"The Significance of Ancestral Islands":

Highland Scottish and Regional Identity in the Works of

Margaret Laurence and Alistair Macleod

by

Tanya L. Butler

B.A., Acadia University, 1998

Thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the Degree of Master of Arts (English)

Acadia University
Fall Convocation 1999

© Copyright by Tanya L. Butler, 1999

National Library of Canada

Bibliothèque nationale du Canada

Acquisitions and Bibliographic Services

Acquisitions et services bibliographiques

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Your file Votre référence

Our file Notre référence

The author has granted a non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of this thesis in microform, paper or electronic formats.

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de cette thèse sous la forme de microfiche/film, de reproduction sur papier ou sur format électronique.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

0-612-45364-2

Canadä

Table of Contents

Page

1. Chapter One: Introduction 1
2. Chapter Two: Highland Scottish Identity in Laurence and MacLeod 14
3. Chapter Three: Regional Identity in Laurence 48
4. Chapter Four: Regional Identity in MacLeod 69
5. Chapter Five: Regional Identity in Relation to the Nation 95
6. Chapter Six: Comparisons and Conclusions 112
7. Works Cited 120
8. Works Consulted 125

Abstract

The process of negotiating personal identity in a Canadian context is a complex one. It inevitably draws on many sources for identity markers, two of which include identification with a particular region and identification with a particular ethnic heritage. This thesis explores the constructed identities found in the fiction of two contemporary Canadian authors, Margaret Laurence and Alistair MacLeod, by focussing on the regional and ethnic identities represented in their texts.

Laurence and MacLeod share an interest in a particular ethnic identity; the legacy of the Scottish Highlands figures prominently in most of their fictional works. But whereas Laurence explores this Highland heritage in fiction set primarily in western Canada, MacLeod explores a similar motif in short stories set in the Atlantic Provinces. Their similar tendencies to explore Highland Scots heritage in specific regional settings have, however, resulted in very different critical approaches to their works. Critics tend to read MacLeod's explorations of the Highland motif as a function of his regionalist bent, while they see Laurence's explorations of the same heritage as a function of a nationalist bent, despite the strong regionalist elements of her work.

This thesis compares the ways in which Highland Scots heritage functions as a source of cultural identity in Laurence's final novel, The Diviners, and MacLeod's collected short fiction. It explores the tensions within and between the regional identities that arise out of this identification with the Highland Scots tradition in these texts and seeks to compare their respective regional visions as they are represented in relation to the Canadian nation.

For my mother, Adele Sutherland, because adoption is possible.

Chapter One: Introduction

In 1985, Robert Kroetsch announced that in Canada, "the centre does not hold. The margin, the periphery, the edge, now, is the exciting and dangerous boundary where silence and sound meet. It is where the action is" (22). More than a decade later, the currency of regionalism appears undiminished as Herb Wyile suggests that "regionalism and regional considerations have in recent decades received increasing attention, attention previously denied because of the pre-eminence of nationalist ideology" (267). He attributes "the possibility of a renewed interest in regionalism" to a "shift in emphasis from cohesion and unity to diversity and differentiation" in literary studies, and indeed, in the Canadian political environment (267). Even more recently, Frank Davey has argued that regionalism in Canada continues to be under-theorized in terms of its close relationship to political and economic factors ("Towards the Ends" 3). Although regionalism has been a familiar phenomenon in Canadian critical circles for some time, it is now receiving renewed attention, attention that is informed by recent theoretical trends that explore marginality.

What do we mean when we talk about regionalism in a Canadian literary context, and why are we bothering to talk about it at all? There seems to be no doubt that regional disparity has dogged Canadian identity since long before our confederation. The Canadian nation is commonly perceived as including six major regions: the Atlantic Provinces, Quebec, Ontario, the Prairies, the West Coast, and the North.[1] But each of

[1]Woodcock, with good reason, insists that Canada is composed of seven regions as the geography, history, and linguistic culture of Newfoundland renders it a region with an identity distinct from the Maritime Provinces (Meeting of Time 12).

these regions can be further divided into sub-regions that follow provincial boundaries (as in the case of Alberta and Manitoba), linguistic boundaries (as in the case of Anglophone and Francophone Quebec), or geographic and previously political boundaries (as in the case of Cape Breton Island and mainland Nova Scotia). So even commonly-held notions of Canadian regionalism are often based on hazy perceptions of personal identity and are difficult to articulate: "Despite its prevalence in public and academic commentary and the often charged and emotive connotations of the term, regionalism lacks clear definition" (Riegel *et al.* ix).

George Woodcock defines regionalism as "the geographical feeling of locality, the historical feeling of a living community, the personal sense of ties to a place where one has been born or which one has passionately adopted" (Meeting of Time 9). In his historically-informed study of regionalism in English-Canadian writing, Woodcock traces the progression of regionalist writing in Canada from the early travel writing of the explorers, to what he sees as the barely regionalist texts of the pioneers (based on the tendency of a few such authors to use British or American literary conventions to write about the Canadian regions)[2], to the "truly regionalist literatures" of the post-pioneer period where "localities" have begun to form into "geographic-historic regions" (15-21). He concludes this history of Canadian regionalism with the bold assertion that "all the really important innovative tendencies in English-Canadian literature have originated in

---

[2]David Jordan elaborates on the nature of explorers' and pioneers' regional writing by pointing out that "early New World regionalists seemed less concerned with describing New World environments than with justifying the conquest of native inhabitants and the settlement of the land" (New World Regionalism 6).

the regions" (23). This statement comes close to redundancy in light of his earlier proposition that Canada is by definition a confederation of regions, bearing no resemblance to traditional European models of the nation-state (10). If we follow this line of argument, it seems that Canada's literatures are destined to be regionalist in nature, with no prospect of a national literature in sight (though this is possibly not what Woodcock intended to express). Indeed, speaking at a conference on the literature of region and nation, Seamus Heaney asks, "All around there is good writing but where is the great carrying voice of the definitive centre?" (19). In answer to his own question, Heaney insists that all good writing is rooted in some region, saying "the writer must re-envisage the region as the original point" (13). Northrop Frye sees the development of regional literature as evidence of a sophisticated culture, arguing that "regionalism is an inevitable part of the maturing of the culture of a society," (8) and he sees "increasing regionalism as a way of the creative mind escaping from a centralizing uniformity" (11). So perhaps literary regionalism is not merely a phenomenon of the geographically massive and culturally diverse nations such as Canada, the United States, or Australia. Perhaps the local and the particular is a predicate for all good literature, and distinctions between regionalism and nationalism are only a matter of degree.

To continue our examination of regionalism where Woodcock left off, Herb Wyile notes that regionalism as a legitimate field of literary inquiry has suffered during the reign of New Criticism in academic circles: "to be regional in that critical paradigm is to be hopelessly specific and contextualized, with only a faint hope of escaping to the realm of the universal" (270). Such attitudes have fostered a certain ghettoisation of

literature labelled "regionalist" in Canadian criticism, where these works are relegated to the position of being an "obligatory regional text" on university and high school reading lists. No doubt the low status of regional literature in the past has stemmed from a tendency on the part of critics to corral all writing that is tied firmly to any locality under the blanket term "regionalist" without regard to other characteristics of the text such as genre, period, or even quality of writing. For example, in the case of writing associated with the American South, we may find travel writing (John Berendt), memoirs (Booker T. Washington), bestselling adventure novels (John Grisham and James Lee Burke), horror novels (Anne Rice), and Pulitzer Prize-winning novels (Eudora Welty and William Faulkner) all gathered together under the label, "Southern regionalism." Current scholarship in the field of regional writing is therefore faced with the difficulty of defining regionalism against what is broadly termed "local colour" writing.

David Jordan's recent work in this field offers an alternative definition, one that seeks to divide "local colour" or the "regional idyll" from the larger body of regionalist writing:

> Traditional definitions ignore a crucial aspect of regionalism: its marginality. Because a region is by definition a small part of a larger whole, regionalism necessarily proceeds from a de-centred world view, and this de-centred world view distinguishes regionalism from other place-based literature, such as nature writing or travel-writing. Regionalism begins with an author's privileged access to a community that has evolved through generations of interaction with a local

> environment, and whose identity is defined in opposition to a larger world beyond regional borders. (New World 8-9)

Jordan sees regionalist writing as conscious of margin-centre politics, evidence of a level of sophistication that he sees as absent in local colour writing. His emphasis on margin-centre dynamics seems appropriate to much regionalist writing, but in effect constructs regionalism purely in reaction to a perceived central literary discourse, which may not be appropriate to every regional experience. Do we all have to be writing against England or Toronto or even Winnipeg or Halifax to be regionalist? And does this definition exclude writers such as Mordecai Richler, who writes out of a very particular experience of Jewish Anglophone Montreal, a region that is often perceived as part of the Canadian centre? Richler's work may indeed be read as regionalist, in that he does write out of very specific, though urban, neighbourhoods within Montreal.[3] Jordan's intent, however, seems to be directed toward disproving traditional notions of regionalist writing as "not only aesthetically but also politically naive" (10). His emphasis on the margin-centre tensions that are generally present in regionalist fiction indicates how politically sophisticated such writing can be. Jordan is aware, however, that his introduction of the concept of "privileged access" opens the door to problems of authenticity that might exclude regionalist writers without the proper credentials (for example, Robert Frost, who was born in California but is best known for his writings about the New England region). The editors of a recent study of North American regionalism similarly point to difficulties

---

[3]Alistair MacLeod has drawn parallels between his own writing and Richler's in light of their similar affinities for place, stating that Richler "writes about a certain area of Montreal–his region of Montreal" ("The World" 57).

in defining literary regionalism, saying, "The term regionalism is used alternately to describe the unifying principle of a corpus of literary texts (that is, a regional literature), the attachment of a writer to a particular place, the diversity of writing within a larger body of national literature, or a kind of ideological consciousness or discourse" (Riegel *et al.* x). Wyile's inclusive approach to regionalism as a critical construct seems most appropriate, arguing that it should be "used in a provisional, nuanced, modulated fashion in conjunction with other terms–for instance, place, locality, anti-centrism, topography, province, etc.–rather than in an essentialized fashion to assert autonomous, integrated discursive formations" (274).

The problem of defining regionalism is further complicated in post-settler colonies such as Canada and Australia by the "ethnic regions" that resulted from varied patterns of settlement in the New World. Clearly, Canada's status as a bilingual country with two predominant ethnic identities has served to divide the nation into two broadly-defined linguistic regions: Francophone and Anglophone (not to mention the implied Other category, collected under the umbrella term, "ethnic minority"). But the cliché of the Canadian mosaic indicates that multiple ethnic identities complicate regional divisions. Since regionalist writing is not limited to just the physical geography of a locale, but also includes its communities and their histories, race and ethnicity can be intertwined with, or divide, a particular regional identity. For example, the work of Rudy Wiebe is strongly influenced by the Canadian prairie region, but also by the Cree, Métis, and Mennonite peoples who inhabit that place.

The complex and intertwining forces of regional and ethnic identity in Canada have prompted Kroetsch to announce that Canada is a "postmodern nation":

> Where the impulse in the US is usually to define oneself as American, the Canadian, like a work of postmodern architecture, is always quoting his many sources. Our sense of region resists our national sense . . . .We maintain ethnic customs long after they've disappeared in the country of origin . . . .It may be that we survive by being skilful shape-changers. (Kroetsch 27-28)

It is this notion of shape-changing that seems particularly interesting in light of an apparent lack of national narrative such as Kroetsch observes in the United States. If we are such skilful shape-changers, how do we construct our shapes, and what regional and ethnic identities do we use to define ourselves? In their introduction to conference papers delivered on the subject of Canadian identity, Jean-Michel Lacroix and Coral Ann Howells state that, "National identity, like individual identity, is a projection for the eyes of others, and to look behind that projection is to discover a far more complex interplay of forces" (243). One might argue that regional (and even ethnic) identities are similar projections that shape, and are shaped by, the literatures we refer to as regionalist; and increasingly, "critics are viewing region and regionalism as constructs rather than as natural formations and recognizing the processes of negotiation, contestation and conflict in forming their definition" (Riegel *et al.* x).

This thesis will extend these discussions of regionalism by focussing on the ways in which ancestral heritage functions as a source of cultural identity within a regional context. The process of negotiating individual identity in a "postmodern" nation such as

Canada involves the accommodation of both regional and ancestral, or ethnic, affiliations. And the role of story, or mythology, is crucial to the shaping of such identity. Old World ancestral myths, reconciled with more recent regional experiences, shape, and are shaped by, New World identities.

One prominent instance of Old World heritage influencing New World identity can be found in the Canadian fascination with the myth of the Scottish Highlander. Out of Canada's Scottish diaspora have emerged writers exploring the "significance of ancestral islands long left and never seen" (The Lost Salt 170). Clara Thomas has observed this recurring preoccupation with Scottish ancestry in Canadian fiction, stating that "there is no other social mythology so pervasive in our literature as that of the Scots" (Nicholson, Critical Approaches 8). And Christopher Gittings identifies the Highland Clearances as a "dynamic and intersecting moment for both Scottish and Canadian literatures" ("Sounds" 94). This interest in Scots heritage, and specifically Highland heritage, is not limited to any one regional literature in Canada, springing out of localities from one coast to the other. The "significance of ancestral islands" is two-fold in the case of Canadian regionalist literature that mythologises Scottish heritage: the memories of the ancestral islands of Scotland are supplemented by the influences of more recent, metaphorical islands in the form of Canadian regions. The "many sources" that Kroetsch suggests Canadians inherit are like so many islands separated by regional disparity and ethnic diversity.

Two Canadian authors concerned with the complex interplay of region and ancestral heritage upon individual identity are Margaret Laurence and Alistair MacLeod.

The legacy of the Scottish Highlands figures prominently in each of their fictional worlds, and they are each of Scottish descent themselves. Laurence, born and raised in Neepawa, Manitoba, explores her Scots heritage in fiction set primarily in Western Canada. MacLeod, born in Saskatchewan, but effectively raised in Inverness, Nova Scotia, explores his Highland Scots heritage in fiction set in the Atlantic Provinces. For each of these authors, the role of story in shaping individual identity is paramount, and they each draw heavily upon regional and ancestral Scottish mythologies when creating their own narratives. Their similar tendencies to explore a common heritage in specific regional settings have, however, resulted in very different critical approaches to their works.

Critical treatments of Laurence's Canadian works are many in number and diverse in perspective. George Woodcock has argued that the "human elements" in her fiction have elevated Laurence to the prestige of a "Canadian equivalent to Tolstoy" (Human Elements 134). Clara Thomas, Colin Nicholson, John Thieme, and Angelika Maeser Lemieux have all explored the importance of Scottish cultural heritage and myth in her works. Clara Thomas, Laurence Ricou, and Robert Kroetsch have examined the regionalist elements of her texts. Neil ten Kortenaar and Gunilla Florby take their interpretations of Laurence beyond the region, arguing that The Diviners may be read as a national allegory, and Frank Davey takes his reading one step further, suggesting The Diviners is a post-national text. Laurence's canonical status as a national writer has tended to eclipse regionalist readings of her work, however, and much of the literature dealing with her regionalist aspects is dated and under-theorized.

Critical treatments of MacLeod's short stories invariably discuss both the aspects of regionalism and of the Highland tradition that permeate his work. For example, Janice Kulyk Keefer remarks that "if MacLeod's fiction is 'universal' in its scope and focus, it achieves this distinction by its passionate commitment to a region that is not so much geographical as imaginative and racial–everything that is conjured up by the term Gaelic" (Antigonish Review 113). Colin Nicholson describes MacLeod's stories as "narratives of loss [that] might well encode a displacement of the primal wounding which clan chieftains inflicted on their own kinsmen for the sake of personal enrichment" ("Regions of Memory" 131). Furthermore, "as textual geography, their Cape Breton setting becomes inseparable from, because identified through, Scottish experience" (131).

Few critics, aside from Christopher Gittings, have made a connection between these two authors at all. Gittings, in an essay that draws parallels between Canadian and Scottish literatures as postcolonial spaces, argues:

> Translation . . . is a creative process that the writers and narrators of Canadian and Scottish fiction engage in to cross the boundaries of time and colonial history and thereby translate past events and personages into a present decolonizing context . . . for example, carrying forward narrative structures from the past, such as the tales of clearance in . . . MacLeod's short fiction and Laurence's The Diviners.
>
> (Gittings, "Canada and Scotland" 153)

Gittings's exploration of the connection between Laurence and MacLeod is cursory, however, and there is room for a discussion of the regional identities represented in their

works. And their respective uses of Highland Scots mythology in defining regional boundaries is crucial to that discussion.

The significance of Scottish heritage to each of these authors is evident in both fictional and personal ways. Margaret Laurence was clearly preoccupied with the motif of Scottish ancestry. Without exception, the protagonists of her Canadian works are of Highland descent, and Highland Scots heritage is a subject dear to the heart of the author herself. Though the sum of her genealogical Scottish inheritance is found in her paternal grandfather, Robert Wemyss, who died when she was young, Laurence always identified strongly with her Scottish ancestry. Furthermore, she confesses, "No one could ever tell me whether my family had been Lowlanders or Highlanders, because no one in the prairie town where I grew up seemed very certain exactly where that important dividing line came on the map of Scotland. I decided therefore, that my people had come from the Highlands. In fact, they had not, but Highlanders seemed more interesting and more noble to me in every way" (Heart 159). Colin Nicholson also remarks on the tendency of the popular mind to associate Scottish nationality specifically with the Highland tradition: "Given the ethnic and geographic composition of Scotland, it is quite extraordinary that a Scottish identity is more often than not invoked in terms of Highland ways and Highland values" (Verduyn 163-64). The treatment of Laurence in this thesis concentrates on these themes as they are fictionalised in her final work, The Diviners, which mythologises the Western experiences of the Métis as well as that of the Scottish Sutherlanders exiled during the Highland Clearances.

Unlike Laurence, MacLeod is actually of Highland descent, as are most of his protagonists. MacLeod discusses this heritage in an interview with Colin Nicholson:

> When people from Scotland went over [to Canada], they went to a large extent in family groups from individual islands, like Eigg, and intermarried, and carried with them the whole body of whatever it is that people carry with them–folklore, emotional weight. . . .if you look at my ancestry and my wife's ancestry, there's no one who is not from the Highlands and Islands of Scotland . . . .In 1985, this is still who we are. And that is why there is this felt affinity on the part of those who emigrated for those who remain. ("Signatures" 92)

This affinity for ancestral islands is a striking aspect of MacLeod's short stories and poetry, where his fictional characters continually reassert that "this is who we are." This thesis incorporates all fifteen of MacLeod's collected short stories, as they stand as a homogeneous body of literature that mythologises the Scots-Canadian experience in the Atlantic Provinces. Chapter Two examines the use of this Scottish heritage in the texts, discussing how it manifests itself in themes of alienation, dispossession, and romance.

Chapters Three and Four set the theme of Highland Scots ancestry within the context of regional experience. Though Laurence is one of Canada's most lauded national writers, she may be viewed as a regional writer speaking from a strong prairie background, and her final novel, The Diviners, addresses the regional experience of both the Scots and the Métis. MacLeod writes out of a strong Atlantic regional tradition,

where even the stories that are set outside of the Atlantic Provinces harken back to them.[4] Despite similar ethnic backgrounds, Laurence and MacLeod are clearly writing from different regional experiences. Chapters Three and Four explore how regional identity is constructed in the works of Laurence and MacLeod respectively through geography, history, race and ethnicity, class structures, and language.

