefathers” but “not in the least like his brother” (127). In this way, the representation of both brothers one as paradigm of motherly French Canada and the other as epitome of fatherly English Canada metaphorically stands for a

nation based on the brotherhood of two main members in apparent equality. But, although at the beginning Snowball is especially fond of John and constantly quarrels with Rene, she chooses Rene at the end so that the novel seems to opt for French Canada as the centre from which the nation still in the make should stem from. Perhaps, the critical approach on the stronger influence of British society and culture developed in the text imply that English Canada is seen as a weaker possibility for a brand new nation to set itself. The preeminence of these two cultural groups within Canada in the novel is very interesting from an ethnic perspective; no other ethnic component of Canada is offered the same status but, on the contrary, a lower one. The only *other* ethnic group mentioned in the text is First Nations who receive very scant attention, on one side, and whose references are eloquent, on the other. There are only four allusions to 'Indians' the first one being as a tokenized circus character "an Indian chief, all feathers, beads, and scarlet cloth" (29). The second and third references are related through the secondary role of First Nations within Canadian society they imply; in one they are pointed out as parties of an unscrupulous business man together with "trappers" and in the other they simply mean absence since for Vane Valentines Canada "aborigines" are only the whites (214). In the last reference, the traditional symbolism of freedom is voiced by Miss Routh when speaking about Snowball's horse-riding. Hence, First Nations' members inhabit totally altered positions in relation to a Canadian mainstream either French or English-speaking in the novel. Although it is true that these commentaries come from Eurocentric characters, the novel does not offer a counterbalance on the matter so that Fleming's novel participates in declaring "Canada's difference from the Old Country [...] [as] predicated on Native absence" just as Sara Jeannette Duncan and Agnes Maule Machar's texts do according to Janice Fiamengo (121). Apart from the avoidance of a challenging embracement of ethnic issues, the exploration of Canada's two solitudes in Fleming's *Lost for a Woman* supposes another connection to other early novels analysed in this Part III of this dissertation.

To conclude, the previous analysis clearly demonstrates that a virtually unknown novel by an early female English Canadian novelist can disclose very innovative elements when closely approached. *Lost for a Woman* by May Agnes Fleming challenges the literary tradition on which it is rooted by entailing an ironical

undermining of sentimental conventions, approaching to realism, developing social criticism, showing the complexity and insights of evolving characters, and including an international setting. Likewise, the preeminence of powerful women characters, the absence of the dichotomy heroine/coquette, “its attractive, believable heroine [who] is more individualized” as well as the critical approach to marriage and patriarchy suppose powerful innovations that challenge the mores of fictional genres in the late nineteenth century (McMullen in MacMillan, McMullen and Waterston: 79). As if this was not enough, from an English Canadian literary perspective Fleming’s work also offers a utopian metaphorization of Canada, raises its two cultural solitudes and explores the crucial issue of its identity as an evolving nation that, just as the novel’s protagonist, is trapped in an involuntary marriage to a hampering imperial structure. In this respect and using McMullen’s words, *Lost for a Woman* can be said to be “a marvellous achievement” (in MacMillan, McMullen and Waterston: 79). Being this Fleming’s last novel before her sudden death as well as the peak of her evolution as professional novelist, I include myself in that “we” McMullen mentions who “cannot help but wonder what this woman would have been capable of had she not felt compelled to work so hard to satisfy popular taste” (80). It can be then affirmed that by ignoring a novelist like May Agnes Fleming and a novel such as *Lost for a Woman*, English Canadian criticism and by extension English Canadian literary expression as well as its tradition and identity have done nothing but missing an innovative, thrilling, fine and intelligent early contribution to the novel genre by a woman.

#### VI.5 MARGARET MURRAY ROBERTSON: “TEACHING THROUGH WRITING”

Margaret Murray Robertson is another alternating voice within Canadian literary tradition. She was born in Stewartfield, Scotland, moved to Sherbrooke, Lower Canada, in 1836, after residing the United States, and then to Montreal where she died in 1897. She was not only from Scottish origin but shifted from Canadian to Scottish settings in her fiction when she considered that Canada’s possibilities as an innovative and fresh location had been exhausted, and very probably because its “exoticism” did no longer attract readers and publishers as intensively as before. Besides, once again –as in many

other cases mentioned in this dissertation— her Canadian works were first published outside Canada, in her case in the United Kingdom and the United States. Her first novel *Christie Redfern's Troubles* was published in London in 1866; her most famous work, *Shenac's Work at Home* (1868), in London and New York which was reedited at least five times and *The Bairns; or, Janet's Love and Service. A story from Canada* in London too in 1870.

*Christie Redfern's Troubles* was first published anonymously; the original title of the novel was *Christie; or the Way Home* and Robertson never approved the widespread title given to her novel. Furthermore, before signing her works, she is assumed to have written two short stories for the *Sherbrooke Gazette* which appeared anonymously in 1864. According to McMullen, the fact that the editor of this periodical was friend of the Robertson's family together with the two stories' similarities with her other works may lead to think that those two stories were actually written by her, too (in MacMillan, McMullen and Waterston: 86). It was not only her who at the beginning hid her professional career in writing for in Montreal's census of 1871 appears as having no occupation while Robertson was already earning her living from writing after publishing many successful novels. These issues of anonymity and institutions ignorance towards the profession of the female author again voice crucial aspects about women writers' situation. Critical institutions also have shown disregard towards Robertson's contributions. For instance, there is still lack of agreement in relation to the number of novels she wrote; according to McMullen in her article about Robertson: "between 1865 and 1890 she published at least 14 novels" ('Robertson'), while following Patricia Demers in her entry for the 1997 edition of *The Oxford Companion to Canadian Literature* about Robertson she wrote twelve novels.

According to Lorraine McMullen, "Hodder and Stoughton in London and Thomas Nelson in New York published most of her novels, which thus reached a wider, more general audience" (in MacMillan, McMullen and Waterston: 97). The issue of the audience is very



*Margaret Murray  
Robertson, 1823- 1897  
(MacMillan, McMullen and  
Waterston 'Illustrations')*

relevant in Robertson's case since her works were primarily aimed at a young audience and not to adult readers. It is not simply a matter of content but an open declaration of intentions on behalf of the author herself, when after having taught for fifteen years she turned to writing suspecting that fiction could also be a great means of educating right moral behaviour to younger audiences. In *Shenac* (1868), for instance, the narrator seems to be speaking to the readers by using a direct style to attract the youngest ones. For Robertson writing was another way of teaching; as McMullen states in her entry of the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online* "the themes of her writing reflect so faithfully her principal preoccupation as a teacher— the development of an informed, strong, and moral youth, particularly among females—" ('Robertson'). In fact, her first incursion into writing dealt entirely with the topic of education as its title shows: "Essay on Common School Education" with which she won a prize in 1864; in it Robertson expresses her ideas about a good education with moral training as its main basis. Besides, her fiction was mainly published, and presumably fostered, by the Religious Tract Society and the American Sunday School Union. The latter sought a type of fiction addressed to their school audiences whereas the former, apparently, promoted writing by women in order to spread their moral axioms; in this way, women writers were authorized but as vehicles for their moral precepts. Although in McMullen's opinion the inclusion of female writing may indicate the "the easing of church patriarchy" (in MacMillan, McMullen and Waterston: 86), it also reveals the boundaries within which Robertson developed her writing career; it could also be assumed that she took her profession not as an independent task but as part of a larger evangelical project. Due to the fact that her fiction was addressed to young and not adult audiences her contributions will be just briefly mentioned in this dissertation.

Furthermore, Robertson was descendant of a very religious family with strong connections to Scotland's Congregational churches; her father, for instance, was minister of one of these first churches and the family moved to Vermont and then to Sherbrooke, Canada, because he was called to minister. Although she received a solid religious education, she attended Mount Holyoke College –also called Mount Holyoke Female Seminary, Massachusetts– whose Principal's female education goals, Mary Lyon, were quite open-minded for the time. In her essay "Female Education" she states that one of their most relevant aims was "to develop independence in young women and

to prepare them not only for household responsibilities” (McMullen in MacMillan, McMullen and Waterston: 84).

Her narratives actually portray such an educational blend. They are overtly didactic and moralistic while at the same time they depict strong women characters, very frequently unmarried, whose firm will helps them overcome failure and/or obstacles. Robertson’s most known novel, *Shenac’s Work at Home* (1868), develops the family chronicle present in many of her novels and shows the main character’s long voyage to womanhood. Shenac is a girl who endures through many difficulties after her father dies and her family goes through multiple calamities. From her domestic realm she is able to surmount thanks to a regained religious attitude. Domesticity as the female realm par excellence is very significant in many of Robertson’s novels; not as an imprisoning space for women but, on the contrary, as the sphere where they rule and serve as the integrating element of the familiar nucleus. This family gathering with a central female figure if taken as a representation of a wider social framework could be voicing the author’s views of “a society guided by women, unlike exploitative, materialistic, hierarchical world of patriarchy” (McMullen in MacMillan, McMullen and Waterston: 106). Women are thus empowered in Robertson’s fiction but always in relation to their domestic kingdoms. I agree with Lorraine McMullen that she was not challenging as a writer; despite such a fictional empowerment, her fiction shows traditional male and female roles well differentiated and separated as well as fixed class strata with neither hint of change nor even intention of alteration from any individual.

*Shenac* is also a very good example of Margaret Murray Robertson’s portrayal of Canadian life. She is very effective in transmitting Glengarry small-town life, with strong community ties, ruled by seasons and always subjected to weather inclemency, and firmly religious. The focus is on the family nucleus since for Robertson it was the epicentre not only of the social system but of individual development and right morality learning; again her educational goal is present since the family appears as a fundamental tool in teaching and learning to inculcate the benefits of generosity, mutual aid and common effort in her young readers. Through such a depiction, Robertson’s fiction could be connected to Wood’s *The Untempered Wind*, although her sharp ironical and critical message is not present in Robertson. Perhaps one of the most interesting details of her account is the depiction of the difficulties Scottish settlers had to go through. As a



Scottish immigrant writer in Canada she is said to have been predecessor of a long saga of Scottish authors in Canada, although in Elizabeth Waterston's study about Scotland's immigrant writers "Canadian Cabbage, Canadian Rose" Robertson is not mentioned. The most widely known is Charles W. Gordon, whose pen name was Ralph Connor and who was actually Robertson's nephew. Despite there is no trace of direct communication between aunt and nephew regarding their literary creation, and apart some specific coincidences in the fiction of both writers, McMullen points out that Robertson's contributions may have served as proof of the existence of an audience eager "to hear about pioneer life and to respond to a blend of poetry and romance" for Charles Gordon and thus as an incentive in carrying out her writing career (MacMillan, McMullen and Waterston: 93).

Literary connections to other relevant literary figures in Canada like this are perhaps some of the most relevant aspects of Robertson's fiction as some critics establish. There is also another link to be found this time to a novel writer, John Galt, also unevenly approached by Canadian literary critics. Following McMullen, in Robertson's *The Bairns; or, Janet's Love and Service* (1870) there is a comparison about the achievements of American and British governments, which had also been carried out by Galt. Furthermore, Robertson explores the theme of alcohol as a crucial question in Canadian society in *A Year and a Day: A Story of Canadian Life* (1874-76?) and *Stephen Gratton's Faith* (1876); this topic would be taken up again by later writers as Margaret Marshall Saunders, whose figure and works are also approached in this dissertation. Very significantly too, there is a connection with Sara Jeannette Duncan too. Her depiction of male English characters and unmarried women in *The Imperialist* and *The Simple Adventures of a Memsahib* recall Robertson's *The Two Miss Dawsons* (1880).

These connections place Margaret Murray Robertson right in the heart of Canadian literary tradition. Robertson's work needs to be reconsidered on behalf of Canadian critics but more perhaps as a juvenile literature writer. She contributed to Canadian letters with her didactic and moralistic works; she also fostered the development of realism within romance in the Canadian novel and the exploration of a feminist theme: the unmarried women condition. She was also skilful in her depiction of

Canadian life with humour and was “a brilliant conversationalist” (McMullen in MacMillan, McMullen and Waterston: 105).

#### VI.6 LILY DOUGALL’S CONTRIBUTION TO THE CANADIAN NOVEL IN ENGLISH: *WHAT NECESSITY KNOWS* (1893)

Once again, the literary figure of Lily Dougall can be said to be affected by the equation no reprint/no existence already mentioned in relation to early English Canadian novel writers. Despite she developed an extensive and successful literary career and having notably published not only ten novels but also short fiction and philosophical essays, there is no work by Lily Dougall still in print today (McMullen, 1986: 137). Actually, in order to get a copy of Dougall’s text for the present analysis I had to turn to printing-by-order houses since getting an original copy is not an option nowadays. The fact that none of her contributions has been reprinted has evidently brought along their dismissal in the writing of Canada’s literary history and the construction of its literary tradition and identity. The question of why her works have not gained reprint in Canada is appropriate; not so much in relation to Canada’s book market which may have not found Dougall’s works interesting enough in modern times but to the oblivion to which her alternating figure and writings have been doomed to until recently and which may have provoked later oversights of her contributions either by publishers or critics. Taking into account the strong relation that Dougall’s novel *What Necessity Knows* (1893) holds with Canada and the powerful social insight it offers on the country’s regionalism during post-confederation times, it is even more striking that at least this contribution by Dougall has been persistently overlooked. These previously mentioned connections between *What Necessity Knows* and Canada are obviously the basis for the subsequent study of the novel. As McMullen suggests, it is “her most interesting novel for Canadians” (1986: 138)<sup>67</sup>.

The analysis of English Canadian anthologies and literary histories which focus or include early fiction developed in Chapter IV shows that the consideration of

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<sup>67</sup> For further information on Lily Dougall’s works, the chapter entitled “Lily Dougall’s Vision of Canada” by Lorraine McMullen included in Shirley Neuman and Smaro Kamboureli’s edition of *A Mazing Space: Writing Canadian, Women Writing* (1986, 137-147) is a very useful source.

Dougall's literary achievements on behalf of Canadian critics has been erratic, to say the least. As explained previously, early compilations such as those of Vernon Blair Rhodenizer or Carl F. Klinck both published in 1965 actually take her fiction works into consideration; in fact, the chapter on "Writers of Fiction: 1880-1920" by Robert Roper, S. Ross Beharriell and Rupert Schieder included in Klinck's anthology pays attention to the figure of Dougall as one "of the more skilful writers of these years" (313). Whereas subsequent publications as Nora Story's 1967 version of *The Oxford Companion to Canadian History and Literature* also mention Dougall, later compilations start showing some degree of hesitancy. This is the case, for instance, of *English-Canadian Literature to 1900: A Guide to Information Sources* by R. G. Moyles (1976) in which she is mentioned but as a minor author, the same as many other early women novelists such as Brooke, Fleming, or Harrison –among others– are. Perhaps, such a minority labelling was actually the starting point of Dougall's dismissal as the drastic decrease in her presence as relevant literary figure in English Canadian fiction in compilations published after 1980 shows. One of the few to take Dougall's contribution to the novel genre is John Moss's 1981 *A Reader's Guide to the Canadian Novel*. She is also taken into account, but this time as short-fiction writer, in *Improved by Cultivation: An Anthology of English-Canadian Prose to 1914* (1994) by R. G. Moyles. From these later literary histories, there are some cases in which the silencing of Dougall's texts can be said to be perhaps more surprising; for instance, in Robert Lecker's participation in the 1980 edition of *ECW's Biographical Guide to Canadian Novelists* given its focus on novel authors and Lecker's questioning of the canonization of Canadian Literature previously outlined in this dissertation, or in Eva-Marie Kröller's *The Cambridge Companion to Canadian Literature* from 2004 since it includes a chapter on "Writing by Women".

Dougall's origin cannot be taken as basis to deny the Canadianicity of her literary career –as in other cases as that of Frances Brooke– since she was born in Montreal, in 1858. Very probably, the fact that she extensively travelled though Europe with her aunt –Jane Dougall– and her temporary settlement in England gave her literary figure the alternating character which so frequently has fostered the disregard of contributors to Canadian letters on behalf of mainstream literary criticism. Furthermore, her cosmopolitan character was also to be noted in her novels for Canada is the setting

and plays a crucial role in only four of her ten novels. On top of that, none of her ten novels was first published in Canada but in London or New York, as already mentioned, mainly due to the weak Canadian book market of the time (McMullen, 1986: 137). These data on Dougall's literary activity recall other boundary-crossing novelists mentioned in this dissertation whose literary achievements have been similarly overlooked or disregarded as contributors to Canada's literary identity.

According to Lorraine McMullen, Lily Dougall did not leave Canada once and for all since she alternated residence on both sides of the Atlantic (1986: 138). Similarly to Joanna Ellen Wood, Lily Dougall also benefited from her international experiences, not only personally but for her literary career which she was resolved to develop from an early age. With this literary aim, she took classes at the Universities of Edinburgh and St. Andrews on varied topics such as English literature, philosophy, metaphysics, Greek or Latin, fields of high interest for her as both the connection of her fiction to other English female authors as well as the religious and spiritual scope of her fictional and non-fictional works show. It is curious that given the ban on women to get an MA degree, St. Andrews University had to create a particular distinction for women who also passed the required tests as Lily Dougall did as her degree as *Lady Licentiate in Arts* demonstrates (McMullen, 1986: 138).

Given such a social framework, it is not surprising that Lily Dougall's first published works appeared either under a pseudonym, as in the case of her first contribution to short fiction through "Hath Not a Jews Eyes?" (1889) signed by Earnest Duns; or anonymously, like her second short story "Marriage Made in Heaven" (1891) and her early religious and theological tracts as *Pro Christo et Ecclesia* (1900). As Lorraine McMullen explains in her article on Dougall's religious vision, the obscurity regarding her identity may have well been influenced by her intention of being seriously taken into consideration as theological commentator which otherwise could have provoked rejection if the author of such texts was revealed as not only a woman but a novelist. According to McMullen, her name was unmasked as late as "seventeen years and four anonymous religious works later" (1987: 79). Such a reluctance, and maybe fear, to openly reveal her identity affected not only her early short fiction and non-fiction but her first steps as female novelist. She also half hid her name in her first novel *Beggars All*, published in 1891, which was signed by a quite ambiguous abbreviated

author: L. Dougall. In this respect, McMullen's article "Lily Dougall's Vision of Canada" includes a very interesting extract from *The Queen*, a reputed nineteenth-century English magazine which focused on female writing. As she states, this publication included a long commentary on *Beggars All* whose author's identity was apparently obscure. The author of the article first suggests that the novel was so successful as to be one of the main topics at the time and adds that it was one of the choices of "most people who desire[d] to read a good novel" (qtd. in McMullen, 1986: 137). From this writer's viewpoint, such a success may have had provoked a common questioning on the identity of the novel's author and more specifically on the gender; the mystery of the abbreviation L. is cleared up as belonging to Miss Dougall whose career in literature is affirmed "to be much richer in interest to the onlookers than literary careers [...] generally are" (qtd. in McMullen, 1986: 137).

Perhaps the wider echo of Dougall's first novel in England and not in Canada has influenced that her second novel whose Canadian content is not only obvious but crucial has also been overlooked by Canada's literary circles. As in the case of her first novel, *What Necessity Knows* was also first published outside Canada, this time in London and New York in 1893. It was published in three volumes, all of them introduced by a different subtitle which suggests the turn of main theme from the first two in which "necessity" is the main topic to the last one in which "love" becomes prominent. Book I is subtitled "Necessity Knows No Law", while Book II is introduced by three verses "Necessity, like light's electric force / Is in ourselves and all things, and no more / Without us than within us", and finally the last book is presented by "Nothing is Inexorable but Love". It is significant that despite being a Canadian novel the "Preface" suggests it was not written there, or at least not entirely, since it is signed in "Edinburgh, June, 1893". As pointed out before, Dougall moved between Canada and England so that she could have written her novel in both countries; not simply basing its Canadian content on childhood memories but actualizing it with her new experiences. She was a serious writer as her immersion in Mormon communities to write another of her novels, *The Mormon Prophet* (1899), demonstrates; in this sense, it seems accurate to affirm that she based the content of her second novel on her direct Canadian experiences although perhaps some parts of the text were written or embellished in England. Interestingly, the preface of *What Necessity Knows* also suggests certain

anonymity since it is signed by L. D. All these details, together with Dougall's boundary-crossing character and career, may well be some of the reasons of the disregard of her figure and works within Canadian literary spheres.

*What Necessity Knows* contains an original and skilfully constructed romantic plot composed of different mingling stories whose complex characters unravel Canada's diverse cultural identity, raise fundamental feminist and multicultural issues, and convey the spiritual message of the novel. It is both a realistic and critical account on the immigrant experience in a Canadian small town in which an innovative dual representation of regional Canada which revolves between utopia and realism is developed. Canadian colonial paradoxes and its intricate otherness framework are also brought into light by means of a powerful characterization that gives access to characters' psyche and an omniscient narrator who offers an ironic scope to the novel.

The plot begins with one of its central characters, Robert Trenholme, who is presented as "Principal of the New College and Rector of the English Church at Chellaston, in the Province of Quebec" (Dougall, 2007: 4)<sup>68</sup>. Readers are thus led into the setting, a Canadian small town so that regionalism is already introduced. Immediately after, in the second chapter, the story moves to a farm house "to the west the Gaspé Peninsula near the Matapediac Valley" where a girl, Eliza Cameron – "Sissy" –, and a man with Scottish accent, Mr. Bates, are having an argument. Now that Eliza's father is dead she is determined to leave Mr. Bates, his old aunt and their remote and lonely log house. Despite Bates' opposition for his promise to her father and insistence that a woman's place is in the house, Eliza's youth, power and courage lead her to hide in her father's coffin to escape, as if only through death could women issue from domestic confinement. Hidden in the coffin, she arrives to a railway station near Turrifs Settlement where Alec Trenholme –who will be later revealed to be Robert's brother– gets out and escapes giving Alec a terrible fright and laying the foundations of old Cameron's legend. A train stops at Turrifs train station and a beautiful English girl, Sophia Rexford, asks the station master, that is, Alec Trenholme, for some milk for a baby and makes a great impression on him since as the narrator accounts "in Trenholme's eyes this lady was faultless, and her face and air touched some answering

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<sup>68</sup> As in the rest of entries of this chapter, all quotations from Dougall's text are taken from the 2007 edition of her novel cited in the section on Primary Sources of the works cited in this dissertation.

mood of reverence in his heart” (56). In fact, it is not the first time the character of Sophia appears since in the first chapter Robert Trenholme writes a letter to Miss Rexford whom he knew from the old world and whose family, because of financial difficulties, is moving to Canada thanks to Robert’s advice to Captain Rexford on buying a farm. This fact is clarified in the following chapter in which the Rexford family, having to change their train to go to the English settlements, meets Eliza –now self-introduced as White and not Cameron– and hires her as servant for their new life in Chellaston.

The convergence of the main body of the novel’s action in Chellaston speaks for Canadian regionalism. The town is described by the narrator as “insignificant” and its narrow social framework as “a curious thing, in which the mincing property of the Old World had wed itself right loyally to the stern necessity of the New” (65). It is a close-knitted society where information about private life is public knowledge and members are inevitably linked in some way or another. In fact, once in Chellaston the development of events brings a life change to the main characters. Robert Trenholme, who apparently was a high-class member given his position as Principal and Rector, reveals his low ancestry for his brother Alec comes to the city to establish himself as butcher following their father’s occupation; this will arise a lot of criticism against him and his family because butchery was very badly considered by immigrants from the old world. Eliza, with Sophia’s support, changes her occupation becoming almost the manager of the town hotel; she leaves the Rexford family and gets her desired independence as a self-made woman. Later on, Mr. Bates also spends some time in Chellaston, not in search of Eliza but following the legend of old Cameron. A strange man appears in the town and, although everybody believes him crazy, he is a kind of visionary, an Adventist prophet whose powerful preaching actually gets part of Chellaston society together –in a seemingly biblical way on a mountaintop and in a very stormy dark night– with the idea that the Second Coming is taking place. As the story of someone –who readers clearly identify as Eliza– coming out of her father’s coffin alive had spread around the place in a very typical small-town gossip manner, everybody believes this strange man is actually old Cameron. This is one of the most meaningful events of the novel for as McMullen explains it serves “as the turning point in the lives of the protagonists” (1986: 144). By means of this original episode, Eliza and Bates

both meet again, discover they actually love each other and happily turn back to the isolated farm together. Likewise, Trenholme gets his own revelation through twisting his ankle when climbing up the mountain for it actually epitomizes the personal enlightening he will go through. Robert Trenholme actually goes up to keep Sophia Rexford's company and help her search one of her sisters; while they walk together, she opens her heart to him and informs about her disappointment about him. Robert's intentions of having a romance with her die out; moreover, he is forced to rest alone at home for a long time so that his personal evolution takes place. It is also precisely during this apocalyptic episode when Sophia and Alec Trenholme meet again and a clue on the closure of the novel is given. Finally, Sophia Rexford, a thirty-year-old beautiful woman devoted to her father's new family after her mother's death, agrees to marry Alec Trenholme, future butcher of Chellaston, downgrading her higher English social status for love.

In spite of its romantic plot, there is no sensationalism –except in some very scarce occasions– but realism; the realistic basis of the novel are established in the first paragraph in which Robert Trenholme raises “those intricate difficulties which, [...], work themselves into the web of our daily life” (4). Such worldly obstacles will be later revealed as the source of sorrow which actually fosters personal growth and salvation. In turn, individual development is directly connected to the spiritual scope of the novel; love and not pride leads to self-realization as well as humility as basis for loving one's neighbours can only bring happiness and bliss for everyone. It is not surprising neither that Dougall highlights her religious ideas nor that she uses the novel genre to express them. As Dougall's writings on theological issues also illustrate, she was a deeply spiritual writer; she belonged to a very religious family, was actually daughter of John Dougall, founder of a religious newspaper called the *Montreal Witness*<sup>69</sup>, and attended private schools in which her religious character was reinforced. Very significantly, for Dougall “novels, [...], are intellectual and differ from most late-nineteenth-century novels in the unusual moral and ethical dilemmas which her characters confront”

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<sup>69</sup> John Dougall's newspaper was published from 1846 to 1920, first weekly until 1860 and later daily run by Lily's brother after their father's death. The success of John Dougall's journalist-religious activity led him also to found the *New York Witness* in 1879 although due to economic problems it had to be closed in 1885. For further information on Dougall's religious ties and literary development please refer to McMullen's “Lily Dougall: The Religious Vision of a Canadian Novelist”. *Studies in Religion* 16.2 (1987): 79-90.



(McMullen, 1987: 80). According to McMullen, it is not strange that *What Necessity Knows* is both a vehicle for Dougall's religious vision and spiritual dimension of life as well as a great and original late-nineteenth-century fiction work. In any case, it is necessary to note that Eliza and Bates' part of the novel's closure is the weakest since there is not enough inner development of both characters to make their final and true-loving reunion realistic.

The ideological extent of Dougall's writing of fiction possesses wider implications since it connects her novels to other nineteenth-century English female authors' fiction. As McMullen suggests, George Elliot also considered the genre as means of passing on the writers' ideas. In this sense, both Dougall and Elliot similarly investigated "the moral problems [...] and experiential growth" of their characters as the open conveyance of their inner processes, opinions, ideas and developments clearly epitomizes (1986: 139). In any case, their development as writers differed for while Dougall evolved from fiction to non fiction, Elliot followed the reverse path. Following McMullen, there are more specific similarities between these writers since they take the knitting of life through daily events that transform their characters in both Dougall's *What Necessity Knows* and Elliot's *Middlemarch* (140). Similarly, Dougall's work also resembles Jane Austen's fiction; both show their ironic and incisive senses by developing wise and humorous social criticism in their novels. According to McMullen's suggestions, Sophia's family of adoption recalls the familiar network described by Austen in *Pride and Prejudice* in the Bennets; besides, the relation between Sophia Rexford and Eliza Cameron/White holds similarities to that of Emma and "her younger protégé of a lower class, although Sophia is not manipulative" (1986: 141). All these connections do not merely imply Dougall's inspiration on other nineteenth-century novels but her deep knowledge about literary fiction in English and, moreover, her admiration for her contemporary women writers. Like them, Dougall was also a challenging novelist; she questioned established social axioms as well as included powerful and complex female characters that raised her novels as innovative literary pieces. Thus, it could be also said that Dougall was convinced not only of her role as novelist but as a woman novelist as the feminist messages she knits in her fiction demonstrate.

In this respect, in spite of the fact that Robert and Alec Trenholme, Mr. Bates, Eliza Cameron/White, and Sophia Rexford are the main characters of *What Necessity Knows*, two of them stand out. Interestingly, they are both women. Eliza and Sophia are two independent and powerful women; the former, a self-made fighter who achieves her goal of getting economic independence, and thus, freedom from male power, while the latter is an intelligent, cultivated and courageous young woman who chooses to challenge social traditions by marrying the man she loves despite his social status. There seems to be some kind of sisterhood between both women; on the one hand, Sophia supports and encourages Eliza's project of life improvement and on the other, both reject socially appropriate unions and finally marry for love. Both of them show their female courage by rejecting marriage proposals; whereas Sophia does not hesitate to break her engagement to a man called Mr. Monekton who could have offered her a much more luxurious life in England and refuses Robert's propositions, neither does Eliza regarding the handsome American who blackmails her and finally proposes. Both characters' rejections are certainly meaningful. On Sophia's behalf, the men she rejects are both English and apparently suitable options given their positions epitomizing her questioning of Old World's class rules; while, in McMullen's opinion, Eliza's "indicates Canadian rejection of American attempts at exploitation" (1986: 146). I agree with Lorraine McMullen that Alec and Sophia's marriage in Canada symbolizes the possibility of creating a new social order where class boundaries can be crossed in favor of saner relationships based on love and not status; in her words it "foreshadows a democratic, unprejudiced and intelligent society" (144).

In any case, both women clearly manifest their opposition to patriarchal society through their actions so that they can be said to be the feminist emblems of the novel. They highlight the feminist message the novel entails with their ideas and opinions as well. For instance, in Chapter VII, Book II, Sophia maintains a very interesting conversation with Robert about Eliza's decision on leaving the Rexford family. Whereas Robert is critical to Eliza, Sophia states that there "is no reason why a boy with head for figures should be made a farmer, or that a young woman with special ability should remain a maid-of-all-work" (133). While Sophia's comments show her calm character and social intelligence, Eliza is more spontaneous and abrupt in her expression of ideas. For instance, when confronting Mr. Bates after having left him alone in the log

house, she shows herself to be a brave and challenging woman by not accepting the slightest blame on her previous attitude towards him; she does not only say “you *made* me do it” but states that her life after leaving him has “been quite safe” (218). Perhaps Eliza’s most clear feminist comment takes place in a conversation with the American man who has discovered her past story and criticizes her behaviour with Mr. Bates. Despite his pressure on her, she is determined not to fall into the trap and asks him: “was he to make me his slave-wife?” (270). Interestingly, Eliza’s behaviour is also significant for she turns against established female domesticity; in escaping from her father’s house and thus rejecting an empty wife-slave role and later leaving the Rexford family who paid her for carrying out women’s domestic tasks to become an economically independent woman, she turns her back to female domesticity, to socially accepted roles for women who kept them inside the house and did not allow their freedom but close to the fireplace, in the kitchen and surrounded by children. From my viewpoint, it is worth noting that the previous examples also demonstrate the contrast between the idea men have on these women and the women they actually are, as if there was not enough social awareness on women’s power yet. The patriarchal system in which they are immersed and which does not allow their full individual development is evidently brought into question. In this sense, the same as Eliza is scandalized by Mr. Bates’ idea that marrying Eliza is a debt towards her father he must fulfil and the only possible solution for a woman like her, Sophia turns against Robert’s traditionalism on women’s roles and his intention on marrying her in Canada, that is, now that his social position seems more accurate for a woman like her unlike in England.

It is very significant that all their feminist ideas actually reinforce the narrator’s commentary on women’s power. One of the clearest examples is to be found when Alec reveals Sophia that he knows about Eliza’s true identity as Cameron and not White; Alec’s inability to understand Eliza because she left Mr. Bates alone while Bates apparently loves her is replied by Sophia with the following words: “I don’t see that a woman is specially beholden to a man because he loves her against her will” (253). As Alec does not seem to follow Sophia’s revolutionary ideas, the narrator explains she decides not to force the conversation any longer, using her female power since “to a woman the art of managing men is much like the art of skating or swimming, however long it may lie in disuse, the trick, once learnt, is there to command” (254). It is clear

that, apart from the challenging ideas these narrator's comment conveys, Dougall's witty and ironic sense is also present.

In addition, these two female characters are the vehicles of the main message of *What Necessity Knows*. Both individual and common happiness are achieved by welcoming love with humility and sincerity towards oneself leaving aside pride and social pressures. Only by looking into the deepest inner self to recognize true feelings, acting according to them and being faithful to ourselves can personal salvation and fulfilment take place. This is precisely why both women finally choose love and not economic prosperity, in the case of Eliza, or social status, as far as Sophia is concerned. As the narrator comments on the moment Sophia is closer to personal revelation: "Humility does demand that we should think ill of ourselves, but that we should not think of ourselves at all. When Sophia lost sight of herself she saw the gate of Paradise" (301).

In spite of these women's central roles, this inner process of individual fulfilment is clearer in the characters of Sophia and Robert. In accordance to McMullen's statement that "the most fully developed characters are Sophia Rexford and Robert Trenholme" readers participate in more profound insights into these characters' psyche along the novel (1986: 141). Perhaps the contrast between both characters is the key for their deeper and more evident evolution, in an exemplifying gesture of different individuals with distinct preconceptions. It can be said that Sophia epitomizes openness and challenge while Robert represents closeness, tradition and adherence to social norms. Despite Sophia's open mind to the new world, external calm and security, revolutionary ideas and brave behaviour, she has to fight against her own prejudices, to carry out the enormous task of facing her own biases in order to become free and finally recognize herself she loves Robert. It is only then when she is able to see "the gate of Paradise", when harmony with nature returns and inner peace is conquered:

After that she was at one again with the sunshine and the breeze and the birds,  
with the rapture of the day and the land, and she ceased to think why she acted,  
or whether it was right or wrong. (301)

But Sophia's relevance goes even further; she is the epitome of the idea that "influence is by example and encouragement" given her well-balanced attitude and fostering of the fulfilment of individual desires, as in the case of Eliza (McMullen, 1968: 141). Besides, she functions as the turning point for Robert's evolution as well. When Robert is forced

to stay at home after twisting his ankle, it is Sophia's words what come to his mind, compel him to face his internal paradoxes and finally lead him to personal salvation. The omniscient narrator offers readers access to his silent evolution through his inner thoughts: "was it true, what Sophia had said, that he had sold his birthright for a little paltry prosperity?" (228). After his forced seclusion, something has changed in him; it is only then when he dares to reveal his true story by telling no other than all the "highly connected" matrons of Chellaston (282), leaving them speechless, that:

"My father was a butcher by trade, and although my work in life has been widely different from his, I often notice in myself something of just those qualities which enabled him to succeed so markedly, and I know that they are my chief reliance." (280)

In doing so, he frees himself and is reconciled with his past so that it is no longer a problem for his brother to settle down in Chellaston and become the town's butcher; Robert finds peace. In this way, Sophia and Robert go through similar internal processes which, from my viewpoint, are very interesting given the clear contrast between both characters along the novel. It seems as if the novel was subtly voicing the idea that no matter what is the starting point, all individuals can achieve salvation only if they venture to go through such a harsh introspection and act accordingly.

Moreover, both Robert and Sophia are the most significant paradigms of Dougall's powerful characterization. On the one hand, *What Necessity Knows* displays a varied range of complex characters which are not plain but in evolution; the mixture of dialogue with the narrator's comments gives access to deeper insights into these characters' internal paradoxes and development which, at the same time, is one of the technical strengths of the novel. On the other hand, this blending of techniques also offers some of the best moments of Dougall's irony and witty sense of humour; the social clash between main and secondary characters, between those who stick to traditional and colonial rules and those who challenge them, grants the novel another reading for social criticism goes with its main message. Besides characterization, wit and irony, Dougall's fiction mastery is also visible through the novel's well-blended plot in which different stories are incorporated and take place simultaneously in a very natural manner offering an innovative rhythm for a novel-romance like *What Necessity Knows*. The complexity of such a blending can be seen, for instance, in chapters VI and VII, Book II. Chapter VI starts with Alec's letter in which he tells the strange story of the coffin, old Cameron and Eliza, and continues with Robert's internal debate on

having his brother coming to town to settle as a butcher and his desire to gain Sophia's affection; it finishes with Robert's "very real hunting" of his low past being discovered (131). Immediately after, Chapter VII picks up the thread of Sophia and includes a very interesting conversation between her and Robert about Eliza and her decision of leaving the Rexford family. In point of fact, the closure of every chapter is usually meaningful being one of the clearest examples that of Chapter IX, Book III, when Robert, having revealed his secret, and Sophia and Alec, now aware of their true feelings, walk together "feeling entirely at home" (248).

Another significant aspect regarding characters is the fact that they are all immigrants or first-generation migrant descendants in Canada but, interestingly, with different immigrant statuses. Although not an emigrant herself, Lily Dougall knew well the emigrant experience and its ins and outs for she was descendant of an immigrant Scottish family. Both her father, John Dougall –who was an immigrant himself– and her mother, Elizabeth Redpath –who was the first generation of an immigrant family– moved to Canada in order to earn a living. Such an autobiographical basis of *What Necessity Knows* is actually stated by Dougall herself in her preface to the novel. There she explains that the apocalyptic episode on the mountaintop echoes a story from her childhood on the "Adventist excitement of 1843" by which somewhere in North America "a little band of white-robed people ascended a hill in sure expectation of the Second Advent" (3). She acknowledges that given the vivid character of the story and the "eccentricity and absurdity" with which it was reported, she decided to include it not without facing some obstacles. Dougall's awareness on the realistic technique she employs and on "the limitations of the writer's capacity" is very significant; she does not only affirm her use of realism rather than romance but reflects on the hindrances of fiction writers (3). In point of fact, in the preface she makes clear that her novel "does not happen to deal with Canadians proper, but with immigrants, most of whom are slow to identify themselves with their adopted Country" (3).

This slowness in adaptation is clearly seen through the Rexford family. It is only their immigrant long journey and settlement that readers attend to for the rest of characters are already established in Canada. Their first contact with the country and its people is actually full of prejudice; Mrs. Rexford needs some milk for her babies and when trying to pay for it to Alec Trenholme at Turiffs station, she says to Sophia: "Tell

him we'll pay him double –treble, for it; I have heard they are avaricious” (55). Later on, when they arrive to the junction for Quebec where they had to change to get to the English settlements their behaviour is not precisely that of newcomers willing to adapt to their new homeland. It is again Mrs. Rexford who does not only complain about the way their luggage is being handled but expects that the next train is there “waiting to receive us [them] at daybreak” (61). The only knowledge she seems to have about Canada is the utopian image of the “Northern Lights” she has read about (62). But the most significant sign of their ignorance regarding Canada and stubbornness to get rid of colonial ties is the carriage they bring from England to the new world. Having been inherited by Captain Rexford, once again it is Mrs. Rexford who stubbornly insists on using it to move the family from the station to their new home and, thus, shows her reluctance to adapt to the new conditions; as the narrator comments, “it was assuredly such a carriage as that bit of Canadian road had never seen before” (67). The significance of the carriage goes even further. Later on in the novel, when the family has settled down and the carriage turns out to be useless –as it could not have been otherwise– it is significant that precisely Mrs. Rexford decides to give it a more practical use by taking off the wheels and placing it inside the house. In this sense, the carriage first epitomizes their colonial status, their reluctance to assume their new condition as farmers, whereas at the end it represents their final acceptance of their situation as immigrants in a new land.

In contrast with her stepmother, Sophia shows a very different attitude towards Canada. She has a much more open view of the possibilities of the new land and even opposes the small town's narrow-minded people. When Robert reveals his secret to the female sewing circle of Chellaston and the prejudiced Mrs. Bennet and Mrs. Brown comment on the lower status both brothers seem to hold now, Sophia states that “they seem to me[her] very much on a level” (283). Canada is then for her not an imitation of British society but a place where another social order is possible, she is aware that Canada is not England and thus needs to grow apart from old-world rules. She makes her point clear in a conversation with her father on Robert and Alec, when she affirms “I want to know how to deal with these *differences*, for the way we have been accustomed to deal with them is false. This case, where one brother is at the top of our little society and the other at the bottom, shows it” (my emphasis, 291). It is very

revealing that precisely the character of Sophia deals with the issue of difference in Canadian society; she is the only one who has a clear view of the country, the only to voice the problem and raise Canada as the chance to deal with difference in a renewed way. Actually, when her father affirms her ideas are “revolutionary” she asks: Are we, a Christian community, unable to devise a way of treating him and his brother that would neither hurt their feelings nor our welfare, that would be equally consonant with our duty to God and our own dignity? (292). Her final resolution shows that Canadian society is actually able to assume such challenging attitudes, as that of a woman marrying a man of lower status. But this healthy way of being connected with Canada is not always such. The same as Sophia’s development along the novel is much more complex than other characters, her relationship to Canada also is. Before going through her personal evolution regarding Alec, she actually moves back to traditional social assumptions inherited from the old world; for instance, she tells her stepsister Red as if she was saying it to herself that “nothing could be more utterly vulgar than to flirt with a young man who is beneath you in station just because he happens to be thrown in your way” (257). In any case, her final choice reveals her breaking-off with such a traditionally British social order. From my viewpoint, it is certainly important that the issue of difference in Canada has been attempted long before in literature in works such as Douglass’s *What Necessity Knows* and that precisely such a work has been overlooked by Canadian literary criticism that paradoxically pretends to deal with difference.

The symbolism of Canada as an escape route from “financial misfortune” or social status back in the old world is made evident by Robert Trenholme. When he is informed about Sophia’s family moving to Canada, he writes her a letter in which he states that “this young country”, despite being “different from English life, [...] rough and ungainly and uncomfortable”, offers positive chances since “with a little patience, the worst roughness of colonial life will soon be overcome” and rewarded by its “glorious climate and cheerful prospects of this new land” (7). Robert’s description of Canada is revealing; on the one hand, he clearly shows his colonial mentality by naming it “a young country” as if it was not such before colonization, and on the other hand, the approbative image he offers connects this novel to other fiction works included in the present dissertation. As mentioned previously, whereas in Frances Brooke’s *The History of Emily Montague* (1769) Canada epitomizes both utopia and imprisonment, in Martin



R. Delany's *Blake; or The Huts of America* (1859-62) it symbolizes the ideal of a promised land where the dream of black freedom can come true. In any case, it has to be noted that the resolution of Douglass's novel affirms that the utopian dream *is* real; Canada is the land where social boundaries can actually be knocked down. But the fulfilment of such a dream is not free of charge. The character of Robert Trenholme demonstrates that Canada can only be taken as escape route in a faithful and sincere manner to oneself. The downsides of considering the country as mere means of getting rid of past secrets are epitomized by Robert's dilemma of silencing his low social ascendancy when Alec appears in Chellaston; whatever individuals have to hide is going to haunt them no matter the utopian territory they move to, the text seems to suggest. It seems clear that, for Robert, his brother Alec represents that part of him he is unwilling to acknowledge; Alec together with Sophia force him to face his internal paradoxes, go through personal transformation and be reborn by voicing his secret and thus achieving reconciliation with those contradictions. It is not surprising, then, that at the end of the novel Alec and Sophia are united by love.

As it could not have been otherwise, Canada for Alec has very different connotations. Unlike his brother, not being able to rely on "all the respectability of the cloth [...], [...] the letters of his[an] Oxford degree and upon all the learning of the New College" makes Alec's Canadian experience very different from that of Robert (147). Having emigrated also to improve his economical conditions Alec "had not found the path to fortune which he sought in the New World as easily accessible as he had expected" (42). His isolation as master at Turrifs station offers him both the chance to go through his own personal process and the revelation of Canada as a distressing country where "even death assumes the form of an almost agreeable change as a matter of lively concern" (43). In keeping with Alec's more realistic vision of Canada, Mr. Bates' views similarly differ from Robert's. In point of fact, Mr. Bates' Canadian experience resembles that of Alec; both characters undergo harsh emigrant processes and suffer isolation. In Chapter V, Book II, Bates and Robert hold a conversation in which their dissimilar perceptions are made evident. While Robert demands his "right in a new country, where Adam has to delve again, to be a butcher *and* a gentleman", Bates more down-to-earth connection with the land makes him aware of colonialism's power and replies Robert stating that "in the towns here, things are beginning to regulate

themselves much in the shape they take in the old country” (my emphasis, 123). From my viewpoint, this contrast between a utopian and a more realistic symbolism of Canada in *What Necessity Knows*, not only makes Dougall’s novel participate in the debate on Canadian identity but enriches it because a dichotomy regarding the literary representation of the country is established. Dougall’s fiction is one of the few nineteenth-century novels in which both images cohabit and contrast.

As the narrator accounts, Mr. Bates’ long emigration journey is shared with Mr. Cameron and his daughter, Eliza. They met “on an emigrant ship” and decided to settle together with Bates’ aunt, “who should do the woman’s work of the new home until she was too old”, and Eliza, who “should do it when she was old enough” (13). It is clear that for these two men their new life project included women only as domestic agents in their shared migrant venture. Whereas Bates is identified as a “wiry, intelligent Scot” with a strong Scottish accent, no precise origin is mentioned about Cameron and Eliza (24). It is perhaps this vagueness on their ancestry which affects Eliza’s dual position in Canada; whereas the previously mentioned story proves her emigrant condition in Canada, later in the novels she appears as “the Canadian girl” (74). Although this contradiction could be taken as an inaccuracy, in my opinion a deeper analysis reveals a much more complex and witty symbolism. When the young and handsome American appears at Bates and Cameron’s farm house in the west of the Gaspé Peninsula, his insistence in naming her as a “young lady” is categorically blocked “with some superiority of manner” by Bates who affirms ““she is not a young lady; she is a working girl, an emigrant’s” (33). On the other hand, the moment in which Eliza is mentioned as “the Canadian girl” is precisely when she has already entered at the service of the Rexford family. It seems clear that the issue of otherness is introduced through her character because while she is a lady for an American whose knowledge on her British ancestry might provoke his assumption about her social status, she is a Canadian girl for a recently emigrated British family.

The depiction of the young American, Cyril P. Harkness, is very significant for he is represented as a *bon viveur*, “born a cook –dentist by profession– by choice a vagabond” as he affirms (33). Likewise, his relationship with Canada shows this same licentious attitude suggesting America’s invasive attitude towards its northern neighbour. When he first appears at Bates farm –once that Cameron is dead– and is

informed about the presence of a girl, Eliza, he recognizes not having had even eye contact with a woman for a long time and pretending to seem funny he says, "I'd pay a five dollar-bill this minute, if I had it, to set eyes on her right here and now" (30). The very fact that he thinks about paying a man even though only to see a woman speaks of his personal depth. Immediately after, regardless Bates' evident disapproval, he continues asking about Eliza as if he liked what he discovered about her would offer him direct access to the girl. Once at Chellaston, Mr. Harkness and Eliza meet again; unluckily for her, he is the first to discover her true identity which again gives him the chance to take too many liberties.

What holds all these disparate characters together is actually Canada. As pointed out previously, Chellaston is their meeting point; whatever their origin or condition, everything converges in a Canadian small town so that Canada plays a crucial role in the novel. Furthermore, Canada is not a mere landscape but a major element: a land of possibilities in which a new society starts to be built up. In this sense, the picturesque Canadian setting of *What Necessity Knows* holds a wide literary significance; it is not as the simple backdrop where events take place but the place where those events *can* occur. Despite such a symbolic scope, the employment of realism fosters a realistic instantiation of Canada not simply as a utopia but as the territory where breaking off traditional social barriers, and thus colonial ties, is actually possible.

On the one hand, some of the aspects of Canadian society commonly depicted in other fiction works of the time are also held by Dougall's novel. For instance, Canada's two solitudes are clearly suggested by the fact that this group of immigrant characters settle in English townships and reject Quebec. The barriers that keep French and British immigrants apart once in Canadian territories are not only physical but cultural and mental as some details of the novel suggest. It is the young American who makes this clear by mentioning the far "French district" and its special social aspects that provoke misunderstandings between both groups (77). Saul's character –a man working for Mr. Bates at the farm– is revealing; he is one of the few white characters mentioned as "a native of the province" –native meaning French– whose indigenous status offers him the advantage of being in-between the two communities because he is one of the few who "talked[s] French about as well as he did English" (40). In fact, he is the only link between both communities of the novel. The linguistic issues between

Canada's French and English-speaking communities is also made evident when Alec Trenholme speaks with a French man who is described as having "that curious grey shade on a healthy skin that so often pertains to Frenchmen" (50). Knowing no French, Trenholme assumes that he "could understand enough English [...] if he told it slowly and distinctly" (50).

These references to French population together with their scarce and apparently difficult interaction with English population evidently speak for the colonial situation the novel describes. The fact that all the main characters are connected to Britain is revealing and their colonial mentality is made evident throughout the whole novel. Perhaps the clearest paradigm is Mrs. Rexford who, having no knowledge on Eliza's origin, pretends to hire her as "servant" from the very moment she meets her; to this proposition, Eliza responds that she does "not want to be a servant" and Mrs. Rexford comments that this type of "independent" behaviour coincides with what she read "in that New England book" (64). This is a very significant episode from my viewpoint since it speaks about Canada's subjected situation in relation to the 'mother country' represented by Mrs. Rexford's attitude, regardless the country's resistance to keep that subordinated state as Eliza's reaction suggests. Moreover, the fact that most of the characters stubbornly insist in maintaining the Old World's social stratification is also eloquent. They do not feel as Canadians but as members of the British Crown in a foreign land; in fact, despite Sophia is one of the few to rejects such colonial ties and finally feels at home in Canada, at the beginning of the novel she also asks herself "what it would be like to be at home in this country" (98).

The indifference of all of the central characters regarding Canadian native peoples –whose appearance in the novel is merely testimonial–, also speaks of their colonial positioning. In spite of the scarce references to Canada's native population, there is a favourable balance in the depiction of "Indians" since two of the three clearest mentions are positive. This is not the case of the first citation of First Nations since they are put on a level with wild animals. When Eliza argues with Bates about her right to leave once her father is dead, he sarcastically suggests her to pay a visit to the Indian settlement close to their farm because in his opinion "Indians or wolves would be quite glad of the *pleasure* o' your[her] company" (21). Clearly, the comparison between Indians and wolves suggests the concept of the savage frequently related to the

unknown populations colonizers met and developed in other literary works mentioned in this dissertation. The other two references are actually positive but revolve around the same story. Both Chapter X, Book I, and Chapter XIII, Book III, include a reference to the heroic deed of an “Indian woman”, in the former, and “a squaw” with her children, in the latter, who successfully help stop a train by lighting a fire and are rewarded with gold and/or money for their action. But there is a significant difference between both allusions; whereas the first one is more a picturesque detail that shows the courage of Canadian natives and suggests their poor but favourable interaction with newcomers, the second one has a wider relevance because the intervention of the squaw and her kids allows Eliza’s final escape. As far as this dissertation is concerned, this fact points at native women as paradigms of freedom just as Frances Brooke’s *The History of Emily Montague* does. In Brooke’s novel, Arabella Fermor resembles Eliza for they are both similarly boundless characters and interact with squaws as epitomes of independence, the difference being Arabella’s stronger relation and even intention to “turn a squaw” (Brooke, 1983: 50). In this sense, both novels challenge colonial cultural assumptions because they go further in their reference to Canadian First Nations; they are not trapped in-between the concepts of savage and noble savage but raise natives as paradigm of freedom.

Nature is again a major Canadian element in Dougall’s novel. According to McMullen, “response to the new land is a major concern of the novel” (1986: 140). Weather conditions generally go with the characters’ personal situation: winter and introspection, or summer and freedom, for instance. It is necessary to note that Canada’s extreme natural environment is not merely part of the setting in which the story takes place but possesses a deeper significance. As mentioned before, those characters whose connection with the land is stronger not only feel more closely connected with the land but are more realistic about the country and its society. For example, Mr. Bates’ experience at the farm changes his viewpoint; after suffering the harshness of the climate and realizing that his timber trade dream is a lie, he is one of the few able to see the more and more imitative English Canadian society has become. But the most meaningful contrast regarding nature is to be found between the characters of Sophia and Robert Trenholme; whereas Sophia, in spite of having recently arrived to the country, is able to appreciate nature’s grandeur, Robert’s connection with nature is

much weaker. There is a very clear example almost at the end of the novel in which Sophia states, “it is very fine weather”, and Robert responds, “there is too much glare” (301). In keeping with the idea that Sophia represents challenge of established rules and Robert tradition, their differentiated relationship with the land is meaningful. While she is able to *see* nature positively and the possibilities Canada offers to create a new social order, congruous with her inner self, Robert’s lack of harmony with environment is in consonance with his blindness towards the country, its society and himself. Following McMullen, Robert’s lack signals “a spiritual disharmony and separation from the Divine” (1986: 142). This connection of nature and the Divine is evident at the end of the novel. In fact, the novel seems to suggest that nature, as god, will respond to individuals’ efforts of personal growth and courage in challenging social axioms for when Sophia and Alec have already gone through their internal processes and are finally and freely united nature accompanies them in the form of “that happy wilderness where flower and leaf and bird, the blue firmament on high and the sparkling river, rejoiced together in the *glory* of light and colour” (my emphasis, 304).

On the other hand, Dougall’s novel also innovates in its representation of Canada. In the first instance, diversity is revealed as a key aspect of Canadian society. It seems clear that this amalgam of newcomers actually enunciates both the immigrant experience in Canada and the country’s social diversity. Such a heterogeneity is declared not only by their different situations either as recently arrived foreigners, shortly settled or first-generation inhabitants in a new land but, more relevantly, through their varied and differentiated relationships with the land. Such an acknowledgement of diversity –either regarding culture or gender– is also presented as the way in for Canada’s well-matched cultural heterogeneity. The different religious creeds and cultural bonds of these disparate immigrant characters are introduced as harmoniously blended in a common territory. The Scotch church coexists with the English in a place like Chellaston where even Sabbath is respected. As the narrator states: “In this land, where no church is established, there is so little bitterness existing between different religious bodies” (170). In point of fact, this heterogeneity seems also to offer access for different female roles which move away from Old-World’s patriarchy. In a very interesting conversation between Sophia and her father she states that women in Canada “are not kept always under the eye of older people, as is usually considered necessary in

England” but are induced “from their infancy to be more self-reliant” (288). A Canadian small town is then revealed as a site of contestation of the colonial establishment either regarding cultural diversity or patriarchal bonds as well as a place where certain multiculturalism and a stronger female freedom can take place. Regardless of this apparently idyllic vision, the novel also includes details on the obstruction and reproach among the different social groups and their differing convictions. The clearest example can be found in the Second Coming episode in which Advent folks are not left alone to experience their beliefs but accompanied by “a good many people who went up the mountain that night to find the enthusiasts, each with some purpose of interference and criticism” (194). Although it is true that their event is neither banned nor punished by the rest of Chellastonians, this comment suggests that this apparently peaceful diversity is not untroubled. The same as for religious diversity, women’s situation is not exclusively depicted as open and progressive; adherence to social rules on behalf of Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Bennet or the battering Job inflicts in his wife offer a quite different picture. Canadian multiculturalism and females situation are then realistically fictionalized as a possibility; it is not a naïve depiction of Canada as the ideal land where cultural heterogeneity and gender equality can take place, but a realistic account of Canada’s diverse socio-cultural framework.

Furthermore, characters’ origin, differing social, economic and personal conditions as well as their connection to Canada places all these characters at a complex crossroads where otherness issues are of vital importance. As pointed out before, Mrs. Rexford first considers already settled immigrants as the others, as ‘Canadians’ from whom it is necessary to differ, while at the end she assumes her belonging to that altered group of people. Similarly, some women from the female sewing circle as Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Bennet change their viewpoint on Robert and Alec, when their family history is discovered, so that the two brothers pass from being one of them to be others. Finally, the American man considers everyone in Canada as an-*other* and not as fellows in the adventure of surviving in a foreign country; country which, of course, he finally leaves. With particular regard to the representation of otherness issues in *What Necessity Knows*, it is necessary to highlight that the novel depicts a much more complex framework that moves away from the simple dichotomy of *I* standing for colonizer and *other* for Canadian. Dougall’s depiction does not only revolve around British versus

French colonial members or British versus First Nations, but immigrants versus immigrants whose positions actually change along the novel. The previously mentioned example of Mrs. Rexford is perhaps the clearest, but there are many other revealing cases. Sophia's quick shift from newcomer to member of Chellaston society and her final move to challenging participant in Canadian society, that is from a peripheral position to central and again to peripheral, or the change of the Trenholme brothers from chief to marginal members of a Canadian small town of are also eloquent.

This complex depiction of regional Canada is actually connected to both the utopian vision and social critique that run throughout the novel. As pointed out previously, the cases of Sophia and Alec, and Eliza and Bates present Canada as a potential paradigm of boundary-crossing social behaviour. On the other hand, the country's social bias –mainly inherited from colonialism– is also brought into question. Following the narrator's comments, Mrs. Brown is presented as an epitome of the questionable social bonds which coexist with those challenging attitudes; her adherence to established norms as member of “the prosperous middle class, but, with the true colonial spirit that recognises only distance below, none above” provokes the reconsideration of her relationship to Robert Trenholme after his secret is discovered (282). Similarly, there is a very meaningful intervention of Alec Trenholme in which he complains about embracing social rules since it may lead to the avoidance of true self development. He says: “I'm sick –just sick, of seeing men trying to find something grand enough to do, instead of trying to do the first thing they can grandly” (233).

Precisely grand is the significance of Canada in *What Necessity Knows*. The country's socio-cultural complexity is fictionalized through a disparate group of characters that unravel both diversity and difference, bring into question crucial aspects on feminism and some on multiculturalism, and raise otherness as a fundamental issue through their immigrant experience of regional Canada. Dougall's fictional skills together with the preeminence and intricate significance of Canada which place the novel at the centre of English Canadian literary fiction and connect *What Necessity Knows* to other relevant contemporary novels show that Lily Dougall's role in Canadian letters and in the country's literary identity through her 1893 novel is not marginal; a serious reconsideration of her participation in Canadian literary history and identity



needs to be carried out for Canada's cultural identity to be revealed as diverse, multicultural, non-patriarchal and difference-embracing as claimed.

#### VI.7 JOANNA ELLEN WOOD AND THE CHILD OF SHAME<sup>70</sup>: *THE UNTEMPERED WIND* (1894)

Probably Joanna Ellen Wood's case is one of the most striking from early English Canadian Literature. She did not only contribute to Canadian letters with an innovative novel and the first openly realistic and critical account of regionalism in Canada but was one of the first complete literary figures, and much more female figures, in a modern sense. Wood was a writer convinced of her role, of her participation in the artistic expression of Canada and the importance of literature as a key tool in its construction. Her confidence on Canada's possibilities as a realm of and for art is evident since she took part in its artistic expression in letters and because of the implicit message of some of her novels. Actually, in some of her writings she even suggested one of the most relevant topics regarding art in Canada from the post-Confederation period and ever since: Canada as a relevant artistic source. In the novel *Judith Moore; or, Fashioning a Pipe* (1898), for instance, following Carrie MacMillan mythical or allegorical reading, Joanna E. Wood includes two main characters together that represent Canada –male character– and art –female character – (in MacMillan, McMullen and Waterston: 185). She not only contributed but also dedicated her professional life to literature as a writer and commentator so that the first disdain and later hesitance of literary criticism in Canada regarding her contributions is curious, to say the least.

Although there is almost no data about Wood's childhood in Canada, it seems that "she aspired at an early age to be a writer" so that it could be stated that she had a strong interest in literature and believed in the profession of writing at a time when women started to be included as university students and professionals for the first time

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<sup>70</sup> The title of this section is inspired by Joanna Ellen Wood's novel whose protagonist's son is precisely called "the Child of Shame".

(MacMillan, in MacMillan, McMullen and Waterston: 171). The fact that very little information about her early years has survived or has been dug out by Canadian criticism could be considered as another proof of its indolence regarding certain writers, while paradoxically searching for its literary roots through its writers as cultural agents. Besides being a cultivated woman –as the constant introduction of extracts from poetry classics in *The Untempered Wind* demonstrates– she managed to live out of the pen. Her first short story “Unto the Third Generation” was very successful and opened her path onto professional writing; from then on, she earned quite a lot of money during the 1890s with her short stories for US and Canadian magazines and competitions, as *The Canadian Magazine* declared (Dyer: xiv). Furthermore, her first novel *The Untempered Wind* (1894) was printed three times in US and then also in Canada, and the rights to publish *Judith Moore; or, Fashioning a Pipe* (1898) are said to have been the most expensive regarding Canadian novels. Her financial success allowed her to enjoy a cosmopolitan life; she visited and resided in some of the most important cultural centres of her time (London, Paris, Boston, New York, and Philadelphia) not just for fun but as a crucial part of her profession, that of the literary author. There she soaked up the latest literary trends, gained a critical vision of what she left at home and researched settings for her fiction. Actually, her cosmopolitan willingness shows a pioneering character for it was the time when such internationalism raised; she was one of the first independent travelling women of her time, together with another crucial Canadian female writer, Sara Jeannette Duncan, who did a “trip around the world with another female journalist” (MacMillan in MacMillan, McMullen and Waterston: 181). It was during one of these trips when she met the poet Algernon Charles Swinburne to whom she dedicated one of her most interesting comments on literature. Swinburne as a Pre-Raphaelite writer went beyond accepted moral taboos and innovated by introducing ‘forbidden’ material in his poems which would influence Wood’s fiction. In her article about his *Poems and*

*Ballads* (1866) she defends his poetry and claims that “the anaemic art which affects to despise the body is essentially false and worm-eaten” challenging the insistence of Puritanism in disdain of body, sensuality and physical pleasure to focus exclusively on spirit and mind as if they were totally separated realms (qtd. in MacMillan, McMullen and Waterston: 199). It seems clear that Wood had very clear ideas about literature and was not afraid to claim the writer’s role and the relevance of writing in society. It can be said that Joanna Ellen Wood is one of the first female figures in Canada close to our modern concept of writer; participating with her fiction and earning her living as a writer, and as a self-authorized commentator on literature.



*Joanna Ellen Wood, 1867-1927  
(MacMillan, McMullen and  
Waterston: 'Illustrations')*

Joanna E. Wood was born in Scotland in 1867 and did not live in Canada until 1874 after having spent some years in New York; she is another example of a foreign writer, an alien, lending her literary voice for her country of adoption, Canada. She and her family did not move to one of Canada’s cosmopolitan centres of the time but to a farm in an Ontario town, Queenston Heights. Although she would later live in-between Detroit and New York with her sister and brother after her mother died in 1910, she lived most of the time in Canada. After her father’s death in 1896 she must have felt the obligation of taking care of her mother and settled down with her at the farm. In 1906, after selling the farm, they both moved to Niagara-on-the-lake. She remained unmarried, perhaps because she found it difficult to combine her professional ambitions with a married life, which does not mean that she did not know what love and passion were as her works show. During the years she shared with her mother, her literary activity decreased until it almost completely disappeared. At this time she suffered a collapse, as MacMillan suggests, either because her type of fiction was not a trend any longer or perhaps it was the price of being a different woman in the late 1890s, due to the “frustrations and tensions of being a single woman seriously pursuing a career in a world where the vast majority of women still married and had families, may well have

been factors” (in MacMillan, McMullen and Waterston: 196). In any case, during her literary career she contributed to Canadian letters extensively with various contributions, from articles to short stories and novels; she wrote for Canadian and US magazines and editors, crossing boundaries and becoming another alternating voice on both sides of the border, which perhaps affected her consideration by literary criticism. It is worth mentioning that at the beginning she used different pen-names; although there is no irrefutable proof of it yet, the name ‘Jean D’Arc’ has been attributed to her. In any case, it would have been a very appropriate pen-name given both figures courage; maybe Wood felt as Jean D’Arc, a heroine of letters. Likewise, some of the prizes she won for her writing were not directly paid to her but “sent in to the credit of two male friends” (qtd. in Dyer: xiv). It is clear then that the social framework in which Wood developed her literary career was not completely reconciled with the new roles of women; it was the beginning of a transition in which women writers started to transgress some boundaries while at the same time they continued to hide under pseudonyms and tried to fit within established literary standards.