Chapter Five further examines how Laurence and MacLeod construct regional identity by comparing their respective regional visions in relation to national identity. Though regionalism is frequently (and automatically) cast as a discourse that resists nationalist ideology, it is important to examine how the nation is constructed in these texts before making such assumptions. A comparison of how the regional identities constructed by Laurence and MacLeod exist in relation to a larger national identity helps to locate regionalism within the context of a Canadian search for identity. Chapter Six concludes the thesis by comparing the ways in which these two authors construct the identities introduced in the preceding chapters.

---

[4]The use of the term "Atlantic" to define the geographical boundaries of MacLeod's regionalist writing is not without its problems, as thirteen of his fifteen collected stories define these boundaries specifically around Cape Breton Island, and not around the whole of the Atlantic region. This thesis frequently shows a preference for the broader term (Atlantic region) rather than the narrower term (Cape Breton region), as the story, "The Lost Salt Gift of Blood" is set in Newfoundland and much of "The Vastness of the Dark" is set in Springhill (in mainland Nova Scotia), suggesting that the region MacLeod is concerned with is not restricted to Cape Breton only. It should be stated that this is not an attempt to imply that MacLeod's texts construct an identity applicable to the whole region, but is done in order not to exclude any of the regional settings of the stories.

Chapter Two: Highland Scottish Identity in Laurence and MacLeod

In an essay discussing the phenomenon of "invented traditions" throughout history, Eric Hobsbawm notes that "'traditions' which appear or claim to be old are often quite recent in origin and sometimes invented" (1). Furthermore, such inventions of tradition "are responses to novel situations which take the form of reference to old situations, or which establish their own past by quasi-obligatory repetition" (2). These ideas seem remarkably apt when considering New World predilections for preserving, and even resuscitating and embroidering upon, traditions associated with ancestral origins in the Old World. One such tradition that has found purchase in New World, and specifically Canadian, imaginations is the one that Clara Thomas calls "the social mythology . . . of the Scots" (Nicholson, Critical Approaches 8). Ian McKay has shown how this "mythology" has been exploited in Nova Scotia in particular, resulting in a romanticised version of Scottish identity (which he coins "tartanism") being associated with the entire province in recent decades. Elizabeth Waterson chronicles the marked influence of Lowland Scottish literature, including Burns, Stevenson, and the Kailyard School of writers, on nineteenth and early twentieth-century Canadian literature. And Christopher Gittings suggests that "the story of a transplanted Scottish literature is analogous to [an] organic conception of cultural movement," citing as an example the seeds, flower cuttings, and roots that Scottish settlers brought with them to remind them of home. This organic tradition, like the Scottish literary tradition, "took root in a Canadian ground and flowered in a new landscape, simultaneously transforming the new landscape and being transformed by it" ("Canada and Scotland" 140). The transforming

effect of Scottish heritage on Canadian literature can been seen in the works of authors from various Canadian regions, including Ralph Connor, Sara Jeanette Duncan, Hugh MacLennan, and Alice Munro, as well as Margaret Laurence and Alistair MacLeod. This chapter will focus on identifying the ways in which Highland Scots heritage is manifested in the work of Laurence and MacLeod, keeping in mind Hobsbawn's suggestion that "novel situations" (such as the lack of a definitive Canadian identity to be found in the wake of British imperialism) often accommodate "reference to old situations" (Highland Scots mythology) in the process of constructing identity.

Laurence's novel, The Diviners, is concerned with the quest for origins, including how those origins shape us, and how we shape them in turn to serve our own needs. The novel begins with an observation of an "apparently impossible contradiction, made apparent and possible" (The Diviners 11) in the illusion of the river that flows both ways. Laurence uses the metaphor of the "river of now and then" as an illustration of not simply the effect of the past on the present, but also of the present on the story of the past. The novel is written to dispel the "popular misconception that we can't change the past–everyone is constantly changing their own past, recalling it, revising it. What really happened? A meaningless question. But one I keep trying to answer, knowing there is no answer" (70). The protagonist who speaks is Morag Gunn, orphan, mother, writer, and diviner of words. Laurence's novel is the account of Morag's history and her present, a chronicle of her epistemological quest "ahead into the past and back into the future, until the silence" (477).

Morag is orphaned at age five, at once deprived of parents, home, and ancestral heritage. Taken in by the town garbage collector, Christie Logan, and his wife, Prin, the child endures wretched circumstances in her new home. Surrounded by squalor and poverty, Morag is socially stigmatized by her association with Christie and Prin. As a child, Morag is alienated from the town in which she lives, dispossessed of family and home, and in need of a mythic identity that will locate her within a community and return to her an ancestral history of heroes. Laurence builds for Morag a mythical past out of the Scottish Highland tradition, a heritage that she has incorporated into each of her Canadian novels to varying degrees and effects. The process of the re-invention of history within the novel is carried out through Christie Logan's conjuration of Highland Scots ancestors for his adopted daughter.

Christie functions as an unorthodox bardic figure in the novel, one whose own Scottish heritage functions for him as a bulwark against the scorn and derision of the town. When faced with the contempt of his community, he rants, "Was I not born a Highlander, in Easter Ross, one of the North Logans? An ancient clan, an ancient people. Is our motto not a fine, proud set of words, then? *This Is the Valour of My Ancestors.*" (The Diviners 56-7). Christie emigrated from Scotland to Nova Scotia as a young boy, travelling west to Manitoba after his mother's death. Now, as the town garbage collector, a scavenger, he is despised and shunned by his community. In spells of depression and anger, Christie reaches back to his Scottish ancestry for assurance that the gulf between himself and the respectable Scots of the town was once not so very wide. The pride and valour he associates with his genealogical ancestors serves to combat the shame and

poverty of his present circumstances. Christie harks back to a social order (the Highland clan system) that was not founded on the kind of class structures he is now a part of in Manawaka, but instead on a sense of community and clan loyalty.

Morag, listening to Christie rant, simultaneously feels the desire to share Christie's glorious ancestral past, and to possess one of her own that separates herself, and her lost family, from Christie and Prin. The orphaned child needs a sense of history and belonging not only to combat the scorn of the community, but to retrieve a feeling of family and clanship. Morag feels doubly bereft of ancestors, deprived of immediate family and of the symbols of ancestry that Christie has: "On a deeper level Morag feels as if, through the loss of her physical parents, she has been deprived of her past" (Woodcock, A Place To Stand 243). The ancient talismans of clan motto, war cry, and crest serve to protect against ethnic non-identity in the New World. Neil ten Kortenaar argues that in The Diviners, "white blood is imagined like water: it can dilute [as in the case of Pique] but it cannot alter the fundamental nature of the stain. It is precisely this kind of aqueous whiteness that Morag tries to avoid by being Scottish" (18). When Morag looks for the symbols associated with her own name, Gunn, in Christie's book, The Clans and Tartans of Scotland, she finds that "the chieftainship of the Clan Gunn is undetermined at the present time, and no arms have been matriculated" (The Diviners 58). Sensing Morag's need to overcome her "aqueous whiteness," Christie produces a series of stories for Morag about a mythic ancestor, Piper Gunn, to combat the terrible barrenness of Morag's orphan identity.

The first Memorybank Movie of Piper Gunn is appropriately titled, *Christie With Spirits*: Christie has been drinking "red biddy" before he regales Morag with tales of her ancestors, the fictional spirits of Piper Gunn and his "woman," Morag. This is not the first time that Morag, the child, has heard these tales, though. The stories of Piper Gunn have achieved the same mythic presence in her mind as those described by the narrator of MacLeod's short story "Vision": "I don't remember when I first heard the story but I remember the first time I heard it and remembered it" (As Birds 128). Christie's myths incorporate two of the most horrific instances in Highland Scots history: the breaking of the clans' resistence to the English at Culloden; and the Highland Clearances, the eviction of the crofters from their homes to make way for more lucrative sheep. The dispossession of the crofters echoes the dispossession Morag experienced at the death of her parents. (Dispossession is a theme reiterated later in the novel when Morag moves from one city to another searching for a "settling place.") The language Christie uses to relate these events is resonant with sorrow, and Flora Alexander identifies the use of parataxis and repetition in these tales to "create an impression of oral poetry" (84):

> It was in the old days, a long time ago, after the clans was broken and scattered at the battle on the moors, and the dead men thrown into the long graves there, and no heather ever grew on those places, never again, for it was dark places they had become, and places of mourning. Then, in those days, a darkness fell over all the lands and the crofts of Sutherland. (The Diviners 58)

Alexander finds further connections between the form of Christie's tales and forms of traditional Celtic storytelling, observing that "the discourse of Piper's anger when he

challenges his people to action has the alliterative energy of a medieval Scottish flyting" and "there is a grotesque element in his threat to them that if they do not move, the duchess will 'have chessmen carved from your white bones . . . and play her games with you in death as she has in your life', which has the inventive exuberance of early Celtic literatures" (85).

Christie imbues Morag with a sense of inherited sorrow, an ancient sense of betrayal and loss brought with the Scots who were "driven away from the lands of their fathers" to find a new home in the New World. The greater the suffering they endured, the more heroic they become in her eyes. Accordingly, Alexander notes that from all the possible representations of the Highlander, "Laurence chooses a strong, positive conception of the Highlander, which is romantically appealing to an outsider seeking for a lost racial identity" (85). This romantic and heroic ideal is evident in the story of how the Sutherlanders, cast out of their homes to starve on the rocky shores of the Highlands, follow Piper Gunn onto a ship that is bound for the New World. The ship lands in the wrong place in Canada, and the Sutherlanders, cast ashore, endure incredible hardship during their first winter in the new land, a land "dreadful with all manner of beasts and ice and rocks harsher then them [they] left" (The Diviners 95). In the spring, Piper Gunn persuades the settlers to follow him on a journey, on foot "maybe a thousand miles or so, then" and then by boat to Red River, "and there they stayed" (95-96). The hardships of the settlers do not end here. Christie then describes the trials the Sutherlanders had to face as they settled on the prairie: "Locusts. Hailstorms. Floods. Blizzards. Indians. Halfbreeds. Hot as the pit of hell in summer, and the mosquitoes as big as sparrows.

Winters so cold it would freeze the breath in your throat and turn your blood to red ice" (96-7). But the Highlanders constructed by Christie were used to surviving adversity, and the text represents the stern nature of the Scots-Presbyterian immigrants as enabling them to face the worst of hardships with stoicism and tame the land in spite of it all. Laurence goes so far as to suggest that "they survived not in spite of the physical hardships but *because* of them, for all their attention and thought *had* to be focused outward. They could not brood. If they had been able to do so, it might have killed them" (Heart 162).

The remainder of the tales of Piper Gunn tell about the settlers' encounters with another dispossessed people in the new world: the Métis. The Métis community in the town of Manawaka, emblemised by the Tonnerres who reappear in all five of Laurence's Manawaka works, are one of the few social groups more despised than the scavenger and his family. The text juxtaposes the dispossession of the Highland Scots with the dispossession of the Métis from their own land, suggesting commonalities between the two communities. Each group has suffered at the hands of the English, and although insurmountable differences divide them, similarities in their histories serve to unite them in ways not immediately obvious. Lazarus Tonnerre gives to his children stories of their heroic ancestor, Rider Tonnerre, as Christie has given to Morag the stories of her ancestor. Lazarus's stories of the North-West Rebellion serve to restore some dignity to a people deprived of land, language, and lifestyle.

Christie's retelling of the North-West Rebellion of Louis Riel and the Métis is a catalyst for Morag's growing awareness of the subjectivity of history. The versions of the Rebellion that Christie tells Morag present events very differently from the versions

Morag hears from Jules Tonnerre, and again differently from the textbook version she hears in school. Morag begins to see at an early age that history is not only what you make it, but how you see it. Experience is remembered and retold to fit the values and needs of different interests.

The union of the Scots Highland tradition and the Métis tradition is personified in the character of Pique, child of Morag and Jules. Pique's dual inheritance causes her difficulties that neither Jules nor Morag has ever had to consider. Which is she, Métis or Scottish? Morag has given her the tales of Piper Gunn and Rider Tonnerre, along with the next generation of myths, tales of Christie and Lazarus. It is left to Pique, though, to determine how she must reconcile these two ancestral traditions. The final symbolic bond between Scots and Métis is the exchange of symbolic ancestral talismans between Morag and Jules near the end of the novel. The reappearance of the plaid pin and the hunting knife from The Stone Angel seems improbable and yet Morag says, "Everything is improbable. Nothing is more improbable than anything else" (The Diviners 457). Morag returns to Jules the hunting knife of his father, and Jules gives to Morag a plaid pin, the symbol of a heritage that Morag has been searching for her whole life. It is not a Clan Gunn pin, and as Morag searches for its identity in The Clans and Tartans of Scotland, she remembers that "Clan Gunn, according to this book . . . did not have a crest or coat-of-arms. But adoption, as who should know better than Morag, is possible" (The Diviners 458). The trade between Morag and Jules restores to each of them a part of their heritage, suggesting that Scots and Métis do have something to offer each other in the New World.

Christie's tales of Piper Gunn furthermore have provided a unique character for Morag to identify herself with: Piper Gunn's woman, Morag. She is described in mythic terms that distinguish her femininity from Piper Gunn's masculinity, but do not subordinate the role of the pioneer woman to the pioneer male: "a strapping strong woman she was, with the courage of a falcon and the beauty of a deer and the warmth of a home and the faith of saints" (60) and "the wisdom and the good eye and . . . the determination of quietness" (96). When hardships in the New World press down upon Piper Gunn and the Sutherlanders, she is a confident and reassuring voice, encouraging and demanding survival. The values of Piper Gunn's woman are the values that allow Morag to endure her dispossession and alienation as orphan and foster-daughter of the scavenger. Out of the tales of Piper Gunn's woman, incorporating the myths of the chariot of Cuchulain, Morag begins her own process of storytelling, "writing in her scribbler . . . it is full of a long story about how Piper Gunn's woman, once the child was born, at the Red River, went out into the forest and built a chariot for them all, for Piper Gunn and herself and their girlchild, so they could easily move around in that country there" (97).

In addition to the character of Piper Gunn's woman, Morag rewrites the character of another figure from Highland Scots history, Cluny MacPherson. MacPherson, "the Highland chief who was forced to take refuge in Badenoch for nine years after Culloden" is transformed into Morag's character, Clowny MacPherson, one of Piper Gunn's men (Alexander 88). This character bears a striking resemblance to Christie Logan: "His name was Clowny MacPherson, because people always laughed at him on account of he

always looked silly" (98). Unhappy with a father-figure that does not fit her present needs, Morag is already using story to shape Christie into a mythical figure. Morag seems to see, unconsciously at this early age, that what matters is not so much the accuracy of the stories of her ancestors, but the actual act of telling them, of reinventing the past to serve the present.

Significantly, Morag's fourth novel discussed within the text, Shadow of Eden, is a fictional reworking of the tale of Piper Gunn. Morag says, "Odd–the tales Christie used to tell of Piper Gunn and the Sutherlanders, and now this book deals with the same period . . . . The man who lead them on that march, and on the trip by water to Red River, was young Archie MacDonald, but in my mind, the piper who played them on will always be that giant of a man, Piper Gunn, who probably never lived in so-called real life but who lives forever" (The Diviners 443). Morag-the-adult retells the stories that were given to Morag-the-child, reworking history to fit the needs of the present.

The final gift of Highland Scots heritage that Christie gives to Morag is a glimpse of the Gaelic oral tradition in the poems of Ossian. Christie nurtures the traditional animosity of the Scottish Highlander toward England, and when he finds Morag studying Wordsworth, he reacts strongly against the English poet. Clara Thomas reads this passage as a rejection of the English canonical tradition, pointing out that Wordsworth's "Daffodils" is "a poem which has become a cliché for British educational imperialism, especially as practised on children of the tropics who never saw a daffodil" (Verduyn 143). In his painstaking scrutiny of The Diviners, however, W. J. Keith has found Thomas's reading to be invalid, suggesting that there is nothing in these lines that even

hints at an English imperialist tradition (116). Gunilla Florby's postcolonial reading of the novel supports Thomas's interpretation, suggesting that "Keith is obviously not aware of the degree to which "The Daffodils" has become a buzz word in post-colonial critical discourse" (210). It is certainly clear, however, that Christie is rejecting a canonical English text, and the English identity behind it, by introducing Morag to the Ossianic poems of James MacPherson:

> "In the days long, long ago," Christie says sternly, "he lived, this man, and was the greatest song-maker of them all, and all this was set down years later, pieced together from what old men and old women remembered, see, them living on far crofts hither and yon, and they sang and recited these poems as they had been handed down over the generations." (The Diviners 73)

Christie then goes on to recount how James MacPherson was accused, by the English, (Dr. Johnson in particular) of perpetrating the greatest fraud in the history of British literature by passing off his own poetry as the collected tales of Ossian.[5] Christie responds to Dr. Johnson's challenge to the authenticity of the poems with a curt dismissal: "The English were bloody liars then as now" (73). Christie and Morag look at the words of the poem in the "original" Gaelic, but Christie cannot read them, and he mourns his inability to recover the language of his ancestors. The inclusion of the Ossianic tradition in Morag's education serves to acquaint Morag with the value of an

---

[5]Whether MacPherson merely liberally supplemented a few authentic Gaelic tales with his own work or fabricated the entire collection of Ossianic poems continues to be a matter of debate today, though the latter seems likely. See Gaskill for essays on this point.

oral literary tradition that counterbalances the written one she encounters in school. As well, Christie privileges the Gaelic contribution to literature over the English contribution of Wordsworth and others. The Highland Scots literary heritage is validated despite the fact that it will never achieve the canonical status of Wordsworth. Parallels may be drawn between the song-maker Ossian and the oral tradition of songs composed by Jules and Pique. The Métis artistic tradition, like the Highland Scots, is marginalised in favour of the English canon. Laurence's inclusion of the poems of Ossian and the songs of Jules and Pique is an attempt to incorporate many different diviners into her novel.

A second effect of the inclusion of the Ossianic poems in the novel is to question traditional attempts to canonize the authentic and neglect the inauthentic. Laurence certainly knew that James MacPherson stands convicted of the greatest literary fraud in British history, but a fixation on authenticity in literature may be seen as parallel to the attempt to achieve accuracy in history. If history is constantly rewritten to serve the needs of the present, "authentic" literature may be similarly manipulated to serve the needs of the present. The fraudulent nature of the Ossianic poems of James MacPherson is less important to Christie and Morag than the role the poems play in the present. No matter who wrote them, they represent a literary tradition that counterbalances the imposition of the literary tradition of a conquering presence, in this case, England. And these poems represent the romanticisation of a distant (temporally and geographically) past with which Morag and Christie want to associate themselves. Again, the value such literature to Morag is in the telling, rather than the historical accuracy of the tale.