As Dyer explains, Wood’s times in Canada were especially concerned with women’s issues. In fact, before the publication of the *The Untempered Wind* there was a heated political debate about the social problem of pregnant women out of the wedlock because of having been seduced by men in the false promise of marriage and then disowned and frequently repudiated by society. The implications of these issues were really high for even newspapers echoed the polemic and the Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald participated actively in it. This debate is very interesting since on the one hand, it shows Canadian society starting to open up to certain feminist aspects; on the other, it epitomizes its division between liberals –represented by John Charlton– who wanted to introduce a bill to outlaw that male behaviour, and the puritan sector that was against it since it could mean “rewarding the woman who comes forward and confesses that she did commit this sin” (qtd. in Dyer: vii-viii). Macdonald even used the literary example of the *The Scarlet Letter* to back his ideas. The polemic also shows the influence of religion on Canadian politics because politicians had problems in distinguishing sin from crime. Moreover, this debate reflects how women’s rights were discussed by men who decided if their “chastity, morality and decency” should be protected by the state or not and how. In fact, from their words it can be deduced that

the protection of women was synonym of protecting the state since attempting on their virtue was “a crime against society”; the pure Christian home seems to be the only safe foundation for a free and enlightened State. Vice, in the shape of social immorality, is the greatest danger that can threaten the State” (qtd. in Dyer: viii). This is actually what Wood fictionalizes in *The Untempered Wind*. The main character, Myron Holder, a descendant from a very poor family of British origin, became pregnant by an unknown man whose identity she refuses to reveal. She is one of those “mothers but not wives” politicians talked about in Wood’s times, who suffered the rejection of a puritan social framework not prepared for difference and determined to make her life rougher than it already was. Through Myron’s long voyage as an unmarried pregnant woman in a small town in Canada, Wood offers a sharp and critical portrayal of the Canadian regionalist society, as well as rendering a challenging feminist message.

Wood’s experiences in Queenston Heights must have been the source of inspiration for the Canadian setting and its Jamestown characters. Although its specific location is not mentioned in the novel, through the precise descriptions of landscapes, its settings and characters and the cadence of weather ruling life, it can be deduced almost undoubtedly that it is placed in Canada. An omniscient narrator presents readers the suffocation of a cruel but religious social framework which despises Myron. Through this narrative voice Wood actually authorizes herself as a fiction writer whose opinions and positioning deserve to be expressed in a piece of literature; it is also the vehicle for her great ironic comments on Jamestown people that actually entail a fundamental strength of the novel and of Wood as a writer. Female characters are especially interesting since they act as the spokesperson of puritan morality but who, paradoxically, not only avoid helping Myron but are actually the ones that make her life a misery, even her own grandmother. After a lot of harshness Myron is left alone as her grandmother and her boy, the “child of shame”, both die and she abandons the little town. She starts working as a nurse in a quarantine station where she meets a doctor who is in fact the father of her dead child, My. There she contracts cholera and on her deathbed he marries her; once her wronged womanhood seems restored through this chance encounter, she finally dies after having achieved what she truly desired: giving a real name to her dead boy, that of Henry Willis, as his father. The omniscient narrator clearly maintains a sympathetic posture towards Myron’s situation and defies social

boundaries; it is also very relevant since its voice is the vehicle for the author's critical and feminist views.

Such a plot closure for a tragedy novel may seem as a virtue-restored technique and, perhaps, too predictable for the modern reader. Nevertheless, Wood broke Canadian literary bonds by fictionalizing a story of a 'fallen woman' not common in Canadian fiction despite being quite popular in English and United States' literature (MacMillan in MacMillan, McMullen and Waterston: 172). The frame in which Wood as a writer seems to be trapped is very interesting since after challenging conventions through her main character she must have had some doubts about how to close her plot. This crossroads speaks out the paradoxes of challenging writers who dared to negotiate established literary limits in terms of form or content who, as Wood, somehow ended up being "unable, in the end, to avoid the cultural script against which she[they] had written" (Dyer: xxv). From a feminist perspective, Wood's novel must be seen as a paradigm of literary problematic of fitting exceptional women characters within a traditional literary framework. Wood's novel is in fact an attempt of renegotiating those social and literary conventions not only through Myron's character but also through the resolution. While most endings exemplified either rightfulness by marriage or claimed careful observation of deviated attitudes by death, Wood closes the story of her challenging female character with both marriage and death. In spite of the fact that it could be regarded as a hesitant solution, it is also pioneering since it is one of the only Canadian novels in which the two established options are mixed. In this way, her text shows a new and different resolution which challenges cultural axioms since it advances a new stage in "the relationships between women and men, women and society, sexuality and marriage, and gender and labour" (Dyer: xxiii).

Furthermore, the fact that Myron is from British origins is very significant since she stands as different and alien from the very beginning, before her wrongdoings give Jamestown people reasons to feel authorized to reject her. Myron came from a family that considered their kin was not Canadian and who suffered the disdain of Canada's society as a consequence or reason of their alien state. When Jed Holder –Myron's father– is in the throes of death he only talks about their homeland and her mother felt

furious because “he was not to lie with all his kin in Kent” (Wood: 12)<sup>71</sup>. It is also him the only one who appreciates the English sparrows flying around unlike Canadian farmers who consider them “a pest, and an overzealous government offered a bounty for their little feathered heads” so that not only society despises these signs of a colonial past but the government takes actions against it (183). In spite of the time spent in Canada, Myron keeps a British accent which voices her difference and places her on the edges of society. One of the few remains the family keeps from their British times is a lantern which “had lighted her mother’s happy footsteps along Kentish lanes” but that now only lights Myron’s misery as a female emigrant (58). This foreign light is described as “queer and old”, as a visible symbol of her difference. Such a symbol and the rest of signs mentioned above signify her family’s unique position within a Canadian social framework imprisoned for its troubles in assuming its colonial past, its alien state as a country ‘founded’ by foreigners whose native inhabitants are almost completely absent from its social network, as the lack of non-white characters in the novel shows.

“Myron Holder was an outsider” Wood writes in Chapter IX (93), one of the best paradigms of her critical insight and fictional mastery in *The Untempered Wind*. Such a position of non-belonging is openly exposed when Jamestown people are described as “descendants of some half-dozen families, the original settlers of the country” so that those coming from a different lineage just did not belong to what they considered as truly Anglo-Canadian (93). In my opinion, the most important aspect the narrator criticizes here is the plea for uniformity that regionalist Canada seems to defend since they not only belong to the same families and looked alike, but are “subjected to the same mental influences, the same conditions of life, the same climate, the same religion” (93), that is to say, they conform a uniform community far from the diverse cultural mosaic later proclaimed as Canada’s substance. Actually, even belonging members who are regarded as “unfortunates” for their physical or mental handicaps are repudiated; if they did not put society’s normal flow at risk they were allowed to stay but “kept out of sight as far as possible” and when they are considered dangerous “they were[are] sent as paupers to the governmental institutions and forgotten” (94). One of

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<sup>71</sup> The edition from which all subsequent quotations of Wood’s text come from is that one issued by Tecumseh in 1994 cited in Primary Sources.

this on-the-edge subjects is little Bing White, a small creature regarded as an “idiot” by his neighbours which “was far from the truth” according to the narrator (96). He is a boy strangely fascinated with blood who has the very curious habit of keeping relics from past wars that took place in Jamestown’s “historic ground” to which its population did not pay attention at all (95). It is revealing that among those relics Indian arrow heads are also listed as tokens of a past history, of a confrontation between colonizers and colonized communities. Interestingly, this is the only mention to native inhabitants of the novel so that in *The Untempered Wind* ethnic communities mean absence. This inattention could be regarded as either part of Wood’s representation of Canadian towns where ethnic members had also been expelled as part of a denied diversity, or an overlooking on behalf of the author. The fact that some, although scarce, race-oriented comments can be found may lead to think that it has more to do with the latter option. In Chapter IV, for instance, the narrator backs up a defence of Myron versus the rejection she suffers stating that she “had come of no slavish race of down-trodden serfs. She had sprung from a long line of sturdy English forbears, lowly indeed, but free and bold” (36-37). It is clear then, that the description of such a situation, apart from being a strong critique of Canada’s social framework, also speaks for its colonial paradoxes. These chosen families were not only settlers but regard themselves as ‘founders’ of a country whose past they despise. It seems there is a silence pact that avoids any confrontation with past mistakes and deeds, with Canada’s foundation on a multicultural network, and of course, which leads to rejection of members who dare to dig that up.

But this silence is constantly broken by earth’s stubbornness since it “was determined to cast forth from her bosom those deadly fragments” (96). Such blindness towards nature’s messages also shows Jamestown people’s unconscious rejection of nature whose almost matchless qualities are altruistically revealed “but in vain” (95). Here the narrator suggests one of the most important aspects of Canada, of its society, its culture and of course its artistic expression: nature. No matter how much Jamestonians decline its revelations; nature rules their lives and their social development. As Wood displays in her novel –perhaps excessively– seasons come one after another allowing weather to shape the cadence of life; the seclusion winter requires, its indoor life and the chance for gossiping it offers; or the blossoming of spring and “the culmination of a year’s endeavours [...] a feverish season, the fruition



of a twelvemonth expectancy” (130). These changes also go with the events and characters of the novel; it is precisely in spring when Homer Wilson –Myron’s only friend and suitor– feels the need of love, “a great hunger for woman’s touches”, and confused and imprisoned when winter draws near (132). It is precisely when the first snow falls and the severe cold of winter comes that Myron’s grandmother dies and, after scant but socially expected gestures from Jamestown people, she is left alone frozen by the grave with the only company of her boy and Homer. According to the narrator snow with its whiteness has the crucial role of hiding society’s falseness; but when it melts, truth comes out as if suggesting that behind that white Canadian façade there were many secrets to be revealed, a diverse cast of characters and social agents silenced but it may be questioned, by whom?

Outwardly, at least, Jamestown had been quite a decent village before the snow melted; now, it showed like a hypocrite from whom the robe has been torn away.  
(218)

After winter’s reflection, Myron’s attitude seems to have changed, “she no longer shrank from before the gaze of those cold eyes that met hers daily” (222). It is then when she lets herself go completely alone in nature at night lead by passion, inner wilderness and freedom; after a night in the woods she comes back to civilization peaceful, resolute, enlightened and determined. There is a clear correspondence between night and nature and Myron’s passions and feelings as an individual apart from a society which in the daylight constantly reminds her sin and the importance of endurance. This episode suggests the relation of nature and civilization as another fundamental aspect in Canada. It seems there is an unspoken fight between nature and society, wilderness, freedom and diversity on the one hand, and civilization, rules and uniformity on the other; between the unknown and the tried and proved. In this way, Wood’s novel may be linked to many other pieces of Canadian fiction as Frances Brooke’s *The History of Emily Montague*.

The excellent description of Bing’s character also speaks for the colonial paradoxes Canadian society avoids bringing face-to-face, whereas such thoughtlessness epitomizes some of its similarities with a mother country from which they want to grow apart. No matter how much Jamestown people try to escape from their historic past, it is always present as for instance through their inherited patriarchal system. From my viewpoint, this is one the main strengths of Wood’s novel: its critical approach towards

a patriarchal society which, of course, entails a challenging feminist message. The characterization of powerful but hypocritical women as moral keepers and subjected weak men, together with a wide range of descriptions full of irony and humour of the social network they insist on maintaining is very pertinent and revealing.

On the one hand, such a feminist vision is evident through the choice of the female protagonist as an outsider given her British ancestry and 'fallen' condition. Myron Holder committed the crime/sin of having a baby out of the wedlock. Of course, the consequences of such a deviant behaviour are only paid by Myron since her accomplice is not punished whatsoever. It can be affirmed then, that in Wood's opinion, society carried out an unequal trial to women and men in this kind of situations, taking part in this way in the heated political and social debate of her time through fiction. But it also highlights women's uneven position since they had to carry the visible sign of the sin during pregnancy. In my viewpoint, this subtle message entails a crucial and challenging feminist comment from the author; maternity, the most important female virtue to which they had to pay homage, is paradoxically criticized by the same society which fosters it when carried out of the established rules. In this way, Myron's baby, apart from being her refuge –he is the only one who loves her since he has not been contaminated by his puritan and hypocritical environment yet– is also the permanent emblem of her unaccepted behaviour. His name is "My" since "he belongs to none of you; he is mine –my own baby–my own child–My–My!" (253). Poor My is actually a "child of shame" while not being a sinner himself who will unavoidably inherit her mother's shame (153). It is very interesting that it is only when Myron starts thinking about leaving Jamestown that My gets sick and dies; Wood offers her character the chance of a brand new start, full of pain and loneliness, but without that scarlet letter. Hawthorne's novel is not only an evident source of inspiration for Wood in this novel but it is openly mentioned. Almost at the end of the novel, in chapter XXIII, the narrator establishes a comparison between the two women's situations and penances, Myron and "Hawthorne's Evil Woman", pointing out the difference of their sin banners since "the milder methods of modern Christianity were far different"; there was no longer the need of that "fatal mark" because the inner burden was punishment enough (297). But Myron challenged Jamestonians' puritanism by keeping her secret and refusing to reveal the father's identity and not trying to avoid her punishment, although perhaps naively. In

fact, despite not being actually married, she seems to truly believe in the marriage vows she and the unknown father exchanged, up to the point of refusing Homer Wilson's proposal of marriage and thus of restoring her virtue (189).

“You can't make it easier for me,” she said. “I have made my own bed,’ grandmother often said, and must lie on it. I went against the world's ways, and I suppose it's only right now to expect the world to be against me. No one can help me but *him*.” (192)

Ironically, her accomplice in sinning is her saviour; he is the only one who can restore her virtue according to society's commandments. This fact reveals significant information about female education and patriarchal bondages. Myron resignedly accepts her absolute lack of virtue, her punishment, and keeps within the boundaries women had been taught to stick to. She has to leave Jamestown to get some rest and finally fulfil what she desires, the restoration of her boy's pride by giving him a name. Furthermore, Myron's acceptance of those false marriage vows stands for women's strong internalization of their role as wives pushed by a cultural framework which regarded them as non-existent and despised them if unmarried. It may be noted that Wood herself could have experienced such a rejection for being an independent and unmarried woman earning a living from writing. In sum, Wood criticizes main social and cultural stereotypes about women through Myron's character. She is a hard-working woman as her neighbours, a member of their community, but an alien of British ancestry; she carries out the most important duties of women: motherhood, although out of the established marriage system; she feels like a wife while she is not; she is seen and treated as an evil woman while having done no harm; she is a fallen woman who dies having restored her virtue. In this way, the author questions female literary representation; Myron is not a virgin neither an evil so that her character moves away from the traditional duality of angel/monster depiction of women in literature. In some passages she is actually presented as a messiah, misunderstood by all her contemporaries, whose message is persistently rejected and who came to carry all the sins of a rotten community. One of the few who is able to perceive her sanctity is Philip Hardman, an uncommon church minister whose departure from Jamestown turns Myron to obscurity,

There came to him a fantastic thought, that this woman was sent to bear the griefs of this village, even as one long since – the Carpenter's son – had borne the griefs of the world [...] (266)

On the other hand, Wood's feminist vision is also portrayed through her excellent depiction of conventional puritan women. They are hard-working women and powerful within the domestic realm, with a strong but superficial religious morals. Of course, they are all married and have kids; they never neglect their female duties at home, go to church every Sunday and spend their free time criticizing and plotting against deviant members of their community such as Myron. None of them takes pity of her or tries to help her; they do strictly what morality dictates and sometimes not even that. When her grandmother dies, she is left alone during the night "when it was customary for five or six to go and stay over night in the house where death was" and the burial (171). They feel authorized to mistreat Myron since she deviated from morality. Right before Myron dies, another woman whose child has died says to her,

"Fancy my child dead! If it had been that young one of yours, now, there would have been some sense in it—a young without even a name—that would have been a good riddance—but mine—mine!" (250)

Such an exertion of violence towards Myron, can also be observed when her son dies. Right in front of his coffin, one of these women, Mrs. Wilson, stubbornly insists on finding out the father's name instead of comforting Myron after such a loss, only because there was a noisy gossip in town about Mrs. Wilson's son being the father. One of the most interesting of these female characters is Mrs. Deans, "distinctly a leader in Jamestown society" (29). She stands out for her always righteous behaviour, collecting money for the church and 'helping' bound girls; she is a rude matron who hires these girls—Myron among them—to do some of the hardest works in her farm. For Mrs. Deans, giving a job to these deviant girls is a Christian duty although "woman and mother as was, she was never moved by their peculiar needs" (29). There is a strong critique of religion in a Canadian small town all along the novel; but it is even harsher in relation to women since they are presented as its representatives and keepers while, according to the narrator, "the Church is not very lenient with women" (299). In fact, Mrs. Deans epitomizes a puritan double moral; she feels devout for such an aid but she is ruthless towards the girls while the rest of the town reassures her in her throne; as the narrator comments, "that this "help" consisted in being allowed to do the hardest work under the most intolerable circumstances for very meagre pay, they did not stop to consider" (29). Mrs. Deans is convinced that bound girls incarnate evil and there is no possible redemption for them. Despite actually enslaving these unaccepted women, she

ironically refuses to be a slave, a man's slave when she says to her husband, "I suppose you'd like me to enslave myself to death [...] Well, if that's what's on your mind, just relieve your feelings of it right away—for be a slave to no man I won't" (102). Such an apparent feminist position is in direct contradiction to her behaviour towards those girls which seems to portray part of Wood's feminist message. On the one hand, the double moral that pious Puritanism hides is revealed. On the other hand, some of the incongruities of an outdated patriarchal system are voiced; only some chosen women were gaining power but they were still subjected to patriarchy to the extent of mistreating their sisters, preventing their improvement, and thus, unconsciously maintaining a system that does not allow a shared freedom. In this sense, Wood's reflection also entails a social critique towards a class system inherited from colonialism.

There is an evident contrast between Myron and these matrons with a very significant double reading. The former epitomizes vice in contrast to the latter's virtue in the eyes of society, while the narrator portrays precisely the opposite picture. Myron is actually the incarnation of virtue, enduring their condemnation and surviving all that misery while the behaviour of these moral keepers, apparently virtuous, is in fact antithetic. They are not the angels but the monsters that make Myron's life bitter. It is important to mention that this is not a plea for Myron's victimization. Although the narrator positions readers in a sympathetic mood towards her, her blind acceptance of her fate and punishment to a rather excessive extent is portrayed in a critical way; as the narrating voice explains, "it is perhaps true that martyrdom is a form of beatitude; but, if compulsory, it rarely has a spiritualizing effect" (36).

The strong presence of women characters in *The Untempered Wind* overshadows male characters participation which in most cases is almost purely testimonial. They appear as puppets that "always did what was expected of them" (255). The most obvious case is Mrs. Deans' husband, Henry Deans, who as the narrator states "had sat under his wife's ministry" (26). But there is a very interesting male character for he belongs to that scarce group of people who take pity on Myron and are able to see beyond her sin. Homer Wilson also epitomizes difference, in the same way as other visionary characters as Philip Hardman who at the end of the novel meets Myron again and recognizes his love for her. It is very revealing that only other characters depicted as

different and somehow non-belonging to mainstream regional Canada are precisely the ones who feel close to Myron and try to help her. It is also curious that these characters are pushed to leave Jamestown either physically or through death.

Homer Wilson –apart from being the only one in town who helps her with her everyday misery– feels compelled to save her; he proposes marriage to Myron since he knows it is one of the slender possibilities she has to restore her virtue. But Homer also plays a crucial role in the novel: he is the spokesperson of the open feminist message Wood’s novel entails. Homer is ironically the only one who speaks up the injustices the matrons encourage against Myron; as he exclaims, “What beasts these women are to leave you alone!” (173). In this way, Homer backs up the narrator’s criticism of an unspoken violence of women against women.

But, O women, think well before you utter harsh judgement! Your verdict is the more sacred by virtue of being pronounced upon your own sex, for woman is more nearly allied to woman than man to man. Each woman is linked to her sister women by the indissoluble bond of common pain. (295)

And this is precisely the clearest feminist goal of *The Untempered Wind*: a plea for a common sisterhood. Wood claims for a shared womanhood as a powerful strategy to advance women’s cause within a restrictive patriarchy that does not leave any space for female freedom. In point of fact, Wood’s feminist position is also present in the rest of her novels, which backs up her pioneering character as a writer. As Carrie MacMillan explains, in her 1900’s novel *A Daughter of the Witches* Wood critically portrays women’s helplessness since their environment does not allow the unbiased exercise of their skills. Wood also breaks bonds in *Farden Ha’* (1902) in which she went “further than most women writers of her day ventured, in describing erotic and illicit love” (MacMillan in MacMillan, McMullen and Waterston: 195). Furthermore, in *A Martyr to Love* Wood raises the possibility of morality as a consequence of man’s deviation; such challenging question shows Wood as “quite remarkable among nineteenth-century Canadian novelists for raising that matter at all” (MacMillan in MacMillan, McMullen and Waterston: 196).

The questioning of Canada’s colonial paradoxes, nature’s relevance and its battle against civilization, challenge of Puritanism and its double morality, and the feminist message mentioned before, are all part of the general critique of Canada’s regionalist social framework *The Untempered Wind* entails. This is precisely one of the most

relevant strengths of the novel: its critical presentation of the pillars of Canadian regional society. Wood's mastery offers a devastating critique of a Canadian small town, narrow-minded and full of prejudices whose members stubbornly struggle to maintain a fake stability and disdain any individual who pleads for diversity and threatens their uniformity, such as Myron Holder. In this sense it could be said that *The Untempered Wind* is a novel about difference, a declaration of Canada's paradoxical attitude towards its own diverse essence that, in its everyday life, seems not only to be silenced but punished. Wood's pioneering critical insight into Canada's regionalism is not only "one of the most vivid representations of small-town Canada in nineteenth-century fiction" but links her novel and her figure as writer to a tradition of Canadian authors who also saw in it an excellent breeding ground for their fiction (MacMillan in MacMillan, McMullen and Waterston: 180). According to Carrie MacMillan, the recognition of Wood's early achievement would connect her to "Sinclair Ross in *As For Me and My House* (1941), W. O. Mitchell in *Who Has Seen the Wind* (1947), Ernest Buckler in *The Mountain and the Valley* (1952), and Margaret Laurence in *The Diviners* (1947)" (in MacMillan, McMullen and Waterston: 175). This being so, it seems paradoxical at least that her figure and main novel have suffered the oversight of Canadian literary criticism.

*The Untempered Wind* was published for the first time in New York by J. Selwin Tait and Sons and it was not edited in Canada until 1898, after three US editions were issued. The first repercussion of the novel was also quite different in the United States and Canada. American reviewers praised Wood's novel even before its publication perhaps in a quite excessive manner. One of the first in commending the novel was *Current Opinion* from New York which stated that *The Untempered Wind* was "the strongest and best American novel of the year"; it also praised Wood's mastery and established a link between her and some of the most relevant writers such as Hawthorne, George Eliot, Charlotte Bronte or Dickens (qtd. in Dyer: xiv). Similarly, *The Week*, apart from pointing out its Canadian bonds, also placed it as a masterpiece of the time. Although after some time reviews became more equivoque, generally speaking for these American reviewers Wood's novel should be "taken seriously" and was a book worth living (Dyer: xv). On the other hand, one of the early Canadian reviews of the novel was not precisely favourable. The Toronto *Globe* criticized Wood's novel in an

unsigned review which stated that not only the harassment exerted on Myron was outdated but that the portrayal of wickedness in a Canadian small town was not an achievement to be praised at all. Actually Wood complained about it in a letter to William Kirby –a recognized Canadian writer of her time– in which she expressed her discontent since it was precisely and only a Canadian medium the “one to render a Canadian work into pieces” (qtd. in Dyer: xvi). Later on, the 1898 Canadian edition of *The Untempered Wind* brought some positive comments just as the *Canadian Magazine* which affirmed that the novel was “perhaps without a peer among Canadian novels” (MacMillan in MacMillan, McMullen and Waterston: 180-1). According to my research about Canadian literary anthologies from 1920 to 2004 Wood and her novel are scarcely mentioned. Very few of Canadian literary histories pay detailed attention or simply mention her work; one of these few is Desmond Pacey’s *Creative Writing in Canada; a Short History of English-Canadian Literature* (1964) where Joanna E. Wood is mentioned together with more widely accepted authors as William Kirby, Gilbert Parker or Sara Jeannette Duncan. Stating that Wood’s critical attitude towards small-town Canada was a crucial factor in despising the novel by Canadian criticism would be too easy but it clearly shows that Canadian literary institutions adhered to the tried and proved and that they were not so good to literary women as it has been generally maintained.

In my opinion, Joanna E. Wood as a writer and her main novel need a more balanced consideration, in-between American exaggerated appraisal and Canada’s despising. I agree with Carrie MacMillan that for the modern reader her fiction may seem too sensational and dramatic with predictable events and closures, but it must not be obviated that Wood was immerse in a literary fashion which dictated certain rules. Even so, her novel needs to be praised for pioneering in breaking some tradition bonds either formally or in content. As it has been explained before, the ending of the novel does not follow established axioms since it mixes the two accepted closures for romance and thus subverts their exemplarity. The feminist message the novel entails also challenges established literary boundaries and fostered female themes as authorized content in Canadian fiction. Wood’s originality is also present in her critique of Canadian rural society since she was one of the first early writers to do so; she distances herself from accepted mainstream accounts of its Acadian character and offers a sharp



and realistic approach through which she raises fundamental questions about its regionalist social background. According to Carrie MacMillan, “Wood is important to the development of feminist themes in Canadian Literature. She is also significant, in her accurate and “felt” depiction of place, to the development of realism in the Canadian novel” (MacMillan in MacMillan, McMullen and Waterston: 200). For all this, Wood’s *The Untempered Wind* deserves a place within English Canadian literary history, tradition and identity that are still to be fully rendered.

In between the publication of Joanna E. Wood’s novel in 1894 and *O-Jî-Mäw-Kwê Mit-I-Gwä-Kî* (*Queen of the Woods*) by Simon Pokagon first published in 1899, another writer deserves at least a brief mention in this dissertation. Although for matters of space restriction an in-depth analysis cannot be offered, the figure of Susan Frances Harrison and her literary career stand out as another clear paradigm of the reluctance on behalf of mainstream Canadian criticism to deal with certain early authors whose contributions, when dug up and approached, prove not simply their participation in Canadian letters but in the forging of literary tradition and identity. Once again, it is necessary to turn to specific critical sources to find references to Harrison since one of the few careful analyses on her career is included in the already cited feminist critical work *The Silenced Sextet: Six Nineteenth-Century Canadian Woman Novelists* edited by Carrie MacMillan, Lorraine McMullen and Elizabeth Waterston (1992).

In fact, following Carrie MacMillan’s chapter on Harrison there is a connection between her and Joanna E. Wood for it seems that her already mentioned novel *Judith Moore; or, Fashioning a Pipe* (1898) may have been inspired by one of Harrison’s short stories entitled “The Idyl of the Island” –published the same year as Wood’s novel but some time earlier– since both depict Canada “mythically as an environment for the artist” (in MacMillan, McMullen and Waterston: 115). Just as Joanna, Susan Frances also experienced the downsides of being a professional woman writer in the Canada of the late nineteenth century which speak of “the constraints on the woman writer in Canada in the 1880s, still unsure of the Canadian and female voice” (110). She employed pen-names of which the most remembered nowadays is ‘Seranus’, used a male first person in her early short stories, had to turn to self-publication of her works as

in the case of her collections of short fiction *Crowded Out and Other Sketches* (1886) and poetry *Songs of Love and Labor* (1925) and looked for publishers outside Canada. In spite of such a pressure on women writers at her time, she took up the pen to voice female literary agency through her works and by praising other women writers as her appraisal on Isabella Valancy Crawford in the *Week* in 1887 shows; besides, she dared to overtly complain about mainstream literary institutions which left her contributions aside as in the case of a review on Montreal literature which appeared in the *Saturday Night* in 1916. It seems that the silencing process that has brought along the total absence of reissuing of her works, the very weak access to data about her life, and oblivion regarding her diverse cultural roles as poet, musical composer, journalist, fiction author, editor and supporter of Canadian Literature –by, for instance, publishing the anthology of Canadian poetry *The Canadian Birthday Book* (1887)– was already setting off.

Although born in Toronto, Harrison spent most of her life in Montreal from where her engagement with French-Canada present in her fiction may stem. Likewise, her marriage to an Englishman may have had some influence on her depiction of French-English relations in Canada in her early short stories as well. Following MacMillan, unlike in her early short fiction, Harrison's probably most famous novel *The Forest of Bourg-Marie* (1898) deals with Canada-US relations by depicting the migration of Canadians to the other side of the southern border in search of better conditions during the 1890s and that was actually experienced even by writers of the time such a as the already cited May Agnes Fleming (in MacMillan, McMullen and Waterston: 123). Once again, Harrison's *The Forest of Bourg-Marie* is a groundbreaking fiction work given its legitimation of Canada as literary setting, although this time focusing on French-Canada, and very significantly because it entails an appraisal of Canada's cultural identity portrayed through the disapproval of the loss of identity that the corresponding assimilation of Canadians who moved to the United States implied. The character of Maglorie Caron is the clearest epitome of the theme since he does not only cross the border to improve his conditions but denies his Canadianicity in order to get easily adapted to the new country. It is equally important to mention that *The Forest of Bourg-Marie* pays attention to Canada's multicultural past and breaks fresh ground since it is closer to realism than to romance so that it can be said to be

paradigmatic in the evolution of the Canadian novel in English to realism. The plot, for example, distances from romance since the closure is somehow ironic for the deviant character's behaviour is not corrected but is allowed to escape free. Since at the end the Canadian small town of Bourg-Marie seems to be left untouched, from MacMillan's viewpoint, Harrison "affirmed[s] the sovereignty of the Canadian landscape, inviolate and pure, and condemned[s] those who would deny their birthright" (in MacMillan, McMullen and Waterston: 126-7). It seems ironical that precisely this novel was first published in New York and not in Canada.

As far as the critical attention that *The Forest of Bourg-Marie* received after publication, it seems to have had a positive welcoming in Canada as Robert Barr's comments in the *Canadian Magazine* demonstrate (MacMillan in MacMillan, McMullen and Waterston: 128). In my opinion, what is more eloquent is the fact that a review of the time which appeared in the United States newspaper *Nation* carried out a devastating critique of another Canadian author, Charles G. D. Roberts, while it praised Harrison's novel since the latter has been silenced by Canadian mainstream criticism whereas the former is today considered a canonical figure. In spite of the inclusion of Harrison in Henry Morgan's *The Canadian Men and Women of the Time* (1912), the analysis of anthologies included in the previous part of this dissertation shows that the figure and contributions of Harrison do not enjoy a widespread recognition nowadays. Such a neglect is even more surprising given the fact that Harrison was an extremely active cultural agent in Canada; after *The Forest of Bourg-Marie*, she wrote another novel entitled *Ringfield* (New York and Toronto: 1914) which was also positively reviewed at her time, continued with her contribution to music, published more short stories and poetry, articles for Canadian and foreigner newspapers on very diverse issues, and even translations. She belonged to a "generation [that] actively and optimistically searched for a Canadian Literature, a Canadian culture, and a Canadian national character" (MacMillan in MacMillan, McMullen and Waterston: 135). In this sense, it is again very significant that an author like Susan Frances Harrison who explored a crucial Canadian theme of the time and ever since, that is, the country's cultural identity, has been later silenced as crucial contributor all along the hard and long search for cultural roots in literature in order to find precisely Canadian identity.

VI.8 AN APPROACH TO FICTION AND CANADIANICITY IN SIMON POKAGON'S *LIFE OF O-JI-MAW-KWE-MIT-I-GWA-KI, QUEEN OF THE WOODS* (1899)

As outlined in the diachronic study on English Canadian anthologization in Part II, Simon Pokagon and his work *O-Jî-Mäw-Kwê Mit-I-Gwä-Kî (Queen of the Woods)*<sup>72</sup> first published in 1899 have received very scarce critical attention in English Canadian Literature even from an ethnic perspective. This section includes an approach to his figure and work in the attempt of bringing light into the reasons of their dismissal. The only critical work in which he appears is in "Introduction: An Anthology of Canadian Native Fiction" by Thomas King (1987). Among the group of early Native writers to deal with the theme of "the clash between Indians and non-Indians" that King lists, the only author before the twentieth century to contribute to Canadian fiction is precisely Simon Pokagon. I agree with King on the fact that, although early participations as Pokagon's together with contemporary fiction works could be thought to conform a literary tradition, there is still a lot of work to do in order to find connections among these individual contributions so that they "will exhibit a pattern or patterns which can be translated into a [common] definition" (King 1987: 4). For such a task to be achieved, a preliminary archaeological research process which allows the identification and exploration of silenced works and authors is needed. This is what is going to be investigated in this section in relation to Pokagon's *O-Jî-Mäw-Kwê Mit-I-Gwä-Kî (Queen of the Woods)* for only direct approach to the author and his text can prove the degree of his contribution to early Canadian fiction.