The culmination of the theme of Scottish heritage in the novel occurs when Morag travels to Scotland, the mythical land of her ancestors. While Morag is living in England, Christie has written to ask when she will go to visit Sutherland. Morag goes to Scotland to visit her lover, Dan McRaith, and says to herself, "If I'm ever to get to Sutherland, it had best be with him" (The Diviners 408). McRaith is a painter who divides his time between London and his Scottish home by the sea. He allows Morag to see his painting, The Dispossessed, which visually captures the pain of the Highland Clearances in an echo of Christie's tales: "A grotesquerie of a woman, ragged plaid-shawled, eyes only unbelieving empty sockets, mouth open in a soundless cry that might never end, and in the background, a burning croft" (The Diviners 402). And yet Morag does not find her trip to Scotland to be the homecoming that she has expected:

> McRaith points across the firth, to the north.
>
> "Away over there is Sutherland, Morag Dhu, where your people came from. When do you want to drive there?"
>
> Morag considers.
>
> "I thought I would have to go, but I guess I don't, after all."
>
> "Why would that be?"
>
> "I don't know that I can explain. It has to do with Christie. The myths are my reality. Something like that. And also, I don't need to go there because I know now what it was I had to learn here."
>
> "What is that?"

"It's a deep land here, all right," Morag says, "But it's not mine, except a long long way back. I always thought it was the land of my ancestors, but it is not."

"What is then?"

"Christie's real country. Where I was born." (415)

This passage shows Morag's transition from searching for a lost Scottish heritage, to a recognition of her "real country" as the place where she was born. The implication is not that Morag has been mistaken all of these years about the land of her ancestors, but that the search was part of a process of coming to terms with history and identity, where she must look far back into the past to understand her present condition. Morag is now able to realize that Christie has become an ancestor through adoption, in time for her to return to Canada before he dies. Her Scottish heritage is not discarded in favour of a new way of being, though. Morag has a piper play the traditional Scots lament for the dead over Christie's grave, "pacing the hillside as he plays. And Morag sees, with the strength of conviction, that this is Christie's true burial" (The Diviners 428).

In her 1966 essay, "Road From the Isles," Laurence explores in nonfiction her own personal "pilgrimage to the land of the ancestors" (Heart 158), a precursor to Morag's exploration of the same journey in The Diviners. The title of the essay itself, "Road From the Isles," is an indication of the direction of Laurence's interest, from Scotland to Canada, from the past to the present. Laurence sees Scotland in terms of its connection to the Canadian prairie, the region of her birth. The Scottish place names she sees are, in her mind, prairie names: "Sutherland, Bannerman, Ross, Selkirk,

Kildonan–to me, these are the names of Manitoba towns and the names of Winnipeg's streets. Weirdly, encountering them in Scotland, they seemed unreal there, or else derived, because to me they are Canadian names" (Heart 171). The land she sees in Scotland reminds her of home: "The Highlands of Scotland struck a chord in me because they reminded me of Clear Lake in Manitoba" (Heart 171). In the essay she describes a perception of history, mirrored in Morag's search for her Scottish heritage, a history "that has the most power over us in unsuspected ways, the names or tunes or trees that can recall a thousand images, and this almost-family history can only be related to one's first home" (Heart 172). For Laurence, the search for ancient and mythic roots is a necessary process of recognizing the very real, regional roots we have in our own world, within the scope of our own personal histories.

The inclusion of Highland Scots heritage in the short stories of Alistair MacLeod takes a very different form from the inclusion of the same heritage in The Diviners. Most of the fifteen short stories that MacLeod has published include Highland Scots heritage in some form or another, though he uses it with varying degrees of importance in the text. Whereas Laurence uses the Highland Scots tradition to explore themes of dispossession and the interrelated nature of past with present, MacLeod tends to use the same heritage in his stories to develop characters and settings. The presence of a connection to the Highlands of Scotland is often implied within the text, represented as a fact of life in Cape Breton and appearing as natural and visible as the constant presence of the sea. And whereas Laurence explores Highland Scots heritage in concert with an exploration of Métis heritage, the overwhelming majority of MacLeod's characters, and the

communities in which they live, are of Highland descent. The Highland Scots identity that distinguishes Morag from what Neil ten Kortenaar refers to as "aqueous whiteness" (20), or undistinguished identity, is the dominant (and assumed) identity in the stories of MacLeod. Laurence's inclusion of Highland Scots heritage is consistent with themes of rewriting history to serve the present, and with the postcolonial search for roots in ancestral lands, only to later reestablish them in the postcolonial nation. MacLeod's uses of this same heritage appear to be somewhat different. The presence of Highland heritage in the stories of MacLeod is as elusive as it is pervasive, and in contrast to the clearer delineation of Laurence's theme, his texts rely on suggested and implied heritage that is only articulated on occasion. Within each of these stories, MacLeod's inclusion of Highland Scots heritage serves to create an awareness of the significance of ancestral values and rituals. History is ever present in the lives of his characters, including traditions that have developed in the past hundreds of years since the settlement of the New World, as well as even older traditions that were brought with settlers from the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. The familiar and practised occupations of mining, fishing, and farming dominate the world of MacLeod's stories, even when the seams of coal are exhausted and the mines are closing, and when the fish no longer teem off the shores of the islands . On an old farm in "The Road to Rankin's Point," a story about a young man who returns to his grandmother and his Cape Breton home after he learns he is dying, the ancient breeds of animals still kept by the grandmother wander half-wild where they will, unshorn, unmilked, and unworked. The gradual passing of an ancient and traditional way of life is a consistent thread throughout the stories of MacLeod.

Colin Nicholson, observing the power that the past holds over MacLeod's characters, describes his fiction as one that "encodes a deeply historicised discourse" ("Footprints" 148). Part of this history is the Highland Scots heritage that has informed the way of life on MacLeod's islands, a heritage that is perceptible in the beliefs, the language, the names, the music, and even the very breeds of animals of the inhabitants of the islands.

Evidence of the presence of supernatural beliefs traditionally associated with the Highlands runs throughout MacLeod's stories. Forms of what is referred to as "Celtic second sight" in The Diviners[6] are perceptible in many of MacLeod's characters. In the title story of As Birds Bring Forth the Sun, MacLeod explores the impact of myth and superstition on a modern mind shaped by reason and logic. Nicholson cites the Highland legend of the Grey Dog of Meoble as the source for the myth of the *cù mòr glas a' bhàis,* the grey dog of death (Nicholson, "Regions" 133-34). Thus traditional "otherworldly" Highland beliefs make their way through story to a modern day hospital room where six sons surround the bed of their dying father and struggle with their dread of the sound of "the scrabble of the paws and the scratching at the door" (As Birds 127). These men are conscious that their fear might be derided by others as superstition: "We are aware that some beliefs are what others would dismiss as 'garbage.' We are aware that there are men who believe the earth is flat and that the birds bring forth the sun" (As Birds 126-7). And yet, the fear of these men is a palpable presence in the room, and the narrator says,

---

[6]Morag attributes Royland's ability to perceive her inner turmoil despite her outward composure as "Celtic second sight" but he replies, "You're the Celt, not me" (308). Morag also refers to her darkness of mind, a sense of inherited sorrow, as "the Black Celt" (246).

"You cannot *not* know what you do know" (126). MacLeod's use of the word "know" rather than the word "believe" confers a sense of reality to the story of the *cù mòr glas a' bhàis.* To those outside a specific ethnic identity, this dog may represent a tradition of folklore and superstition easily dismissed, but to those who have inherited the Highland identity, she represents a kind of privileged access to knowledge that is not always welcome but cannot be avoided any more than can genetic inheritance.

MacLeod's characters often live their daily lives with an awareness of death, and of things that seem to be inexplicable by modern standards. In "Island," a story about the MacPhedran family and the island they have inhabited in isolation for generations, the lover of Agnes MacPhedran possesses ghost-like qualities, coming to be with her on a night very near his death, and then returning with eerie similarity in the figure of her grandson to spirit her away. The blind grandmother in the story, "Vision," a story of interlocking stories about how sight and blindness relate to appearance and reality, appears after her death on the beaches at Normandy to save her grandson from death but not from his own blindness. In "The Road to Rankin's Point," the grandmother hears the death bell ringing in her ear as her husband is dying in the snow, much as the narrator hears the same bell ringing as she is dying in the same spot seventy years later. In "Vision," young boys joking about the second sight are cautioned "not to laugh at such things" by their mother, who then invokes Sir Walter Scott as an authoritative voice that lends veracity to "such things" (As Birds 134). The invocation of Scott, one of the greatest manufacturers of the Highland mystique, echoes Christie's invocation of that other great manufacturer of Highland myths, James MacPherson. The romantic and yet

bleak and morbid influences of traditional Highland Scots mystique is very much cultivated and preserved in MacLeod's modern day Cape Breton.

The language of MacLeod's fiction is also a source of connection to a Highland Scots ancestry. Gaelic words, phrases, and songs punctuate his stories, and the characters frequently communicate in Gaelic. The reader enters into a world where Gaelic was once the predominant language, and is still a distinctive feature of regional music, though infrequently used in public, in the home, or in the classroom. Gaelic serves to connect MacLeod's characters with each other and to separate them from others, as it does for the boys enlisting for war in "Vision": "And then, perhaps because they were far from home and more lonely and frightened than they cared to admit, they began to talk in Gaelic" (As Birds 156). The narrator of this story notes the difficulties for native speakers of Gaelic to communicate in an increasingly English-speaking world: "The story was told in Gaelic, and as the people say, 'It is not the same in English,' although the images are true" (As Birds 160). In "The Closing Down of Summer," a story about a group of miners who are preparing themselves to leave Cape Breton for the mines of South Africa, the narrator speaks of the increasingly unlikely possibility that they will be replaced in their work by successive generations, and reflects that "such replacement, like our Gaelic, seems to be of the past and now largely over" (As Birds 22).

The connection between language and music is a close one in the regional culture the text constructs. MacLeod makes many references to Gaelic songs, including several laments, and to the "violin music" that has dominated the Cape Breton music scene for many years. And, of course, the bagpipes speak to the descendants of the Highland Scots

of their pain and loss as they do to Morag at Christie's grave in The Diviners. For example, the narrator in "The Closing Down of Summer" describes the music played for his brother's funeral: "The bagpiper plays 'Flowers of the Forest,' as the violinist earlier played his haunting laments from the high choir loft. The music causes the hair to bristle on the backs of our necks and brings out the wildness of our grief and dredges the depths of our dense dark sorrow" (As Birds 14). MacLeod defines the music of the descendants of Highland Scots as imbued with personal meaning. Reflecting on the impressive display of Zulu music and dance he has witnessed in Africa, the narrator remarks that "though I think that I have caught glimpses of their joy, despair or disdain, it seems that in the end they must mainly dance for themselves" (As Birds 20). Though he hopes that through his crew's singing of their Gaelic songs, they might have transcended barriers of difference and ignorance, he suspects that "in the end it seemed we too were only singing to ourselves . . . singing songs in an archaic language as we too became more archaic" (As Birds 21). The miners' abandonment of the music of the hit parade for a return to the Gaelic songs of their youth is a reflection of their alienation from the modern world, and a feeling of connection to the world of the past, a world that is slowly slipping away from them. Thus the narrator feels that he and his group share a connection with the Zulu dancers, isolated as they are in their music. The text suggests that both the Zulu dancers and MacKinnon's crew are separated by their forms of communication (in the case of the miners, their language, and in the case of the Zulus, their dance) from the colonizing influences that surround them. The narrator feels he shares a closer connection with the Zulu dancers than he does with his daughter, who is associated with this colonizing

influence through the English educational text she brings home from the university. The miners' reversion to the language of the past is symptomatic of their sense of inarticulateness within the alien world of their families. The decline of ancestral traditions and values within the region intensifies the ways in which the Gaelic songs have become "songs that are for the most part local and private and capable of losing almost all their substance in translation" (As Birds 21). The sense of community that exists between the miners because of their common occupation and common heritage isolates them from those outside the occupation and heritage, separating them even from their own children. Isolation and an inability to communicate with those who do not share their immediate experience characterizes the miners of MacKinnon's crew.

The same isolation and connection to the past is the theme of the story, "The Tuning of Perfection," a story about the conflict between the old ways of the Scots who settled Cape Breton and the new ways of the generations that succeeded them. Like the MacKinnons, the protagonist, Archibald, is hailed as "the last of the old-time authentic Gaelic singers." He, too, is separated from the modern world by his isolated home on the mountain top and by his unwillingness to compromise his "authentic" music for the tastes of the present day (As Birds 92). The producer of the festival of Scots Around the World (who ironically does not speak any Gaelic and does not care to learn) prefers the youthful vigour and adaptability of Carver and his group, a band of drunken and scarred men who will offer nonsense songs to the world for the chance to earn a little money. A further irony becomes clear at the end of the story when Archibald speculates that Carver and his men bear a resemblance to the ancestral warriors of the Highland tradition: "He imagined

it was men like they who had given, in all their recklessness, all they could think of in that stormy past. Going with their claymores and the misunderstood language of their war cries to 'perform' for the Royal Families of the past," just as the men of Carver's group travel to Halifax to perform for the modern Royal Family (As Birds 117).

MacLeod's use of Highland Scots heritage reinforces the themes of alienation and dispossession characteristic of regional literature. Though he does not chronicle the events of Culloden or the Highland Clearances in the same way that Laurence does in The Diviners, he sows references to them in his stories. For example, the image of the miners lying on the beaches of the western coast of Cape Breton has the effect of "perhaps conjuring an historic memory of those other beaches, forcibly left, around the western coast of Scotland" (Nicholson, "Footprints" 149). In "The Tuning of Perfection," Archibald's ancestor is still referred to as the "man from Skye" who "because of the violence he had left in Scotland . . . had he wanted to be inaccessible in the new world and wanted to be able to see any potential enemies before they could see him" (As Birds 86). The miners in "The Closing Down of Summer" carry with them spruce twigs snagged in the grilles of their cars as their "Highland ancestors fashioned crude badges of heather or of whortleberries to accompany them on the battlefields of the world" (As Birds 11). These references to Highland Scots heritage call attention to the dispossession their ancestors suffered in Scotland, and to the construction of inherited grief MacLeod's modern characters still seem to suffer in their continued alienation from their ancestral "home." Though he refers to the Highland warrior tradition, MacLeod's works lack the fictional recreation of the violent history of the Scottish Highlands that we find in The

Diviners. Instead the text allows the knowledge of a past of suffering to be displayed by the characters in more unobtrusive ways. Whereas Laurence moulds the history of the Highlands to fit a specific reconstruction of history, MacLeod includes seemingly chance references to the same events in order to colour the present day alienation and sorrow of Cape Bretoners who live in the shadow of their past.

MacLeod's inclusion of Highland Scots heritage in his fiction serves a dual purpose. Firstly, a clear statement is made about the indubitable impact of the past upon the present. The tendrils of deep traditional roots still touch his characters in the present. Loss of ancestral heritage is a theme that echoes the loss of land and livelihood their ancestors suffered. Even the alienation of Atlantic culture from the rest of the world is becoming a thing of the past. Nicholson notes that "peripherality and marginalisation are present in this writing in an imagery of vanishing races" ("Footprints" 149). Secondly, though, the question that turns over in the mind of the narrator in "The Road to Rankin's Point" still stands as an unresolved issue: "What is the significance of ancestral islands long left and never seen?" (The Lost Salt 170). As Leon B. Litvack speculates, "it would seem that the answer would dwell on the cultural breakdown and the sense of haunting" that is evident in these stories. He feels that a message of hope may be found in MacLeod's second collection in particular, which allows his work to transcend mere "lamenting [of] what might have been had historical circumstances been different" (9). He traces the progression of MacLeod's treatment of the past from a "pessimism concerning the preservation of Scottish culture and tradition in future generations" to a kind of reconciliation between the tensions of the fading past and the chameleon present

(10). Often the characters in his stories are compelled to balance these two forces, never forsaking one entirely for the other, but always acknowledging the authority of each over their lives. Litvack sees in MacLeod's work that "the alteration of the traditional ways is something experimental (though necessary), and only gives the Gaelic culture another chance to live on" (12). This thread of hope within the contexts of dispossession and alienation mitigates the tone of loss and death of culture in MacLeod's stories to prepare the way for the reader's contemplation of the significance of ancestral islands in the modern lives of Atlantic Canadians.

In comparing the different functions of the Highland Scots motif in the fiction of these two authors, the ideas put forth by Hugh Trevor-Roper in an essay exposing the constructed nature of the Highland mystique are useful. Trevor-Roper asserts that "the whole concept of a distinct Highland culture and tradition is a retrospective invention" and that "before the later years of the seventeenth century, the Highlanders of Scotland did not form a distinct people. They were simply the overflow of Ireland" (15). Leaving aside a problematic discussion about what constitutes a culture that is distinct from, and not merely the overflow of, Ireland, it is interesting to note some of the emblems traditionally associated with ancient Highland culture which Trevor-Roper holds up for examination.

The most well-known tradition Trevor-Roper identifies as a "retrospective invention" is the "supplementation" of ancient Scottish literatures by James MacPherson and Rev. John MacPherson: "between them, by two distinct acts of bold forgery, they created an indigenous literature for Celtic Scotland and, as a necessary support to it a new

history" (17). As a result, "it took a full century to clear Scottish history–if it has ever been cleared–of the distorting and interdependent fabrications of the two MacPhersons. Meanwhile, these two insolent pretenders had achieved a lasting triumph: they had put Scottish Highlanders on the map" (18). The "insolence" of James MacPherson in offering the fraudulent poems of Ossian to the world is a familiar story in literary circles, despite the poems' initial, and continued, remarkable popularity.[7] As we have seen in this chapter, Laurence makes use of this particular constructed emblem of Scots identity in facilitating the construction of Morag's and Christie's own sense of Scots ancestry. While the text recognizes the accusations of the Ossianic poems as fraudulent, it is still a powerful symbol of ancestral identity, an identity that is defined against the English literary canon.

Other "invented traditions" associated with the Scottish Highlander that are exposed by Trevor-Roper include the bagpipes as *the* hereditary musical instrument (16, 18), the kilt as the Highlander's ancestral form of dress, and the tartan as the traditional method of distinguishing clan affiliations (18-31). While the kilt and clan tartans are fairly inconsequential in the text of The Diviners, these two symbols are evident when the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders parade through Manawaka on their way to Dieppe. The soldiers wear the Cameron plaid and march behind pipers who play "The March of the Cameron Men." Morag is swept up in the romance and heroism associated with the image of the Highland warrior, saying, "it has a splendour in it. You could follow that

---

[7]For a discussion of the "Ossianic vogue" that swept across Europe and America and its influence on the European Romantic tradition, see Gaskill and Hook.

music to the ends of the world" (158). The irony is, of course, that Morag is watching Jules Tonnerre (the colonized Métis) march into battle (for the colonizer), wearing the symbols of the Scots his grandfather fought only years before. The traditional symbols of the dominant ethnic identity within the region are adopted by all for the purposes of uniting the region before battle. But internal divisions are not erased by the symbolic solidarity, and the text clearly displays how bizarre this attire is for Jules, as he says to Morag, "a Tonnerre in a kilt is some sight, I can tell you" (154).