The cataloguing as Canadian and fiction actually entails two of the most intricate issues regarding Pokagon's text. First of all, it is imperative to note that the national boundaries imposed by white colonial powers regardless of the already established cultural differentiations among colonized peoples do not necessarily correspond to the



Figure 2. Simon Pokagon.

Chief Simon Pokagon, 1830-1899

(Internet sources)

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<sup>72</sup> Despite Simon Pokagon's work is mainly known as *Life of O-Ji-Maw-Kwe-Mit-I-Gwa-Ki, Queen of the Woods* preference is given in this dissertation to *O-Jî-Mäw-Kwê Mit-I-Gwä-Kî (Queen of the Woods)* since it is the title mentioned in the third edition of his work in 1901.

spaces those diverse cultures inhabited before colonization. But as we are somehow forced to play with certain critical rules that fence literature inside a certain territory, the location of Pokagon and his tribe needs to be explored. Likewise, the term *fiction* also settles literary limits from the perspective of the mainstream culture that, again, do not match as a matter of course the outlines of differing literary expressions as that of First Nations. As explained in Part II, these authors' incursion into the English language implies a translation of their literature, either oral or written, and into a foreign literary tradition so that their works are not necessarily in complete harmony with mainstream genre distinctions in English Canadian Literature.

For the Canadian connections of Pokagon and his culture to be revealed, a brief outline of their history seems necessary. From the scant biographical data available on Simon Pokagon, it is possible to determine that he was the youngest son of Leopold Pokagon, an outstanding spokesman of the Michigan Potawatomi tribe, popularly known as the Pokagons; after the Treaty of Chicago of 1833 and the victory founding of the United States of America, they were forced to sell their lands and relocate with a subsequent diasporic move by which "hundreds fled north to Ottawa lands or to Canada" (Clifton, 1984: 55). In a brief historical sketch it is significant to note that the Potawatomis witnessed and became involved in different ways with colonial powers – French, British and Spanish– in their competition to appropriate American lands. According to James A. Clifton's research, around 1650s and 1660s the Potawatomis were "the numerically dominant tribe in the Wisconsin refuge" and maintained a strong alliance with French colonizers until Great Britain got hold of colonial power over France in America (1984: 15). This period of intercourse with the French gave rise to one of Canada's current First Nations, the Métis, who are inheritors of the mixed culture born from the union of French men and Potawatomi women whose bilingual children were not considered full-members of the tribe. Apart from economic and political exchanges, the Potawatomis received other European influences such as alcohol, epidemics, to some extent religion since they resisted Catholicism and their men were often called into military participation to defend the French colonies of Quebec and Louisiana. When the British came into the scene, some Potawatomi travelled to Lake Ontario in search of better deals for their products. After the proclamation of British hegemony over American lands settled by the Treaty of Paris of 1763 and although

most tribes' representatives went to Canada to create alliances with the new rulers, the Potawatomis were less inclined to such a direct acceptance. In the same year, the so-called Pontiac rebellion broke out as a consequence of the policy of Canada's military governor which ended with the reception of presents in exchange of alliances between the Potawatomis and traders from Montreal. The British finally managed to achieve peace and established the "boundary between English settlements in the East and tribal lands in the West" divided by the Appalachians (Clifton 1984: 26). Before the Quebec Act of 1774 had any real impact, the American Revolution had already broken out. First Nations tribes inhabiting interior lands such as the Potawatomis "were seen from then until the 1830s as Canada's first line of defense against any further expansion of the American republic" (Clifton, 1984: 27). Following Clifton, when the new American nation finally got its independence from British rule there was also certainty that First Nations lands belonged to Americans and not to Natives. After many incidences and even a war between the Potawatomis with the support of the British in Canada against Americans, President Washington managed to make them recognize the sovereignty of the United States. Later on, after the government of Thomas Jefferson and mainly due to Andrew Jackson's 1830 Indian Removal Act by which First Nations' lands passed to the hands of Americans another war took place in which the figure of Tecumseh stood out. Finally, the Tippecanoe treaty of 1832 settled peace, the Potawatomis' lands were bought by the United States and they were relocated in western Mississippi. This is when lots of them, later known as the Pokagons, "sought refuge in Canada" (Clifton, 1984: 41).

The figure of Tecumseh is actually the basis for Charles Mair's work entitled *Tecumseh*, a historical drama explored by Glenn Willmott as another paradigm of the expression of *ressentiment* in English Canadian Literature together with Rosanna Mullins Leprohon's *Antoniette de Mirecourt* (1864). The previous historical events show the diasporic process to which Simon Pokagon's ancestors were induced to, the changeability of their national status in dependence of colonial powers, the enforced alternating character of his tribe but also the connections with Canada, although scant. It is interesting that just as Martin R. Delany's novel reveals, for the Pokagons Canada also meant a refuge, a land where freedom, rights recognition or at least a better situation could be achieved. In this sense, both in First Nations and Black North

American diaspora Canada held a similar significance. Just as in Delany's *Blake*, the Canadian utopia is also subverted by Clifton when he states that whereas those Potawatomis who stayed in Michigan, as Simon Pokagon's father, did not enjoy the recognition of their rights but were considered second-class citizens, "those who emigrated into Upper Canada had none[r]ights at all, except the privilege of taking refuge at one of the reserves set aside for the use of emigrating American Indians" (1977: 313). Once again, the ideal image of Canada as a welcoming country to foreigners is overthrown.

Simon Pokagon seems to have remained among those Potawatomis/Pokagons who endured in the oppression of American governmental powers in Michigan. Unlike his father's mixed ancestry Chippewa or Ottawa-Chippewa, Simon was "a full-blooded Pottawattamie<sup>73</sup> Indian and the last of the Pokagon band" (Pokagon, 1901: 5). He received English education at different colleges in Ohio and Twinsburg, "was the first *red man* to visit Abraham Lincoln after taking the presidential chair", and succeeded his father as representative of his people in negotiating and procuring the payment in exchange of their lands –which appears to have been a hard task indeed– from the United States (my emphasis, 1901: 7). In addition to his English education, Pokagon's situation as assimilated First Nations' member within American culture is also revealed through his Catholicism. Following Clifton, he was actually "an ideal product of American Indian policy, the last of the proper chiefs, a devout Catholic, the 'Indian Longfellow'" and the "best educated full-blooded Indian of his time" (qtd. in 1977: 312). The biographical details offered by C. H. Engle, publisher of his work, before Pokagon's text unravel an interesting event regarding his positioning as assimilated First Nations' spokesperson. With the occasion the World's Fair of 1893 he realized the discriminatory practices of a recently born nation as the United States since, while all nationalities were fully represented, "he and a few others of his race, *the only true Americans*, stood in the background, unnoticed" (my emphasis, 1901: 9). This event was meaningful for his idea of a congress of "the educated people of his race" failed and because it encouraged him to write his speech on "The Red Man's Greeting" (9-10).

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<sup>73</sup> Note the different spelling of Simon's tribe name as Pottawattamie, rather than Potawatomi as Clifton spells it, in the biographical sketch by the publisher of his work, C. H. Engle, included in the third edition of 1901. As in the case of the title of Pokagon's text, this older but presumably more reliable naming given the higher proximity to the culture of these peoples will be employed from here onwards.

However challenging the comments of his speech were, as the mention to the equal humanity of whites and First Nations' members or his claims for justice, his inclusion of only "the educated people of his race" in a congress speaks for the assimilationist character of his figure as a native educated in English institutions, fluent in both his mother tongue and English and who proclaimed nothing less that "we[First Nations] must lay aside all tribal relations, and become citizens, kings, and queens of this great Republic!" (qtd. in 9-10). In consonance with his conforming of American culture, he translated sermons into his mother tongue and contributed to different magazines such as *Arena*, *Forum* or *Harper's Magazine* and to North American literature with *O-Jî-Mäw-Kwê Mit-I-Gwä-Kî* (*Queen of the Woods*).

Just as his biographical data suggest, Simon Pokagon's stronger relation with the United States and not Canada is also made clear in the "Preface" to *O-Jî-Mäw-Kwê Mit-I-Gwä-Kî* where it is stated that he expressly wanted his work to be published in Hartford, Michigan, "among the white people where we[they] have[had] lived and are[were] well known" (ii). On the other hand, Pokagon himself voices in his "Dedication" that he addresses his work "to all societies and individuals –benefactors of *our race*– who have so bravely stood for our rights", remark that clearly expresses the acceptance of racial division and thus of race discourses in force at the time (my emphasis 'Dedication'). In this sense, although the author's intentions suggest that his work addresses a mixed audience of whites and First Nations that presumably includes Americans as well as Canadians, its connection to Canada seems weak. From my reading of *O-Jî-Mäw-Kwê Mit-I-Gwä-Kî* the only allusion to Canada that I have been able to identify is in the many references to members of the Ottawa tribe who do not play a significant role in the work except for the conversation held between the first-person protagonist, that is, Pokagon himself, with "a tall, middle-aged man of the Ottawa tribe" depicted as a character (138)<sup>74</sup>. Anyway, this is a very light nexus for despite Ottawa is today the name of Canada's capital city the Ottawas were equally dispersed throughout American territories like the Pottawattamies. This being so, the Canadianicity of Pokagon's text seems not to find solid bases.

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<sup>74</sup> Just as in previous sections, all subsequent references to Simon Pokagon's text come from the 1901 edition of *O-Jî-Mäw-Kwê Mit-I-Gwä-Kî* included in the section on Primary Sources of the Bibliographical References; in order to make reading lighter only page numbers will be specified.



As far as the fictionality of Pokagon's work *O-Jî-Mäw-Kwê Mit-I-Gwä-Kî* is concerned, after reading the text I agree with Clifton that this work is "a semifictionalized, partial autobiography" (1977: 312). The Preface to Pokagon's text is again a significant source of information; there, it is explained that it "is a real romance of Indian life" in which most characters "bear their real names" except in some occasions "where fictitious names are used" (i). In the Preface it is also explained that certain episodes of cruelty have been avoided in order to achieve the author's main purpose of bringing white and *red* men closer or, as Pokagon puts it, to "boldly declare[ing] to all the world that 'the white man and the red man are brothers, and that God is the father of all'" ('Dedication'). Following these observations, it is a realistic/romantic and mainly autobiographical piece but with a certain fictional intention. In relation to realism and autobiography it is very clear from the beginning that the first-person narrator of the text stands for Pokagon himself; the narrator's remark in the very first page on the fact that "I had attended the white man's school for several years" matches the author's autobiography (4). But that *I* turns into a third person in some passages of the text, above all in the two closing chapters where the underlying critique of the story is directly exposed as if in a praying speech; expressions like "Pokagon has no desire to [...]" or "the most humble prayer of Pokagon [...]" exemplify this change of technique that inscribes in the narrating voice a certain fictional characterization (210). Descriptions, specific settings, dialogues which convey his people's difficulties to speak English, real names of people, and/or events such as the death of his daughter are revealed as realistic strategies in *O-Jî-Mäw-Kwê Mit-I-Gwä-Kî*. Romance is also present in idealistic depictions of nature, his and his wife's total harmony with animals and the land, his love story with Lonidaw, and in her death due to sorrow. Far from following the traditional romance pattern, Pokagon and Lonidaw's love affair is not hampered by alien forces and abruptly resolved by an equally foreign influence; it is quickly settled despite Lonidaw's initial but short hesitance and with her mother's consent because, as she explains, Pokagon's "([...] grandmother) when I was left nin ma-mi-maw-is nin-gi-win (an orphan at my birth), took care of me, and brought me up" (121). Such moves between fiction and non-fiction are actually challenging and resemble canonized texts in English Canadian Literature such as Susanna Moodie's *Roughing it in the Bush* (1852). In spite of these fictional

features, the text is eminently an autobiographical account so that it cannot be said to participate in the novel genre.

In any case, although Simon Pokagon's *O-Jî-Mäw-Kwê Mit-I-Gwä-Kî* does not hold enough ties with Canada and the novel to be raised in this dissertation as paradigm of neither English Canadian literary identity nor as subverting epitome of its reluctant literary criticism, it is interesting in relation to some issues approached in previous sections. Regarding language matters of ethnic authors, the text is mainly written in English but includes constant references to the Algaic/Algonquin<sup>75</sup> language. Besides, Pokagon's adventures are introduced by a chapter entitled "the Algonquin language" in which he explains that "the manuscript was first written in the Algonquin language" since at that time was his only tongue and a brief translation of basic linguistic forms into English is offered (35). It is necessary to note that the Algonquin language conveys another link with Canada since it is the tongue of the Algonquins, a First Nation mainly located in Canadian soil nowadays. In this sense, *O-Jî-Mäw-Kwê Mit-I-Gwä-Kî* raises questions in relation to Barbara Godard's ideas on Canada's heteroglossia/polyglossia shadowed by bilingualism; in the case of Pokagon's text it would rather refer to the United States although by extension to North America too. In my opinion, this autobiographical account can be said to imply an incursion into linguistic dominance. Moreover, it is certainly significant in relation to otherness for this work supposes an early subversion of centre/margin dichotomies established by hegemonic cultures in North America. In this text First Nations are not any longer the other, represented from the perspective of a predominantly white and male mainstream but the centre of the discourse. Now whites are the savages so that First Nations' culture is raised; the narrator comments, for instance, that "the girls and boys of our people [...], are not laughed at and tormented as though it were a crime to fall in love [...] unlike the savage practice of the whites" (109). However critical this viewpoint is, it is mainly conciliatory text since both cultures are depicted as united by a common enslaving force; that "king", "that old dragon", "that great devil-fish", "that curse", "that soulless "maw-tchi" (tyrant)" which is alcohol. In the story, Pokagon's daughter actually dies because of the inability of some white drunk men to help her when drowning. In the

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<sup>75</sup> Whereas in the subtitle of Pokagon's work the inclusion "brief Sketch of the Algaic Language" refers to Algaic language, inside the text such sketch is titled "the Algonquin language" (35).

light of this event, Pokagon claims that it is a devilish force “to whom the red man and the white man are alike a race “a-waw-kan-og” (of slaves)” (199). Although it could seem somehow a naïve declaration, the last two chapters demonstrate Pokagon’s awareness on the reality of the situation; the economic benefits it produces and the blindness of the two political parties of the time are brought into question. But, from my viewpoint, the interesting aspect of the symbol of alcohol as unifying enemy is on the imperialist language employed to describe it. By calling it a King and a tyrant, Pokagon is, on one side, participating in a political discourse through a semi-fictional romance story so that, like in Rosanna Mullins Leprohon’s novel *Antoniette de Mirecourt* the politics of romance and the politics of politics overlap. On the other side, the tyrannical essence of alcohol voices the cultural colonization of First Nations by imperial powers also present in Frances Brooke’s *The History of Emily Montague* (1769) through the wine offering of Arabella Fermor to First Nations women, as well as overturns literary images of drunk Indians as those in Sara Jeannette Duncan’s *The Imperialist* (1904) for they are revealed as victims of an imposed and overwhelming force whites do not want to fight against. However interesting these aspects may be, the previous approach to the figure of Simon Pokagon and his 1899 work *O-Jî-Mäw-Kwê Mit-I-Gwä-Kî (Queen of the Woods)*<sup>76</sup> prove that their absence from English Canadian Literature seems to be founded on solid bases.

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<sup>76</sup> Despite Simon Pokagon’s work is mainly known as *Life of O-Jî-Maw-Kwe-Mit-I-Gwa-Ki, Queen of the Woods* preference is given in this dissertation to *O-Jî-Mäw-Kwê Mit-I-Gwä-Kî (Queen of the Woods)* since it is the title mentioned in the third edition of his work in 1901.

VI.9 “A STRANGER WITHIN OUR GATES”: ONOTO WATANNA’S *THE HEART OF HYACINTH* (1903)<sup>77</sup>

In 1899, together with Simon Pokagon’s *O-Jî-Mäw-Kwê Mit-I-Gwä-Kî*, another novel with ethnic perspective saw the light: *Miss Numè of Japan* by the female author of mixed English-Chinese Winnifred Eaton, also known for her *nom de plume* Onoto Watanna, previous to which no other novel in English by an Asian American author is known today (Najmi, 2000: xxvii). This being so, *Miss Numè of Japan* by Onoto Watanna can currently be claimed to be the first contribution to the novel genre in English North America by an author of Asian –and more specifically Chinese – ancestry. The participation of this female author in English North American Literature before the twentieth century can be thus said to be pioneering. Taking into account Watanna’s Canadian origins, the novelty of her ground-breaking fiction work would not be so noticeable if mainstream literary criticism from her native country had paid some attention to her figure and work; but that is not the case. It is certainly curious –to say the least– that Canadian mainstream critics have not claimed neither the novel nor the author as pioneering literary agents taking into account their struggling efforts to write a national literary history on which a literary tradition and identity could be based. Given the fact that Onoto Watanna is both a woman *and* ethnic author, her case seems to bring together the two main themes this dissertation questions regarding Canadian literary criticism, that is, its apparently non-patriarchal and multicultural character which –as already explained in this dissertation– in many cases turns out to be closer to sexism and racism despite claimed otherwise. Once more, we are before a virtually unknown



*Onoto Watanna from Winnifred Eaton Reeve fonds, Special Collections, 299/82.13, University of Calgary (Samira Najmi: vi)*

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<sup>77</sup> The title of this section is taken directly from Watanna’s novel *The Heart of Hyacinth* in which one of the characters is precisely said to be “a stranger within our gates” but it also refers, ironically, to J.S. Woodsworth’s work entitled *Strangers within Our Gates* critically approached in Part II of this dissertation.

author; but a revealing aspect must be added since this author's case does not only seem to be doubly jeopardized by her alien position as female and Chinese but also due to her employment of a Japanese literary persona generally considered unfaithful to her cultural roots.

Watanna's 'Japanization' or 'Orientalism' –to use Edward Said's words– is precisely one of the main hindrances critics have met to carry out serious approaches to her works. Counting on another successful literary woman in her family loyal to their Chinese origins has not been helpful; on the contrary, it has fostered an even stronger dismissal of Watanna's contributions, if that is possible, so that she has frequently been dismissed without further questioning. In fact, Onoto Watanna is mainly known as Edith Eaton's sister, also known by her pen-name Sui Sin Far; she was also a fiction author who, unlike Onoto, adopted a Chinese persona and has been considered as more loyal to the non-English part of her equally mixed ancestry. Together they are frequently referred to as the Eaton sisters. Named Lillie Winnifred Eaton at birth in 1875 at Canada's second big urban centre, Montreal, Onoto Watanna was daughter of a culturally mixed marriage between a Chinese mother and half-Irish-English father who met in China and emigrated to Canada at the beginning of the 1870s where she was to "spend the first twenty years of her life" (Najmi, 2000: xiii). Onoto's family endured economic difficulties mainly because of its constant enlargement which, although forced the involvement of elder siblings in household duties, did not hamper the education of the thirteen children. Her mother, Grace Eaton had been instructed as teacher and employed her skills to teach her kids. While all seem to have developed successful professional careers, four of them devoted to arts perhaps inspired by their father's artistic inclinations; Winnifred and Edith in the literary sphere and Sarah and May as painters (xiv). As explained by Samina Najmi in her introduction to the 2000 edition of Watanna's novel *The Heart of Hyacinth*, Winnifred did not enjoy the economic restrictions she and her family had to bear but, on the contrary, overtly complained about it; she apparently stated that was her "conception of hell: a place full of howling, roaring, fighting, shouting children and babies" (qtd. in xv). Paradoxically, she later married and had no less than four children. Given her family's shortage, it could be deduced that she would have been pleased with the economic independence that a literary career offered her at the early age of twenty. In 1896 she moved to

Jamaica where she worked for *Gall's Daily News Letter* as reporter, shortly after changed Jamaica for the United States, first Cincinnati (1897-98), then Chicago (1898), and finally New York in 1901 where she bought a house. She would come back to Canada after divorcing from her first husband because he turned “into alcoholism and becomes[became] physically abusive” and remarrying to Francis Reeve with whom she moved to a ranch in Calgary in 1917 (Ferens: 187). Although during the first three years in Canada her literary activity appears to have almost vanished, she soon turned uneasy with female domesticity and rented a house in Calgary where she could have “a room of her own, [and get] back to writing her popular Japanese-flavored romances” (Brennan: B2). With her literary activity restarted in Canada, she also became involved with the country’s literary spheres as “chair of the Canadian Authors Association”, a very eloquent detail indeed which again questions the disregard of her figure in her native country (Ferens: 187). Later on, she travelled to New York in different occasions; first to try her hand in the film industry around 1920 and later to become nothing less than “chief story editor for the New York branch of Universal Studios”, position that enabled her participation in films such as the *Shanghai Lady* and her temporary settlement in Hollywood until 1931 when she came back to Canada and her husband (187). Although Bly affirms that “it was necessity, not a failing marriage, that drove her to Hollywood”, she almost had to pay dearly for her professional career since, according to Brennan, her second husband “petitioned for divorce in 1931” (Bly: B10; Brennan: B2). During her frequent absences from her Canadian home for professional reasons, Francis Reeve stayed in Calgary so that a growing apart between them may have taken place. Watanna seems not to have wanted another divorce so that she went back to Canada (Brennan: B2). This episode is certainly significant from a feminist perspective since it clearly shows the shifting land in which successful professional and married women walked on at the turn of the twentieth century. James Doyle, David Bly, Brian Brennan, Samina Najmi and Dominika Ferens agree regarding the year of Watanna’s death, 1954, but it is surprising that as late as in the year 2000 Najmi still maintains that she passed away in Calgary while in Ferens’s close study her death is said to have taken place “in Butte, Montana, while on a trip to the States” (187).

From her biography, it is crucial to note that critics such as Samina Najmi and James Doyle coincide regarding the very weak connection to Chinese culture of

Watanna's family; whereas Najmi states that "the Eatons were not culturally Chinese" but mostly English-speaking and learned in "Western classics" (xvii), Doyle affirms that "none of the Eaton children learned their mother's native language and most of them had no contact with other Chinese people" (51). In this respect, why has she been regarded disloyal to her cultural roots? Perhaps, ignorance on personal details as these together with the incongruence on Watanna's place of decease speak of the scarce attention paid to her personal data and raise questions on the need to pay attention to authors' biographical information. In any case, if discarding Watanna because of her indifference to her Chinese ancestry has seemed pertinent from a critical viewpoint, one could also wonder why has not been equally appropriate to dismiss her on the basis of her Englishness while having been born and raised in the mainly French-speaking environment of Montreal. On the other hand, her moves back and forth Canada and the United States as well as the main publication of her novels in New York speak of the alternating character of the author that curiously recalls the position of other similarly disregarded writers analysed in this dissertation. Moreover, her professional career with which she supported herself and her family together with her two marriages and one divorce as well as her flight from domesticity are eloquent on her independence as a woman at the turn of the twentieth century.

Although the literary career of Onoto Watanna started in journalism, she soon turned to other literary genres and enjoyed "immense success as a novelist, playwright and public character" mainly among US audiences (Doyle: 56). Regarding her contribution to fiction, after her early 1899 novel *Miss Numè of Japan* she appears to have produced at least sixteen works between 1901 and 1925. There are still some contradictions in relation to her fiction production since, whereas in James Doyle's article on the Eaton sisters only eleven works by Watanna are mentioned, Dominika Ferens' extensive study includes sixteen. From both critical sources it can be observed that Watanna developed an extensive and varied literary career in which an evolution is noticeable. She started with Japanese romances mainly produced during the first decade of the twentieth century such as *The Heart of Hyacinth* first published in New York in 1903 that will be analysed in this section. The success of an early short story entitled

“Japanese Love Story” first issued in the *Iroquois Magazine*<sup>78</sup> and later reissued at least four times in other periodicals seems to have been the germ of her Japanese focus. The almost simultaneous appearance of the first story by Watanna’s sister, Sui Sin Far, seems to have had some influence on the adoption of a Japanese persona since Watanna later recognized to have opted for it “because her sister had appropriated Chinese subject matter” (Doyle: 54). The concurrency in the development of both sisters’ literary careers has led to too frequent comparisons of their achievements; James Doyle is one of the critics who inscribes a lower value on Watanna’s literary achievements for, in his opinion, “there seems little doubt now [...] that Winnifred was the less capable writer of the two sisters” (57). Doyle extends the contrast by establishing a parallelism between Watanna and another ethnic author Archie Belaney, also known as Grey Owl –mentioned in Part II of this dissertation– on one side, and between Sui Sin Far and Pauline Johnson, on the other, in order to explain the more reprehensible perspectives adopted by the former. Unlike their ‘good’ counterparts, Grey Owl and Watanna “attempted to conceal their real selves behind ethnic images concocted from popular Euro-American notions and their own simplistic romantic ideas” (Doyle: 55). Once again, a comparison brings along the devaluation of certain authors’ literary achievements from the perspective of mainstream criticism which resembles that of Canadian Literature in relation to highly considered European letters. But in this case there is an extremely relevant factor to take into account: that of ethnicity which is being employed as token to validate or reject different literary responses. Whereas some authors were acclaimed precisely for the romantic ideas on ethnicity their works portrayed at their time, they are being now accused of unfaithfulness so that ethnic authors seem to be confined within a dominant culture whose shifts in perspective regarding ethnicity equally change the consideration of their works. From my viewpoint, either Watanna and Grey Owl’s or Sui Sin Far and Pauline Johnson’s literary responses are significant about the differing answers of ethnic writers fenced in a dominant culture that dismissed and/or exoticized them and should not lead necessarily to a devaluation on the basis of current ideas of what is right or wronged literary

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<sup>78</sup> Note the ethnic bent of the first periodical which ventured to publish her story of Japanese content; it seems as if before the twentieth century ethnic issues shared common media for works to see the light so that, in spite of not having much relation to Asian issues, Watanna’s early work was published by an ethnic newspaper as the *Iroquois Magazine*.



ethnicity, precisely because those ideas change. In this respect, I wonder why Watanna has to be compared with her sister anyway. Is it not perhaps allowed for two authors from same ancestry to develop differing literary personae and careers? Is not literature a freedom realm where fictional alter-egos are not only possible but desirable? If otherwise, there would not be anything like literary fiction nowadays but genres gravitating around autobiography.

Doyle's approach participates in the good sister-bad sister paradigm raised by Dominika Ferens whose close study *Edith and Winnifred Eaton: Chinatown Missions and Japanese Romances* (2002) helps understand their differing responses. As she explains, given the stronger Anglo-cultural attachment of the Eaton family, both sisters relied on "imagined homelands" so that China and Japan were equally alien for both Edith and Winnifred (19). Neither Watanna nor Sui Sin Far had ever a direct experience of those lands but turned to available ethnographic sources, to the religious material of Protestant missionaries in the case of China and to travelogues for Japan since these were the ethnographic writings to those territories accessible at that time. Why, then, if both sisters similarly relied on "imagined homelands" Sui Sin Far is currently regraded as the 'good' author while Watanna remains as the 'bad' one? I think that critical unawareness on the specificities of their cultural milieu is again at stake. But such an attention to authors' backgrounds is even more important in the case of the Eaton sisters since there has been an evolution in their consideration; whereas Sui Sin Far is now remembered and Onoto Watanna has been silenced, their reputation at their time was precisely the opposite. In this way, I agree with Ferens that "understanding what made for her[Watanna's] success is no less important than understanding what kept Edith[Sui Sin Far] from achieving it in the same historical moment" (133). On the other hand, although it could be thought that the Eaton sisters should have done the same as their male counterparts whose interest in writing about distant territories pushed them to travel, it is necessary to take into account that neither their class nor their gender allowed them to do the same as men at that time; as Ferens explains, "social taboos, gender-segregated spaces, and women's financial dependence on men, turned certain spaces into almost exclusively male preserves" (132).

Moreover, current prejudices against Chinese immigrants in North America may have played an important role in Watanna's decision. Samina Najmi offers an eloquent

summary in this respect in her “Introduction” to the 2000 edition of Watanna’s *The Heart of Hyacinth*. While during second half of the nineteenth century Chinese immigrants were welcomed in North America that was simply in terms of work force; they were offered the harshest jobs and suffered from racial prejudice. Even prominent figures as the founder of Stanford University overtly spoke for discrimination by stating that “the settlement among us[Americans] of an inferior race is[was] to be discouraged by every legitimate means” (qtd. in Najmi: vii). Discrimination against Chinese population was also legally exerted as the Alien Land Act, laws against miscegenation, or the Exclusion Act which is “the only immigration act ever to target a specific racial group” demonstrate (viii). These exclusionary gestures brought along subsequent images on the *yellow peril* which spread throughout North American media and affected not only the United States but also Canada where similar discriminatory practices also took place –as already outlined in the second part of this dissertation–. The turn to the twentieth century brought a more positive attitude to Orientalism but in relation to Japan and not to China; of course, the fact that Japanese population was not a *visible minority* as well as its smoother adaptation to Western civilization had also something to do. Being this the cultural framework in which Watanna started her literary career it seems not so strange that a female author of mixed ancestry like her, chose to shadow her Chinese connections and opted for a Japanese literary identity.

Watanna not only created a Japanese literary persona but supported it on the construction of a *real* Japanese identity as strategy of literary authentication at a time when authors’ biological links credited their fiction with stronger reliability than temporary sojourns. She publicly claimed to be half-Japanese and to have spent only her early childhood there and self-authorized her as a both ethnic and female author by declaring, for instance: “I can speak about Japanese culture with authority because I am the daughter of a Japanese woman” (qtd. in Ferens: 117). In fact, she is still referred to “in *Who’s Who* [*Who Was Who in America*] as having been born in Nagasaki, Japan”, another interesting detail regarding the critical disregard of her figure (Najmi: xix). But Watanna’s Japaneseness was not only the product of her own unilateral construction but of the desire of her cultural background to believe in it; as Ferens states, “Winnifred asserted her authority to write insofar as others [...] enabled her to pass” (133). Although there was not total critical agreement on the achievements of her

'Japaneseness', reading audiences' eagerness for exoticism, publishers' reinforcement of authenticity by including *exotic* pictures and biographical details on her, and positive critical reviews as William Dean Howells's appraisal of *A Japanese Nightingale* "as such a lesson in the art imitating nature as has not come under my[his] hand for a long while" (56), demonstrate that her cultural milieu did not discourage but reinforced her strategy of authentication –although, of course, because of unawareness of her true identity–. Besides, during Watanna's times Franz Boas' already cited differentiation between race and culture were far ahead; at the turn of the nineteenth century race and culture were merged so that her racial ascription validated her as spokesperson of Japanese culture. Ironically, the ingenuousness of her romances was taken as clear proof of her profound knowledge of such an exotic land as Japan which, in turn, evidences, first, Anglo North America's total ignorance on exoticized/ethnicized cultures, and second, "mainstream conceptions of race and evolutionary progress" (Ferens: 118). Furthermore, far from being an obstacle like for many of Watanna's fellow white literary women, her female condition was paradoxically another advantage in the eyes of her contemporaries but *only* in relation to her pretended Japanese ethnicity. On the one hand, raising her gendered condition proved to be a profitable marketing strategy for her publishers since accounts on Japan had come almost exclusively from male hands; her feminine viewpoint reinforced the so-acclaimed freshness of her portrayals. On the other hand, her Japanese femininity raised her as valid epitome of a geisha-like "exotic female entertainer" to such an extent that it implied "exchanging a stigmatized identity for a sexually desirable one" (Ferens: 135). But Watanna's tactics of passing for Japanese was not merely a smart response to the cultural milieu but had other very significant implications. First, Watanna avoided "passing as white" –which she could have easily done– so that a differentiation with the white dominant culture was established (Najmi: xii). Then, in leaving aside her Chineseness and adopting another Asian identity she turned the cultural stigma imposed on her family by a dominant white society into an asset so that "she shifted her status from undesirable to desirable" (Ferens: 118). As a consequence, she *saved* her works from direct exile at first, unlike her sister's. Finally, she took "advantage of these [Japanese] Orientalist myths" and turned them into valid literary content to such an extent that she became a "best-selling author" (Najmi: xii). Her gesture proved to be very well-timed since "the turn of the

century was a perfect moment to become a ‘Japanese’ novelist” for either earlier or later it would not have been so advantageous (Ferens: 117). Some time later, with Japan’s involvement in the Second World War the appreciation of Japanese themes obviously changed into negative and it was precisely then when Watanna seems to have regretted her engagement with that country and proudly recognized for the first time her Chinese ancestry (Ferens:140).

It is very difficult to know if her decision was simply opportunistic or rather the happy result of different intervening factors, but the truth is that while Watanna’s passing for Japanese was appraised and even fostered at her time, it has been the main basis for the later punishment of her literary contributions. Anyway, even as consequence of opportunism her successful intervention in mainstream culture’s ethnic game would have been a highly sarcastic gesture. From my viewpoint Watanna’s case is an extremely interesting paradigm regarding the construction of a positive ethnic identity to escape a stigmatized one as well as of a claim for difference, although from the safer pulpit of a well-considered ethnic group. From an English Canadian perspective, it seems paradoxical that an author who built a literary persona has been overlooked by the literary framework of a country with a similarly constructed identity. Besides, Wattana’s example also voices the almost imperceptible pressure exertion of dominant cultures on the exotization of ethnic authors and, very significantly, on the positive genderization of female authors only when in relation to a specific ethnic background within which women are considered an exotic asset. Moreover, her constructed identity was not simply a marketing strategy but another intelligent gesture to carry out a critique of white society as *The Heart of Hyacinth* shows (1903). Fortunately, renewed analyses of her figure and work by critics such as Yuko Matsukawa, Noreen Grover Lape, Carol Vivian Spaulding or the already mentioned Samina Najmi have lately contributed to drag Watanna’s figure and works from ostracism by bringing into light their subversive character and challenge of racial and gender conventions<sup>79</sup>.

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<sup>79</sup> For further information on modern critical approaches to Watanna please refer to Dominika Ferens study on *Edith and Winnifred Eaton: Chinatown Missions and Japanese Romances* published in 2002.

In point of fact, Watanna did not only and merely produce formulaic Japanese romances as it is widely thought; on the one hand, her contribution to fiction extended to other formulas while, on the other, a close analysis of one of her Japanese novels as *The Heart of Hyacinth* (1903) demonstrates her challenging employment of such an exotic means. In-between her thematically Japanese novels, she also wrote *The Diary of Delia: Being a Veracious Chronicle of the Kitchen with Some Side-Lights on the Parlour* (1907) labelled as an “‘Irish’ novel” by Ferens (186). Later in her career she turned to other formulas in works like *Me: A Book of Remembrance* (1915), an anonymously published work closer to autobiography, and *Marion: The Story of an Artist’s Model* (1916), rooted on her artist sister Sarah. She even embraced Canadian themes in her last contributions *Cattle* and *His Royal Nibs*, both interestingly published in New York by W. J. Watt in 1924 and 1925 respectively. *Cattle* is actually set in Alberta (Canada) and despite it was not widely accepted among Canadian critics it appears to have received “favourable comments from noted Canadian essayist and humorist Stephen Leacock” (Bly: B10). Although a close study on one of Watanna’s Canadian novels would have seem appropriate in this dissertation, first, they fall out from the period covered in the present research –since it extends up to 1904, publication date of *The Imperialist* by Sara Jeannette Duncan– and second, circulation issues do not help at all in the rapprochement of Watanna’s Canadian novels. Still nowadays they are mainly to be found in the special collections of university libraries such as Queen’s (Kingston, Ontario) where *Sunny-San* is still among its uncatalogued material. Instead, a close analysis of one of her Japanese romances, *The Heart of Hyacinth*, is carried out since it is a challenging novel regarding both woman *and* ethnic issues and a very good means to explore her too frequently undervalued adoption of a Japanese persona. Moreover, although, as already explained, the questioning of mainstream discourses of texts like *The Heart of Hyacinth* somehow implies a participation in their recirculation, Watanna’s novel conveys a disruption worthy of attention since, as Ferens states, “of Winnifred’s novels, this one probably works hardest against Western assumptions of cultural superiority” (164).

*The Heart of Hyacinth* tells the story of Hyacinth, a white girl adopted by a Japanese widow named Madame Aoi and raised as Japanese in the small but attractive city of Sendai with her step-brother Komazawa. The novel starts with the arrival to

Sendai of an English ship with a group of “strange white men” among which a “missionary and his wife” stand out (Watanna 2000: 3)<sup>80</sup>. The missionary is there to convert Japanese peoples into Christian faith so that an imperialist task is suggested. His wife dies and he remarries a Japanese woman, Aoi, with whom he has a son, Komazawa. Although she could barely read, when her husband dies she works hard to become learned in English and Christianity and brings up her son in an English-speaking environment for “to the little Komazawa she spoke[speaks] only in English” (9). He shares with her mother and an old Japanese servant Mumè a “little isolated home” much like the island of Japan until the arrival of Westerners (11). The first foreign incursion comes from the sudden arrival of a strange and sickly pregnant Englishwoman who leaves an orphan baby before dying. This nameless woman is called “the stranger within our gates” by Madame Aoi and rejected by Komazawa precisely for disrupting their home with her strangeness; as if in a premonitory gesture he states: “we are happy *alone* together” (my emphasis, 15). But the true “stranger within our gates” is the daughter of this woman who is finally adopted by Madam Aoi. The little girl is named Hyacinth who, ignorant about her origins, has a happy childhood in Sendai with those she believes to be her family, until Komazawa is sent to England following the wish of his dead father and the guidance of the new minister of the city’s mission-house. It is now when Hyacinth’s first breaking-off takes place; considering the new minister main responsible of his brother’s departure she rejects entering the mission-house from then onwards and thus breaks ties with her English ancestry. Unlike her brother, she attends a Japanese school in which her classmates “became accustomed to the difference between her and themselves” to such an extent that she turns out to be not only one of them but “the soul of the school” (65). Although some romantic touches are to be found, up to here *The Heart of Hyacinth* seems closer to a realistic account of events than romance. But romance slips into the narration when during Komazawa’s absence an advantageous marriage is offered to Hyacinth by the son of the wealthy Yamashiro family. He is a descendant of a *pure* Japanese family, Buddhist and traditional, his father being a tradesman “of samurai birth” and his mother “the typical Japanese matron” (106-7). It is now when issues concerning Hyacinth’s real origins

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<sup>80</sup> Just as in previous in-depth analyses of silenced authors’ novels, subsequent quotations of Watanna’s text are all taken from the 2000 edition of *The Heart of Hyacinth* included in Primary Sources.

come to light. She is the first one to know but her mother advises her to keep silent in sight of a rejection of the girl from the Yamashiro family. This is precisely what happens with the arrival of “two strangers to Sendai” who are no other than the English-speaking emissaries of Hyacinth’s father once he has learnt that his former escaped wife had a daughter; they discover and make public Hyacinth’s story so that the *pure* Japanese family cannot accept a non-fully Japanese engagement (116). After such an intrusion, Madame Aoi “to keep out unwelcome callers, kept[keeps] the shutters and shoji closed at all times” (155). Just as resistance to economic imperialism is an impossible task, one of the strangers finally makes his way into the house, not to force Hyacinth out but to offer her a solution: marriage. She faces him and declines his offer; he is a complete alien man for her. Instead she desperately tries to regain the favour of the Yamashiro family but is cast off; although later Yamashiro Yoshida would reconsider the situation and offer marriage again, it is too late for a strong and proud woman as Hyacinth and she rejects him. Shortly after, when the visit of Hyacinth’s English father is imminent, the only way out from misery she finds is escaping. Her father, Mr. Lorrimer, finally arrives to Sendai accompanied by his second wife, Mrs. Lorrimer. As if by chance, the Lorrimers come to Sendai in the same ship than Komazawa who travels to Japan not to settle his sister’s almost unavoidable return to her real origins but to try to avoid her marriage with Yamashiro Yoshida. Having spent his childhood with Hyacinth, Komazawa is the only one who knows where she is hiding and finds her; their encounter shows them they are no longer kids but a man and a woman. They apparently unite in love and Hyacinth accepts for the first time to go to the mission-house only led by Komazawa. Although marriage seems to be suggested in the fact that they go together to the mission-house, the novel leaves an open ending.

Under the surface of this romance formula, a novel at the turn of the twentieth century as Watanna’s *The Heart of Hyacinth* conveys challenging messages regarding ethnicity and femininity. From an ethnic perspective, the central characters of Komazawa and Hyacinth are provocative since a questioning of current theories on the biological inheritance of racial/cultural ties is carried through them. Whereas Komazawa is a boy of mixed English-Japanese ancestry raised in a Japanese cultural background but in whose education Englishness and Christianity prevail, Hyacinth is a white girl of English origins who becomes Japanese by chance and education. The fact that both

learn and do not receive a racial/cultural ascription biologically is certainly paradigmatic. In fact, in Komazawa's first visit to Sendai from England he tries teaching Hyacinth the Englishness he has learnt there and "undermining all that sensei[Japanese teacher] had taught" her (73). As the narrator clearly states, Komazawa's intention was "to seek to turn the child's mind to a new and alien point of view, when, too, this view-point was, in a measure, an acquired thing from Koma himself" (73). Cultural acquisition is thus visibly voiced in the novel. Moreover, the final union of Komazawa and Hyacinth is equally subversive. Unlike their parents' marriage which follows imperial/patriarchal hegemonic structures by joining a superior white Englishman to an inferior Japanese woman, their union breaks moulds since it implies a union of a white woman, although raised as Japanese, to a man of mixed ancestry but Anglicized through education. In this sense, *The Heart of Hyacinth* validates miscegenation, something completely rejected in Watanna's North American society. Very significantly, their union also complicates traditional imperialistic subjection; there is no longer a hegemonic member/culture to rule over another and impose cultural ties but two culturally alternating individuals joined in equality.

On the other hand, both characters are epitomes of the cultural schizophrenia that members from culturally mixed families –as Watanna herself– were fenced in not by their own relatives but by their cultural frameworks. Before any alien intervention, Madame Aoi, Komazawa and Hyacinth are, as Ferens explains, "just a family, not defined by anyone else" (162). But when Komazawa's leave for England is being discussed, the Reverend of the mission-house, Mr. Blount, states that he is "first of all more English than Japanese", that is, "one of *us*" –meaning the English– so that he needs to go with his people and abandon "this isolated spot, where he is, may we say, an *alien*" (my emphasis: 57). In his reply to the Reverend, Komazawa claims his identity and states: "This is, indeed, my home. [...] I am also Engleesh, but, ah, I am not so base to deny my *other* blood" (my emphasis, 57). Although the fact that after his first English sojourn he tries to convert his sister into Englishness could seem a proof of the process of cultural colonization he has gone through, he first acknowledges that he, and not her sister, is "the renegade" (79). Later in the text, he is able to keep his perspective on the negative aspects of English society by stating that he is not a selfish man "though I[he] have[has] spent years of my[his] family life among those who were so" (209); and



finally, he takes sides by falling in love with Hyacinth and remaining in Japan. Through the character of Komazawa the novel seems to opt not for the commonly-regarded superior culture, but for the *lower* –from an imperialistic viewpoint–, for his own culture with all its paradoxes. Similarly, Hyacinth’s given position because of the circumstances is culturally schizophrenic. At first, she is a white child whose physical differences are evident for her everyone around her, being her eyes the most evident stigma; it is the narrator who describes Hyacinth “with her wide eyes” as immerse in a background “where all eyes about her were narrow and seemingly half closed” (109). Once her whiteness becomes blurred through education and acquisition of Japanese manners, dressing and hairstyle, the initial reluctance turns into acceptance. She becomes one of them, a Japanese. I agree with Ferenes that “the motif of dressing and undressing repeatedly draws attention to the constructedness of racial difference” and there are plenty of examples along the text being the clearest Komazawa’s taking off his English costume to dress as Japanese for his little sister to recognize him and welcome him back (163). But Hyacinth’s acquired cultural identity is brought into question, not by herself but strangers, when her *real* identity comes to light. It is precisely in relation to dressing that she discovers her English ancestry when Madame Aoi gives her the clothes of her death mother; “the things are Engleesh” [...] “Is it not strange?” she asks her mother (103). She is now in no man’s land; feeling intimately Japanese but being publicly English she inhabits a cultural borderline in which she is shaken by all; her boundary-crossing position motivates rejection and/or appropriation on behalf of those on both sides of that line. On the one hand, her Englishness does actually provoke the rejection of that society to which she belongs represented by the Yamashiro family that “had been always ashamed of the fact that Hyacinth was half English” (173). She tries to explain it to Madame Yamashiro and says to her: “it is not my fault I am Engleesh” (175); but regardless of her imploring, she is finally refused. On the other hand, this same fact drives one of the two English strangers to break Japanese cultural ties and enter the house without previous notice; in his apology for having insulted her with his behaviour he says: “But she is not Japanese” [...] “I never thought of her as such” (167). In this way, the character of Hyacinth functions as paradigm of the delicate positions inhabited by individuals of mixed ancestry. Moreover, through her

character the novel also warns about the perils of multicultural clashes and suggests respect for one's feeling of identity in spite of skin colour or origins.

Although in such a situation a girl like Hyacinth could have surrendered to foreign forces and very probably would have lost herself, she does not. She is sure of her Japanese identity and claims it. She tells Madame Yamashiro "I am Japanese here" and to the stranger "I am a Japanese; we are not so uncouth and rude in our intercourse with strangers" (175; 162). One of the frequent transmissions of characters' thoughts by the narrating voice reinforces Hyacinth's identity demand, as for instance, "she was a Japanese girl, she asserted— Japanese in thought, in feeling, in heart, in soul" (172). Interestingly, together with her Japaneseness she also claims her femaleness. When Komazawa, the man, affirms she is just a little girl, she refuses and states: "I am already a woman" (209). In fact, Hyacinth is the feminist epitome of the novel. Already in girlhood she is "restless, rebellious, [...] anything but the usual passive little Japanese girl" (45). Once her brother—the only one able to control her— leaves, the "strange, independent nature" of Hyacinth breaks "all restraints" (62). But her strong and independent female character collides with the patriarchal framework she lives in where women have no power over their life and future. As Hyacinth herself, women are dependent on men, either in the form of a husband who chooses her as wife or an alien father who after long time decides to recover her daughter. Although fenced in a patriarchal society, she becomes a defiant female with all patriarchs either Japanese or English. She confronts first Mr. Yamashiro by bringing into light the paradox between his suggestion that she should not spend more time with the English after the marriage and his role as "the pioneer in Sendai of those who induced intercourse with these barbarians" (113). Likewise, she defies the English; she rejects one of the strangers and even menaces him of calling the authorities if not leaving her house and confronts her biological father when as a reply to his suggestion on Mrs. Lorrimer's role as her new mother she replies: "You make mistake. My mother is dead" (234). But her defiance is not simply worldly against both forms of patriarchy. Despite some submission gestures, she rejects Japanese patriarchy by denying her hand to Yamashiro Yoshida after casting her off and thus raising her female pride. Similarly, although patriarchal rules dictate that, as her mother Aoi tells her, "filial submission to the parent is the most important of all" her escape and thus flight from English patriarchy is equally challenging (177). The

cross-national scope offered to patriarchy strengthens the feminist critique of the novel since patriarchy is not defined as culturally dependent but as an international phenomenon that subjects women wherever they are. But *The Heart of Hyacinth* is not naïve regarding patriarchy since the need to take into account certain cultural differences is also suggested. When Komazawa relates the two main female paradigms of Western patriarchy to Hyacinth, those of innocence and coquetry, that is, the angelic and the devilish woman, she does not even know what a coquette is implying that Western patriarchal axioms cannot be applied to differing cultures in equal terms. In spite of differences, Japanese society is depicted as patriarchal, being the prohibition for women to have mirrors and thus to recognize themselves the clearest sign. As Madame Aoi explains, in Japanese society mirrors were only allowed for married women so that “a maiden was saved from being vain of her beauty” (76). It is precisely when Komazawa confronts Hyacinth with her image in a mirror that she becomes aware of her divided self but, unlike in the case of other female characters by women authors mentioned in this Part III, Hyacinth’s internal breach is complicated with ethnicity. When she sees herself reflected in the mirror she exclaims “that’s not me. No! That’s lie!” because it is the first time she faces her difference represented by her blue eyes and white skin although she has always thought herself Japanese (75). Aoi’s premonition that “it might terrify her to see her own face –so different from that of her playmates” is fulfilled but, far from intimidating her daughter, Aoi’s belief that “in heart and nature she is all Japanese” is strengthened; Hyacinth sees clearer than ever both the woman and the Japanese inside her, regardless of her white face and wide eyes (78).

From a feminist perspective, issues regarding otherness are challenged through resolute female characters who struggle to position themselves as central agents within patriarchy. The centrality of Hyacinth’s character and the inclusion of defiant women as her biological mother who escapes from an unfortunate marriage, her adoptive mother who protects her daughter from the two strange men and the servant Mumè who would not hesitate to defend the family from the violence of foreign barbarians voice female power as focal and not marginal. In any case, the subversion of otherness is clearer from an ethnic perspective since the confrontations of these three women are addressed not only to men but white Englishmen. Before dying and apparently led by her feverish state, Hyacinth’s biological mother reverses the hegemonic centre/margin dichotomy by

remarking “it was all wrong –quite wrong from the first. [...] *they* are bad, all bad! Ah, it was cruel, cruel!” and telling Madame Aoi “you are not like those *others*, those fearful people”; comments which are even more significant since voiced by a member of the dominant white English-speaking culture (my emphasis, 22-3). In my opinion, one of the most modern features of Watanna’s *The Heart of Hyacinth* relies precisely on its subversion of otherness. Ethnic characters in the novel are no longer peripheral as in other novels approached in this dissertation as Frances Brooke’s but central. They are not marked with ethnicity or skin colour but those who so frequently inhabit hegemonic positions in English North American novels, the whites. They are the strangers, the barbarians, the aliens, the devils, the selfish ones. This is precisely what Hyacinth voices when, as reply to the two strangers’ comment of her living among “this alien people”, she “fiercely” exclaims “‘Not alien!’ [...] ‘My people –my–’” (145). Very significantly, the text does not convey an ingenuous shift of positions by which the white dominant *I* becomes simply the *other* and the bad since differences are inferred. Hyacinth acts as cultural visionary for she is the only one to perceive diversity among those white *others*. According to one of the narrator’s portrayal of her thoughts, she is able to make a distinction between the whites she has known and rejected represented by Reverend Blunt and the two newly arrived whites, her father’s emissaries; “a mistake had been made in the popular impression” she thinks (123). Likewise, these white couple is not depicted as equally barbarian. On the one hand, they share whiteness, language and a perspective over Japan as aliens unable to fully comprehend the differing culture but are different since one is an American while the other’s identity is unspecified. But on the other hand, when after Hyacinth’s reaffirmation that Japanese people are her own, while the younger stranger says “it is grotesque, impossible, horrible”, the older feels “like a –criminal” for participating in her separation from her culture (146). In this sense, they represent a dichotomy of foreigners in a new land, one being completely blind and the other more comprehensive towards specific cases. In this way, *The Heart of Hyacinth* by Onoto Watanna explores the complexity of otherness by means of a multicultural clash that differentiates the text from simplistic centre/margin dichotomies too frequently written from the viewpoint of the English-speaking hegemony in North America.

The characters of these two emissaries are also very interesting from a new historicist perspective since their historical discourse contrasts sharply with that of Japanese people; for example, whereas for them Date was “a Japanese feudal lord” happily defeated by Western Catholicism, Sendai’s inhabitants similarly regard him as feudal but part of “the glories of past generation” (120; 2). These two white strangers also participate in the overlapping of the discourses of romance and politics present in Watanna’s work just as in the novels of Frances Brooke, Rosanna Leprohon or May Agnes (Early) Fleming. The house inhabited by Madame Aoi, Hyacinth and Mumè is depicted as “the hostile country”, that is to say, Japan, in the eyes of these two Western men so that their invasion of the family’s intimacy also supposes a culturally imperialistic gesture (158). Similarly, the firm defence of Japanese identity voiced by Hyacinth raises her character as representative of Japan and its culture which, in keeping with this imperial metaphor, possesses a broader significance. Her rejection of Christian religion and education as well as her critique of Mr. Yamashiro for having granted access of foreign influences to Japan by means of trade speak for the denial of conflicting foreign cultural influences that are replacing her ‘native’ culture. Likewise, her firm resistance to go with her father to England and her ultimate opting for Japan are eloquent about her country’s defence of its cultural roots and withstanding against so-considered higher cultural axioms from the West. In the case of Hyacinth, the marriage metaphor is significant insofar it implies resistance to colonization and maintenance of Japaneseness, however complex. From my viewpoint, the relevance of this depiction of a renewed type of imperialism in the form of cultural imperialism is twofold. On a first instance, it is significant from a new historicist perspective since through it the novel voices a silenced history: that of the mute fading out of native cultures because of cultural colonization through religion, education and trade; while on the other, such an innovative perspective on cultural imperialism confers the novel a very modern political viewpoint rare in early twentieth-century fiction and still debated nowadays.

To conclude, despite Onoto Watanna’s inspiration on secondary sources rather than direct experience to write this novel could recall Homi Bhabha’s ideas about mimicry as reproducing but not challenging a given situation, it seems clear that *The Heart of Hyacinth* does not convey a mere imitation but a questioning. The reversal of Western racial/cultural axioms not in a univocal but complex manner, the alteration and

broadening of otherness, the crossnational and simultaneously specific scope offered to patriarchy, the feminist challenge of Hyacinth and the politically provocative suggestion of cultural imperialism keep Watanna's novel apart from simple reproduction and position it closer to disrupt. This close reading of *The Heart of Hyacinth* shows what Ferens highlights on the fact that "Winnifred combined "romance" and "Japan" into a fictional space where almost anything could happen, in order to work out racial and gender conflicts that she experienced in North America" (153). Moreover, I would add that it is a novel both on difference and identity voiced through a central female protagonist and her struggle to validate her culturally differing identity whose message is addressed to both Japanese and North American audiences. Difference and identity indeed imply a strong connection between *The Heart of Hyacinth* as paradigm of Watanna's works and other early works analysed in this dissertation either from an ethnic or female perspective, such as Martin R. Delany or Joanna E. Wood's, Watanna's case being even more significant given her simultaneous position as both a female *and* ethnic author. In this respect, *The Heart of Hyacinth* is also a very relevant source to explore the ethnic appropriation as authentication strategy of an English Canadian female novelist of mixed ancestry in order to bring into question Western racial/cultural axioms. From an English Canadian perspective, on the one hand, the dismissal of Onoto Watanna's novels is certainly surprising not only for having produced the still currently considered as first Asian American novel in English, *Miss Numè of Japan*, and having written two novels directly connected with Canada, *Cattle* and *His Royal Nibs* but also for her extensive pioneering contribution to the genre in English. On the other hand, given the alternating character of Watanna's literary figure and the challenging feminist and ethnic messages of her fiction, their disregard on behalf of mainstream English Canadian criticism does not seem so unusual but, on the contrary, it reinforces what is being questioned in this dissertation through early female and ethnic novelists: the paradoxical reluctance of hegemonic Canadian literary institutions to deal with the diverse and differing responses of early female and ethnic contributors while broadly claiming Canadian Literature to be non-patriarchal and multicultural. In any case, Watanna's novels were not only more successful in the United States and even Japan at her time but still continue to be shadowed in English Canada where access to them is still mainly offered by specifically focused ethnic sources.

As a conclusion to this chapter, the early contributors to the novel genre in English Canada approached in previous sections share with Onoto Watanna the employment of a mainstream literary genre in order to voice very diverse and differing messages. From their divergent positions as Canadian-born writers who resided in Canada or alternated with other countries, as Canadians of mixed origins, and/or foreign temporary or stable residents in Canada, they devoted part or all of their literary careers to fictionalize Canada, introduced innovations in the novel genre, and left defiantly strong female and/or ethnic central characters as well as challenging fictional stories. The recovery of early authors and works as those unveiled in previous sections demonstrates that archaeological approaches to early Canadian Literature are still needed in order to gain access to silenced voices like these and grasp their achievements. By writing their early novels, all of them contributed to the shaping of English Canadian literary tradition and identity which after closely approaching these works are revealed as polyphonic, diverse and heterogeneous even at early times.





## CHAPTER VII

### “AT THE MAKING OF A NATION”: SARA JEANNETTE DUNCAN’S *THE IMPERIALIST* (1904)<sup>81</sup>

It was a sorry tale of disintegration with a cheerful sequel of rebuilding, leading to a little unavoidable confusion as the edifice went up. Any process of blending implies confusion to begin with; *we are at the making of a nation*. [...] The valuable part of it all was a certain bright freedom, and this was the essence. Trade was a decent communal way of making a living, rooted in independence and the general need; it had none of the meaner aspects. (my emphasis, Duncan 1990: 49)

The making of the Canadian nation is precisely what Sara Jeannette Duncan’s novel explores. Set in the small Canadian town of Elgin, *The Imperialist* depicts regional life bestowing it with a wider scope since the text fictionalizes a historical crossroads of the country focusing on the Murchison family whose elder son, Lorne Murchison, represents the imperialist of the title. Mr. and Mrs. Murchison, representatives of an older generation, have six sons and daughters, Lorne, Abby, Advena, “the boys” Alec and Oliver, and Stella, the youngest anti-establishment daughter, all of whom correspond to a young nation still in the making. The rest of the cast is rounded off by different characters from whom the Milburn family, and specially their daughter Dora Milburn, Dr. Drummond, the minister of Elgin, together with his substitute reverend Hugh Finlay, and Mr. Alfred Hesketh stand out. The main thread of the story revolves around Lorne Murchison, the young lawyer and hope of Elgin who, at the early age of twenty-eight and contrary to all expectations, is elected as spokesman of

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<sup>81</sup> Part of the title of this section is a quotation from Sara Jeannette Duncan’s text. “At the making of a nation” is part of a comment by the narrating voice of the novel included in chapter five; the complete quotation is included right at the beginning of this chapter. As in previous analyses of texts, every direct citation to *The Imperialist* by Duncan is taken from the 1990 edition of her work by McClelland and Stewart included in Primary Sources section of the Bibliography.

the Liberal, and paradoxically imperialist, party in a ballot against Mr. Walter Winter and the Conservatives to represent the region of South Fox in the Dominion House of Commons. Despite in a first instance Winter and the Conservatives seem to be the winners, it is finally Lorne who wins against all predictions. Political intricacies are made clear since Lorne's election is "immediately challenged, on the ground of the infringement in the electoral district of Moneida of certain provisions of the Ontario Elections Act with the knowledge and consent of the candidate" (277). On the poll day, Lorne is advised by his supporters to spend the day in the 'Indian'<sup>82</sup> Reservation of Moneida, where presumably "the fight would be hottest" (272). The fact that there he is introduced to some of the chiefs of the community brings along the circulation in antagonistic newspapers of a false story on Lorne and his party's instigation of Indians' null votes which is actually the main basis of the Conservatives to ask the High Court of Toronto to nullify the ballot. Although the poll is in fact rendered void, the election is called again and the Liberal party wins, although this time without Lorne. Of course, the significance of the ballot does not only lie on Lorne's failure but on the idea of nation both sides support. In the meantime, the stories of the rest of characters are mingled and reveal the complex social framework of a predominantly white Canadian small town and young country in between two forces, old English colonial ties and US trade relations, which stand for two differentiated future projects as a nation.

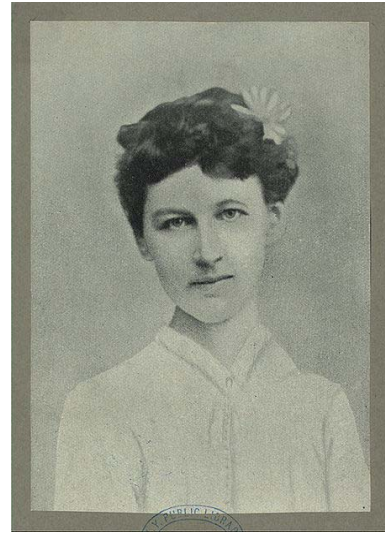
The previous summary clearly shows not only that *The Imperialist* is almost exclusively set in Canada –except a short episode where some characters including Lorne travel to England– but that it strictly deals with political and socio-economic issues concerning the Dominion of Canada. Hence, the Canadian component of the novel cannot be said to be an obstacle for Canadian literary critics to, at least, take this novel into account, if not including it as a very significant contribution to Canadian letters. We are not, for instance, before a case as that Frances Brooke's *The History of Emily Monatgue* (1769) which ends with all its main characters back in Britain, so that the low inclusion rate of Duncan as literary author, even only on the basis of this contribution to the novel genre, explained in Robert Lecker's *Making it Real: The*

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<sup>82</sup> The term 'Indian' is intentionally employed in this chapter when referring to *The Imperialist* since it is included in Duncan's novel; otherwise, the current terminology of First Nations is generally preferred and will be employed when dealing with ethnic issues of the text. Having explained this, quotation marks will not be used again in order to avoid repetition.

*Canonization of English-Canadian Literature* (1995) –already outlined in Part II– is even more striking.

Neither the origin of Sara Jeannette Duncan can be held against her or her novel’s relevance within English Canadian Literature; she was born in 1861 in Brantford, Upper Canada; was trained as teacher in Brantford Model School and Toronto Normal School, and developed “a remarkable journalistic career” as contributor to the *Toronto Globe*, *The London Advertiser* (London, Ontario), *The Montreal Star* –for which she even was “its parliamentary correspondent in Ottawa”– and the literary Torontonians newspaper *The Week*. Besides, despite she died in 1921 in England, all her economic inheritance was invested in her native country which



Sara Jeannete Duncan, 1861-1921  
(internet sources)

in Misao Dean’s opinion suggests that “she continued to regard her homeland as “full of the future”” (Dean, ‘Duncan’). In fact, in a letter to a friend, John Willison –editor of the *Globe*– Duncan overtly explains that she was not only committed “to write a Canadian novel, with a political motif” but that her intention was “to make it my[her] best book” (qtd. in Lecker, David and Quiqley 1983- : 78-9).

The basis of not so much a dismissal but underestimation of her figure and *The Imperialist* on behalf of Canadian critics cannot be found on her and its Canadianicity, but must be then searched elsewhere. Perhaps, the facts that she left Canada for the United States in 1885 where she worked for the *Washington Post*; made a round-the-world trip with her friend and also journalist Lily Lewis in 1888 about which she wrote the novel *A Social Departure: How Orthodocia and I Went Around the World by Ourselves* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1890) that, although not a revolutionary beginning, marked her evolution from journalism to fiction (Lecker, David and Quiqley 1983- : 49); and resided in India with her husband Everard Charles Cotes until she passed away may have had some impact on reviewers consideration on her literary contributions to Canada. Although once Duncan left Canada she would never hold permanent residence there, it has to be noted that she kept connected to her homeland

through her family, her frequent visits and payment of the income her works produced there and not anywhere else. Surely, the first publication of all of her novels outside Canada –including *The Imperialist* which was first issued in London and New York in 1904– and the non-Canadian setting of most of them, with the exceptions of *The Imperialist* and *Cousin Cinderella; or, a Canadian Girl in London* (London and New York, 1908), had an impact on Canada’s critical regard. In consonance with Tausky’s entry on Duncan included in Lecker, David and Quiqley’s edition of *Canadian Writers and Their Works: Fiction Series* (1983- ), I also think that one of the most interesting aspects of Duncan’s literary career is precisely its alternating and boundary-crossing character as well as her participation in Canadian, English and Indian literary traditions. Regardless of such an international scope, Tausky thinks she must be regarded as “an essentially Canadian writer” for as a literary author she was the result of a time of foreign influences, of imperialism either political or cultural, and of female attempts of “expressing a woman’s perception of the world” (in Lecker, David and Quiqley, 1983- : 42).

Given some of the early reactions to the novel analysed here, I am more inclined to think that the reasons for its low consideration are related to other issues, such as the patriarchal and traditional character of early Canadian literary institutions. As a proof, one of the first reactions to *The Imperialist* appeared precisely in one of the Canadian newspapers she worked for, the *Toronto Globe*, which pointed out Duncan’s femininity as hindrance to be acquainted as serious literary spokesperson on political and economic issues (Dean ‘Duncan’). According to the *Globe*, women of Duncan’s time when dealing with such subjects, and thus transgressing the boundaries of domesticity, were regarded as able of only achieving “partial” attainment and “that is[was] all that could be said of the political passages of *The Imperialist*” (qtd. in Turner: 312). As stated in the “Afterword” to the 1990 edition of Duncan’s novel by Janette Turner Hospital:

[...] reviewers of the time could not conceive of political and monetary intelligence residing in a woman, even if she did have the distinction of being the first female journalist to work in the editorial office of the *Toronto Globe*.  
(312)

But *The Imperialist* also received positive critics when published such as the appraisal of *The New York Times* or the *Toronto Saturday Night* which affirmed that “to the Canadian, to the Ontarian especially, it means more than any other Canadian story, for it

gives with truth and with art a depiction of our own community” (qtd. in Dean, ‘Duncan’).