The bagpipes are, of course, very important in constructing the romantic and heroic identity of Piper Gunn. Trevor-Roper questions the identification of the pipes with the Highlands, repeatedly stressing the point that the "hereditary" musical instrument of the Highlander "was the harp, not the pipes" (16).[8] Piper Gunn might not have been a convincing hero, capable of leading his people across an ocean, through miles of wilderness, and into battle with the natives if he had wielded a mere harp. In addition, we have seen how the pipes are used to romanticise Christie's funeral, and how at the moment the piper begins to play, the identities of Christie and his fictional character begin to merge somehow in Morag's mind, and she repeats the words of the story over his grave: "And Piper Gunn, he was a great tall man, with the voice of drums and the heart of a child, and the gall of a thousand, and the strength of conviction" (428).

---

[8]Trevor-Roper is certainly correct in his assertion that the harp preceded the pipes as the ancestral instrument of the Scottish Highlands, and the pipes did not originate in Scotland, being most likely brought to Britain by the Romans. But in all fairness, the Encyclopaedia Britannica suggests that evidence for a distinct tradition of piping in Gaelic culture dates back at least five centuries, revealing it to be a relatively ancient "adopted" tradition in relation to the more recently invented traditions of kilt and clan tartan (206).

The final tangible symbol of Highland ancestry in the text is the MacDonald's plaid pin that Morag receives from Jules in exchange for the Tonnerre's hunting knife, confirming that "adoption is possible." And indeed, these words seem most appropriate to an examination of the trappings of Highland heritage included in this text. Because in light of Trevor-Roper's efforts to challenge the authenticity of these "ancient" symbols of Highland culture, adoption is how such traditions ever appeared at all. And it is significant to note that all the symbols that Trevor-Roper singles out to expose are included in Laurence's text: the poems of Ossian, the kilt and the paraphernalia that accompanies it, individual clan tartans, and the bagpipes. If Laurence had set out to incorporate every "adopted symbol" of Highland Scots ancestry into her text, she could scarcely have done a more thorough job of it. So it seems that the Highland Scots tradition as represented in The Diviners is doubly invented in that Morag adopts the mythological ancestry of Piper Gunn, his woman, and Clowny MacPherson, and this adopted ancestry is characterized by symbols and traditions that have themselves been borrowed or "invented."

In contrast, MacLeod seems to avoid the romanticised cultural icons Trevor-Roper singles out as "invented traditions" and Ian McKay identifies as evidence of "tartanism" in Nova Scotia. Though MacLeod refers to the same historical events Laurence refers to in her text (Culloden and the Clearances), his use of tangible symbols to represent the Highland tradition differs. Rather than focussing on Ossian, kilts, plaid pins, tartans, and bagpipes, MacLeod includes references to Sir Walter Scott, heather, Cheviot sheep, "violin music," and Scottish thistles. And the symbols McKay has singled out as

evidence of rampant "tartanism" in Nova Scotia, such as the provincial tartan sported by a piper who welcomes tourists to the province, are conspicuously absent in MacLeod's stories. Most of his characters avoid "dancing merry Highland flings on the grave of memory" for the tourist industry (McKay 47), and when MacLeod does introduce characters who cater to the trend of "tartanism" (such as Sal and Carver in "The Tuning of Perfection"), he is careful to balance their attitudes with the traditionalist, "authentic" attitudes of those who abhor "tartanism" (such as Archibald in the same story). While he does mention bagpipe music in one story, MacLeod privileges the violin as representative of the Scottish (and Cape Breton) tradition of music. For example, the MacCrimmon descendants in "The Road to Rankin's Point" are "said to be given two gifts . . . the gift of music and the gift of foreseeing their own deaths" (The Lost Salt 169). The gift of music is expressed with the grandmother's violin which is passed around at their family gathering, and it "is a very old violin and came from the Scotland of her ancestors, from the crumbled foundations that now dot and haunt Lochaber's shores" (The Lost Salt 168-69). In "The Return," a story about a Montreal lawyer's return to his Cape Breton home with his family and about the conflicts that arise between his present and past lives, the lawyer listens to recordings of "violin music" when his wife is out of the house. This music is represented as one of the few links Angus has with his ancestry and his home in Cape Breton, and he cries while listening to it. So rather than using the bagpipes as a symbol of a glorious ancestral tradition as Laurence does, MacLeod uses another symbol that is still reminiscent of the Highland tradition, but is representative of the folk musical tradition, not the ceremonial musical tradition of the pipes. The "violin music" MacLeod

refers to may be reasonably identified as the fiddle music that is closely linked to Cape Breton regional culture in popular imagination as well, and is symbolic of shared folk music traditions between the Scottish Highlands and Cape Breton.

Similarly, references to Cheviot sheep in the stories are symbols of a shared agricultural tradition between the Old World and the New, with the Cheviot sheep having the added significance of being the lucrative breed that replaced crofters during the Clearances. Trevor-Roper could have no quarrel with the authenticity of these symbols, though they are, again, less frequently associated in popular tradition with a Highland tradition than are clan tartans and kilts. And while the text introduces the literature of Sir Walter Scott in support of a Scottish legend about the second sight in "Vision," his position as a purveyor of romance and heroic tales is somewhat undermined in "The Boat," where the mother had read Ivanhoe in high school, "and considered it a colossal waste of time" (The Lost Salt 136). One final symbol of Highland Scots heritage worthy of note in MacLeod's stories is the Scottish thistle in "The Road to Rankin's Point." In this story, the narrator, Calum, has given his grandmother a pin decorated with entwined Scottish thistles, and watching her fasten it to her dress, Calum remarks, "I am struck once more by the falseness of the broach, for Scottish thistles do not twine. Perhaps at the time of its purchase I was being more symbolic than I ever thought" (The Lost Salt 172). The "broach,"[9] purchased in "the press of pre-Christmas shoppers in Toronto" represents an inauthentic representation of Highland Scots heritage, much as Trevor-

[9]Though the conventional spelling for a pin of this kind is "brooch," MacLeod has used "broach" in his text and I have chosen to honour his spelling.

Roper argues that the kilt and clan tartans are inauthentic representatives of the same. And MacLeod's text draws attention to the falseness of this particular symbol, much as Laurence's text draws attention to the fraudulent nature of James MacPherson's Ossianic poems. The "broach" may be read as a gift symbolic of the understanding of "true" and "authentic" Highland Scots heritage that Calum and his grandmother share, an understanding that is as exclusive as the regional identity the texts construct.

So while Laurence uses inauthentic symbols (such as Ossian) in her creation of ancestral heritage, her text is not concerned with separating authentic from inauthentic, instead recognizing that even fraudulent or adopted symbols are very powerful in shaping a sense of constructed ethnic identity. Though the plaid pin that Morag receives at the end of the novel does not actually represent the clan Gunn, she is still able to adopt an inauthentic representation of her ancestry and still incorporate its symbolism into her identity. Neil ten Kortenaar points out that Morag's whole construction of her genealogy is never authenticated and her sense of her ancestry is predicated on a name and series of fictional ancestors. Morag acknowledges this in the text: "Colin Gunn, whose people came to this country so long ago, from Sutherland, during the Highland Clearances, maybe, and who had in them a sadness and a stern quality. Can it ever be eradicated?" (18). These observations made by Morag summarize the whole issue of ancestral heritage in The Diviners. The mystique created by references to the "sadness" of the Highlander who suffered during the Clearances, and to the "stern quality" that is a result of Presbyterian and pioneer identities combined, cannot be undone by the simple word "maybe" that challenges the authenticity of it all. Despite Morag's recognition that it may

all be a fiction, she wonders if the "idea" of the Highlander, and her identity as heir to it, can "ever be eradicated" from her sense of self. The power of story in shaping identity overwhelms the power of mere fact, and authenticity in symbol or in history is undermined with the recognition that "everyone is constantly changing their own past, recalling it, revising it. What really happened? A meaningless question. But one I keep trying to answer, knowing there is no answer" (70). The text recognises that it is impossible not to manipulate history in the search to make meaning out of the past, and the manipulation of identity markers such as kilts, clan tartans, and bagpipes is part of this process in Morag's case. Thus, whether or not such symbols are authentic is a meaningless question in light of other issues: What do they mean to Morag? How are they incorporated into a personal mythology that shapes personal identity? And how do they interact with the symbols of regional identity also prevalent in this text?[10]

Issues of authenticity provide a very different approach to the cultivation of identity in MacLeod's stories. As we have seen, his texts seem to avoid many of the symbols Hugh Trevor-Roper has exposed as inauthentic. And the use of the "broach" with entwined Scottish thistles invites speculation that MacLeod *is* concerned with issues of authenticity in ways that Laurence is not. His incorporation of the "broach" into the

---

[10]In all fairness to Laurence, her own views on authenticity as expressed in a letter to Adele Wiseman seem to differ from this reading of the Highland motif in The Diviners. She seems to lend credence to the authenticity of James MacPherson's Ossianic poems, writing to Wiseman, "Have now read Dr. Johnson on the subject and feel quite strongly that although MacPherson may possibly have added bits of his own, or not translated quite accurately, what he was doing was to take down poetry from the still-surviving oral literature of the Highlands, and Dr. Johnson just did not know bugger all about oral literature" (Selected Letters 243).

text introduces the idea of an authentic (and regional) representation of Scots heritage juxtaposed with a fraudulent (and central, or Torontonian) representation of the same. The "broach" itself is a symbol of the privileged access to this distinction that Calum and his grandmother share, thus broadly defining regional identity as authentically Scottish in contrast to other interests that capitalize on the ignorance of those without such privileged access. The text suggests that Torontonians might purchase such a "broach," wishing to connect with an ancestral heritage about which they know nothing. Calum gives, and his grandmother accepts, the gift secure in their own knowledge that they have remained close enough to this ancestral tradition to be able to distinguish that which is authentic from that which is fraudulent. This privileged access fosters a cohesive ethnic identity that values the preservation of ancestral history and culture, including a strong sense of community.

The uses of Highland Scots heritage in the work of Laurence and MacLeod seems to differ on these three points: on the role of culture, the role of community, and the role of authenticity in shaping ethnic identity. As we have seen in this chapter, Morag's identity as both an orphan and the adopted daughter of the scavenger cause her to feel as though she is without a cultural tradition. And just as Christie scavenges odds and ends from the Nuisance Grounds, so he "scavenges" a cultural tradition for Morag from the Highland symbols to which he has access (including Ossian, the pipes, and a sketchy history of Culloden and the Clearances). Morag, as an adult, continues this process of adoption of culture by adding the label of Black Celt, the recording of Gaelic music, even the brand of scotch she drinks, and the talisman of the plaid pin to her collection of

Highland cultural signifiers. Her lack of cultural heritage in childhood spawns a quest for the trappings of a romanticised Highland culture that she can adopt. By contrast, we have seen how MacLeod, by and large, avoids references to symbols of a romanticised Highland culture in his texts and explicitly makes an issue out of the authenticity of the Highland culture found in his Cape Breton with the Scottish thistle "broach." His characters are represented as the inverse of Morag Gunn, having been surrounded by the "authentic" culture since birth so that they absorb Gaelic by osmosis and cannot escape the superstition that dogs them like the story of the *cù mòr glas a' bhàis.* MacLeod's characters cannot seem to escape the knowledge of their cultural inheritance if they wanted to. So while Morag searches for a cultural tradition to fill the void the death of her parents left, MacLeod's characters are secure in the knowledge that they, and all those who surround them, share a cultural tradition that appears strongly rooted in the region.

The second point on which Laurence and MacLeod differ in their use of the same heritage is on the point of community. The poverty and shame that Morag is subject to as Prin and Christie's adopted child separates her from the larger community of Manawaka, as we shall see more clearly in the next chapter. Her sense of isolation from the community also contributes to her search for identity, prompting her to leave Manawaka at her first chance and eventually make Ontario her home. The lack of community feeling in Manawaka will also be covered more fully in the next chapter, where we explore the regional tensions that prevent a cohesive sense of community there. MacLeod's settings differ sharply from Manawaka on this point, as we shall see in Chapter Four, constructing a cohesive regional identity that may be likened to the clannish nature of traditional

Highland society. So although a high proportion of Scottish descendants in Manawaka do not display any sense of clannish unity amongst themselves, we will see that MacLeod's representation of a similarly high proportion of people having the same descent do display a strong sense of cohesive community.

And finally, we have seen how Laurence and MacLeod seem to differ on the issue of the authenticity of the Highland traditions represented in their texts. While Laurence apparently has no qualms about using each of the symbols Hugh Trevor-Roper has flagged as part of a pattern of invented and romanticised Highland symbols, MacLeod cannot be accused of the same tolerant adoption of inauthentic symbols. This tends to prompt the connection of these three points of difference into a pattern suggesting that the absence of cultural identity allows, and encourages, the adoption of romanticised symbols of culture. This process of adoption, for Morag, does not appear to be concerned with issues of authenticity that might exclude her from "joining" the Highland cultural community in her quest for identity. MacLeod's characters, by contrast, are represented as being born into a cultural tradition and a cohesive community that often prioritizes authenticity and rejects romanticised versions of an ancestry that is "real" to them. They have no need to go in search of a cultural tradition in the way Morag does, and they appear to be imbued with the awareness of their "authentic" Highland history. And their understanding of this history is often transmitted in the guise of story in the texts, as Morag's understanding of her fictional history is transmitted in the guise of the stories of Piper Gunn. In the next chapters, we will see how such an ethnic identity may be seen as extending beyond ancestry to regional identity.

Chapter Three: Regional Identity in Laurence

Gayle Greene has stated, in an essay on Laurence's use of history in her fiction, that "Margaret Laurence is usually regarded as a 'regional' writer concerned with Canadian history and myth" (Nicholson, Critical Approaches 177). This statement appears somewhat contradictory at first, suggesting that Laurence is "regarded" as a regionalist writer and is yet concerned with national treatments of history and mythology. A closer examination of Laurence's work in light of both its regionalist aspects and their resulting interaction with its nationalist tendencies may help to clarify this apparent contradiction of themes.

Laurence has repeatedly emphasized the importance of place, both in her own writing and in the writing of others. In the preface to her critical work on Nigerian dramatists and novelists, she states that literature "must be planted firmly in some soil. Even works of non-realism make use of spiritual landscapes which have been at least partially inherited by the writer" (Long Drums 10). Laurence has adhered to this line of thought in her own writing, planting her fiction both literally and metaphorically in the soil of the town of Manawaka. That is to say Laurence writes out of both the tangible landscape of the prairie and a host of "spiritual landscapes" that are anchored to it.

Woodcock has stated that "few Canadian novelists are more rooted in a local culture than Laurence" (Meeting 33). Indeed, all five of Laurence's major Canadian works are connected to the prairie town of Manawaka. While only one novel, A Jest of God, is entirely set in the town, the other four works depend heavily on it for their context. Hagar, Stacey, Vanessa, and Morag all carry the influence of the town with them

on their journeys to Vancouver, Winnipeg, Toronto, and Britain. The five works span four generations of Manawaka's inhabitants, ranging from Jason Currie's pioneer presence in The Stone Angel to Morag and Jules's escape from the town in The Diviners. Their daughter, Pique, is the only major character in Laurence's Canadian fiction not born in Manawaka, but she, too, is haunted by the town of her ancestors and must return to it to locate her roots.

In the epigraph to the final work in the Manawaka cycle, Laurence reveals something of the constructed nature of the region from which she writes. The epigraph is taken from Al Purdy's poem, "Roblin Mills Circa 1842," and states, "but they had their being once and left a place to stand on." These lines speak to many themes that recur throughout the Manawaka works, culminating in The Diviners: the pioneer experience of the New World; the influence of history, ancestry, and inheritance on identity; and the significance of place as literal and metaphorical ground "to stand on." This final aspect of the epigraph and of The Diviners gives rise to Laurence's reputation as a regional writer. The creation of a "place to stand on" is a necessity for the characters of the novel, and it is the objective of Morag's quest, the subject of her final novel.

In Chapter Two of this thesis, we have seen how Morag, Jules, and Pique struggle for a historical tradition in which to locate themselves, using ancestry to shape their identities in a modern context. But the process of shaping identity is as much affected by the region of one's birth as it is by the region of one's ancestors. The text is firmly grounded in the immediate experience of Morag and Jules in Manawaka, though they both struggle to escape the town. Just as the pioneer forebears of the poem "had their

being once" and bequeathed a place for those who followed them, so the text of The Diviners constructs and bequeaths a place which might be seen as loosely typifying a region and is well worth examining in our study of constructed identity.

In her essay, "A Place to Stand On," Laurence discusses two elements of place that will affect fiction: "First the physical presence of the place itself—its geography, its appearance. Second the people" (Heart 4). The text of The Diviners uses various means of constructing regional identity, accommodating the influences of both geography and humanity in the creation of Manawaka. Though an examination of geography is relatively straightforward, in examining the identity of the people in a region we must account for history, race relations, class structures, and linguistics. While the boundaries of many of these influences are blurred and some directly depend on one another, it is important to determine how each influence is manifested in the text individually in order to gauge the complexity of how regional identity is formed.

Essential to any discussion of regional identity is an examination of the geography that influences that identity. While regional identity is not merely determined by geography, geography is often the most visible influence on it. In the case of Laurence's work, the geographic manifestation of the prairie pervades her Canadian fiction. In an early review of The Diviners, Marge Piercy emphasizes the Western aspects of Laurence's fiction, suggesting that her work "sets out a powerful gritty sense of place" (6). Though Laurence is frequently tagged as a prairie writer, Laurence Ricou takes care to distinguish her representation of the prairie from that of other authors writing out of the same place. Ricou states that Manawaka is "in many ways an untypical prairie town" and

that in the stream of more typical prairie fiction, "a consideration of Margaret Laurence's prairie settings is apt to seem disruptive" (146). Ricou begins his study of the unifying element of contemporary prairie fiction by lamenting that no such study has been done before (144). He assumes this dearth stems from the "obvious" nature of the prairie, a geography that apparently leaves everything exposed and nothing to the imagination. He stipulates, however, that "like most easy assumptions, its intensity and breadth of application must be examined if we are to voice it with conviction" (144). Perhaps Ricou is in such a rush to "illuminate the typical prairie of Canadian fiction in the last two decades" that he oversimplifies the matter somewhat. It is interesting to note the variety of regional identities that spring out of what is, after all, not a homogenous geographical region, rather than voicing with conviction the definitive prairie setting. And as Laurence observes, both the geography and the population of a region must be taken into account when discussing the importance of place in a text. (Heart 4). No matter how tempting it might be to characterize regional fiction solely in terms of geography, the inhabitants of a region provide infinite variety, multiple variations on regional identity.

Perhaps Ricou's tendencies to essentialise the prairie experience in fiction are mirrored by Laurence's somewhat allegorical representation of the geography of Manawaka. Both the structure of the town and the flora that inhabit individual areas within serve to reinforce an allegorical reading. Manawaka is broken up into four distinct levels: the Wachakwa River valley, Hill Street, the town proper, and the hill above the town. The Wachakwa River ("more a creek than a river" [The Diviners 36]) flows through a valley below the town. It is in fact on the margins of the town, and has been the

home of the Tonnerre family for four generations. The plant life in the valley is uncultivated, possibly a representation of how the prairie would have looked before the colonial presence of Europeans: "Down in the valley the scrub oak and spindly pale-leafed poplars grew, alongside clumps of chokecherry bushes and wolf willow. The grass there was high and thick . . . interspersed with sweet yellow clover" (36). The trees that grow in the valley are small and wiry, tough trees that will persist in a hostile environment, just as the Tonnerre family has persisted in the hostile environment of Manawaka. Subsisting in shacks pieced together from scavenged materials, they exist both on the fringes of the community and below the community, the lowest level in the social order of Manawaka. The Wachakwa Valley is also where inhabitants of the town go to escape its restrictions, as Morag does to daydream (The Diviners 139), as John Shipley does to escape his mother (The Stone Angel 127), and as Rachel Cameron and Nick Kazlik do to make love (A Jest of God 89).