In any case, it seems that more favourable reviews on Duncan’s novel did not have such a strong impact on critical consideration since it did not gain Canadian publication until 1961. In spite of this reissuing of *The Imperialist*, it is also very eloquent that no articles on it were published “between 1961 and 1973” (Tausky in Lecker, David and Quiqley, 1983- : 35). Besides, as quoted previously in this dissertation, it was as late as in 2002 when *The Imperialist* was included in an anthology as a “masterpiece” and her author as “Canada’s first modernist writer” (Bennet and Brown: 154-5). Regarding Duncan’s literary career in general, her undermining of established axioms in fiction may have also influenced the critical attention her fictional works received which passed unnoticed for a long time after she passed away. Thomas E. Tausky offers eloquent information on this matter and structures criticism on Duncan’s works as follows: first of all, “a few essential, but fragmentary, early documents” which took place before “a long period of total neglect” and a final “recent revival of interest” (in Lecker, David and Quiqley, 1983- : 32). From the first stage of the interesting although incomplete accounts on Duncan and her work, G.B. Burguin’s 1895 conversation with the author published in *The Idler*, the biographical and literary sketches on “Mrs. Everard Cotes” by Florence Donaldson and Marjory MacMurphy published in 1898 and 1915 respectively, as well as the 1955 letter of Duncan’s niece with information of her aunt stand out. Besides, as Tausky explains, during Duncan’s times the reviews on her literary merit tended to be deferential on behalf of critics from Britain and the United States, whereas from a Canadian perspective they were not very acute. I totally agree with Tausky that this incongruence between foreign and Canadian consideration of her work does not offer so much information about for instance *The Imperialist* but, nevertheless, it reveals data on Canadian critics’ consideration of boundary-crossing literary figures and “a great deal about the prejudices aroused by Canadian settings and by women writing about politics” (in Lecker, David and Quiqley, 1983- : 34). From 1921, year of Duncan’s death, until the 1950s her work suffered from a “total neglect” which has had unfortunate effects “in terms of biographical research” since all her contemporaries who could have offered essential information had already passed away (Tausky in Lecker, David and Quiqley, 1983- : 33). In spite of the revival

of her figure and works after that decade there are also blatant absences to be noted as that of the already mentioned and fundamental critical work on Canadian Literature by Margaret Atwood *Survival*. Fortunately, things have changed to a great extent since Duncan's figure and *The Imperialist* have aroused a great deal of attention by relevant critical figures also included in this dissertation as Carole Gerson or Clara Thomas, to cite just some. Once again, I agree with Tausky regarding the fact that such a rush of attention subverts early dismissals and/or disregards of the author and her novel from a Canadian viewpoint. In relation to authors previously approached in this Part III, the evolution in consideration of Duncan's literary achievements resembles that of, for instance, Martin R. Delany and both help deconstruct the assumption that Canadian literary tradition and identity are perennial and not evolving throughout times in consonance with critical changes and innovations.

Perhaps she was a too advanced spokesperson and, moreover, spokeswoman for the Canadian audience at the turn of the twentieth century; either as author or journalist, she overtly presented challenging themes and forms which may have been misunderstood both by the public and critics of her time. In fact, as Misao Dean explains in the chapter "'You can't imagine my feelings:' Reading Sara Jeannette Duncan's Challenge to Narrative" included in Lorraine McMullen's *Re(dis)covering Our Foremothers* (1990), Duncan was somehow confined in a crossroads of audiences. Although she critically dealt with colonial and imperial paradoxes which may have been interesting for Canadian readers, her works were mainly published in America, which was not any longer linked to colonial powers, and Britain, still trying to maintain its imperial hegemony. This is precisely why Dean affirms that "Duncan addresses an audience that could rarely be expected to share her 'point of view'" (in McMullen, 1990: 187). Likewise, her provocative feminist ideas may have also shocked her audience for, as Tausky maintains, "one suspects that many of her readers were not" feminists (in Lecker, David and Quiqley, 1983- : 46). From a feminist perspective, it is significant to note that Duncan felt the need of using pseudonyms to hide her female identity; she started her journalistic career by signing her articles with the certainly masculine pen-name of Garth Grafton "in order to be taken seriously in the journalistic world of her day" (Bennett and Brown: 154); she also employed the pseudonym of V. Cecil Cotes for the publication of *Two Girls on a Barge* (1891) (Tausky in Lecker,

David and Quiqley, 1983- : 57); and once married to Everard Charles Cotes, she signed as “Mrs Everard Cotes (Sara Jeannette Duncan)” being the first of her works signed as such *A Daughter of Today* (1894). She held an in-between position as a *female* author from a subjected country as Canada who, because of “her race, her class, her sense of participation in the English literary tradition, and her idealist support for the British Empire”, simultaneously held strong connections to the imperial centre (Dean in McMullen, 1990: 188). Duncan’s position strongly resembles what Virginia Woolf calls “double consciousness” and McMullen reinterprets as “divided-self” of women writers trapped in literary traditions in which they participate but which reject them; within which the female author “when from being the natural inheritor of that civilization, she becomes, on the contrary, outside of it, alien and critical” (Woolf, 1981: 97). As explained in Part I, such an alienation paradoxically offered authors a vantage perspective from which, following Homi K. Bhabha, new senses of identity are displayed so that there is no longer a univocal and hegemonic identity framework but a varied and hybrid range of meanings of identity (1994: 1-2). It is from these positions in-between the said and unsaid that Barbara Godard rises where, paraphrasing Hutcheon, a negotiation of fresh literary spaces takes place (Godard, 1987: x; Hutcheon, 1990: 9). This outsiders’ view is precisely what Duncan translates into her fiction works in which, by means of inherited literary forms, she challenges them thematically and formally; as Dean maintains she ultimately “subverts the conventions of the popular novel to express her marginalization, while clinging to the framework they offer” (in McMullen, 1990: 188).

From my viewpoint, Duncan’s case as contributor to Canadian letters is even more noticeable given her prominent participation as both literary author and commentator. She was a prolific writer for she wrote a total of twenty two novels according to Misao Dean’s bibliographical account<sup>83</sup>. Apart from the novels mentioned above, Duncan also wrote *An American Girl in London*, published one year later *A Social Departure*, *The Simple Adventures of a Mensahib* (1893), and *A Daughter of Today* (1894), both produced during her experience in Calcutta and followed by other

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<sup>83</sup> For specific information on Sara Jeannette Duncan’s novels, Misao Dean’s work *A Different Point of View: Sara Jeannette Duncan* (1991) includes a very useful list in its bibliographical section in pages from 179 to 180.

four novels with Indian setting from which *His Honour, and a Lady* (1896) and *The Simple Adventures of a Mensahib; The Path of a Star* (1899) are to be highlighted; and some novels during the last stage of her literary career which, in Tausky's opinion, "cannot be compared with the achievement of the first two decades" (in Lecker, David and Quiqley, 1983- : 87). Furthermore, Duncan published an autobiographical account on her change of residence from Calcutta to Simla entitled *On The Other Side of the Latch* (1901); also wrote plays and participated in stage plays "which were mainly unsuccessful" according to Misao Dean's entry to the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online* and even adapted her 1914 novel *His Royal Happiness* for theatrical representation ('Duncan'); produced short stories gathered in the collection *The Pool in the Dessert* (1903) which includes "An Impossible Ideal", a "brilliant novella" according to Tausky (Lecker, David and Quiqley, 1983- : 77); and even poetry<sup>84</sup>.

As literary commentator, it is remarkable that in her role as journalist Duncan participated in the heated debate on the existence of a Canadian Literature and frequently approached literary issues and matters concerning fiction as well<sup>85</sup>. As Thomas E. Tausky affirms, "in her years as a journalist in Canada, Duncan was at the centre of the brave efforts then being undertaken to establish a national literary culture" (in Lecker, David and Quiqley, 1983- : 30). In her columns and articles she did not only deal with literary aspects but controversial issues such as the place of women in society and journalism or imperialism in Canada which also speak for her challenging character. Regarding Duncan's journalistic literary commentaries, the column "Saunterings" for the Torontonion newspaper *The Week* is a good example. "The Heroine of Old-Time" published in October 28<sup>th</sup> 1886 is a very interesting article for it reveals part of Duncan's feminist approach to literature and fiction in her ironic review of old female protagonists who are "the product of an age that demanded no more of femininity than unlimited affection and embroidery" (Daymond and Monkman: 79). It is precisely in this article where she introduces her ideas on the new woman in the novel

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<sup>84</sup> The extensive literary career of Sara Jeannette Duncan as well as her broad participation in Canadian letters as journalist make her a fascinating figure with contributions enough to write a full dissertation. Taking into account the main thrusts of the present dissertation and due to space restrictions, only her novel *The Imperialist* will be thoroughly analysed in this chapter.

<sup>85</sup> For further information on Duncan's journalism Thomas E. Tausky's 1978 edition of *Sara Jeannette Duncan: Selected Journalism* is a very interesting source.



genre since current literary heroines are no longer peculiar but real since novelists who successfully depict them do not linger on their gendered selves:

The woman of to-day understands herself, and is understood in her present and possible worth. [...] The women who enter into its[the novel's] composition are but intelligent agents in its reflection and show themselves as they are, not as a false ideal would have them. (Daymond and Monkman: 80)

“Outworn Literary Methods” appeared in June 9<sup>th</sup> 1887 and offers a conspicuous analysis of old and new literary trends; the former being traditional and narrow since authors never venture into “the pernicious habit of foreign travel” neither offer credit to “the frivolous fashions of the day” but remain home-bound to whatever “fate had assigned them” (Daymond and Monkman: 87). In contrast, new authors had taken the baton of their predecessors not to continue their tradition but change it, either in theme or form. Duncan also devoted some of her articles to review literary works, either foreign or Canadian such as “The Algonquin Maiden” published in January 13<sup>th</sup> 1887 in which Duncan states that publications of Canadian literary works are generally “received with peculiar demonstrations” (Tausky: 109). This is precisely why she dedicates attention to this romance of the same title challenging more realistic trends of the time, although perhaps showing certain benevolence to the work for the fact of being Canadian. “New Directions in Fiction” (August 2<sup>nd</sup> 1888) is also significant regarding Canadian Literature is for its exploration of common ideas on “intellectual poverty at home”, that is in Canada, on the basis of the higher impact of foreign literary forms at her time (Daymond and Monkman: 89). In Duncan’s opinion, importing outside trends, authors and works does not convey a lower status of national literary production neither means that readers directly reject it in favour of foreign and apparently better pieces. On the contrary, it means that fictional genres are constantly in the make, changing and innovating since “fiction seems determined to broaden its scope in all directions” (Daymond and Monkman: 91). In doing so, Duncan addresses one of the most important issues concerning Canadian literary tradition and identity that of the complex of not having a Shakespearian figure to rise as worthy representative of Canada’s letters.

But the most eloquent articles from a Canadian perspective are “Colonialism and Literature” (September 30<sup>th</sup> 1886), “American Influence on Canadian Thought” (July 7<sup>th</sup> 1887) and “Dangers of Literary Nationalism” not published in the *Toronto Week* – unlike the rest of articles quoted in this passage– but in the *Montreal Star* in January 31<sup>st</sup>

1888. These three pieces explore the main issues at stake in Canada's culture and literature at the time: the impact of colonialism and its downgrading effect, the danger of offering too easy entrance to US influences, and the perils of nationalistic narrowness. For instance, in "Colonialism and Literature" she points out Canada's "spirit of depreciation" and the "tendency to nip forth-putting buds by contemptuous comparison with the full blown production of other lands" (Tausky: 108). She also states that Canadians, either politically or culturally, not only "are ignored" but ignore themselves so that, in her opinion, "so long as Canada remains in political obscurity, content to thrive only on the roots, so long will the leaves and blossoms of art and literature be scanty and stunted products of our national energy" (Tausky: 109). Despite in this article she examines the dangers of Canada's colonial influences and the lack of a "patriotic sentiment" to unite all Canadians, in "Dangers of Literary Nationalism" Duncan explores the other side of the coin, that is, excessive nationalism in relation to literary criticism. Canadian "literary standards" of the time, "if we[they] have[had] any", were "much too low" from her viewpoint, as the tendency to praise literary works for the very fact of their Canadian origin demonstrates (Tausky: 118). She mentions Canada's "colonial status, our[its] comparative poverty, our[its] youth" as factors frequently coming into play when considering literary production, which should not have such an impact, according to Duncan (Tausky: 118). She pleads for a different attitude towards Canadian literary production which praises works at the highest level or deplores them so that the habitual value statement of "It is very well, considering" is no longer held; in Duncan's words: "let it be well, absolutely not relatively, or let it not be at all –at least let it not hear about it" (Tausky: 118). Taken in conjunction, these three articles reveal the crossroads at which Canadian culture and literature were immersed in after 1867, in the process of searching a national literary expression to feel identified with so that what was at stake was precisely Canadian cultural identity.

In this sense, it seems clear that Duncan's participation in Canadian letters was not only carried out through her actual works but by means of her journalistic explorations, both showing her concern on fictional issues, on the changes the genre was experiencing, the role of women, and, very significantly, on the state of Canadian Literature and its relevance as basis of cultural identity. Taking into account Duncan's extensive literary career and prominent participation in the fostering and understanding

of Canadian Literature and culture through her role as journalist, the disregard of her figure and works seems even more paradoxical.

The conjunction of the forces of colonialism, nationalism and US influence Duncan explores in her articles are precisely the political background of her novel *The Imperialist*. As stated at the beginning of this chapter, all the inhabitants of Elgin, and more relevantly the Murchison family and Lorne Murchison, are precisely immersed in the nationalistic project of making a nation but trapped in-between overwhelming forces, those of the British Empire and the United States. It is important to note that, unlike some of the novels analysed previously in Part III, Elgin is no longer an imprecise Canadian setting; it is neither a distant nor a utopian land but a real territory located in the Province of Ontario.

The colonial/imperial framework and paradoxes affecting Elgin's society are introduced at the very beginning of the novel. Elgin people are occupied celebrating the Queen's Birthday which in Canada takes place on "the twenty-fourth of May" despite nobody of these "far removed" lands is certain about the date and very few of them have money to celebrate it properly; anyway, they all enjoy it since it is "a 'Bank' holiday, indeed!" (9). The ethnic component of Canada is already introduced in this passage through the figure of "drunken Indians vociferous on their way to the lock-up" which also suggests the colonized position of these members of the community (9). They are not any longer the savages or noble savages previous novels depict, as for instance Frances Brooke's *The History of Emily Monatgue* (1769), but domesticated due to the Empire's pernicious influence through alcohol. This image resembles precisely a passage of Brooke's novel in which Arabella Fermor offers wine to some native women. As explained in the corresponding chapter, according to Robert Merret such an offering stands for both the imposition of foreign values on behalf of the colonial centre and the process of cultural displacement colonized peoples went through. In Duncan's text these two facts are similarly suggested although not so much as a discovery, like in Arabella's case, but an accomplished fact. In this way, not only parallels between Brooke and Duncan's novels can be found but a reinforcement of imperialistic symbols such as wine/alcohol is at stake.

The Murchison family is early introduced as main focus of Elgin's society in the novel. Although they somehow belong to microcosm of a Canadian small town, they are

also detached given their more recent Canadian settlement in comparison to other Elginians, and thus closer connection to the mother country, and their weak economic status. In fact, while the rest of inhabitants have a servant girl to help at home since “everybody was subject to them in Elgin, everybody had to acknowledge and face them”, the Murchisons are “temporarily deprived” of such help for lack of money (12). The clearest paradigm of their lower level of Canadian engagement is their house for “it was in Elgin, but not of it” (29). First of all, the house supposed a “dramatic sacrifice” for the family since they had to buy it under mortgage and the house needs constant care and work (27). Hence, despite being a nice place to live in, it is an old and almost falling-apart residence the Murchisons have to endure. The narrator actually states that Mrs. Murchison was aware from the very beginning that the house “was going to be the bane of her existence” (27). Furthermore, it is not located in the city centre but “on the very edge of the town” precisely where “the plank sidewalk finished” so that it also places the family in the margins of Elgin’s society, and thus, of Canada (27). The house has a “fountain, an empty basin with a plaster Triton” which, regardless of the touch of class it seems to offer, looks somehow “*pathetic* in his frayed air of exile from some garden of Italy sloping to the sea”, and a drawing room with French and Italian features in which Mrs. Murchison would have welcomed important visits as the Lieutenant Governor if he had ever visited Elgin (my emphasis, 28). The European connections of the house offer a decaying character to the family but also imply both the family’s closer relation to European cultural centres –and thus their lower level of adaptation to Canadian life conditions which require more pragmatism– as well as their condition of ‘exiles’ in Elgin. In fact, for the rest of Elgin’s society their house is an epitome of meagre newcomers who have not clear ideas on economic issues in the colonies and suffer from adaptation to a new land, and of the fact that “nothing can save them from the isolation of their *difference* and their misapprehension” (my emphasis, 29). Besides, their election of the house is generally considered an error; although somehow appreciated, the house had never been imitated since it was “felt to be outside the general need” and because “it represented a different tradition” (29). In this way, similarly to their house, the Murchisons are a paradigm of difference within Canadian society, they simultaneously belong and not belong to their new social framework so that they can be said to suffer from the disadvantage of not being fully integrated but

also benefit from the advantage of their free outsider perspective. The narrator actually states that the same as the “house gained by force of contrast”, the lower suitability but higher nobility of their residence offered the family the chance to profit from its “more leisured intention” (29). In fact, and in contrast to the rest of Elginians, the Murchisons have already been depicted in the novel as not so practical but “imaginative” people, character that their house reinforces (15). The place they all inhabit does not only hold a “sense of opportunity” for Mr. Murchison so that it also epitomizes the family’s position as recently arrived immigrants, but has a library “filled with English classics” bought precisely by Mr. Murchison, to which Mrs. Murchison objects and which are mainly enjoyed by Advena and Lorne Murchison, who will later reveal their more controversial attitudes (29-30).

Despite Mr. Murchison and Mrs. Murchison are similarly attached to the old country, there is an interesting contrast between both characters. The colonial ties of Mr. Murchison are clearly displayed in the connection between him and Dr. Drummond, Elgin’s minister of the Church of Scotland. Before becoming friends, Drummond asked for references on Mr. Murchison and was told that he was “a Scotchman” and “not very long from the old country” (19). This is the way in which the rest of Elgin people tended to describe him, having as crucial his still strong connection to Britain. Dr. Drummond and Mr. Murchison had both started their colonial adventure at the same time, were aware of their participation in “the building of this[that] little outpost of Empire” and of the chances that small town offered them but reluctantly; as the narrator states, although “the new country filled their eyes” and “the new town was their opportunity”, “its destiny”, either the country or the town’s, was also “their *fate*” (20). In fact, regardless of their participation in the construction of the new nation, they also brotherly share a hearty fidelity to the mother country. They are both Liberals in far removed lands from the imperial centre and do not find that paradoxical whatsoever. On the other hand, Mrs. Murchison’s attachment to the old country is not related to politics –as in the case of her husband– but voiced through her stubborn maintenance of old social traditions, including female roles. She keeps most of her customs from old times and only embraces Elgin’s traditions if they match her previous practices as the “six o’clock tea” instead of “the innovation of a late dinner” recently incorporated by some in the town (39). Her attitude towards female roles is also eloquent of her colonial ties.

Following the narrating voice, in Mrs. Murchison's opinion, her daughter Abby "had married, early and satisfactorily, Dr. Harry Johnson" whereas Advena and her love for literature demonstrated "that she will never be fit for the management of a house" (32). Instead of valuing Advena's success in attending "*the university* course for women at Toronto" and getting a position as teacher at Elgin's College, she is more worried about her apparent lack of skills in order to get married, and thus, establishing herself as a decent woman according to traditional social axioms which so frequently "made her[Mrs. Murchison] miserable" (my emphasis, 32-3). In fact, the choice of Lorne's name by Mrs. Murchison is also revealing about her colonial bonds since it was the name of Canada's Governor-General, that is, of the representative of the British Crown in Canadian soil. "It was a simple way of attesting a loyal spirit" the narrator comments, but it is also a sign of his later evolution in the novel, as if the name had stamped imperialism on him. Taken in conjunction, Mr. Murchison and Mrs. Murchison offer a very significant contrast. While Mrs. Murchison is more practical and is more worried about what people might think, Mr. Murchison's holds a more elevated concept of life, "a capacity for feeling the worthier things of life" and supports Lorne and Advena's interest for literature regardless of Elgin people's commentaries (29-30). The fact that Mr. Murchison bought the house also suggests his less practical character in relation to his wife.

In this way, the dissimilarity between both parents shows not a univocal perspective but diverse attitudes towards colonialism and the new life in Canada. According to Tausky's information in Lecker, David and Quiqley's Edition of *Canadian Writers and Their Works: Fiction Series*, these two characters seem to have been inspired by Duncan's own parents, as the dedication of the novel "to my father" suggests; similarly, Advena could be taken as a "version of the imaginative young woman we have seen so often in Duncan's fiction" (80). But, regardless of the differences between Mr. Murchison and Mrs. Murchison, they form a whole in relation to younger generations since together they contrast with their sons and daughters. While parents represent old rules and allegiances, Abby, Advena, Stella, Alec, Oliver and Lorne stand for the future not only of the family but the town and the country. The family can be said to be a paradigm of the nation for the differing postures between mothers/fathers and sons/daughters resembles that of a mother country with its daughter

nations; between them there is a similar “great gulf fixed, across which intercourse was difficult” (54). But the relevance of the younger Murchisons has wider implications; they do not carry the expectations of society but are responsible of the family’s acceptance within Elgin’s society. Mr. Murchison and Mrs. Murchison “had produced nothing abnormal, but they had to prove that they weren’t going to” and Stella “was the last and most convincing demonstration” (46).

In fact, Stella, together with Abby and “the boys”, Alec and Oliver, are the clearest proofs of the Murchisons “normality”. As stated before, Abby’s marriage to a somehow prominent member of Elgin’s community, although precocious, and her adherence to domesticity raise her as clear representative of the “good woman” still attached to traditional female roles. Nevertheless, the narrator’s comment on the fact that she had “not done so badly” suggests that she was not an extremely happy woman but had resigned to what was expected of her (47). In contrast, Alec and Oliver are sarcastically introduced still “too young to think of matrimony” (33). In this sense, whereas Abby’s early marriage does not seem to be a problem, her brothers are paradoxically regarded as “too young” precisely for fulfilling the same task. Alec and Oliver are “the boys” of the family, mainly worried about having fun and very frequently silent in relation to important issues for, according to the narrator, “adolescence was inarticulate in Elgin on occasions of ceremony” (42). They work with their father at his shop in Elgin’s market and seem not to have any further ambitions; they will remain boys forever if “they remained under their father’s roof” which seems to be the case given their passivity, unadventurous character, lack of commitment in socio-political issues and even indulgence (33). Alec and Oliver are thus introduced as harmless not only as members of the Murchison family but also within Elgin’s society. Furthermore and unlike their sister, the boys also “enjoyed a great deal of popularity” since, according to the narrating voice’s remarks, “Elgin society [...] has this peculiarity, that the females of a family, in general acceptance, were apt to lag far behind the males” (47). Alec and Oliver were more frequently invited by other Eliginians’ than their sisters, a fact which, despite reprehensible, reveals a better situation than that of the mother country for “London may not be aware of the existence of sisters” whatsoever (47). It seems clear that, whereas the contrast between Abby’s marriage and Alec and Oliver’s freedom entails a feminist critique of Elgin’s still

mainly patriarchal framework, the higher degree of development in colonial lands regarding women's issues which differ from the colonial centre is also suggested.

From my viewpoint, although Stella seems not to have committed any mistake to damage the family's reputation given her youth, her strongly critical comments suggest uncertainty of what the future could bring for her and, hence, the family. She is interestingly depicted as open-minded, independent and certainly captious. Almost all of her interventions involve some kind of criticism. On the occasion of Dr. Drummond's tea visit to the Murchisons' house and given the fact that in Elgin "the wife must worship with the husband", she dares say that Dr. Drummond "seems to think a lot more of Abby now that she's Mrs. Episcopal Johnson" (37-8). Both Stella's critical view on the consideration of women depending on church membership and the narrator's affirmation on female –and not male– change of religious ascription depending on their husband's of course imply a feminist comment on Canadian society. But regarding women's issues, Stella is cleverer than the rest. She is not only able to acknowledge the paradoxes of Elgin's patriarchal society but also to grasp female power over men. In a conversation between Mr. and Mrs. Murchison on the apparent love affair of Lorne and Dora, Stella intervenes to point out that whatever happens depends on Dora and not Lorne so that she arouses the stronger power of higher-class women over socially disadvantaged men; she says: "I suppose she[Dora] thinks she's going to get Lorne" (114). Besides, during a family debate on the charges against Walter Ormiston for having robbed the bank, whereas everybody hopes he is innocent, Stella not only affirms that "of course he's innocent" but raises the crucial issue of the bank's responsibility for such an accusation: "and when they prove it, what can he do to the bank for taking him up? (42). Stella's scarce but prominent interventions suggest that she is one of the few from the family and the town to see further on, and sometimes she even seems a visionary. As far as Lorne's British friend, Hesketh, is concerned she is the only one to foresee Hesketh's negative influence on her brother's political campaign. She states that "here he's just an ignorant young man" and also advises her brother not to "have him talking with his mouth at any of your[his] meetings" (201). In doing so, she somehow predicts Hesketh's ambivalent position and his final dirty trick on Lorne for at the end he is not so supportive but acts in his own interest given his relation with Lorne's main opponents, the Milburns.



In my opinion, the fact that Stella is only fourteen years old makes her solidly critical commentary somehow difficult to believe. Perhaps in order to lessen the impact of her comments and in consonance with the previous quotation on the town's inarticulacy of its youngsters, Stella's words pass unnoticed. Nobody in the family seems to acknowledge them since there is never a reply. The narrator's description of Stella summarizes her position within Elgin's community; as her intelligence demonstrates, she "without doubt, was well equipped for society" but her most significant features in relation to this Canadian small town are her "quality of being able to suggest that she was quite as good as anybody without saying so, and the even more important quality of not being any better" (45). In this sense, Elgin is revealed as an enclosed and narrow-minded garrison where standing out was not precisely welcomed.

The only one from the Murchisons siblings still considered with certain reservations is Advena. It might not be mere coincidence that she loves literature and specially fiction, that she is an older independent woman –economically and ideologically– and thus the most important feminist emblem of the novel. Very significantly, she is the only one who keeps the ability of dreaming in a place like Elgin where "no one could dream with impunity [...], except in bed" (46). It is also eloquent that she, as a kid, had direct contact with a "drunken squaw" from whom she took a papoose<sup>86</sup> and pretended her mother to take care of him/her. Of course, her mother and the family's acquaintances saw in it a dirty stratagem of Indians trying to take advantage of a little girl. Again, the closer relationship of Advena with squaws reminds of France Brooke's Arabella who desires to turn squaw and thus become freer. Both characters independence and final submission to social rules through marriage hold similar resemblances.

Advena's closer relation to her brother Lorne is equally significant. They are both sensitive, imaginative, learned –since they are the only ones from the Murchison siblings to have attended official courses, Advena in Toronto and Lorne at Elgin's College– interested in literature, and "her idealism equals his –but her opportunities and her future, by comparison, are circumscribed" (Thomas, 1977: 45). From my viewpoint, the fact that they start from similar positions but society does not offer parallel opportunities for both speaks for the underlying feminist message of *The Imperialist*.

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<sup>86</sup> A North American Indian baby or child.

Following Clara Thomas' article on Duncan's novel, *Advena* seems to be based on the author's biography since both belong to the pioneering group of females to receive education in Canada and so, to enjoy different opportunities and break domestic ties (1977: 45). In fact, both started working as teachers, one of the traditional professional roles for women outside the household. Likewise, the connection between *Advena* and Lorne is also voiced through the inclusion of their romances since they are the only characters in novel to have their love affairs depicted. But, in spite of the sister-brother affinity, their love stories differ to a great extent. On the one hand, *Advena* and High Finlay's relationship is mainly based on their literary exchanges and their inability to overtly show their feelings until the very end. Both show allegiance to social rules through their inaction when Finlay feels unable to reject his aunt's already arranged marriage to Miss Cameron, both still back in Britain. When Finlay is aware of *Advena*'s love for him and is confronted with the absurdity of the situation by Dr. Drummond, he recognizes that "the objection to it isn't in reason –it's somehow in the past and the blood" (184). Paradoxically, at the beginning of the novel Finlay, as a recently arrived immigrant and unlike *Advena*'s ideas on Canada's "empty horizon", is able to grasp the country's opportunities for he states that "an empty horizon is better than none" in contrast to England that "has filled hers up" (123). *Advena* also shows her respect for social bonds mainly because she does nothing to stop the situation, not even expressing her feelings to Finlay. On the contrary, she has the strange idea of visiting Miss Cameron and Mrs. Kilbannon, Finlay's aunt, when they arrive to Canada to show them her respect and offer help which at the end will turn as a positive act for the couple. While Finlay is out of the town in a mission, it is finally Dr. Drummond who intercedes for them, explains the situation to Miss Cameron and Mrs. Kilbannon, settles his own marriage with Miss Cameron and thus frees the innocent couple. On the other hand, Lorne's relationship to Dora Milburn has different implications. Dora is the only daughter of a much more class-conscious family, the Milburns, whose father holds opposite political views to those of Lorne. The narrator makes clear the social stratification separating the lovers when Lorne meets Dora for the first time and explains that "he had never been so near Dora Milburn, and he had never before perceived so remote" (60). Although Lorne proposes Dora and even gives her an engagement ring, she never wears it, plays the love game waiting for a better candidate

and constantly gives him feeble excuses such as the contrasting political postures of their families. It seems that what are at stake are their differing social statuses rather than politics. At the end, once Lorne's political project has failed and thus his possibilities of prospering socially, she tells him, without previous notice, she is going to marry Hesketh, who holds not so clear political views and is presumably better placed in the social scale.

Lorne Murchison is not only the central figure of the novel but the epitome of imperialism. Despite his family's economic issues and forced emigration to Canada –or precisely because of that– he embraces the imperial ideology. Despite much like part of his family he is an imaginative young man, he also followed the path marked by colonial society by studying and becoming a lawyer, so that he is raised as representative of Canada's younger generations. In a conversation between Mr. Murchison and Dr. Drummond the latter states that other lawyers from Elgin “look to Lorne to bring them in touch with the new generation” (25). In Lorne's first case as lawyer, he actually takes sides on behalf of Elgin's younger generation; he defends “Walter Ormiston, the son of old Squire Ormiston” and cashier of the Federal Bank who has been accused of robbery. Moreover, charges against Walter Ormiston are brought by a very famous and *older* lawyer of Toronto, “the great Cruickshank, K. C., probably the most distinguished criminal lawyer in the Province” so that the clash between older and younger generations is made clear (89). In a small town like Elgin, the process is a much discussed matter and Lorne's responsibility seems almost overwhelming, as if the future of Ormiston and, by extension, of Elgin's and Canada's younger inhabitants depended on him and even the country's evolution as an independent nation. This is indeed what the narrator implies when stating in relation to Lorne's participation in the Ormiston's case that,

Youth in a young country is a symbol wearing all its value. It stands not only for what it is. The trick of augury invests it, at a glance, with the sum of its possibilities, the augurs all sincere, confident, and exulting. (89)

Walter Ormiston is finally found “Not guilty” (97). The positive resolution of the case for Lorne makes it a “personal triumph” which both increases the consideration of him and his family among Elgin's peoples and opens new professional doors for him (96).

After Lorne's victory, he is appointed member of a commission “from the United Chambers of Commerce of Canada” to London in order to discuss with the

British government “the encouragement of improved communications with the Empire” (99). The stay of Lorne and the rest of his companions in London is one of the most significant passages of the novel regarding imperialism. Before departure, Lorne holds an interesting conversation with Mrs. Milburn; she shows her stronger colonial ties when she tells him that he is not going to like Canada so much “after seeing dear old England” to which Lorne replies that he “expect[s] [...] to like it better” (107). Whereas Mrs. Milburn epitomizes the immigrant mythology that nothing is better than the mother country, Lorne maintains that he will not find Canadian men “so far behind, for point of view and grasp and dispatch” in relation to the British (107). Shortly after, Lorne also speaks with Dora, Mrs. Milburn’s daughter, on the same issue, this time showing a very different perspective. Somehow in contrast to Lorne’s previous remarks to Mrs. Milburn, he now shows his enthusiasm for visiting and, interestingly, *feeling* England which, as he states, will make him “a better man [...] till I[he] die[s]” (109). He goes on and explains Dora his vision of the Empire not as a political and/or economic bond but on the basis of “the moral advantage” of Canadian servitude (110). Paradoxically it is now Dora who, against her mother’s view, replies Lorne by stating that English people are not necessarily better than Canadians. These two conversations are eloquent regarding the ambivalent positions held by Lorne and other immigrants in Canada within the colonial system; whereas he keeps certain pride regarding his fellow countryman and women, the opportunity of visiting the colonial centre seems like a dream for him, the chance to experience and feel in first person what all of them apparently belong to. The pervasiveness of the imperialist ideology is thus clearly represented.

Once in England, Lorne and the rest of the deputation experience important revelations. First of all, at the hotel, they notice their insignificance in the eyes of English citizens for “no heads turned in the temperance hotel when they came into the dinning-room” unlike at home, where they were prominent members of society (126). The fact that their expectations of finding similar recognition in England or at least more than “the merest published announcement of their arrival” are disappointed speaks for the realities of imperialism; despite received ideas on the familiar bonds of colonial lands with the mother country, reality confronts them with Britain’s indifference. As the narrator states: “The Empire produces a family resemblance, but here and there, when

oceans intervene, a different mould of the spirit” (126). Later, they have the honour of being invited to one of those parties so typical of high British society. Regardless of their first detachment, they started to observe the scene with a certain degree of ownership for everything around them “had, in a manner, come out of Canada, and *Canada was theirs*” (my emphasis, 127). This episode also offers the reader a new perspective on imperialism. First of all, the differences between both societies are highlighted; British ostentation and stronger class-consciousness clearly contrasts with Elgin’s meagreness and higher importance of economy. Second, the feeling of detachment of Lorne and the rest of Canada’s commission members experience speaks for their alienation in relation to a mother country which still influences their own land to a great extent. Last but not least, when confronted to England’s attached but strange society they realize that Canada belongs to them and not to Britain so that the colonialist familiar bond is proved weaker.

In spite of Lorne’s original disappointment for not seeing his expectations to gain knowledge and feel the mother country fulfilled, he is the only one from the deputation to hold an apparently more elevated view on the experience. While the rest agree that “England was a good country to leave early” and start considering imperialist sentimental appeal with reservations, the narrator accounts that “only Lorne among them looked higher and further, only he was alive to the inrush of the essential; he only lifted up his heart” (129-30). This comment offers readers an idea of Lorne’s stronger allegiance to imperialist views as well as of his detachment from his fellows; it is premonitory of what will happen to him. In Chapter XVI, Lorne meets Alfred Hesketh who can be said to be Lorne’s English version. Both are young, educated and eager but hold differing positions within the imperial framework, the former as representative of colonized peoples and the latter of the colonizers. This time Lorne expresses Hesketh some again contradictory details on his imperial ideas. Here Lorne voices the family metaphor of Empire but to point out England’s necessity to take the colonies’ perspective into consideration the same as families do with their descendants. He asks: “Why shouldn’t a vigorous policy of Empire be conceived by its younger nations – who have the ultimate resources to carry it out?” (137). He even seems a prophet for his ability of seeing British decadence with all its pathetic pomp and his almost subversion of imperialism by pointing Canada, Australia and India as epicentres, at least

economically. But such patriotic remarks on the power of colonies do not dishearten his firm belief in England as “the heart of the Empire” in the future, although only if she acknowledges and supports the colonies’ development.

Back at home, all the members of the deputation, including Lorne, rejoice having finally left that foreign land but, according to the narrator, with the feeling of the “dull anachronism in a marching world” imperialism now meant (142). Even a race discourse seems to sprout since on Canadian soil they do not only welcome again their freer and full-of-chances land but “that new quality in the blood which made them different men” (142). Instead of strengthening their imperialistic views, their experience seems to have forged a renewed patriotism and even an acknowledgement of belonging to a different kind, a different race. But Lorne has not abandoned his imperialistic views; in a conversation with Hugh Finlay, Lorne insists on the moral advantages of Canada’s colonial bondage while Finlay affirms that young nations have the possibility of becoming adults by themselves whereas England doubtfully can. It seems as if history had been turned upside down; a member of the colonies who has visited the decrepit mother country still defends imperialism and a recently arrived and presumably imperialistic immigrant criticizes it. Perhaps, Finlay’s deeper knowledge on England’s situation makes him precisely think imperialism is on the edge of destruction. Be that what it may, Lorne is presented as a stubborn idealist maybe as forewarning of his final resolution.

After having met Lorne, Alfred Hesketh ventures in the immigrant experience and travels to Elgin in order to explore the wider possibilities Canada seems to offer, unlike in Britain where his future was very uncertain. Elgin’s people see in him “a stranger” and “a symbol” of colonialism, and they usually refer to him by saying “there’s one of them” (171). The issue of otherness is very clear in this remark but exclusively in the contrast between already settled peoples and newcomers in Canada. The otherness framework affecting Elgin is much more complex and will be explained later in this chapter. Hesketh does not seem to notice such a rejection but on the contrary feels at ease and glad. His disconnection from the new surrounding reality is also epitomized in his total ignorance on history for he thinks Mr. Murchison was a pioneer in Elgin for having arrived thirty years before which is not the case. In fact, he considers the Milburns, with whom he resides, “the most typically Canadian family”

while the novel suggests they are not so typical but more class-conscious than the rest of Elgin, as he himself is due to their shared stronger social awareness (242).

But Hesketh's unconsciousness is at his highest when contributing to Lorne's political campaign. It is the first time he addresses a colonial audience and certainly shows it by condescendingly referring to colonials as having "rough unpolished exterior" but "virtues" inside; he also commits the mistake of bringing up the glorious past of their ancestors and mentions those brave forefathers who took colonial lands away from the "savages" and wrote "the most glorious period of the British race" (221). Of course, those are not the issues Elgin's people are worried about and Indians are not any longer named savages. The rest of his speech does not get better for in his imperialistic discourse he quotes British literature and prominent English lords nobody neither knows nor understands. His detachment is so evident and deep that part of the audience even tells him "Oh, shut up!" (223). As Stella foretold, Hesketh's participation would not bring anything positive. In fact, his completely vain attempt is the prelude to Lorne's own speech.

Before addressing his audience, the narrator makes clear premonitory comments on the fact that people perceived that something has changed in Lorne but nobody understands what and why. Although at the beginning he gets applauses for his use of a closer language to the audience and suggesting the possibility of Canada as centre of the Empire, there is a sudden change that turns things in the opposite direction. There is a shift from colloquial to higher language and a critique to the United States' focus on economic rather than ideological terms to leave the Empire as well as on the perils of assimilation. This critical view, despite visionary for readers nowadays given the 'colonization' of Canada by its southern neighbour, could not be properly understood by an audience who saw America's improvement in comparison to their meagreness. Then he continues with his outdated imperialist talk and states the following:

But the alternative before Canada is not a mere choice of markets; we are confronted with a much graver issue, [...]. The question that underlines this decision for Canada is that of the whole stamp and character of her future existence. [...] ...Let us not hesitate to announce ourselves for the Empire, to throw all we are and all we have into the balance of that great decision. The seers of political economy tell us that if the stars continue to be propitious, it is certain that a day will come which will usher in a union of the Anglo-Saxon nations of the world. (265-6)

His words are a clear paradigm of the historical paradox Canada faced at that moment between breaking colonial ties and raising as an independent nation or keeping them and thus delaying its economic, political, social and cultural evolution. Although Lorne's too elevated ideas and their contradictions are apparently well received by the audience at first, later comments among attendants demonstrate the opposite. Even his party fellows secretly reproach him; for instance, Mr. Williams comments to Mr. Bingham that "he's monkeyed it all away. All away" (269). It seems clear that his contact with "the Idea", with the imperial ideology and not its realities is what had changed in him and separated him from his people, from their more immediate needs.

As explained in the summary of the novel's plot included at the beginning of this chapter, Lorne is finally and paradoxically elected against Mr. Walter Winter and the Conservatives to represent the region of South Fox in the Dominion House of Commons. Although at a first instance readers are somehow led to conclude that he is not going to win, the novel keeps the intrigue until the end. The subsequent political intricacies together with the accusation against Lorne and his party on the basis of their supposed manipulation of Indians' votes which endangers Lorne's election also help maintain attention and mystery. Despite the charges are not found appropriate, the poll is recalled, the Liberal party decides to manage without Lorne and wins the election. It is Mr. Bingham who tells him that the party needs "to win this[the] election, and we[they] can't win it with you[him]" (301). This is precisely Lorne's punishment for being the imperialist in Elgin, for becoming such an idealist in politics. Even when facing his party fellows' rejection from the new ballot, he stubbornly maintains his imperialistic views; at Horace Williams comment on the fact that he did not abandon "that save-the-Empire-or-die scheme" in time, he answers: "I shall never get rid of it" (301). His innocence and lack of shrewdness in the political battleground are also evident. After his speech, the people in Elgin obviously think that "he would not hesitate to put Canada to some material loss, or at least to postpone her development [...], for the sake of the imperial connection" and that is precisely what is crucial to the party, public opinion rather than ideals (301). Astonishingly, this revelation seems completely new for him for he still thinks that the prevalence of imperial links over Canada's development as a nation was what the Liberals wanted him to defend. It is only now when the rest of members of his party give him the clue; that was not the



party's pretension. Mr. Bingham and Horace Williams also highlight his lack of experience as Lorne's main hindrance in the political field.

This closure of Lorne's case is very significant for various reasons. From my viewpoint, his innocent and inexperienced character speaks for the young generation he stands for. Although Elgin's youngsters are the future of the town and the country, they need to work and learn a lot before succeeding their ancestors as makers of the nation. The fact that older generations finally succeed implies that Canada's younger members are not ready to rule the country yet; they lack experience and have too much innocence left. It is economy what has priority over ideology. By extension, a parallelism could be established between Lorne's young generation and Canada as a young nation itself which also needs to grow up and develop a powerful insight and slyness to deal with the two superpowers in-between which the country was trapped at that time, that is, England and the United States. Lorne's final fall and loneliness actually suggest that what a young nation in the make as Canada needs is not so much idealism but pragmatism; the novel seems to claim for a closer relation to earth, to the urgent realities of developing nations and to focus on the future rather than sticking to past colonial ties. All the paradoxes regarding imperialism aroused during Lorne's trip to England to which he seems blind offer an ironical counterview and prepare the reader for his final fall. Readers as well as the narrative voice are already aware of the contradictions of an outdated imperialist ideology which does not allow the full development of Canada as a nation, or at least its economic evolution. But Lorne's loneliness is much more profound; his love, Dora, finally marries his apparent friend, Hesketh, whose support of Lorne turned out to be counterproductive. As I see it, this fact reinforces the need of confronting reality face to face, leaving ideals aside and not losing sight before romantic but unrealistic pretensions. Dora is not only giving Lorne clues of this sad resolution but her social position and consciousness make the inappropriateness of a marriage between both evident. In this way, Lorne does not only fail in politics but in the politics of love. As Clara Thomas explains, the "politics of politics" and "the politics of love" are actually the two main thematic elements of *The Imperialist* and that is precisely what Lorne's story shows (1977: 38).

In any case, the fact that the older members of the Liberal party continue their political deed and finally win could also mean that the participation of younger citizens

is not completely rejected but that it is necessary for them to learn about political intricacies and adapt their ideas to surrounding realities. Learning is precisely what Lorne achieves at the end of the novel. There is no final resolution neither for Lorne nor for the rest of characters; instead, there is an open ending which is one of the most evident modern features of Duncan's novel. The narrator's final statement in the final page of *The Imperialist* makes clear Lorne's youth as representative of Canada as a young nation in the make: "Here, for Lorne and for his country, we lose the thread of destiny" (309).

Along the imperial discourse of the novel Canada's identity complex in opposition to the United States is also revealed. As pointed out before, the historical background the novel depicts Canada as a nation in construction divided into allegiance to the Empire and resistance to America's annexationism. In this respect, language is a clear paradigm. Those members of Elgin's community who want to maintain their higher status by showing closer connection to the motherland as Mrs. Milburn still use "what was known as an "English accent"" while the rest employ an accent adopted from Canada's southern neighbours, "let us hope temporarily" according to the narrator (51). America's linguistic inheritance is sarcastically reintroduced in the novel when Lorne and the deputation are in England. Common British people such as bus drivers do not understand Canadians and ask them if they are Americans, to which Mr. Cruickshank answers "yes [...] but not the United States kind" (132). This episode clearly shows Canada's obstacles in marking its difference in relation to a much more developed and influential nation as the United States which are still valid nowadays. My experience has demonstrated me that even today most Europeans have difficulties in identifying certain Canadian cultural expressions; regarding literature, for instance, Margaret Atwood is somehow known in Europe but her Canadian origin is mostly ignored, the same as it is rare to find some who knows that the famous film *The English Patient* is based on a novel by the Canadian writer Michael Ondaatje or that the famous critic Northrop Frye is actually Canadian.

Language is not the only paradigm of Canada's efforts in differing from the United States. The appearance of Canadians and their houses are also pointed out as signs of difference. In Dona Milburn's opinion, despite American citizens are generally thought to be more stylish, "Canadians are much better form" (110). Likewise, it is her

mother who establishes a comparison between residences in both countries, being Canadian houses much more humble; “but grandeur isn’t everything, is it?” she adds (106). It is also interesting that the term “annexationist” is used by town kids as an insult against those who did not support the imperial cause for, in the narrator’s words, in Canada “there was no middle course” (169). In fact, the opposition to the United States is also a source of patriotism for some of the characters of *The Imperialist*. Octavious Milburn –Dora’s father– is said to “prefer[red] a fair living under his own flag to a fortune under the Stars and Stripes” (53). He is one of the few members of Elgin’s older generations to have been born in Canadian soil so that he epitomizes the patriotic sentiment within the country’s colonial paradoxes. For him “Canada was[is] a great place” and is pleased with the situation of Canada as a “self-governing colony” advantageously located “far enough from England” but counting on “her protection” (54). Mr. Milburn ideas are eloquent in so far they reveal the historical crossroads of a nation struggling to develop a shared patriotic feeling but still paying homage to old colonial powers.

The imperial discourse of Lorne and the Liberals also includes a rejection of American influence. In Lorne’s final speech, he does not only discredit the United States for having abandoned the Empire but resistance to them is highlighted as crucial in the making of Canada as a nation. Lorne is very aware that America’s peaceful rapprochement is merely a colonizing strategy since “American enterprise, American capital, is taking rapid possession of our mines and our water-power, our oil areas and our timber limits” (266). From his viewpoint, such a slow, silent and apparently harmful advancement of this foreign influence is nothing but the prelude of more violent times “when they will menace our [Canada’s] coasts to protect their markets” (266). In consonance with the Milburns’ remarks of the previous paragraph, it seems also curious that regardless the opposition between the Milburns’ conservatism and Lorne’s liberalism they actually agree with regard to the perils of US assimilation. Again, these simultaneous political coincidences and differences among characters are eloquent of the complex historical, political, socio-economic and cultural crossroads that slowed down Canada’s independent development. Very significantly, it also speaks of the intricacy of Canadian identity framework, looking for itself in the mirrors of two foreign nations exclusively interested in the economic resources Canada offered as well

as resisting their influence in order to find its own roots. It is not strange that such a crossroads somehow decelerated the shaping of Canadian identity so that, as stated previously in this dissertation, its construction was later and hastily carried out. Moreover, I consider the novel's insistence on the perils of assimilation from the United States as certainly visionary. *The Imperialist* actually advances part of the present situation of Canada in relation to America's mainly economic but also cultural colonization and foresees the power of economy over politics we are experiencing nowadays.

Within this framework of intervening forces, with old colonial ties on the one hand and the United States on the other pulling from and to different directions, the reader cannot help but wonder, where is Canada? Northrop Frye's famous question where is here? can be read between the lines of Duncan's text. There is no concrete answer since in the novel Canada is nowhere and everywhere but above all it is still in the make; its essence seems to be there but in an imprecise manner, with some of its current national symbols already established as the maple leaf but, on the whole, yet identity-less. In this respect, what is clearly explored in *The Imperialist* is the fact that "if Canadians did not know quite what they were, they at least knew they were neither Americans nor old-country British" which actually corresponds to a very important period of Canadian history (Bailey in McMullen, 1976: 65). In this sense, Duncan's novel is a very interesting work from a new historicist perspective since it entails perhaps not so much a rewriting but an investigation of a decisive historical moment for Canada. The confrontation of the Liberals and the Conservatives of the novel as well as the country's positioning in-between America and Great Britain is actually a reflection of history. According to Alfred G. Bailey's "The Historical Setting of Sara Jeannette Duncan's *The Imperialist*" included in McMullen's 1976 edition of *Twentieth Century Essays on Confederation Literature*, after the 1858 Galt Tariff and the National Policy of John Macdonald "a sense of independent status within the Empire" as well as a consequent unavoidable fear of "annexation to the United States" were introduced among Canadian population (in McMullen, 1976: 61). During the later economic crisis of the 1870s and 1880s a highly intense debate between those who supported "commercial union or unrestricted reciprocity with the Republic" represented by Goldwin Smith, and those who advocated for maintenance within the Empire although

as a federal union in which “dominions would have equal representation and status with the Mother Country” with George T. Denison as spokesman, took place (Bailey in McMullen, 1976: 62). Between both postures it seemed not to be any possible in-between solution the same as in Duncan’s novel there is “no middle course” since, according to the narrator, in Elgin “if you would not serve with Wallingham the greatness of Britain you were held to favour going over to the United States” (169). It seems clear that what is depicted in Duncan’s text is precisely this historical period, especially the confrontation between Smith and Denison’s postures through the opposition of the Conservative and Liberal parties in the ballot. In Bailey’s opinion, if Duncan had stayed longer in Canada she would have witnessed that the “middle course” could actually be achieved since it became a reality within the Dominion of Canada. In any case, Sara Jeannette Duncan through her work *The Imperialist* intervenes in historical discourses in so far her text offers an insight on political issues but from the viewpoint of common people, from the lower and certainly less acknowledged perspective in mainstream historiography of the inhabitants of a Canadian small town.

The Canadian small town of Elgin indeed works as liaison of the different voices of the novel and their exchanges of imperialist and anti-Americanist discourses. It is mainly through the narrator that readers approach Elgin’s specificities which are unravelled little by little and with a great deal of irony so that a double-sided image of the town is offered. According to Clara Thomas, the inclusion of Ormiston’s case together with the final court solution on the ballot with Lorne as Liberal representative, mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, are clear paradigms of law as one of the “institutional components of Elgin” (1977: 43). In her opinion, press and education are other relevant constituents but incomparable in importance to the trinity “home, business and church” (42).

The power of the press is almost omnipresent in Duncan’s text; the clear-sighted depiction of press issues in a small Canadian town again raises autobiographical connections with the author. Duncan’s first person experience of journalism may have been the source of inspiration for the discerning perspective on written media included in *The Imperialist*. It is certainly significant that there are only two newspapers in Elgin; the *Elgin Express* ruled by Mr. Horace Williams, supporter of Lorne and the Liberals, and the Conservative *Mercury*. In a first instance, it is curious that Elgin’s citizens do

not see any contradiction in having a member of the community involved in politics and at the same time ruling a newspaper; Horace Williams's objectivity does not seem to be questioned whatsoever. Moreover, influential people from Elgin seem authorized to influence the work of journalists; for instance, Dr. Drummond openly manifests his intention of dropping by the office of the *Express* since he does trust their reporter and what he might write about his last night sermon. Elgin's press is also a clear symbol of narrow-minded and close-knit society of the town; the fact that Lorne's taking of the official examination for lawyers in Toronto is published as breaking news gives a clear idea on the priority of the "local, provincial, or Dominion" –and not on foreign or international issues– of Elginians withdrawing into themselves. But the significance of the press in the text revolves around its support and fostering of the division of Elgin's society, and thus speaks for Canada's dichotomous position at that time. Just like there are two newspapers, there are only two viewpoints on the Ormiston's case, two political parties struggling in the election, two directions for the nation, and hence, two possible Canadas.

Apart from the press, education also plays a crucial role in Elgin's society. The Collegiate Institute of the town is a source of pride and a means for social improvement. Elgin's Institute is sarcastically described by the narrator as a "'public' kind of school" for not everyone has free access to it and thus to improve socio-economic conditions; likewise, it is depicted as a "potential melting pot" although not a real one. In any case, the social positions of some youngsters like Lorne Murchison and Elmore Crow are levelled because of their studies at the Institute, despite Lorne is able to attend thanks to his father's support whereas "Elmore would inevitably have gone back to the crops since he was early defeated by any other possibility" (84). The connection and higher status stamped through shared studies is evident when walking together through the market both avoid looking to the carts, for "if you had been "to the Collegiate," relatives among the carts selling were embarrassing" (85). The differing positions of siblings from a same family precisely because of education as that between Lorne and his brothers Alec and Oliver is also significant. Furthermore, education in Elgin is a paradigm of the representative character of the town regarding young nations as Canada. As the narrator tells us, education not only "has so much to do with reassembling the classes of a new country" but is a powerful impulse for younger generations to take

different professional paths from those of their ancestors (83-4). In this sense, the access to higher studies although unequal is a crucial source of differentiation of Canada from the two colonizing powers of the time, England and the United States. Canadian Collegiate Institutes offer some future opportunities for younger generations which contrast with British inherited social statuses and professional perspectives and the utopian American dream for all.

Following Thomas “home, business and church” are the other three essential elements of Elgin’s society. The relevance of home has already been analysed in relation to the Murchison family as epitome of their difference. The other two, business and church are related to education from my viewpoint. In the case of Mr. Murchison, his hardware store business at Elgin’s market is crucial character as means of improving in the new country; it is the economic source of his family, is Alec and Oliver’s way to earn a living and offers Mr. Murchison the opportunity to render Lorne and Advena a chance to study and thus to thrive. Similarly, the connection between education and religion is represented by the figure of Dr. Drummond who as minister of Elgin also feels involved in the task of educating younger generations and “responsible for the formation of their characters and the promise of their talents” (40). On the other hand, religion is not merely an important social element but one of the “two controlling interests” of the town, together with politics, with its significance stemming from its wider social and ethical scope (62). Church attendance is indeed one of the habits that every citizen is assumed to submit no matter “the intellectual exercis”, “emotional lift” or weekly distraction it meant for each of them; according to the narrator “it was [simply] the normal thing” (65). Given its socio-ethical importance, breaking this habit of church attendance could have terrible consequences since “a person who was “never known to put his head inside a church door” could not be more severely reprobated” by, for instance, Mrs. Murchison (65). As everything else in Elgin, professing a religious creed was not a matter of fervour but simply “reasonable” as one more social rule to be observed.

All along the plot described above, Elgin appears not simply as the backdrop where events take place but as “a dynamic element in the action” and almost as another character of the story (Thomas, 1977: 39). In relation to Lorne’s first case as lawyer, Chapter X includes a metaphorization of Elgin as if the town was one more fictional

member of the plot; Elgin is said to have “a sapience of its own” and hold a “finer palate for sensation” thanks to which the town “saw in it[Lorne’s case] heightened chances, both for Lorne and for the case” (88-9). Although Elgin is not a real location, it is realistically located in the novel in the south of the Province of Ontario. In contrast to some of the novels analysed previously such as Martin R. Delany’s *Blake; or, the Huts of America* (1859, 1861-62), Elgin does not entail an imprecise and utopian representation of Canada but is presented as a real and specific Canadian setting. Furthermore, according to both Clara Thomas and Alfred G. Bailey Elgin holds autobiographical connections with Sara Jeannette Duncan’s hometown, Brantford. In fact, both Elgin and Brantford are located in Southern Ontario and similarly situated in an important commercial junction, the former on the Grand Trunk Railway and the latter on the Grand River. As Thomas affirms, “Elgin certainly has some of the lineaments of Brantford” (1977: 30). Likewise, Bailey’s chapter on the historical setting of Duncan’s novel offers an interesting description of Brantford given its affinities with Elgin. Both are small and “busy enough” towns, important commercial centres of the region and with a “well-to-do class” to which the author belonged (in McMullen, 1976: 61). Besides, the same as close to Elgin there is the Indian Reservation of Moneida, according to Bailey, Brantford counted on “the lands of the neighbouring Six Nations Indians” (in McMullen, 1976: 61).

In spite of the specificity of Elgin’s location, at a metatextual level the novel confers it a wider scope as paradigm of Canada and, I would add, an international significance as a small town. The representative character of Elgin as a Canadian microcosm is made clear all throughout the plot and more specifically through the introductory quotation of this chapter in which Elgin’s people are actually said to be “at the making of a nation” (49). In my opinion, although other references to the town place it as paradigm of regional Canada they also grant it an international scope as representative of rural small towns. Stella’s crucial quality of not standing out of Elgin’s commonality is pointed out positively there “as anywhere else”, the same as “privilege has always its last little stronghold [...] *in towns like Elgin*” (45; my emphasis, 48). Besides, church attendance, gossiping or reservations against foreigners, as in the case of Hesketh, and difference also speak for frequent features of small towns outside Canada. In any case, the relevance of Elgin does not rely on this somehow international



scope but on its exemplarity of Canada. It is in this small town of Elgin where the Murchisons live, where the ballot between Liberals and Conservatives takes place, where Indians votes are finally decisive, where romance fails and wins, where imperial ideology seems to fade and anti-Americanism is strengthened, in short, where the making of a nation takes place.

The quotation from Duncan's *The Imperialist* that introduces this chapter is certainly eloquent of Elgin as paradigm of Canada. The Dominion of Canada as well as Elgin's society is experiencing "a sorry tale of disintegration" from previous colonialism and face the promising labour "of rebuilding" with the consequent "confusion as the edifice went up" (49). As far as I am concerned, Duncan's use of the terms "rebuilding" and "edifice" are meaningful in so far they portray the sense of Canada's construction and reconstruction, first by foreign architects and then by Canadians, either historically or culturally as in the case of its literary identity. Despite the disorientation, Canadians and Elginians were immersed in the rising of a renewed building, that is, "at the making of a nation" with all the burdens, difficulties, shortages and intricacies such process entails but also, according to the narrator, with "a certain bright freedom, and this was the essence" (49).

Although the particularization of Elgin could seem to be somehow in conflict with the wider scope the novel also confers to the town as Canadian paradigm, Clara Thomas offers a very interesting explanation in this respect. In Thomas's opinion, Duncan's mastery is precisely present in her depiction of a place that "transcends particularity to move into the area of social mythology" since *The Imperialist* also participates in the writing of two of the most widespread and strong Canadian myths, that of "the Small Town", that is Elgin, and "The Hero and Nation-Builder (Scotch)" represented by Lorne Murchison and his father (1977: 38). Indeed, both mythologies awaken connections to Canadian history so that they are also relevant regarding new historicist perspectives; small towns were crucial "on a time Canada was predominantly rural and towns like Elgin were important centres" and immigrants from Scottish ancestry played a relevant role in Canada given the large amount of them who contributed in the "in the exploring and setting of the country" not to mention their influences on society through the Presbyterian church or the Established Church of Scotland (Thomas, 1977: 47). But both mythical figures are even more relevant because

they connect Duncan's novel to previous and later contributions to the genre. Regarding regionalism of small towns, from the works analysed in this dissertation Frances Brooke's depiction of the garrison mentality in her 1769 novel and the intolerance of Myron Holder's epitomization of difference on behalf of Jamestown's people in Joanna E. Wood's *The Untempered Wind* (1894) are to be noted. As Thomas states, Canadian authors like Duncan "have followed our[Canadians'] fantasies [...] and they have also recognized in the small town setting a manageable microcosm of our society as a whole" (1977: 48). On the other hand, Mr. Murchison and Lorne together stand for the Canadian myth of the Scottish "Hero and Nation-Builder" which is indeed the most prevalent in Canadian letters according to Thomas as Hugh MacLennan and Margaret Laurence's novels demonstrate (1977: 48).

The attractiveness of Duncan's fictional small town is also based on the complex social picture the author offers with Elgin as axis. It is not merely a harmless setting but a town whose peoples are in-between freedom and imprisonment, where prosperity is allowed but difference is resisted. The Murchisons are a very good example of this paradox. Whereas Mr. Murchison business and Lorne's access to higher education are positively regarded as means of improvement for Canadian immigrants, the family's imaginative character, their love for literature and their house are considered sources of difference, "and a difference is the one thing a small [...] will not tolerate" (45). Elgin is a place where everybody has "only two stories", one from the past in the motherland and the new one in Canada, where constructing new stories apart from the mainstream, fantasizing and even dreaming, as Advena does, do not go unpunished (24). From my viewpoint, although this critique on Canadian resistance to difference is fictional, it reminds to the main axis of this dissertation already and extensively analysed, that is, Canada's reluctance to accept its diverse cultural essence as the construction of its literary identity demonstrates, so that what is ultimately at stake is precisely difference.

Within the town, Elgin's market is highlighted as a microcosm within a microcosm. It is the place on which all people from the town concur; there the rare interactions between rural working wives and urban housewives, men from mixed ancestries and occupations, and between older and younger generations take place. In consonance with Elgin's pragmatism, normality and "attention to the immediate" prevail; it is not a vibrant, colourful and joyful market but just "a scene of activity", its

significance stemming on the exemplarity of “the deep root of the race in the land, twisted and unlovely, but holding the promise of all” (64; 80; 81). The view of the market scene with the concurrence of people it fosters is what stamps a sense of belonging on Lorne and his potent imagination takes him to his idealistic sensations on the bright future of his young nation.

The sense of kinship surged in his heart; these were his people, this his lot as well as theirs. [...] The opportunity was in his hand... [...] At that moment his country became subjectively into his possession; great and helpless it came into his inheritance as it comes into the inheritance of every man who can take it, by deed of imagination and energy and love. (81-2)

Elgin’s market works as paradigm of the promising and worthy character of the people of the town, and thus, of the nation too. But the social perspective Duncan’s novel offers is more complex since the reader is regularly exposed to a two-fold viewpoint on the town and its people which, at the same time, is another example of the author’s mastery. Despite I agree with Clara Thomas that Duncan’s “detail [...] is highly selective”, such a discriminatory strategy is equally relevant for the higher sophistication of the social picture it portrays (Thomas, 1977: 39).

In consonance with the present dissertation, some of the most important details of the novel are concerned with the female and ethnic members of Elgin’s society in so far they offer a renewed and much more complex perspective on the Canadian social framework. The decisiveness of the votes of Indians from the nearby Moneida reservation in the ballot between Lorne and the Liberals against the Conservatives is a brilliant turn in my opinion. Previously in the novel the ethnic component of Canadian society is depicted from Elgin’s disdainful viewpoint, that is, from the perspective of white Canada. First of all, the fact that Indians reside in segregated areas contradicts benign historical discourses and attempts at describing Canada’s social framework such as Porter’s *The Vertical Mosaic* (1965). A mosaic, although vertical, implies certain contact among its different pieces but Duncan’s *The Imperialist* suggests that there is no cohabitation between whites and other ethnic groups. The scarcity of mentions to these *other* groups reinforces this inference and adds the discriminatory sense of Elginians for they are exclusively depicted as “drunken Indians” or “drunken squaw[s]” before the election (9; 41). In fact Lorne Murchison, lost in his idealistic imperialism, fails to recognize Canada’s ethnic complexity before the arrival of colonizers when he states that “this country’s for immigrants”, that is, for European whites (110). In any case,

Indians' right to vote speaks for Canada's historical recognition of its ethnic component which is directly referred to in the text through Lorne's mention to the figure of Sir John Macdonald who "gerrymandered the electoral districts and gave votes to the Moneida Indians" (154). Once again, Duncan offers a double-sided perspective since according to her novel such a granting of participation to First Nations was not carried out in an unbiased manner. On the election occasion, the narrator makes a clear description of manipulation Indians were subjected to when facing a ballot. They "were supposed to "go solid" for the candidate in whom they had been *taught to see* good-will" and "had always known that they were voting on the same side as "de boss" as if they were unable to decide by themselves and needed guidance (my emphasis, 279). Of course, the assumption of Indians ignorance is used by white society in its own benefit regardless of political sign; first the Conservatives *buy* their allegiance by giving them lands, wages, a school and even a patron, and then the Liberals win them over through Mr. Winter's "fatherly influence" (280). But the consideration of Indians on behalf of the people from Elgin is not merely condescending. Lorne's comment on Dr. Drummond's shock when Macdonald entitled one of their basic rights suggests that a part of Elgin's society totally disagrees with recognizing their political participation, not to mention their contribution in the construction of a shared nation. From those who resign themselves regarding Indians voting, there are certainly many who disregard them. When the Conservative party challenges the final election of Lorne Murchison and the Liberals, Mrs. Murchison and Alec hold a meaningful conversation in this respect. Mrs. Murchison states that "you can never trust an Indian", that squaws selling berries only know "English enough to ask a big price for them", that their papooses were always dirty, and somehow regrets that she "thought they were all gone long ago" (278). Alec's reply is equally interesting for in his opinion "there are enough of them to make trouble all right" and they do nothing "but vote and get drunk" (278). Interestingly enough, the narrator supports Alec's ideas since the situation of 'red' men seems to match Alec's description. They seem to keep "an old sovereignty" which differentiates them despite having "taken on the sign of civilization" through costumes, for instance, and which is apparently thrown in Elginians' face after "so much Government had done for him[the red man] in Fox County, where the "Reservation", nursing the dying fragment of his race, testified that there is such a thing as political compunction" (279). Either in the

remarks by Mrs. Murchison and Alec's or the narrator, "Indian" stands for "red man" so that First Nations women are totally left out of the question; in the novel, they mean absence. It is precisely because of these remarks that the fact that First Nations participation in the election turns out crucial is one of the best challenging and ironical gestures of the novel; it epitomizes their power although scant and seems a fictional revenge of the author against white prejudice.