Halfway up the hill is Hill Street, home to Prin and Christie Logan. Hill Street is designated as "the Scots-English equivalent of The Other Side of the Tracks" (The Diviners 36). To continue the allegorical interpretation of the town, the ethnic roots of the inhabitants of Hill Street (of British descent) place them above the Métis 'halfbreeds' relegated to the valley below, but not so far up as the respectable citizens living in the town proper: "it was inhabited by those who had not and never would make good . . . .dedicated to flops, washouts and general nogoods, at least in the view of the town's better-off" (37). It is a place of poverty, apathy, and abuse, where Gus Winkler beats his family and his daughter aborts herself with a coat hanger. It is an ugly place, where there

are "only one or two sickly Manitoba maples and practically no grass at all" (36). If the Wachakwa valley is a place lightly touched by civilization, then Hill Street offers the most degraded face of civilization in Manawaka. In Christie's yard, attempts at improvement vie with unruly weeds, "where a few carrots and petunias fought a losing battle against chickweed, lamb's quarters, creeping charlie, dandelions, couchgrass" and sundry bits of junk from the Nuisance Grounds.

Crowning the hill is the respectable part of town, composed of "big brick houses" and "wooden houses painted really nice" (46), where the "streets [are] shaded by sturdy maples, elms, lombardy poplars" (37). There are "lawns all neat and cut" and "flower gardens with pink and purple petunias, and red snapdragons like velvet, really rich velvet, and orange lilies with freckles on the throats" (46). These images are representative of stability, of cultivation and civilization, and of careful attendance to appearances. The brick houses and sturdy hardwoods give the impression of permanence and authority. The blinds in the windows of the houses are pulled down "to keep out the heat" just as the tall trees shade the streets. "Typical" prairie geography is effaced with images of the hill, the trees, and the coolness of the shade they give. Morag sees that the blinds over the windows "make the houses to be blind" (46) just as the inhabitants of these houses are blind to the suffering of those below them on Hill Street and in the Wachakwa valley. The drawing of the shades to keep out the light is symbolic of the hill-dwellers' unwillingness to see the more unpleasant aspects of their town.

One such aspect of Manawaka is the town dump, delicately referred to as the Nuisance Grounds. The Nuisance Grounds share the crest of an adjacent hill with the

cemetery. On the second, removed hill, the detritus and the deceased of the town are placed side by side, separated by appearances yet united by geography, "all the dead stuff together on that same hill" (80). The appearance of the Nuisance Grounds is predictable, containing "a billion trillion heaps of old muck" (81). There are no trees within the Nuisance Grounds, but chokecherry and pincherry bushes discretely screen it from sight. The appearance of the cemetery is equally predictable, though the polar opposite of the Nuisance Grounds: the cemetery is "decent and respectable, with big spruce trees and grass that is kept cut" (80). Hagar Shipley remembers the "funeral parlour perfume of the planted peonies, dark crimson and wallpaper pink, the pompous blossoms hanging leadenly, too heavy for their light stems, bowed down with the weight of themselves" (The Stone Angel 4). The outward appearance of the cemetery is carefully manicured by Manawaka residents who might be seen as represented by the peonies: pompous, and bowed down with the weight of themselves, with the weight of respectability. The veneer of respectability that lies over the cemetery hides the truth of what lies below. Under the clipped grass lay the dead of Manawaka, who are, in the words of Christie, nothing but "muck": "Not a father's son, not a man born of woman who is not muck in some part of his immortal soul" (47). Thus, the boundaries between the respectable places and the disreputable places in Manawaka are constructed. Christie moves from Hill Street up to the shady streets on the hill every day and he sees the garbage that is cast out of the stately brick houses, giving him the insight that what lies under the cemetery and what lies in the Nuisance Grounds are but different facets of the same thing. The suspicion of this truth causes those in the town who are conscious of appearances to ostracize Christie, not only

because he knows their individual sordid secrets, but because he knows the barriers between them are only illusory.

Morag moves between barriers as well. The death of her parents brings her from outside the town, where the farms are, to the locale of Hill Street. Her early dispossession of home and family echoes the themes of dispossession she identifies so heavily with in the identity of the Highlander, and her move from the farm to Hill Street mirrors the emigration of the evicted Highland crofters. Morag resists her forced relocation but becomes part of Hill Street in ways that it takes her years to accept. At age fourteen, Morag begins to work Saturdays in Simlow's Ladies' Wear in town, and makes an effort to distance herself from Hill Street. Her earlier journey from Hill Street into town to buy doughnuts at Parson's Bakery has been met with scorn and belittlement from respectable citizens. Now Morag has become careful with her language and her appearance, desperately trying to belong at the top of the hill. But it does not work in the way she has hoped, and she receives the humiliation of being told that she has improved herself beyond all reasonable expectation (The Diviners 128). After this, Morag moves in the opposite direction from Hill Street, associating herself with Jules, who is from the valley below. Morag's journey down into the valley to be with Jules is symbolic of not only the permeability of the boundaries within the town, but also of the union of those who are both from the same place (Manawaka), and from different places (Hill Street and the Wachakwa Valley). Though the union between Morag and Jules only partially bridges class divisions, it does bridge racial divisions that are insurmountable for many others in the town.

One other circumstance in the novel points to the illusory nature of these boundaries within Manawaka. Abortion seems to happen on both sides of the track, along with the "licentious" behaviour that occasions it. Eva Winkler might be seen as living up to the stereotypical expectations that the town has of Hill Street inhabitants when she becomes pregnant out of wedlock and aborts herself at home. But the aborted child that Christie finds in the trash wrapped in newspaper appears to have come from a respectable home in town, proving that some ugly things happen on both sides of the boundaries.

Reminders of the town's setting on the prairie are seeded throughout the text, most heavily in the first two sections of the novel which chronicle Morag's childhood years in Manawaka. The representation of Manawaka in the text does not reinscribe stereotypical perceptions of the prairie as a flat expanse unadulterated by distinguishing features. The town is set on two hills, above a valley, through which flows the Wachakwa river. However, Manawaka's identity as a prairie town is clearly indicated. Clues identifying Morag as from the West appear very early in the text. The first snapshot presented to the reader portrays Morag's parents as standing before a farm gate; she is the child of prairie farmers. Her parents' future seems insecure even in the snapshot; they are "hopeful" as all farmers must be, "looking forward to what will happen, not knowing the future weather of sky or spirit" (The Diviners 15). Morag's construction of her parents' identity as farmers is somewhat romanticized, however, as we learn when she stipulates that her father "smells of soap and greengrass. Not manure. He never stinks of horseshit, even though he is a farmer" (16). The amendment is

immediately recognizable as a construction through its implausibility and through Morag's own admission that these memories are fictions. The representation of Morag's parents as farmers serves to imbue them with the identity of the pioneers who ventured into an uncertain New World, leaving behind the familiarities of the old one. While the text does not portray the prairie as overly hostile or unaccommodating to mankind, it does remind us of the uncertain nature of the settlers' existence, even generations after the land is settled. Colin and Louisa Gunn die of illness, much in the same way that Sarah Cooper, ancestral mistress of Morag's current home, died in childbirth at age twenty-four. The inhospitable nature of the prairie setting is suggested by references to the drought of the Depression years (17) and to the weather, "blistering summers and bone-chilling blizzard-howling winters" (37). When Christie tells Morag the story of Piper Gunn's arrival in the West, his depiction of the living conditions is suitably dramatic to illustrate the tenacity and endurance of the Highland Scots: "Locusts. Hailstorms. Floods. Blizzards . . . .Hot as the pit of hell in summer, and the mosquitoes as big as sparrows. Winters so cold it would freeze the breath in your throat and turn your blood to red ice" (The Diviners 96-7). His subsequent remark, "Not that it's that much different now" asserts the endurance of the descendants of those pioneers. His words construct the identity of the prairie dweller as rugged, stoic, and steadfast in the face of such conditions, preserving a connection between the ancestral identity of the Highlanders and the pioneer identity of the Westerner.

Consideration of the people who inhabit a place is as important (if not more so to Laurence) as is geography when discussing the regionalist qualities of a text. One of the

most important aspects of people in this novel is their history, the events that have shaped the identity they now carry. As we saw in Chapter Two, Morag's identity has been shaped from an early age by her awareness of her Highland ancestry. Though she has been bereft of the symbols of this ancestry, such as a clan motto, war cry or crest, Christie has created necessary symbols for her in the forms of Piper Gunn and his wife, Morag. In addition to the heroes of Piper Gunn and his woman, Christie gives Morag an awareness of the tragic events in Highland history in his references to Culloden, where clan lifestyle was forever broken, and to the Highland Clearances, where many of the Highland crofters became a people dispossessed of home and livelihood. The stories of the Highland Clearances lead into another important part of Morag's history in that they precede and make necessary the Highlanders' emigration to Canada. Though the battle at Culloden and the Clearances are not strictly part of the history of the prairie region, emigration from the Highlands to the West is the event where historical links are forged between Old and New World identities. In the settlers' journey to the West, we begin to see the history specific to this region, a history that is shared by more than one race of people. The shared history of a place both unites and divides the characters in The Diviners, constructing their identity along previously established lines of alliance and enmity.

In Laurence's tribute to Gabriel Dumont, "Man of Our People," she compares the defeat of the Métis at Batoche with the defeat of the Highland clans at Culloden. Laurence sees parallels between the last stand of the Métis and that of the Highlanders, in each case a doomed resistance facing, on the one hand, the more numerous and better-

equipped forces of the army from Eastern Canada with the North-West Mounted Police and, on the other hand, the royal army of "Butcher" Cumberland, respectively. Laurence quotes George Woodcock, who reminds us of the irony of Sir John A. MacDonald's apparent deafness to the Métis requests for justice, and his subsequent harsh response to their rebellion. MacDonald "belonged by ancestry to the clans that at Culloden stood in defense of a primitive culture against a complex civilization, in the same way as Gabriel Dumont and his people were preparing to stand on the Saskatchewan" (Heart 229). All value judgements about the level of civilization achieved by either the Highlanders or the Métis aside, Laurence uses this same parallel in The Diviners, embodied in the characters of Morag and Jules. Morag and Jules are each members of a conquered nation, though Morag draws her identity from the nation that conquered the Métis. Just as Morag draws her identity from her possible Highland ancestry, so Jules draws his from his Métis ancestry. The difference is, of course, that while Morag and Christie struggle to unearth or fabricate a history for her, Jules cannot ever escape his, even should he want to, by its virtue of being stamped on his outward appearance. Similarly, later in the novel, Pique feels that she cannot be both Scots and Métis but will always be seen as a "halfbreed," and so is prompted to identify with her outwardly visible ancestry, though she has to go searching for it.

The text uses the story of the Métis Rebellions to demonstrate how history is always shared by multiple parties bearing a variety of perspectives. Morag hears the story of the Rebellions (what Jules calls "The Troubles" [The Diviners 83]) from three separate sources: from Christie, who works it into his tales of Piper Gunn; from schoolbooks ("We

took it in History" [145]); and from Jules (159-64). The three variations contain myriad discrepancies, with no one source to be trusted as "true." Everything from the height of Riel, to his sanity, to the role of the "Arkanys," is in question. Morag begins to accept that the printed word is not inviolate, that books can lie, and that words merely serve the end of the author, as Jules tells her his story of Riel. He says, "the books, they lie about him" (The Diviners 161), an echo of Christie's defence of the validity of the Ossianic poems ("And the English claimed as how these were not the real old songs, but only forgeries, do you see, and you can read about it right here in this part which is called Introduction, but the English were bloody liars then as now" [73]). By showing three differing variations of a story known to all in that region, well-documented and entrenched in school curricula, the text questions the possibility of knowing "what really happened" and emphasizes the constructed nature of all memory, even that sanctified as official history.

The shared history of the inhabitants of a region gives rise to firmly entrenched patterns in class structures and race relations. Morag and Jules are in many ways united by class, both ostracized by the middle-class element of the town. The dominant Scots-Presbyterian ethic that permeates the town separates the respectable, hardworking citizens from the "ne'er-do-wells" like Lazarus and Christie. Though they are each ostracized for somewhat different reasons, Morag and Jules are united at an early age in school by their existence outside the respectable class in Manawaka, and by the tough shells that they develop to insulate themselves from derision. One day in school, Morag sees that "he grins at her. Well, think of that. The grin means *Screw all of them, eh?* Astounded,

Morag grins back" (The Diviners 78). Though their shared identity as outsiders is tenuous at best, it permits an attraction between them to develop. Morag tells Pique, "I guess you could say [it was] love . . . .I guess I felt–feel–that he was related to me in some way. I'd known him for an awfully long time, you know . . . .I'm not sure *know* is the right word, there" (The Diviners 254). Despite any connection between Morag and Jules that arises out of class, there always exists a racial and cultural barrier between them that prevents them from really *knowing* one another. But Morag is one of the few town inhabitants who ever comes close to knowing Jules, and vice versa. Terry Goldie's study of various representations of indigenous peoples in literature offers a further possible explanation for the connection between Morag and Jules in a phenomenon he calls "the Celtic connection" (26-27). Goldie suggests that stereotypes of Celtic ethnic identity as savage, primitive, and unfettered by civilization have opened up paths of identification between Celts and indigenous peoples in Canadian literature along these lines. While shared identity as dispossessed peoples certainly seems to link Morag with Jules, shared identity as primitive or savage seems to break down as neither of these characters seems particularly uncivilised. Furthermore, this theory seems inapplicable to Manawaka society when we examine Hagar Shipley's disdain of the Métis in light of her own pride in her Highland Scots heritage.

The relationship between the Anglo-Scots inhabitants of Manawaka and the Métis that existed there before them reveals a dynamic that is not totally unique to the prairies, or even to Canada, but it is an important element in this construction of regional identity. Throughout the Manawaka novels, the Tonnerres are scorned, avoided, and censured by

the white (and Celtic) inhabitants of the community. They are called "*those breeds*, meaning halfbreeds . . . .They are mysterious. People in Manawaka talk about them but don't talk to them. Lazarus makes homebrew down there in the shack in the Wachakwa valley, and is often arrested on Saturday nights. Morag knows. She has heard. They are dirty and unmentionable" (The Diviners 79). Morag, who wears the same dresses to school as Piquette Tonnerre and who lives in a house where flies copulate on the table next to the peanut butter, is permitted by the town to feel superior to the Tonnerres. She is curious about Jules, but asserts, "He is *not* like her. She does not glance in his direction all day" (79). As Morag matures, she comes to realize that she does not know what the Tonnerres have experienced, and she tries to re-examine the history she has learned, which involves conflict between the Métis and Scots-Canadians. When Christie tells Morag the story of Piper Gunn in the New World, among other hazards he lists Indians and halfbreeds. Morag asks, "Did they fight the halfbreeds and Indians, Christie?" He replies, "Did they ever. Slew them in their dozens, girl. In their scores" (97). Christie has replied as part of the tale, but Morag breaks him out of his storytelling to ask, "Were they bad, the breeds and them?" Christie is momentarily stymied, but recovers, "'No,' he says at last. 'They weren't bad. They were–just there'" (97). Christie's inability to see that his ancestors were the victims of dispossession in Scotland but the agents of dispossession in Canada is striking, and the task is left to Morag to reconcile the two. Clearly, part of Morag's process of coming to terms with her regional roots involves coming to terms with herself as part of a conquering nation, a settler presence that dispossessed the native presence of its land. She is not only the descendant

of the dispossessed, but she is the descendant of dispossessors. When Lazarus dies and is refused space for burial anywhere within the town where he has lived his whole life, Morag sees the irony, that he, who has more right to the cemetery on the hill than those who lie there, is barred from it. Morag tries, at the death of Piquette and her children, to resurrect a little of the dignity that once belonged to the Métis by writing about old Jules Tonnerre and how he fought with Riel in 1885. But the newspaper editor "deletes it, saying that many people hereabouts would still consider that Old Jules back then had fought on the wrong side" (176), reinscribing traditional patterns of enmity between the Scots and the Métis.

Language is also important to a study of the "human" identity of a region. Marge Piercy calls attention to the relative strength of the Manawaka sections of the novel resulting from Laurence's highly localized use of language, her "chewy idiom" (6). Morag, the writer, is conscious of language from an early age. Words wield immense power in her mind and she is sensitive to the differences in language that separate those from within her region from those outside it. As early as age five, Morag has learned that coyote is pronounced *kiy*-oot by Westerners (The Diviners 21), and she passes this regional identification on to Pique in turn: "'*We* say *kiy*-oot,' Morag says with ludicrous pride and snappishness. 'Only John Wayne says coy-*oh*-tee'" (441). In this instance, Morag defines herself and Pique as belonging to the Canadian West rather than the American West, and perhaps groups all Westerners in general against Easterners, who do not seem to use this word at all. Furthermore, Morag singles out the local pronunciation of *creek* as *crik* (36), and distinguishes the Western meaning of the word *bluff* from the

Ontario meaning of the same word: "In Ontario, bluff means something else—a ravine? a small precipice? She's never really understood that other meaning; her own is so clear" (The Diviners 304). Once again, the meaning that Morag identifies with is an image of endurance and survival that began as the Highlander and transcended time and space to become the Westerner: "A gathering of trees, not the great hardwoods of Down East, or forests of the North, but thin tough-fibred trees that could survive on open grassland, that could live against the wind and winter here . . . .That was a determined kind of tree, all right" (304). While the metaphor may seem to reinscribe traditional perceptions of the prairie as inhospitable, a place to be endured, Morag focusses on the survival that is the necessary counterpart of hardship, a tradition of hardship that began with dispossession in the Highlands and became survival on the Canadian frontier: "People who never lived hereabouts always imagined it was dull, bleak, hundreds of miles of nothing. They didn't know. They didn't know the renewal that came out of the dead cold" (304). This renewal echoes the act of emigration the Highlanders underwent, reestablishing themselves in the Canadian West after the harsh "winter" of the Clearances. Morag separates herself from those who have not truly inhabited the prairie, a space they cursorily dismissed as dull and bleak. In setting herself up in opposition to those who are not privy to the secret life of the prairie, she not only draws qualities of strength and endurance from her ancestral and regional identities, but also rebirth and renewal, associating herself with crocuses that "grow out of the snow." In this case, Morag uses aspects of her regional identity in order to resurrect herself out of stagnation, dullness, and bleakness.

Morag's fictional creations reveal awareness of local language as well. The names of her early playmates, imaginary characters, reflect the influence of Western mythology on her language: Cowboy Joke, Blue-Sky Mother, Barnstable Father, Old Forty-Nine. The adventures she creates for them reflect a similar regional influence. For example, "Once Cowboy Joke's pinto threw him over a ravine, as in 'Little Joe Wrangler He Will Never Wrangle More,' and he would have been a goner except that Rosa Picardy and myself, with great intuition, had happened to build a couch of moss in that precise place" (The Diviners 20). The references to cowboy mythology (the acts of wrangling, being thrown from a horse, and not just any horse, but specifically a pinto) combine with references to the environment (the ravine, a couch of moss) and local idiom ("he would have been a goner") to create a story deeply imbued with young Morag's Western identity. Even her more traditional childhood fictions betray a blending of fairy-tale motifs and regional symbols, as in the story: "Another time . . . [we] went into a deserted grain elevator, hundreds of miles high and lived in only by bats, dragons and polar bears . . . and succeeded after many perils in discovering a buried treasure of diamonds, rubies . . . and emeralds (which I thought must be the same brave pale mauve as the prairie crocuses we found in spring even before the last snow went)" (The Diviners 20-21). Here the castle of the traditional European gothic tale is replaced by a grain elevator; the array of monsters includes not only bats and dragons but, more atypically, polar bears; and the treasure is imagined in the hues of local flowers. Morag's later fictional creations also combine the Highland mythologies of Piper Gunn and Ossian given to her by Christie with the trappings of her immediate surroundings. In her story about Piper Gunn's

woman, Morag writes about the chariot that she builds, borrowing from the Ossianic poem Christie has read to her about the chariot of Cuchulain. But the chariot that Piper Gunn's woman builds reflects a regional influence in its design, sporting "a seat covered in green moss . . . birchbark scrolls around the sides, carvings of deer and foxes and bears, carvings of meadowlarks, carvings of tall grasses" and so on (The Diviners 97-98).[11] Morag is enough of a realist that she is unable to imagine a chariot with a seat covered in velvet: "she said velvet at first, but where would they get it?" (97). Morag knows the patterns that mythic tales follow, but she consciously rejects velvet (symbol of the Old World) in favour of moss (symbol of the region).

Morag, the adult writer, continues to write out of the Western region. Lilac Stonehouse, the protagonist of her first novel, is a "fluffily pretty girl from a lumber town who lights out for the city. An old story" (The Diviners 244) for those who live on the margins of a nation. She sets her novel, Jonah, on the coast of British Columbia, and her penultimate novel, Shadow of Eden, reexamines her childhood myths of ancestry in a fictionalisation of the journey of the Selkirk settlers into the New World.

The idiom of the region is visible in the adult Morag's speech, not just in her writing. Morag reinvents her language at age fourteen when she decides to drop the tough act that has preserved her throughout childhood. Describing a new coat purchased to help improve her appearance, Morag says that it is "princess-style, fitted, and flaring at

---

[11]Flora Alexander reads Morag's reinvention of the mythical chariot as a "feminised version of the chariot of Cuchulain" rather than a "regionalised" version of the same as "Morag transforms the warlike chariot into something decorative and comfortable" (86). It would seem that Alexander is overlooking the references to regional emblems in her reading.

the bottom. It shows off her figure, which is a goddamn good one–that is, a very nice one" (The Diviners 121). Morag's internal censor is evident throughout this section as she tries to distance herself from Hill Street, a region of poverty within the region of the town. She reinvents her language again when she falls in love with Brooke, symbolizing the congruent erasure of her historic, geographic, and economic origins. Morag is dispossessed of her heritage once again, but this time by choice. For example, in response to a offer of sherry from Brooke, Morag responds with, "Please," . . . having recently learned to say, simply, *Please*, instead of *Oh yes thanks I'd just love some*, or, worse, *Okay that'd be fine*" (The Diviners 214). Brooke enjoys her idiomatic expressions, such as "up Galloping Mountain way" and "away to hell and gone" (209, 211). At the beginning of their relationship, Morag sees such expressions as provincial and strives to hide them from Brooke, who finds them quaint, evidence of an unsophisticated nature, a nature unsullied by the civilizing influences of Toronto or England. As their marriage deteriorates, however, Morag's suppression of her regional roots more clearly becomes a suppression of her identity, and it is through the language she has inherited from Christie that Morag first breaks the suffocating influence of Brooke: "I am five feet eight inches tall, which has always seemed too christly bloody tall to me but there it is, and by judas priest and all the sodden saints in fucking Beulah Land, I am stuck with it" (277). The language of this outburst reveals both an admission of the influence of "home" on Morag's character, and an assertion of the same for Brooke's benefit. Language is doubly the catalyst for Morag's withdrawal from Brooke as it becomes clear that her identity as a writer is incompatible with Brooke's desire to have a

perpetual child-bride and with his academic and imperialistic standards of literature. Morag's unconscious act of signing her first novel with her unmarried name, Gunn, separates her novel, product of her past, from her present identity as Morag Skelton. Brooke is not receptive to Morag's assertion of her regional background and this process of recovering her past in order to reconcile it with the present culminates in Morag's liaison with Jules, "as though this joining is being done for other reasons, some debt or answer to the past, some severing of inner chains which have kept her bound and separated from some part of herself" (292). Jules describes Morag's return to him as "doing magic, to get away" and sees himself as the "shaman" (294). But the magic that is wrought in this scene involves both escape and return, as Morag takes the first step in her reconciliation of regional roots with the identity she is searching for.

Chapter Four: Regional Identity in MacLeod

An attempt to explore the regionalist elements in Alistair MacLeod's work could be viewed as somewhat redundant in light of critical treatments that invariably characterize MacLeod as an obviously regional writer. For example, Janice Kulyk Keefer's review of his second collection of stories asserts that "Alistair MacLeod's Cape Breton is by now a firmly defined fictive world on this country's literary map" (113). James Doyle describes MacLeod in the Dictionary of Literary Biography as the "most regionally loyal of Maritime writers" and as "the most important chronicler in fiction of the landscape and folkways of Cape Breton to appear on the Canadian literary scene in recent years" (184). While these statements may constitute something of an exaggeration, they reflect MacLeod's apparently unassailable status in the Canadian literary canon as an author whose definitive characteristic is his Atlantic regional identity.

Certainly such assertions are not without basis. MacLeod's fiction is realist in nature and depends heavily on regional details for its context. Such details include aspects of Atlantic geography, history, ethnicity, class structures, and language. MacLeod echoes Laurence's statements about the importance of place for good writing, noting that "there is the feeling that regional writing somehow is not good enough, but my own answer to this is that most of the world's great literature begins in the regional; all literature has to begin someplace" (Nicholson, "Signatures" 97). Of his fifteen collected short stories, only two are not specifically connected to the Atlantic Provinces in some way: "The Golden Gift of Grey" is set in small-town Indiana and hearkens back to "hillbilly" roots in the mines of Kentucky; and setting is used in "As Birds Brings Forth

the Sun" in an obscure way, leaving specific (and possibly Cape Breton) localities unnamed. Even these two stories resonate with the regional elements found in the rest of his fiction, the first by virtue of its themes of dispossession and relocation and of the ever-present lifestyle of miners, and the second in a more complex way we will return to later in this chapter. The rest of the stories often make use of a frame narrative set in central Canada, or in the Midwestern States, but focus on a main narrative set within the Atlantic Canadian region. Thus, MacLeod's stories (as well as his poetry) stand as a fairly homogeneous body of fiction that revolves around the Scots-Canadian experience in the East.

As with our examination of the Western regional identity found in Laurence's fiction, a discussion of the geography represented in MacLeod's stories is integral to his texts' construction of Atlantic regional identity. Landscape figures significantly in all of his stories, described at length and in eloquent detail. All of his stories boast a catalogue of description, detailing images of the sky and its weather; the land, plants, and animals it hosts; and the sea with its myriad manifestations. If Laurence has stated that the people of a region are of greater interest to her than is geography (Heart 4), it is difficult to determine which aspect figures more prominently in the work of MacLeod. Certainly, he allows landscape more significance in his fiction than Laurence does in hers. MacLeod's stories are so deeply involved with geography that Harold Barratt is prompted to say that "sometimes, character and landscape seem indistinguishable" (178). Before discussing the validity of this statement, let us look at the landscape constructed by the texts.

There are four main landscapes that seem to be represented in MacLeod's stories: the fishing village, the mining village, farm territory, and logging territory. Among his stories, most settings make use of more than one landscape. Mines are frequently juxtaposed with farms (as in "In the Fall") and all the stories (with the exception of "Golden Gift of Grey") are set next to the ocean. Even the stories that are not directly concerned with fishing life (such as "The Road to Rankin's Point" and "The Tuning of Perfection") are set within visible distance of the sea. The crossover between geographic landscapes serves to construct a cohesive Island identity, rather than segregating characters into those who live on farmland, those who live by the sea, and those who live in forests. While Laurence writes out of a single specific geographical construction (the town of Manawaka), MacLeod writes from various locations on Cape Breton Island and once from Newfoundland (in "The Lost Salt Gift of Blood"). The result is a greater diversity in terms of local geography, but with much less influence from outside geographies. For example, much of The Diviners is set outside of Manawaka, though Morag carries the influence of the town with her wherever she goes. By contrast, MacLeod's protagonists are only occasionally able to leave the Atlantic setting where they were born. Consequently, we see ties to the Atlantic Provinces, and Cape Breton Island in particular, as strikingly close throughout the collections. This may be one of the reasons why MacLeod is so often read as a strongly regionalist writer. One might be tempted to state that MacLeod's varied settings represent every landscape on Cape Breton Island outside the few urban areas (such as the Sydney area). Again, this reinforces the

construction of a cohesive Cape Breton identity as one that is firmly connected to the rural landscape.

Such a varied representation of geography is closely linked to occupation in MacLeod's fiction, as may be noted from our four categories of landscape. In contrast to Laurence, who uses geography in an allegorical fashion in the town of Manawaka, MacLeod uses geography to support his realist style. Within the rural context that MacLeod uses for his stories, landscape closely determines livelihood, and so any discussion of geography in these stories must pay deference to the significance of occupation.

The principal occupations of MacLeod's characters within the region are clearly representative of the traditional components of the Cape Breton economy: fishing (both inshore and offshore), coal mining, small-scale farming, and logging. Again, crossover between landscapes dictates crossover between occupations, creating the illusion that all Cape Bretoners are involved in fishing, farming, mining or logging, and frequently in all four as the season demands (as in the story, "In the Fall"). While occupation is significant in The Diviners (particularly in the cases of the individual diviners in the text, Christie, Morag herself, Jules, Dan McRaith, Royland, and Pique) it serves a thematic function. However, in MacLeod's stories occupation seems to serve as a detail of the setting, providing an atmosphere of the region. That is to say that The Diviners is concerned with diviners from different regions (including McRaith from Scotland and Royland from Ontario) and, instead of focussing on the primary industries connected to particular places, focusses on the recurrent act of creation found in many vocations and in

all regions. As most of the occupations of The Diviners are transferrable to other regions (such as writing, painting, and singing), they contribute less to regional identity than do the occupations of MacLeod's characters, occupations which are tied closely to the Atlantic region. Though, of course, fishing, mining, farming, and logging are possible in other regions, occupation in MacLeod's work is more closely tied to the Atlantic resource base than is occupation in Laurence's work. Livelihood is a central focus of more than one of his stories, including an exploration of what it means to be a miner in "The Closing Down of Summer" and in "The Vastness of the Dark," and what it means to be a fisherman in "The Boat."

Both geography and livelihood, and consequently economy, contribute greatly to a specific regional identity in MacLeod's characters. While the environment of the Atlantic region is not specifically represented as harsh or inhospitable, it is seen as breeding resilient people. In our examination of regional identity in The Diviners, we have seen how the pioneers of the prairies are characterized as steadfast in the face of extreme weather, floods, droughts, and plagues of pests. The characters of MacLeod's stories show similar qualities in the face of different hardships. The back-breaking labour required by the Western farms is here required by small farms, the fishing industry, and the coal mines. Atlantic identity is very much influenced by the presence of the sea, represented in MacLeod's work as ever-changing with the weather and the season, yet as constant as the flat horizon of the prairie. In examining the characters that make their living from this sea, we begin to see why Barratt suggests that character and landscape become indistinguishable. For example, in "The Lost Salt Gift of Blood," a story about

an outsider's return to Newfoundland to meet the son he sired as a young graduate student collecting the island's folklore years before, the boy's grandmother has "eyes as grey as the storm scud of the sea" when she looks at the man in hostility (The Lost Salt 73). And the grandmother in "The Return" has "hair almost as white as the afternoon's gulls and eyes like the sea over which they flew" (93). MacLeod frequently uses such aspects of the landscape with its flora and fauna in his descriptions of his characters. Furthermore, many of his characters display an open affinity for the landscape they inhabit. For example, in "The Vastness of the Dark," a story about a boy who leaves Cape Breton and tries to shed his Atlantic identity like an old skin, one old man tries to explain the relationship of the miner to the land he has mined: "Once you drink the underground water it becomes a part of you like the blood a man puts into a woman. It changes her forever and it never goes away" (The Lost Salt 50). This identification, bordering on union, with the landscape one inhabits is reiterated in "The Boat" and "The Road to Rankin's Point." In "The Boat," a story about a boy who makes a difficult choice between his two loves, school and the sea, the narrator's mother is described as "of the sea as were all of her people, and her horizons were the very literal ones she scanned with her dark and fearless eyes" (The Lost Salt 133). The mother in this story is so bound to her literal horizons, namely to the sea, that she cannot accept the people who are not connected to it as her own. In "The Road to Rankin's Point," a dying young man returns to his family's ancestral farm to make his peace with death. The story is rife with the imagery of death and loss: the cattle of the farm are unmilked and suffer from mastitis, the chickens are too young to survive the cold of winter, and the horses serve as pets,

roaming leisurely amongst the fields. The very house has sunk into the earth so that the doors only open inward and the woman who lives inside is losing her sight and hearing (The Lost Salt 165-66). Everywhere the narrator looks, he sees images of atrophy and decay, much as his own body has begun to deteriorate. The parallels between the narrator, the farm, and his grandmother are unmistakable, and when she chooses to die rather than leave her land, her grandson shortly follows.

The characters in MacLeod's stories also appear to identify heavily with the animals that are an essential part of their rural occupations. Few stories do not involve the presence of animals in some way, and in many, they figure very significantly. Horses and cattle are important in "In the Fall," "The Road to Rankin's Point," "The Return," and "Second Spring." Dogs are present in almost every story in the collection, and are crucial to "Winter Dog" and "As Birds Bring Forth the Sun," two stories about individual dogs that respectively save and destroy their masters. Even fish and birds make their contributions to the stories. For example, in "Vision," the blindness of the young mackerel echo the recurrent theme of distorted vision in the story. In "The Tuning of Perfection," the monogamy of eagles living high in the mountains of Cape Breton echoes the monogamy of a young couple who chose to spend their life together at the same heights. Finally, in "The Road to Rankin's Point," MacLeod reinforces mythic ties to the past when he places Cheviot sheep on an isolated farm in Cape Breton. It was this same breed of sheep that replaced crofters during the Highland Clearances, resulting in their emigration to Canada.

Most of the animals that figure in MacLeod's stories offer a parallel to the construction of human identity in the stories: they are creatures apparently bred to work. Like their owners, they are characterized by strength, endurance, and utility. A toy poodle would be as incongruous as an interior decorator in MacLeod's Cape Breton. MacLeod's horses are not pleasure animals but pit ponies who are condemned to a life of gruelling, blinding labour within the mines alongside the men they resemble. Even the indolent horses of "The Road to Rankin's Point" are characterized as wasted labour because they do not work. In them "power can still be seen" and they seem to say, "we were not bred for this kind of life nor did we come from it nor is this all we are" (The Lost Salt 165). The story "In the Fall" is about the difficulty of disposing of an animal which has shown its value within regional paradigms through mining, logging, and farming, but which can no longer work. Utility is the defining measure of worth for animals as it is for humans, and inflexible poverty dictates who lives and who dies in this representation of subsistence farming. The dogs in MacLeod's fiction are working dogs, "bred for the guiding and guarding of life . . . not the guardians of junkyards or used-car lots or closed-down supermarkets . . . they have always worked closely with their human masters" (The Lost Salt 186). References to junkyards, car lots, and supermarkets serve to define the identity of dogs within the region in contrast to the identity of dogs from the central cities of Halifax or Toronto. A dog of memory in "Winter Dog" is purchased by mail from the centre, earning him the nickname "Ontario dog" from sceptical neighbours who ask, "Do you think your Ontario dog will be any good?" The dog turns out to be "worse than nothing" because he cannot work in the way that "regional" dogs do, fulfilling his destiny

as an outsider unable to fit in within the region (As Birds 37-38). The animals of the region are powerful, resourceful, and useful, defined by their work as much as the people of the stories are. So the importance of animals in MacLeod's regional vision serves multiple functions: to reassert the interdependence of all living things in a harsh rural environment and thus promote identification between land, animal, and humankind; and to define the character of all the inhabitants of such an environment as rugged and hardworking, in opposition to the outsiders defined as misfits within an environment to which they are unsuited.

MacLeod also uses occupation to construct a regional identity that emphasizes its inhabitants' close proximity to death in their daily life. No story illustrates this so well as "The Boat," where a man recounts how he lost his father, a fisherman, to the sea he had worked with all his life: "Neither is it easy to know that your father was found on November twenty-eighth . . . wedged between two boulders at the base of the rock-strewn cliffs where he had been hurled and slammed so many many times . . . .There was not much left of my father, physically, as he lay there with the brass chains on his wrists and the seaweed in his hair" (The Lost Salt 150-51). The brass chains, worn to prevent the salt water from chafing his wrists, appear as symbolic manacles, chaining this man to the sea in his life and then again to it in his death. In "The Road to Rankin's Point," three of the grandmother's brothers lost their lives through their occupations: "One as a young man in the summer sun when the brown-dappled horses bolted and he fell into the teeth of a mowing machine. A second in a storm at sea when the vessel sank . . . .A third frozen upon the lunar ice fields of early March . . . in a sudden obliterating blizzard" (The

Lost Salt 170). Death seems to haunt every occupation in MacLeod's stories. "The Closing Down of Summer" also deals with the daily possibility of a grisly end as the narrator describes the death of his father, his brother, and other loved ones at the bottom of mine shafts where they worked. The narrator broods on the possibility of his own death in the shafts, but makes an effort to pull his thoughts away from death, saying, "I must not think too much of death and loss, I tell myself repeatedly. For if I am to survive I must be as careful and calculating with my thoughts as I am with my tools when working so far below the earth's surface" (As Birds 27). It is apparently only too easy for such characters to become obsessed (and oppressed) with the dangers they face. In "The Vastness of the Dark," the narrator remembers the Springhill mine disasters of 1956 and 1958, focussing on the effect the tragedies had on scattered mining communities all over the province. The horror of death in the shafts unites the inhabitants of the region, rousing men to travel many miles at night to help rescue the survivors. Others, like James's grandfather, sit next to the radio to hear news of men they never met, but are bound to by livelihood. James's father describes the scene on his return, telling of "hands and feet and blown-away faces and reproductive organs and severed ropes of intestines festooning the twisted pipes and spikes like grotesque Christmas-tree loops" (The Lost Salt 58). The degree of detail with which MacLeod describes these scenes of death comes not merely from a fascination with the morbid. The horror of death faced by miners, fishermen, loggers, and farmers is proportional to the amount of heroism and stoicism displayed by the people who make their living from such dangerous places. With characteristic irony, MacLeod juxtaposes the judgement of an outsider with the

description above: "These people . . . they have no guts" (The Lost Salt 58). Literally, these men have no guts because they have sacrificed them to the mines, but symbolically, the texts construct the people who cling to their region despite the dangers it offers them as not only stoic, but also heroic. The narrator in "The Boat" says of his father, who has never wanted to be a fisherman, "I thought it was very much braver to spend a life doing what you really do not want rather than selfishly following forever your own dreams and inclinations" (The Lost Salt 147). Such people are represented by these stories as truly having "guts" and courage.