In contrast to Indians' right to vote, women in Elgin do not enjoy that privilege. The day of the election, whereas Abby Murchison's husband goes to vote, she has no right to but is instead left with the kids within the domestic realm of her father's house. Nevertheless, women are granted certain participation in politics although paradoxically they could neither vote nor be elected; for example, they are allowed to attend political meetings, presumably in silence since nobody in the audience expects or values their contributions. This paradoxical situation contrasts with rural areas and England but in very differing ways. When Mr. and Mrs. Crow, Dora and Hesketh go to the rural town of Jordanville to support Lorne's public speech, both Mrs. Crow and Dora are the only women for there political affairs "were accepted as a purely masculine interest" and female participation "would have been greeted with remark and levity" (217-8). This is the reason why Elgin women never attended these country meetings unless their "wifely duty[ies]" forced them, as in the case Mrs. Farquharson whose husband is a politician close to retirement who needs constant help (218). On the other hand, the ban against female voting is something alien for Hesketh since in his recently abandoned English motherland winning an election "without the ladies, especially in the villages, where the people were obliged to listen respectfully" is unbelievable (218). Anyway, Elgin's society is depicted as ultimately patriarchal. The most significant aspect regarding feminism is women's lack of agency in politics; since *The Imperialist* mainly deals with political affairs in a small Canadian town, it is certainly revealing that women are depicted as simple observers regarding political issues.

Unlike First Nations, white women seem to enjoy a certain degree of power within the community. Their presence is stronger, they have not been relegated to a far reservation but reside, contribute and influence to a certain extent from within Elgin's society. Mrs. Murchison is a good example of women's somehow empowered but fundamentally powerless position. She is depicted as the epicentre of the family with all

its members “radiating from her” but is immersed in a society in which political and economic powers are ruled by men, as her husband and son Lorne demonstrate (12). In fact, women’s situation is not as free as that of males for their subjection to social, family and patriarchal bonds is stronger. When Dora agrees in attending Lorne’s speech she shares with him his preoccupation on the fact that she “shouldn’t be allowed to go with him[Hesketh] alone” (214). In contrast to Mrs. Murchison and Dora allegiance to the norm, *The Imperialist* also includes more challenging characters as those of Advena and Stella so that it offers a more complex picture on the place females inhabit within Elgin’s society. The existing contrast between Dora and Advena raises the latter as “a new kind of heroine” in Dean Misao’s opinion (in McMullen, 1990: 192). In comparison to Dora’s conventionalism as subjected young woman, Advena stands out for her free spirit and independent professional life. But in spite of Advena and Stella’s critical and freer postures already explained, they ultimately follow the dictate of patriarchal axioms through the final marriage of the former and the non-exceptional character of the latter. The closure of the novel with the marriage of all main female characters as Advena and Dora, with the exception of Stella who is still too young, is also relevant. Although some critics see in Advena’s last self-sacrifice in marriage a defect in Duncan’s fiction, Misao thinks it “illustrates [both] her allegiance to the old ideals and her inability to see how to embody them in the new world” (in McMullen, 1990: 192). In this way, Advena can be said to epitomize the figure of the new woman although somehow handcuffed by a new reality. Regardless of the initial connection between sister, Advena, and brother, Lorne, their divergent final resolutions indicate the differing plans society had for women and men. Whereas Advena is placed, once married but without her job, in a far distant land where her husband, Hugh Finlay, is sent to, Lorne is shown disappointed, unmarried but with certain professional prospects. It is significant to note that from a modern perspective, although the ambiguity of Lorne’s resolution seems stronger at first sight, Advena’s marriage is not so solid as ending for, as Glenn Willmott explains, “she has pursued a development in the public sphere [...] which remains untranslated into the private one” (2002: 28).

Moreover, Lorne’s imperial speech is also significant from a feminist perspective for its identification of nations with women, either as motherlands or daughter-nations in the making. For example, he refers to the United States as “the

daughter who left the old stock to be the light woman among nations” (267). Besides, Lorne’s family metaphor of Empire awakens resemblances to Pilar Cuder-Domingez’s marriage metaphor already mentioned in Part II. While for Lorne the British Empire is comparable to a family, England being the mother and the colonies her daughters, according to Cuder-Domingez’s views imperial bonds remind of female’s ties to their husbands. Similarly, by establishing a relation between Lorne’s imperial family metaphor and the marriage resolutions of the daughters in the novel, Advena and Dora, a connection with Cuder-Domingez’s is raised. In any case, both metaphors show the strongly gendered conceptions of nations and nationalism.

Finally, one of the clearest examples of the social critique that *The Imperialist* conveys is the dance at the Milburns’ house; it is also one of the best ironical passages of the novel. The reception of guests is in the drawing-room with pomp and circumstance but the narrator tells us that the whole family had been involved in much less elevated tasks right before their arrival; “Miss Filkin had only just finished making the claret-up, [...] Dora had been cutting sandwiches till the last minute” and Mrs. Milburn had forced the maid to wear a cap to open the door (55). Despite their apparent higher status, they are like everyone else in Elgin. Attendants, specially ladies, are all well dressed but without excesses for “moderation was prescribed in Elgin”, not due to social decorum but for more compelling reasons as the lack of materials and the still short social evolution of the town (57). The gathering, of course, is a great occasion for Elgin’s main social occupation, that is, prospective marriage and, very gently, elder generations “left these amusements to the uncultured” (57). In fact, Lorne Murchison is one of the guests, to the surprise of many, since he has certainly not been invited for his social status but because of his great future hopes after being appointed lawyer of the Ormiston’s case. It is his first time at such a vain gathering and his lack of social skills is evident since his arrival; he arrives too early, indeed. Dora’s thoughts on Lorne’s attitude are broadcast to readers by the narrator; she thinks “how perfectly silly he must feel coming so early!” (56). The rest of her reflections are similarly disdainful and condescending and it is in fact during this party when the narrator makes the insurmountable distance between Lorne and Dora and, thus, Elgin’s unvoiced social stratification clear. I agree with Alfred G. Bailey on the fact that the minute and dazzling portrayal of daily life in a small Canadian town Duncan develops in *The*

*Imperialist* may well be the product of her first-person experience in Brantford and highlights to such an extent that the text seems a reliable source for both sociologists and historiographers; in any case, the strong factual content of the novel must not make us “losing sight on its essential nature as a work of fiction of outstanding merit” (in McMullen, 1976: 65). In consonance with Bailey, Clara Thomas also affirms that Duncan’s social insight offers some “of the finest vignettes in our[Canadian] literature” as that on Mrs. Crown’s disguising of her real status as a working farm wife (1977: 40).

Elgin and its representative character on the whole country are again significant from a new historicist perspective. First, the main concerns of Canada as a young nation are revealed; the great importance of law and press as means of strengthening still unconnected and somehow lawless lands on one side, and the trinity “home, business and church” as axioms of Canadian society through the smaller scale of a town on the other. Besides, the heterogeneity of Elgin’s citizens is also eloquent on the diversity of Canadian society, mainly as a white mainstream but composed of a mixed amalgam of recently arrived immigrants, first generation, older and younger peoples with different economic and social statuses and who also hold different political views. What is common to all of them is precisely difference. From my viewpoint, the Murchisons’s siblings are the clearest paradigm of diversity of the novel. Whereas Alec and Oliver stand for resignation and total allegiance to social fate, Advena and Lorne represent the wider possibilities the country offers but differing for Canadian men and women, and Stella symbolizes the uncertainty of youngsters, and very significantly female, who seem outstanding. They all speak of the hazardous future of a young nation facing a varied range of resolutions. Second, the feeling of participation in the wider project of making a nation that Elgin’s peoples share speaks of one of the most pervasive issues of Canadian history, society and culture; that of establishing themselves as a whole, of finding their essence, their identity. Last but not least, the situation of the women and Indians of the novel supposes a literary intervention into history for the novel subverts the commonly accepted ideas on the equity and non-discrimination of Canadian society, that is, on its non-patriarchal and non-racist character.

This complex social framework depicted in *The Imperialist* also raises important issues concerning otherness. In contrast to the previous novels analysed in Part III, Duncan’s work portrays a much more intricate picture in this matter; all the characters



in the novel, Canadian, British, native, first generation, older, younger, female or male seem to inhabit altered positions. It is certainly curious that precisely Mrs. Milburn—one of the most strongly established members of Elgin’s society—is said to employ the French term “*outré*” to refer to those she considers outsiders in the town as Hesketh (197). In this way, not only the issue of otherness is clearly addressed in the text by the narrator but it is notably related to the *other* solitude of Canada, that is, the French community whose state of otherness in relation to the predominant white English solitude is clearly raised precisely by being misrepresented in the novel. In fact, the level of complexity is even higher since some characters see their positioning reshaped at some point in the novel. It is very interesting that when the Canadian deputation travels to the motherland while their sense of peripheral members of the Empire is clearer their feeling on the centrality in Canada is also stronger. Canadians seem to be in the process of shifting from the margins of a wider and alien project to the centre of their own, the making of the Canadian nation. Likewise, the dominant status of English peoples in England is revisited through the figure of Hesketh and his immigrant situation in Canada. Although unconscious, when he moves from London to Elgin there is a change from *I* to *other*, from chief to border, from central to marginal. The Murchison family epitomizes *the other* within Elgin’s society from the start, their house being the clearest paradigm of their difference. Very significantly, difference is also the most relevant identity sign highlighting Elgin and, by extension, Canada’s position within an international framework mainly ruled by Britain and the United States at that moment. As the narrator states: “They had the uncomplaining bucolic look, but they wore it with a difference; the *difference*, by this time, was enough to mark them of *another nation*” (my emphasis, 219). Then, the focus on Lorne’s family as representatives of Elgin together with the archetypal character of this small town regarding Canada as a nation also suggest the country’s altered place within that international framework. This is precisely what the ballot between the Liberals and the Conservatives in Elgin implies; it stands for the struggle of Canada trapped in-between two overpowering forces in search of its own identity, trying to find and voice its difference before two possible biased projects of nation. Canadians seem to feel they are still *the other* in relation to Americans and Englishmen; they are somehow nobody since their nation is still in the make, shaped but not rounded off. This is the reason why the

significance of the election is overwhelming; it marks a shared decision on the future of the nation, on the path to follow independently from foreign influences so that Canadians' placement could change from peripheral to central.

Apart from the Murchisons, the town and the country's altered place, some members of Elgin's community are also *the others* in relation to a blurred and shifting centre. On the one hand, younger inexperienced generations with Lorne as principal paradigm seem to occupy an altered place in relation to the still sovereign older members of Elgin, just as the young nation of Canada is *the other* regarding older nations, either well-established as Britain or recently independent as the United States. On the other hand, women as well as First Nations do not hold similar statuses regarding the white patriarchal axis of the town. By being confined to the domestic realm and thus having no chance to influence in a wider scale, women inhabit an altered space in contrast to a predominantly male public sphere. Although *The Imperialist* offers a certain glimpse of change, for instance in the character of Advena, everything women perform is ultimately related to household and wifeness. This division between domestic and public fields recalls Nancy Armstrong's ideas included in Part I. In consonance with Armstrong, in Duncan's novel the description of literary activities as mainly domestic as well as Elgin's focus on public matters such as politics and economics and the lack of attention to culture or literature also speak for its patriarchal social framework mainly worried about public and thus manly issues. In spite of the apparent similarity between women and First Nations' differential positions, male members of First Nations obviously inhabit more altered places than those of women. Their almost total absence and weak of agency in Elgin's society except in some scant occasions in the market and on the ballot day reveal that their otherness state is stronger than that of white females, native women being *the others of the others* so to speak. But they are not only metaphorically the others in relation to a white central society but physically since they reside in separated areas.

Before concluding this close analysis of *The Imperialist* by Sara Jeannette Duncan it is necessary to pay attention to the extraordinarily innovative fictional features of the text. Following Glenn Willmott's statement that "the paramount, more general characteristic of modernist aesthetics is undoubtedly its experimentalist drive to innovation and novelty", there is a lot to say on Duncan's novel modernism (2002: 39).

As mentioned along this chapter, *The Imperialist* counts on a narrative voice that serves as ironical-critical counterpoint to plot events and characters and addresses directly to readers. Far from being a simple omniscient voice, he/she holds a middle positioning between omniscience and belonging with regard to Elgin's community. Already in the second page of the text, the narrator is introduced as a first person observer and connoisseur of the town and its peoples; "it is hard to invest Mother Beggarlegs with importance, but the date helps *me* –the date, *I* mean, of this chapter about Elgin" (8). Despite this first omniscient approach, this voice reveals his/her membership within the fictional place and among the characters by changing *I* for *we*; in fact, at the crucial narrative moment of the novel in which the clue on the nation-building process that the text entails is revealed, the narrator says "*we* are here at the making of a nation" so that he/she is highlighted as one participant in the construction of Canada. In fact, omniscience is also brought into question in some occasions when the narrating voice reveals ignorance or hesitance regarding some events; for example, in reference to Lorne's showing of gratitude to Dora the narrator states "I don't know whether she saw it" (109). As I see it, apart from the innovation that this shift implies, it is also meaningful regarding the partaking of the novel in such a national shaping. Taking Duncan's remarks on the incomprehensible lack of literary activity in Canada at her time included in her article "Colonialism and Literature" (September 30<sup>th</sup> 1886) her novel's intervention in the nation-building process is even more eloquent. As she states, Canadians in general "are still eminently unliterary people" and Ontario in particular is nothing but "one great camp of the Philistines"; what mattered in Canada then was "politics and vituperation, temperance and vituperation, religion and vituperation" and not culture and literature (Tausky: 108). In this sense, the belonging and sense of contribution of the narrating voice of *The Imperialist* seems to speak also for the author's participation in the nation-building project through literature.

On the other hand, despite a realistic technique is mainly developed in the novel, romance features are also found. As explained previously, the minute description of events and characters by the narrator, the realistic setting of a small town in Ontario, the complexity of both the characters and the social picture offered, and the employment of dialogue offer a realistic approach to the plot. But in the depiction of the love affair between Advena and Finlay romance techniques –similar to those developed in novels

analysed in this dissertation such as Frances Brooke or Joanna E. Wood's— are unravelled. Advena and Finlay represent a typical romance story for their inability to break social rules and declare their mutual love whereas readers are perfectly aware of the situation thanks to the narrator's intervention. In their very frequent meetings at the Murchisons' library, they hold conversations on literature and elevated ideas in which there is no room for showing their mutual passion. When Finlay resigns himself to marrying Miss Cameron and her arrival with Finlay's aunt is imminent the narrator makes clear that Advena and Finlay "looked at it through the wrong end of the glass" (205). Much like in previous romances, an external force has to intervene to free them so that love triumphs. But in contrast to traditional works in which an unexpected, almost divine and certainly difficult to believe for the current readers turn takes place, in Duncan's novel it is a real and overtly shown gesture of a benefactor which assists them. Firstly, it is Dr. Drummond who brings Finlay face to face with Advena's feelings; "man, she loves you!" Drummond blurts out to Finlay (180). And secondly, it is again Dr. Drummond who before Finlay's resistance to contradict social fate settles his marriage with Miss Cameron so that the young couple is finally liberated. This plot shift, although connected to romance, also means an innovative depart from traditional romantic fiction that once again places Duncan's text in-between tradition and modernity. Likewise, the predominance of weather and nature conditions and their harmony with plot events –winter and romance scheming or spring/summer and the explosion of love, for instance– of previous romances is less strong in this novel. In fact, it is almost exclusively in relation to Advena and Finlay's story that these techniques are to be found. After Finlay's trip outside Elgin, when the lovers meet again there is a heavy shower into which Advena ventures without any protection to receive Finlay, only to discover that his opinion has not changed. It is precisely Dr. Drummond who assures Finlay that "the storm is passing over" right before the hindrances for their romance are sorted out (289).

As in a mirror reflection, just as the novel thematically deals with Canada as a nation trapped between two reigning forces and in the process of finding its own identity, the formal aspects of *The Imperialist* support the theme by also being confined in-between tradition and modernity and suggesting the genre's search of a different character in its exploration of new fictional directions. In consonance with the author's

idea on “Canadian personality as the middle ground between conventionality and freedom”, her novel revolves around tradition and modernity (Misao in McMullen, 1990: 188). Likewise, following Glenn Willmott it is precisely in that still empty space Duncan introduces in her novel as right “here” but “at the making of a nation”, that is, between ideals/romance and reality/realism “that the formal experimentation will originate, as the writer (and his or her protagonist) tries to “earn” the authority of romance “over again” as a real, independent development, “for ourselves”” (2002: 23). According to Willmott, this apparent paradox between romance and realism in modernist novels from Duncan to later authors such as Roberts or Salverson, is not such since “realism is understood [...] not to oppose romance, but to absorb it” so that while realism stands for “an incomplete reality” and romance represents “an historized wish”, both techniques in conjunction “mark the production of a new formal practice” (2002: 23).

As if these were not enough signs on the outstanding originality of *The Imperialist*, Duncan’s work is also riddled with metafictional strategies that reinforce the modernity of her text which are mainly found in the narrator’s reflections on the writing process. When presenting the character of Mrs. Murchison the narrator recognizes having been tempted “to introduce Mrs. Murchison[her] in the kitchen” but proceeds otherwise (28). Similarly, in reference to the party at the Milburns’ house the narrative voice explains that “I seem to have embarked [...] upon an analysis of social principles in Elgin, an adventure of difficulty, as I have once or twice hinted, but one from which I cannot well extricate myself” (48). When the narration focuses on the attention of Elgin’s press to Lorne’s first case the narrator makes clear that it is neither him/her nor the text are concerned with any journalist report but that he/she and the novel “will therefore spare [...] more than the most general references” (90); and at the end of the novel when he/she states regarding Lorne’s last interjection on his adherence to imperialism that “I cannot let him finished on that uncontrolled phrase” (307).

But Duncan’s text is also a novel that refers to novels as “the highest class of fiction”, a remark significantly introduced through the character of Advena (122). There are also interesting metatextual references to be noted such as quotations to previous parts of the text as “in the passage I have mentioned” (81). Moreover, *The Imperialist* includes a technique close to the stream of consciousness too. In the occasion of Lorne’s

too early arrival to the dance at the Milburns' residence, Dora's thoughts are broadcast by the narrator although not portraying all the inner process of her consciousness but including some of her thoughts. The narrator states that "she further reflected, "I don't think I've ever seen him till now in evening dress; it does make him a good figure"" (56).

The closure of the novel is also eloquent regarding Duncan's formal innovation in this novel. After keeping suspense on the final resolution of Lorne's election, the narrator leaves an open end and does not close the plot like in previous romances in which a final resolution for every story was offered. Nevertheless, the narrating voice gives a brief summary on the main characters in the last paragraphs. The liberals finally win the election; Mrs. Murchison is happy to welcome their new candidate, too busy to pay attention to Dr. Drummond's marriage and still firm in her opinion that Advena's election of a husband just "thrown over, will never [...] constitute a decorous proceeding"; Stella finally recognizes that the engagement of Hesketh and Dora is the best that could have happened; despite Mr. Milburn's ideas against imperialism seem to have mellowed, they could arouse again in the future; and Mr. Cruickshank offers Lorne a partnership so that he can come back from the United States (308). This is the point in which the narration is left with a sense that anything could happen after all. Hence, it is both an open and non-didactic ending which departs from traditional fictions' solid and moral closures and reinforces the originality, innovation and modernity of Duncan's novel.

But the modernity of *The Imperialist* is even deeper. Much like other modernist novels, Duncan's text also includes "the small town as foil", as controllable setting in which to seclude individuals as focus of fiction (Willmott, 2002: 15). It narrates "individual development and experience" by concentrating on youth as means of exhibiting the passage to adulthood; this is what in Willmott's opinion seems to have fascinated novelists from the beginning and middle twentieth century, the "novels of individual development, experience as transitions from youth to maturity (or their failure), as travels and educations (or their failure), or as making of chosen careers (or their failure)" (2002: 17). Going back to the analysis of Duncan's novel included in this chapter, the focalization on a small town, on one side, and the centrality of individuals and their processes of transformation into maturity of modern Canadian novels, on the

other, are clearly present in Elgin and in the characters of Lorne and Advena. Likewise, the depiction of Canada as a young nation in novels after Confederation which marks the passage into postcolonialism of Canadian history and culture as well as “the nation as youth metaphor [which] pervades popular culture of post-colonial Canada” are also present in Duncan’s text (19).

Very significantly, it is precisely *The Imperialist* by Sara Jeannette Duncan the novel that brands this passage of Canada into postcolonial modernity in the literary field, for it is “a novel that acknowledges the merging breakdown of traditional boundaries of class, religions, politics, and ethnicity in an individualism proper to open-ended modernity”; Duncan and her text opened a new direction in fiction followed by later Canadian novelists (Willmott, 2002: 19). A similar development to that of the novel genre in relation nation focus is to be found in modern literary criticism which also acknowledges this self-awareness as a positive element in fiction works. As far as this dissertation is concerned, it is certainly curious that in spite of its inaugurating character, Duncan’s novel has been not considered so until recently.

Moreover, the characters of Lorne and Advena are also paradigms of the dialogue between the actual and the ideal, formally characteristic of “the modern Canadian novel in English: the bildungsroman” (Willmott, 2002: 16). According to Willmott, what the bildungsroman and the modern Canadian novel share is “a dialectic of the actual and the ideal”; whereas in the former this duality is represented through a social experience/reality that undermines the ideals of young individuals, in modern Canadian novels in English the ideal is embodied by “a transfigured imperialism” which needs readjustment to the actual, that is, to Canada’s specificities (2002: 22). Despite “as antetypes of the bildungsroman protagonists in the period to follow”, this dialogue between the actual and the ideal is paradigmatically revealed through Lorne and Advena in *The Imperialist* (Willmott, 2002: 18). Once more, Willmott bestows a pioneering role on both Duncan as “the original writer of this form in Canada” and on *The Imperialist* as “the archetype” whose baton was taken by authors such as Grove or Callaghan (2002: 22). Furthermore, the wider relevance of the bildungsroman resides in its embodiment as literary representation of the self-consciousness of a nation-in-the-make towards modernity like Canada which sees its search for identity portrayed in novels such as Duncan’s. Lorne and Advena are again raised by Willmott as symbols of “youth driven

by modern –and paradigmatically postcolonial– mobility and restlessness” much like their nation is (28). They both learn just as their nation does. The characters of Lorne and Advena are also paradigmatic regarding the two standard and rival closures of the bildungsroman in modern Canadian fiction, that is, “compromise” and “no compromise”, to use Willmott’s terms. Whereas Advena’s final marriage is clearly a fictional gesture leading to agreement with established social axioms, the more open closure of Lorne’s story implies a lack of compromise which contrasts with Advena’s. In spite of both characters’ significance, the previous analysis of *The Imperialist* of this chapter makes Lorne’s predominant role clear. It is indeed Lorne who mainly –but not exclusively– connects Duncan’s fiction to later novels such as Irene Braid’s *Waste Heritage* or Morley Callaghan’s *Strange Fugitive* so that a coherence among modern Canadian novels can be raised according Willmott. Paradoxically, in a country like Canada so worried in the past about finding its distinctive identity, that is, the points in common among, for instance, literary works, it seems that currently, paraphrasing Willmott, awareness of cultural identity is “blurry” and hence “national identity, no better” (15).

In short, it seems clear that Sara Jeannete Duncan’s *The Imperialist* is not only a modernist novel but the first Canadian modernist novel in English. The thematic and formal contemporariness of this novel at the turn of the twentieth century is portrayed by means of a strong and challenging political exploration, its critical insight on Canadian society, and contribution to the development of the new woman in fiction through challenging female figures, taken in conjunction with the modernity of its fiction riddled with irony, metafiction, complex psychological characterization, and a strongly original narrating voice which introduces a new point of view in fiction. Although these many diverse innovations could be taken as explanations of the early misunderstanding and subsequent misrepresentation of Duncan’s novel, further disregards would not be by any means acceptable and, in fact, Canada’s mainstream critical approaches seem to have been changing their dismissing tendency as far as *The Imperialist* is concerned. Moreover, the previous analysis of Duncan’s novel shows the author’s mastery in realistically depicting Canada’s complex social network since, in spite of selectiveness of detail, the novel does not distract attention in favour of one



predominant side but offers a dichotomous view on all the matters. In this way, *The Imperialist* implies a crucial evolution in the shaping of Canadian identity through the novel genre; it is no longer here or there, I or other, but in a midpoint. Following Misao Dean, the new sense of identity of the novel is actually in consonance with Duncan since it is “true to her definition of a Canadian personality as the middle ground between conventionality and freedom” (1991: 188).

As a conclusion to this Part III, *The Imperialist* by Sara Jeannete Duncan seems a perfect coda to this dissertation. Just as for Duncan, Canadian literary identity today still seems to be in-between conventionality and freedom, between the allegiances to the canonical axioms of traditional criticism and the freer perspectives of ground-breaking approaches such as those of ethnic and feminist studies, between sticking to the tried and proved and attempting at re-covering dismissed authors, rethinking boundaries and rewriting Canadian literary history, tradition and identity. As if in a sarcastic gesture, Duncan’s text fictionalizes the construction of the identity of Canada as a nation whereas precisely that process of fabricating an identity from a literary perspective in English Canada has unevenly embraced *The Imperialist* as a fundamental piece. Just as in the case of the novels covered here from Frances Brooke’s *The History of Emily Montague* (1769) difference is comprised in Duncan’s work offering her novel, perhaps, a similar differing position to that of those works approached in previous sections that has precisely led to their dismissal. Connected through the uneven critical attention their figures have received from an English Canadian viewpoint, the close rapprochement of their works offers access to the silenced and diverse senses of identity they convey which might be lost once and for all if mainstream critical discourses in English Canada stick to their reluctance to embrace them. By *unsilencing* of their names, their titles, their characters and stories and bringing into light their significance this chapter tries to demonstrate that early Canadian English literature is riddled with successful, intelligent and powerful female and/or ethnic authors whose contributions need to be reconsidered if generally accepted ideas on the non-patriarchal and multicultural character of Canadian letters is to be claimed in the future. Otherwise, sexism and racism will have necessarily to be highlighted as axis on which Canadian criticism has written the country’s literary history and built its tradition and identity. These novels by a

temporary Black resident in Canada, an English Asian Canadian woman, and plenty of English immigrant and Canadian-born females as a whole demonstrate that Canada's early literary heritage is solid and shaped by diversity but also bring into question that it is still to be re-covered.

## CONCLUSIONS

Taking the conclusion of Part III as a starting point, the close study of early Canadian novels in English demonstrates that there are strong early African, Asian, and female Canadian literary voices still waiting to be embraced by the literary identity of English Canada. The inclusion of Frances Brooke and Sara Jeannette Duncan as reference points for this group of silenced identities seems very pertinent to me in this dissertation. Whereas Frances Brooke's *The History of Emily Montague* (1769) means the first attempt at fictionalizing Canadian identity through the novel genre, Sara Jeannette Duncan precisely depicts the nation-building process of Canada as a nation in-the-make looking for its identity in *The Imperialist* (1904). From Brooke to Duncan, the polyphonic, diverse and heterogeneous shaping of English Canadian literary identity takes place by means of the firm contribution of early female authors to the Canadian novel in English through innovative novels like *Lost for a Woman. A Novel* (1880) by May Agnes Early Fleming, *What Necessity Knows* (1893) written by Lily Dougall and Joanna E. Wood's *The Untempered Wind* (1894) who took the baton of previous incursions into fiction by woman writers such as Julia Catherine Beckwith Hart, Susanna Moodie and Rosanna Leprhonon or into juvenile and short fiction as in the case of Agnes Maule Machar and Margaret Marshall Saunders. But this identity has also been hewed by means of the enrichment of the novel genre that Martin R. Delany's *Blake; or, the Huts of America* (1859 and 1861-62) as the first Canadian novel in English by an African author entails, as well as by the original critical insight of a novel like *The Heart of Hyacinth* (1903) by the transgressive literary figure of Winnifred Eaton, also known as Onoto Watanna. Linked by either the dismissal or misrepresentation of their early participation to the Canadian novel in English, all of them bring into question accepted ideas on the non-patriarchal and multicultural character of Canadian Literature as well as of its literary history, tradition and identity

whose racial and gendered biases will have necessarily to be voiced if the diverse senses of identity that these novels convey remain silenced.

In this sense, archaeological researches as that carried out in this dissertation support and reinforce the approaches of ethnic and feminist critics to English Canadian Literature explained in Part II. The unearthing of the paradigmatic cases of Brooke, Wood, Delany, Watanna or Duncan's novels –to cite just some– prove that the claims of feminist and ethnic critical perspectives are indeed right regarding the establishment of a restrictive concept of literary value, the monolithic creation of a literary canon, the biased writing of literary history, and the bigoted invention of literary tradition in English Canada. These early literary paradigms also confirm the existence of still untold histories of sexism and racism which bring into question the construction of English Canadian literary identity. In spite of the intersections between ethnic and feminist critical stances, the rapprochement of the contributions to the novel genre of these early authors raises the need to focus on their specificities since, for instance, early female and ethnic writers in English Canada did not share equally altered positions. Very significantly, the literary figure of Winnifred Eaton as paradigm of the doubly jeopardized positioning of ethnic women writers is also exemplary about the suitability of employing ethnic *and* feminist approaches in intersection. In any case, both critical perspectives help unbury silenced literary voices and foster awareness on the divergent but equally Canadian identities that their texts convey which might vanish once and for all if English Canadian mainstream criticism insists on adhering to traditionally established axioms.

Furthermore, the case of Winnifred Eaton is also paradigmatic since the analysis of her background leads to perceive and understand her adoption of an alien literary persona as well as the rejection of her works precisely on the basis of such an appropriation. I believe that with my exploration on Eaton's writing, the urge to return to history outlined in the theoretical approach in Part I is thoroughly proved. Just as English Canadian ethnic and feminist critics maintain and this dissertation demonstrates, it seems pertinent to come back to history in order to discern the degree of impact that the socio-historical and cultural frameworks in which literary authors are embedded has both on the production and estimation of their works. Likewise, the uncovering of silenced contributions to the English novel in early Canada carried out in

Part III inspired precisely by the ethnic and feminist perspectives outlined in Part II reinforces the critical theories explained in Part I; it helps unravel part of those untold histories of gender and race as well as the the role of literature as counterhistory. As an example of critical delegitimation, the unearthing of early African, Asian, First Nations' and female literature in English Canada and the close study of the anthologization of the Canadian novel in English equally demonstrate the biased nature of the writing of literary history and the invention of literary tradition on the basis of such a history. Moreover, these questioning perspectives on early Canadian Literature in English also confirm that the analysis of the influence of the issues of alterity, exile, authority and authorship is necessary in order to grasp diverse senses of identity and grow apart from monolithic constructions of literary identities in Canada or elsewhere.

Finally, I would like to point out that the contributions to the Canadian novel in English from Frances Brooke to Sara Jeannette Duncan from the divergent viewpoints of male, female and/or ethnic authors who were Canadian-born and resided in Canada or alternated with other countries, Canadians of mixed origins, and/or foreign temporary or stable residents in Canada are paradigmatic of the diverse essence of Canadian literary identity even at early stages. Ironically, works and writers as those voiced in this dissertation have been undervalued or rejected as significant agents during the later construction of a heterogeneous and embracing English Canadian identity, a process along which the country's literary expression was taken as an important basis. Diversity and heterogeneity, thus, are intrinsic to Canadian literary identity not because mainstream critical discourses in Canada have claimed it so but precisely because their reluctance to acknowledge the poliphonic essence of Canada has fostered scholarly works such as this dissertation to question it and unearth Canadian literary identity.



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