The suggested heroism of the characters echoes the suggested heroism of the descendants of Scottish Highlanders discussed in Chapter Two. Geography may also be seen as reasserting the connection between the region of settlement (Cape Breton) and the region the settlers left (Scottish Highlands). The similarities of landscape found between the islands in the Atlantic Canadian region and the islands off the west coast of Scotland support a shared "island" identity between the two. MacLeod remarks on this continuity of island identity in the context of the Hebridean Scots' emigration to Cape Breton, saying, "I think if you're an island group of people and then you go to another island, although a bigger one, and you stay there for a long long time and everybody, as far as we can speak of our ancestry, is almost exactly of the same racial stock, it means something. It means a kind of intensification that perhaps not a lot of North Americans have" (Brick 21). The intensification of identity that MacLeod speaks of stems both from the settlers' sense of geography shared with their ancestors and from a concentrated ethnic presence in the region of settlement.

Though MacLeod does not overtly state that the landscape of Cape Breton is like the landscape of Scotland, his use of setting in the story, "As Birds Bring Forth the Sun" supports the continuity of identity between Scotland and Cape Breton. This story begins with the words, "Once there was a family with a Highland name who lived beside the sea" (As Birds 118). The frequent use of Gaelic in the story makes it clear this family is Scottish or is of Scottish descent, but the actual nationality of the man or his family is never named. The setting of the story may either be in the Highlands of Scotland or in the Highlands of Cape Breton. MacLeod carefully refuses the reader any clues that might pinpoint the 'real' setting. The effect is to blur national identity while emphasizing ethnic identity, suggesting an indifference to political boundaries that reinforces a shared identity between Scotland and Cape Breton. Such a blurring of locations could only be possible between two regions with similar landscapes (in this case coastal areas), particularly in view of MacLeod's unstinting attention to detail. The setting used in the story for the frame narrative provides a stark contrast. Here MacLeod identifies the setting as a Toronto hospital room, juxtaposing the centre (Toronto) with the margin (the Highlands), the urban with the rural, and the real with the mythological. It is the tension between these last two influences, the antiseptic reality of a Toronto hospital and the mythology of the ancestral Highlands, that is most significant in this story. The men who are descended from the Highlands live in the modern world of reality, but feel strong ties to the mythologies of their inherited culture. They say, "we are aware that some beliefs are what others would dismiss as 'garbage'. We are aware that there are men who believe the earth is flat and that the birds bring forth the sun" (As Birds 126-27). But they also

stipulate that it is "hard to not know what you do know" (As Birds 126). In acknowledging their struggles to reconcile their epistemological dilemma, the characters of this text separate themselves from others of their nationality who are secure in their unassailable logic (such as the Toronto doctors). The six grey-haired brothers and their father belong not only to a separate geographic region, but also to a separate region of knowledge where the possibilities of curses or ghosts cannot be brushed away. These men are doubly haunted, first by the *cù mòr glas a' bhàis*, the big grey dog of death, and then by the knowledge that they are different from the people of other places and other ethnicities in the credence they allow to such ideas.

Such themes of isolation and difference are crucial to MacLeod's stories, and he uses geography to emphasize them. The island motif is strong within most of the stories, with all but one story ("The Golden Gift of Grey") set on an island. Again, we see some blurring of identity between the landscape and the characters in the story, "Island," where the people who live on the small island off Cape Breton Island are seen as isolated and different from others. This motif may be expanded to include all the island-dwellers of MacLeod's fiction, from the boy, James, in "The Vastness of the Dark" to the old man, Archibald, in "The Tuning of Perfection." While MacLeod's texts may tend to construct a cohesive Atlantic identity, they use this cohesive identity to emphasize the difference between those from the region and those from "away," as is seen above in "As Birds Bring Forth the Sun." Reminders of an island geography are too numerous to count, contained as they are in every reference to the sea that encompasses the land. Just as the sea binds the inhabitants of the region together through shared livelihood and shared

dangers, it also serves as a literal and symbolic barrier that separates those from the region from those outside it.

The shared history of a region is a strong influence on regional identity, as we saw in The Diviners. While Laurence uses historical events that have much purchase for the inhabitants of the prairie region, it seems she has also chosen to discuss events that are covered in history classes all across Canada (e.g. the Métis Rebellion and the voyage of the Selkirk settlers). This has the effect of giving her treatment of history some national purchase as well as strong regional purchase. MacLeod's use of history differs somewhat in that he does not refer to historical events that would appear in standard Canadian history texts. Rather his references to history are to local history, to the kind of events that happen in every region but were perceived as insignificant on a national scale. For example, in "The Vastness of the Dark," geography triggers memories of local history as James travels through the town of Springhill and remembers the mining disasters that took place there. Just as the Riel Rebellion of 1885 is an historical event that has reached almost mythic proportions in Laurence's region, so the tragedies at Springhill have mythic qualities in the mind of young James. And just as Laurence exposes the complex nature of all histories by juxtaposing three versions of the Rebellion story, so MacLeod achieves the same effect by juxtaposing two separate versions of the Springhill disasters. For "the man from away," the impact of the tragedies is summed up cursorily: "'Springhill is a hell of a place . . . unless you want to get laid. It's one of the best there is for that. Lots of mine accidents here and the men get killed off'" (The Lost Salt 55). By contrast, James's memories of the same events are memories of rescue missions, of

children giving nickels and dimes for relief and of his father's descriptions of "men transformed into grisly jig-saw puzzles that could never more be solved" (The Lost Salt 58). But while both Laurence and MacLeod emphasize the multiple versions of any one event, Laurence has chosen to write about events that include the discourses of Canadian history texts. Thus readers from outside the Western region may not personally identify in any way with the stories told in The Diviners by Christie and Jules, but there is a possibility they will identify with the textbook version, and can therefore have some form of access to the shared history of the region. In the case of MacLeod's discussion of the tragedies at Springhill, it is less likely that the reader from outside the region will already possess a "textbook version" of this story, and so may well be excluded from the region by virtue of not having the same kind of access to local history. Whether this results in Laurence's text being more inclusive or accessible than MacLeod's is by no means certain. But while Laurence is accepted as both a regional and a national writer, MacLeod is more often read as "merely" a regional writer.

Further to a discussion of MacLeod's use of history, it might be argued that his implied reader possesses a certain amount of knowledge about the history of the Atlantic region, information that is never necessary to trace the plot of his story yet adds resonance for the reader who shares this regional identity. While in the case of "The Vastness of the Dark" MacLeod provides the details of events the reader may not be familiar with, this is not always the case. In some circumstances, details are included in the text that have no significance in terms of plot, as the mine disasters do in this story, but are drawn from implied knowledge of local history that is not explicitly illustrated in the text. For

example, MacLeod frequently refers to rum in his stories, as when two men drink rum at night in "The Lost Salt Gift of Blood" (78) and when young Alex sits on his grandfather's lap and sips at his rum toddy in "The Return" (The Lost Salt 95). The mention of rum resonates with an entire history of the rum trade (legal and illegal) in the Maritime region, an integral part of the West Indies sea trade, and a fact which is barely referred to in the text: "I know the rum to be strong and overproof. It comes at night and in fog . . . .Coming over in the low-throttled fishing boats, riding in imitation gas cans" (The Lost Salt 78).[12] MacLeod relies here on information shared by the inhabitants of the region, implied knowledge could serve to segregate readers from within and from outside the region.

Recent regional history is also important to MacLeod's stories, seen in the references to the decline of a traditional Atlantic economy. These stories bridge the gap between the years when fish, lobsters, coal, and trees supported a lively economy in the region and the years in which this resource-based economy began to fail. Themes of loss and decline pervade many of MacLeod's stories, and such themes focus concretely on the loss of access to the resources that helped create a regional identity. MacKinnon's miners, in "The Closing Down of Summer," will travel to South Africa to work the mines there, using the skills they inherited as part of their Cape Breton identity. But the mines in Cape Breton can no longer support them, and they encourage their sons to "go to the universities to study dentistry or law and to become fatly affluent before they are thirty.

---

[12]For a discussion of the history of rum in the Atlantic region, see Morrison, James H. and James Moreira, eds. Tempered By Rum: Rum in the History of the Maritime Provinces. Porters Lake, NS: Pottersfield Press, 1988.

Men who will stand over six feet tall and who will move their fat, pudgy fingers over the limited possibilities to be found in other people's mouths" (As Birds 22). Though the men that are born to this region are perceived as constructed for physical labour, being over six feet tall, there is no longer anything much to labour over and so they must redefine their intended occupations. The loss is continued in the fishing industry where the fishermen of today "do not make much money anymore and few of them take it seriously . . . .The fishermen before us are older men or young boys. Grandfathers with grandsons acting out their ancient rituals" (As Birds 12). For MacLeod's characters, occupation still defines the individual and has all the impact of an "ancient ritual" even when the access to fish dwindles away. "The Road to Rankin's Point" opens with the troubles the fishing industry suffers in this region, noting that "there is talk that the fishermen may strike," though others choose "to remain drunk and discouraged on the beach or within the dampened privacy of their little shanties" (The Lost Salt 155-56). The grandmother's farm in this story was once prosperous, but is now falling into decay, and the road to Rankin's Point is dotted with the ruins of long abandoned farms. And in "The Tuning of Perfection," Carver observes that the logging industry is not what it once was, saying, "We just cut 'em all down. Go in with heavy equipment, tree farmers and loaders and do it all in a day, to hell with tomorrow" (As Birds 100). James's grandmother tells him in "The Vastness of the Dark" that he is right to leave the region as "there is nothing for one to do here anyway. There was never anything for one to do here" (The Lost Salt 47). While the inhabitants of the region were once able to exact a rough living from the land and sea, and became shaped by these occupations, this way of

life has begun to slip away. The regional identity that was once bolstered by teeming fish and rich mines is rapidly becoming an identity of loss and privation. MacLeod evokes the memory of a thriving economy, creating an impression of deep roots in the region, only to balance it with the reality of recent history and the changes it brings to Atlantic identity.

Another aspect of regional history that MacLeod does not discuss specifically but which is implied in the text is shared ethnicity within the region. Without exception, MacLeod's main characters are of Scottish descent. Most of the incidental characters in these stories are of the same descent, with a few Irish tossed in for variety. The construction of Cape Breton as a homogeneous settler colony of the Scottish Highlands is only mitigated by the mention of a few diverse ethnic presences: there is a Dutch family in "In the Fall," a few black children in "The Vastness of the Dark" and the Syrian and Lebanese peddlers in "Vision" who exchange their names for the Scottish names, Angus and Alex, so "they would seem more familiar to their potential customers" (As Birds 136). While the settlement patterns of Cape Breton for the past 200 years do reflect a high proportion of Highland Scots and their descendants (Hornsby 50), MacLeod's texts tend to construct a suspiciously uniform population, neglecting the reality of Atlantic ethnic diversity, not to mention the Acadian and Native presences in the region.[13]

As is frequently the case in regionalist writing, differences within the region seem to be glossed over in favour of attempting to capture an essential regional identity. The

---

[13]Indeed, MacLeod's critical afterword to Hugh MacLennan's Barometer Rising focuses closely on the Scottish heritage of many of the novel's characters, making even Halifax sound as though it is populated almost entirely by people of Scottish descent. This seems to reaffirm MacLeod's interest with one particular ethnic identity within the region.

exclusive nature of the early Scottish settlements in Cape Breton is perpetuated by the insular nature of the region, creating a place that has been defined by a uniform ethnicity for many generations. This tends to result in implied ethnicity in MacLeod's stories, where the reader may safely make assumptions about the ancestry of most of the characters. In "The Closing Down of Summer," the miners on the beach share more than geography, occupation, and history. They also share ethnic identity, as is clear when the narrator notes the spruce twigs wedged in the grilles of their cars: "We will remove them and take them with us to Africa as mementos or talismans or symbols of identity. Much as our Highland ancestors, for centuries, fashioned crude badges of heather or of whortleberries to accompany them on the battlefields of the world" (As Birds 11). The homogeneity of the group is represented as a natural phenomenon, as predictable and implied as their common livelihood. As was the case with geography and with occupation, these texts use ethnicity to conjure a strong sense of regional community through a cohesive Atlantic Canadian identity, one apparently devoid of discord between races or ethnicities. This aspect of MacLeod's work contrasts sharply with The Diviners, where diversity of race within the region plays a significant role in constructing the identity of the region.

Class structures in MacLeod's stories follow much the same patterns suggested by ethnic homogeneity. The texts all revolve around the experiences of the working class, be they fishermen, farmers, or miners. There appears to be very little diversity within the region in terms of class, presenting the region as a homogenous working class unit. Class tensions only begin to appear when inhabitants of the region come into conflict with those

from outside the region. For example, in "The Return," the family that travels from Montreal to the father's home in Cape Breton are separated from their Cape Breton family members by their class status. Angus, the father, has become a lawyer in Montreal and is estranged from his working class roots by his acquired status. The gulf between the classes is manifested through clothing, for instance. When Alex goes out to play with his cousins, he is taunted by local boys about his clothes. His mother, a Montreal socialite, has dressed him in clothes appropriate to his class in Montreal, clothes that cause him to stand out in the working class environment in which he now finds himself. The mother resists her husband's objection to them, saying "But Angus I don't want him to look like a little savage" (The Lost Salt 97). The mother's implication that her husband's family members dress like savages signifies the tensions between her class and her in-laws' class, suggesting that her identity, too, is constructed in relation to a regional Other. Class tensions begin to erode, however, when Alex enters the world of his cousins for a day. Alex's Montreal clothing attracts the attention of local bullies. The text suggests that children have less difficulty bridging the gap between classes, as Alex's cousins rush to defend him from the bullies in a manner reminiscent of Highland clannishness, though they perhaps have had similar thoughts about his "sissy clothes." As they climb a hill moving further away from the town and their parents, Alex's clothes begin to get rumpled and when he loosens his tie in the heat, "the collar button comes off and is forever lost in the grass" (The Lost Salt 98). When he later meets his grandfather coming out of the mine, the grandfather holds him close, covering his clothes in coal dust. For one moment, the gap between miner and lawyer's son is bridged. While Alex follows

his grandfather and uncles into the showers, his father sits on a bench spread with newspapers to keep his suit clean. The father is unable to bridge the gap he has created between himself and his roots, a gap that is essentially a class division. So we see that class functions as a unifying force within the region, but a divisive force between the region and national urban centres. Representation of class dynamics within the region reinforces the construction of a cohesive Atlantic identity.

Language in MacLeod's texts supports the constructs introduced by the examination of ethnicity and class. The use of Gaelic in many of the stories is a reminder of the homogeneous and insular nature of his communities within a primarily Anglophone nation. In some stories, members of the community converse fluently in Gaelic. For example, in "The Return," as the boy Alex travels toward his father's home he observes that, "some of the people around us are talking in a language that I know is Gaelic although I do not understand it" (The Lost Salt 92). The introduction of Gaelic into the setting serves to unite the residents of the region and segregate them from those who are "from" away, in this case Alex and his family. Similarly, when the grandmother from "The Road to Rankin's Point" visits friends in the nursing home, "they whisper to her in Gaelic which most of the staff can no longer understand" to tell her of "real and imagined atrocities" (The Lost Salt 176). In this case, language, specifically the Gaelic tongue, serves a dual purpose. Gaelic is represented as a dying language in the region, a language that is dwindling away with the fish stocks and the mines until only the elderly in nursing homes still speak it. Secondly, the text implies that everyone in the region once spoke Gaelic, stating that "most of the staff can no longer understand" it (176).

Once the ethnic composition of the region would have assured that the staff could understand Gaelic, but now the loss of old ways separates those who "have it" from those who do not. In "The Closing Down of Summer," the narrator tells us that "as a youth and as a young man I did not even realize that I could understand or speak Gaelic and entertained a casual disdain for those who did" (As Birds 19). Gaelic was not part of the culture that was taught formally in classrooms, but was an aspect of regional culture that was absorbed through constant contact: "As if it had sunk in unconsciously through some strange osmotic process while I had been growing up" (19). Gaelic is represented as highly local, a vernacular tongue, and where the narrator once despised it, he and his crew now "speak it almost constantly though it is never spoken in our homes" (19). The text then refers to the recent Celtic Revival that has taken hold of the region, almost constructing it in opposition to an "authentic" Celtic tradition, and the narrator observes how children are now taught "individual Gaelic words in the classrooms" in an effort to recapture their lost heritage (As Birds 19-20). The narrator does not feel a part of this revival, though he and his crew have sung their Gaelic songs for it, and he says "that too seemed as lonely and irrelevant as it was meaningless" (As Birds 20). The repeated motif of the loss of the Gaelic tongue represents division within the previously uniform regional identity. Even though all the main characters of these stories share similar ethnic descent, they do not all share the language of that descent, and a rift develops between those who adhere to the old ways, and those who do not. A good example of this tension occurs in "The Tuning of Perfection" between Archibald, one of the "last of the authentic old-time Gaelic singers," and his granddaughter, Sal. Archibald is a purist, a man who refuses to

compromise his cultural identity for the Scots Around the World festival where his family wants to sing. When Sal sings a Gaelic lament like a milling song and he corrects her, she replies that it does not matter to her. She does not know what the words mean and neither will anyone else. Here Sal is identified with the Halifax producer who is more interested in effect than in authenticity, and with the crowds of people who will not understand the words. In representing the newer generation as willing to prostitute their heritage for fame and money by climbing aboard the "tartanism" bandwagon, the text suggests that the older generation is more authentic, possibly even more "regional," though it is the newer generation (such as Carver's group) that has the flexible nature to continue some form of that identity. Though Carver intimates to Archibald that he and his group know their music is not authentic, they are willing to conform to popular expectations of Scottish traditions for money (As Birds 117). Here, language is the focal point for regional concerns that are near "universal": the tensions between old and new ways.

Language also plays an important part of regional identity in these texts in terms of place names within the region. Many places in the text have been named for places in Scotland, as is the case of Canna in "Vision," "called after the Hebridean island of Canna, 'the green island' where most of its original inhabitants were born" (As Birds 134). Other places were given the names of settling families, as in the case of Rankin's Point, Cameron's Point in "The Closing Down of Summer" or MacPhedran's Island in "Island". And finally, some places have been given Gaelic names, as in names of places on MacPhedran's Island: *achadh nan caoraich*, the field of the sheep; *bagh na long*

briseadh, bay of the shipwreck; and *creig a bhoird*, the table rock. These are private and local places, an identity which is reflected in their Gaelic names, names that are inaccessible to outsiders. When the last of the MacPhedrans prepares to leave the island, she "marvelled that the places would remain but the names would vanish" with the Gaelic-speaking inhabitants who had settled there. The settlers' use of inherited language and inherited names was once a way of preserving a link with the Old World and appropriating space in the New World. Generations later, it distinguishes the region as still Highland Scots, still conscious of its connection to the Old World.

A final way in which language serves to construct a particular regional identity is through suggestions of oral narrative within the texts. Kulyk Keefer sees in MacLeod's writing echoes of the music associated with the ancestral bards of Scotland and Ireland: "He achieves that haunting and powerful resonance characteristic of the Gaelic music which is his characters' best means to self-expression and communication" (Under Eastern 182). And Jane Urquhart argues that "in MacLeod's fiction the 'voice' of the oral tradition is never very far away" (As Birds 169). For example, his story, "As Birds Bring Forth the Sun," opens with lines that echo the influences of a storytelling, or what Kulyk Keefer dismissively calls a "fairy tale," tradition (182): "Once there was a family with a Highland name who lived beside the sea. And the man had a dog of which he was very fond" (As Birds 118).[14] The paratactical structure of these lines suggests the same

---

[14]In an interview with MacLeod, Laurie Kruk characterizes this sentence as "an appeal to oral tradition" and connects it to the folkloric quality of the layered stories within "Vision" "because of the various narrators telling tales within it." MacLeod confirms his interest in oral tradition and attributes it to his interest in history because "story has obviously existed longer than literacy has" (158).

connection to Celtic oral traditions that Flora Alexander observed in Christie's stories in The Diviners (84), reminding us of the story's source in an actual Scottish legend (Nicholson, "Regions" 133-34), and also representing a strong tradition of storytelling within the Atlantic region. The story, "Vision" is an example of the continuity of storytelling between the Old World and the New. The text of "Vision" layers stories upon stories, suggesting the interrelatedness of all narratives at some point or other. The story begins with reflections about the impact storytelling has had upon the narrator, saying "I don't remember when I first heard the story but I remember the first time that I heard it and remembered it" (As Birds 128). The stories have been told many times, as is common in an oral tradition, and the narrator has absorbed these stories and made them his own at some point in time, much as the miners of MacKinnon's crew absorbed the Gaelic language. The layers of story fluctuate from a father's childhood journey, to a friend's ancestor who had the second sight, to the exile of St. Columba of Colum Cille from Ireland thirteen hundred years before. The stories of the Old World merge into the storytelling tradition of this region in the New World, reinforcing the idea of barely broken continuity between the two.

In conclusion, we see that regionalist elements of MacLeod's stories serve to emphasize an almost "living" connection between the region and the Old World, while constructing a strong sense of cohesive unity within the New World region. This sense of cohesiveness may be interpreted as a strong sense of regional community, possibly akin to the clan structure of Highland society left behind in the Old World. But this sense of homogenous community is problematised in the next chapter when we explore such

regional concerns as out-migration by comparing the ways in which these two authors represent the region in relation to the nation.

Chapter Five: Regional Identity in Relation to the Nation

No examination of the regionalist aspects of a text is complete without some examination of how the region is defined in relation to its binary opposite, the nation. Tensions between regional and national loyalties are characteristic of Canadian identity, particularly in the cases of such marginal regions as the West and the Atlantic Provinces. In a somewhat extreme observation of Canadian regional-national tensions, Kildare Dobbs argues that "Canada is so intransigently regional that few generalisations about its national character are valid" (Berry 22). Recalling David Jordan's distinction between regionalism and local colour, Dobbs places emphasis on the "marginality" and "de-centred world view" of regionalist writing. As a result, this interpretation of regionalism tends to set regional identity in opposition to national identity.

Yet regionalist aspects of Laurence's fiction tend not to be read in conflict with its nationalist aspects. Despite the strong evocation of prairie identity found in her works, it is difficult to find any major critic who does not sing her praises as one of the major bulwarks of our national literary canon. George Woodcock confesses he has "come to regard her novels as perhaps the most important Canadian fiction of any time and certainly of our time" (Place to Stand 9). Andy Wainwright claims that she is no less than "the most significant creative writer in Canadian history" (Very Large Soul vii). Clara Thomas has written an entire essay connecting Laurence's work to the larger Canadian literary tradition, stating that her characters' "search for an individual identity is paradigmatic of the constant search for the elusive 'Canadian identity'" (Nicholson, Critical Approaches 3). In addition, Thomas points to the recurring motif of Scottish

ancestry in Canadian fiction, presenting Laurence as the culmination of an exploration of Scots heritage begun by Ralph Connor and continued by Sara Jeanette Duncan and Hugh MacLennan. She argues that these writers, Laurence included, are aiming for something that transcends "mere assimilation of all the immigrant races" into "something 'Canadian'" (9). W. H. New traces the development of national identity throughout her Canadian works, saying:

> For Margaret Laurence, national social adjustments involve gender, class and other subtleties of discrimination; story by story, the Manawaka series traces the processes of change that reconcile first the Scots with the English and Irish, then the British with the Ukrainians, then the Europeans with the Asians and finally (most ironically, most resistantly) with the indigenous Métis. The West, by this view, becomes the cradle of multiculturalism. (New, A History 248).

While New's assertion of reconciliation between the diverse ethnic and racial identities represented in the texts seems somewhat exaggerated, a close examination of The Diviners does suggest the region serves as an allegorical microcosm for tensions that exist on a national level. Such readings interpret Morag as symbolic of the white settler presence and Jules as symbolic of the indigenous presence in the New World. Morag's rejection of Brooke as the representative of British Imperialism leads to her union with Jules and its outcome in Pique. Pique is the hybrid representative of the future and her presence in the text suggests the possibility of a time when there is no "us"or "them" in Canadian ethnic and racial, or regional, identity. While a reading of The Diviners as national allegory is so complex as to be beyond the scope of this thesis, it is interesting to

note that Laurence's novel permits (even encourages) such readings.[15] And furthermore, national interests in the novel tend not to be read in conflict with regional interests, but rather as a natural extension of regional dynamics.

The act of leaving the margins for the centre is crucial to Morag's "quest for islands"(The Diviners 380). When leaving Manawaka for university in Winnipeg, Morag is impatient: "Leaving Manawaka. At last. At last. Jubilation. Also, guilt" (177). But Morag's guilt is reserved for her sense that she is abandoning Prin and Christie, and her desire to leave is unmitigated by a true longing to stay. Morag at her departure is "exultant" and she imagines herself as "swifting into life," leaving the parochial restriction of the region behind (190). Her need to separate herself from Manawaka also distances Morag from Jules: "They inhabit the same world no longer" but she puts any pain this causes her out of her mind by thinking of leaving: "In the night, the train whistle says *Out There Out There Out There*" (181).

Morag's escape from the region is a gradual progression of moving from one place where she does not belong to another. First she escapes to Winnipeg, far from Manawaka but arguably still the centre of her region, where she reflects, "now she is away. Away is here. Not far enough away" (193). After meeting Brooke, Morag accepts his invitation to follow him to Toronto, the centre of the nation: "Would she like Toronto? Would she like Paradise? With Brooke, and away from the prairies entirely" (219). But neither her union with Brooke nor her residence in Toronto ends up resembling the Paradise she has anticipated. Even after four years of living in Toronto,

---

[15]For readings of The Diviners as a national allegory, see Kortenaar, Florby, and Bader.

Morag admits that "unfortunately the city still scares the bejesus out of her" (239) and "the apartment in Toronto seems more than ever like a deserted island" (275). This "deserted island" is not the island refuge that Morag has been searching for. It is a barren place that echoes the barrenness of Morag's marriage to Brooke. Morag's escape from the unsatisfactory centre takes her west, thinking, "maybe it only ever occurs to prairie people, when they light out, to go yet further west" (297). In Vancouver, Morag feels crowded by the mountains and is aware that this place is not the island she is seeking either, saying, "This is not to be her final settling place, obviously. People of the city, the real inhabitants, born here or having adopted the place, do not feel the same way. They do not feel hemmed in or threatened by these mountains" (312-13). But still Morag rejects the region of her birth, stating that "there is no way she can return to Manawaka. If she is to have a home she must create it" (313). Morag's sense of not belonging in each place she lives culminates in her residence in England, the "scepter'd isle" and "royal throne of kings" (382). After living in London for a few years, Morag recognizes the attraction of London as a cultural centre of the world as a "fantasy," noting that "publisher's parties in London are no more appealing to her and no less parochial than they were in Canada" (383). And this island, too, is rejected as a settling place, when Morag finally travels to Scotland, her mythologised ancestral island, and realizes that the true land of her ancestors is the place she was born.

In Chapter Two of this thesis, we saw how this journey to Scotland, and Morag's subsequent realization that she belongs not to a mythic past but to "Christie's real country," serves as turning point in her quest for identity. Robert Kroetsch has identified

this moment as a "touchstone passage in Canadian writing," (26) suggesting that it has national application in the collective Canadian attempt to define ourselves against, and yet in harmony with, ancestral roots. Rudolph Bader explains this neatly when he cautions us that "it is important to remember that her roots are not completely negated; they merely recede from their prominent position to make room for other roots" (42). The "other roots" that Morag learns to accommodate are her ties to "Christie's real country," now recognized as the true "land of [her] ancestors" (The Diviners 415). In interpreting Morag's reference to Christie's country, we may favour a narrow reading of the text that identifies Manawaka as the land of the ancestors. Certainly, Morag comes to the realization that though she can escape the prairie region in a literal, physical sense, she will never be able to leave it in an imaginative sense. But despite the recognition of her prairie roots, when Morag returns to Canada, she does not make her home in Manawaka. She instead chooses to settle in a different region, at McConnell's landing in southern Ontario. The house at McConnell's Landing represents the answer to Morag's quest for identity: "Land. A river. Log house nearly a century old, built by great pioneering couple, Simon and Sarah Cooper. History. Ancestors" (The Diviners 439). Morag and Pique come "home" not to the prairie region that figures so heavily in the Manawaka sections of the text, but to rural Ontario, the setting for the frame narrative of the text. When writing about McConnell's Landing, Laurence is arguably writing from a second, non-Western, regionalist perspective. Although the regional identity created in the frame narrative is weak in comparison to the Manawaka sections, Laurence still takes care to define this region in terms of its plant and animal life, its people (Royland and the

Smiths), and its river. Morag has felt that McConnell's Landing is the physical "island" she has been seeking: "Morag, terrified of cities, coming out here, making this her place, her island" (The Diviners 379). McConnell's Landing is constructed as a refuge from encroaching urban progress, an island of peace that Morag adopts after rejecting Toronto, Vancouver, and London as homes.

The presence of Catherine Parr Traill is closely connected to a regionalist reading of the frame narrative in the novel. She is as much Morag's "spatial" adopted ancestor as Piper Gunn was her adopted ethnic ancestor. Morag's acquisition of land in southern Ontario is merely an act of purchasing a space to exist in. Catherine Parr Traill as a literary ancestor, an Ontario regionalist author in her own right, facilitates Morag's transformation of this new space into a place of her own. Clara Thomas has noted: "The adult Morag has moved to McConnell's Landing in Ontario and there she intends to stay. It is part of Margaret Laurence's own belief that to become truly a part of the place–any place–it is necessary to assimilate that place's history into one's own consciousness" (Verduyn 148). The choice of Traill over her sister, the "whining and bitching figure of Susanna Moodie" (Kroetsch 67) favoured by Atwood as a literary ancestor, seems like a conscious effort to identify with a pioneer figure who embraced a new land, making herself at home in it.[16] While Moodie's more dramatic writing focusses on the hardships and dangers offered by the New World, Traill's writing looks toward transcending mere survival into full-fledged belonging. Morag conjures the spirit of Traill as a standard by

---

[16]Woodcock identifies Traill as the only member of the literary Strickland family to emerge from the pioneer experience in Ontario as a "truly regional writer" (Meeting of Time 20).

which to measure her success as a pioneer, but this act is Morag's attempt to place herself within a larger pioneering tradition. If Piper Gunn filled Morag's need to define herself with a Scottish ancestry, Traill fills Morag's need to define her present existence with a Canadian ancestry. Traill serves as such a Canadian ancestor, and her English ancestry is not even mentioned in the novel as Morag ended her search for ethnic identity in her moment of realization in Scotland. And rather than returning to the literal land of her birth and adopting a prairie figure as a new Canadian ancestor, Morag makes herself at home in another region and with other regional ancestors.

Without over-emphasizing the status of Laurence as an Ontario regionalist writer, it is important to recognize these aspects of the novel. As a regionalist writer, Laurence clearly draws her strength from her prairie roots. And Morag, in self-imposed exile from her native prairie region, draws parallels between the region of her birth and her later home: "Morag Gunn, fleeing Manawaka, finally settling near McConnell's Landing, an equally small town with many of the same characteristics" (The Diviners 377).[17] But Morag's ability to "make room for new roots" indicates that regional identity is not carved in stone. Adoption is possible for Morag in multiple ways, and "Christie's real country" may be read broadly as the Canadian nation rather than narrowly as Manawaka, Manitoba or the prairies.

---

[17]It should be noted that Neil ten Kortenaar uses Morag's eventual settlement in a non-prairie region as support for his assertion that The Diviners is a nationalist text: "If Morag can return to Ontario, it is because she identifies not with a particular landscape but with a map" in spite of Morag's comparison between Manawaka and McConnell's Landing (15).

A discussion of national identity in MacLeod's stories seems to raise problematic and eventually, unresolved, issues. In an interview with Colin Nicholson, MacLeod illustrates his understanding of North American national identity: "The cliché is that you think of America as the melting pot and of Canada as a mosaic, composed of individual areas . . . .I think of it as inhabiting a single room within a larger house; inhabiting both" ("Signatures" 97). Certainly the strength of MacLeod's work is in the identity created within that single room, the Atlantic region. But this regional identity relies on the construction of a central region, representative of that larger house. In these texts, an apparently cohesive regional identity is problematised when regional ties are viewed in relation to the nation. MacLeod has noted: "For people at the edges of whatever it might be, there is always the pull of the centre," citing as an example ferryboats of unhappy people leaving Ireland for work in England (Brick 26). Indeed, a number of his stories include representations of this "pull of the centre," making it an important regional concern. Janice Kulyk Keefer notes this tension between leaving the region and staying:

> The poorness of the soil, the violence of the sea, the exhaustion of the mines prevent [MacLeod's] people from earning more than a bare living and drive, perhaps not the strongest but certainly the most ambitious into exile. Those who go are almost crippled by a sense of shame and loss; those who stay, like the mother in "The Boat," become almost dehumanized by loyalty to a place which seems reduced to primal elements--wind, water, rock. (Under Eastern 182)

While Keefer's use of words like "crippled"and "shame" to describe those who live in "exile" from the region is somewhat extreme, it reflects the priority MacLeod gives to the

difficulty of leaving, or returning to, the region. The texts emphasize the great distance between the region and the centre as crucial to this concern in two ways. Firstly, disparity between the region and the centre emphasizes the characters' inability to pursue certain goals, including economic stability, within the region. The centre is represented in these texts by higher education, professional careers, and a secure economy. In contrast, we have seen how the region is characterized as relying heavily on resource industries and consequently subject to hardship when those industries begin to fail. Secondly, the disparity between the region and the centre makes the decision to leave the region much harder for some characters, and the return equally difficult for others. This results in a heightened sense of alienation from the region for those who choose to leave and it results in making escape impossible for others.

Disparity between the region and the centre is stressed in several of MacLeod's texts. In "The Lost Salt Gift of Blood," the narrator who comes from the Midwest to Newfoundland emphasizes the region's distance from the continent's centre by noting that Dublin and the Irish coast are nearer now than are Toronto and Detroit (The Lost Salt 65-66). In noticing that his shoes, so appropriate to the classrooms of the Midwest, are failing him here on the rocky shore, he says this is "no place to be unless barefooted or in rubber boots. Perhaps no place for me at all" (70). Newfoundland and the Midwest are worlds apart in this story. In "The Return," the child Alex remarks on the literal and metaphorical distance that separates Cape Breton from his Montreal home, saying "We have come from a great distance and have a long way now to go" (The Lost Salt 105). And "The Road to Rankin's Point" begins with an extended description of the road

Calum has followed from the centre to reach his regional roots. He looks behind himself, "inland and outward" along the road that "if followed relentlessly will take you almost anywhere in North America; perhaps to Central and to South America as well" (The Lost Salt 156-57). The image of Cape Breton Island as connected to the rest of the world by a mere umbilical road emphasizes the disparity between the margins of a continent and its centre. So although the region appears isolated from the centre by geography, economy, local history, and a certain ethnic identity, it does not exist fully in isolation from the rest of the world. Many of these stories rely on the centre to provide the binary opposite for their construction of regional nostalgia. While the "Highlands and Islands" of the United Kingdom are represented as a sort of mythic centre toward which the regional imagination is pulled, economic and vocational opportunities are continually represented as drawing Atlantic Canadians toward the centre of North America.

The return to the region after an absence is often of concern to regionalist writers. Speaking of Laurence's sojourn in Africa and her subsequent return to Canada, Woodcock notes that "the ability to go away and return enriched is of course part of the regional experience, which in practice tends to liberate the mind from the narrowness of mere nationalism" (Meeting of Time 33). This preoccupation with returning to the region recurs throughout MacLeod's fiction. For example, "The Return," "The Lost Salt Gift of Blood," and "The Road to Rankin's Point" all deal with literal returns to the Atlantic region after a residence in the centre of the nation. The Montreal lawyer in "The Return" is alienated from his family and from his roots by his choice to pursue a profession far from the mines where his father and brothers continue to work. In "The Lost Salt Gift of

Blood," the child, John, is so "wonderful sad" after moving to Toronto that his mother returns him to her parents in Newfoundland (74). Though John's father has come from the Midwest entertaining the possibility of returning with the boy, he changes his mind after observing the quality of life John has here. Life at the centre is not characterized as ideal through the eyes of the narrator:

> And perhaps now I should go and say, oh son of my *summa cum laude* loins, come away from the lonely gulls and the silver trout and I will take you to the land of the Tastee Freeze where you may sleep till ten of nine. And I will show you the elevator to the apartment on the sixteenth floor and introduce you to the buzzer system and the yards of the wrought-iron fences where the Doberman pinscher runs silently at night. (The Lost Salt 83)

The suggestion that John belongs in this region and his father, the outsider, does not is reiterated throughout the text. And in "The Road to Rankin's Point," Calum has returned to the region after what he calls his "'absent' years, spent teaching the over-urbanized students of Burlington and Don Mills in the classrooms that always seemed so overheated" (The Lost Salt 174). Calum has returned home after discovering he is dying, comparing himself to "the diseased and polluted salmon" returning home "to swim for a brief time in the clear waters of my earlier stream" (174). Though Calum has apparently left Cape Breton of his own accord and returns only to die, his characterizations of the centre as "over-urbanized" and "overheated" are also unappealing.

"The Boat," "Winter Dog," and "As Birds Bring Forth the Sun" also deal with the issue of return to the region from the centre, but the return is manifested through memory

or story, rather than through a physical journey. In "The Boat," the narrator returns to the region through nightmares that haunt his prosaic Midwestern reality, and the text spins from dream into memory into the story of "The Boat." Tensions between the centre and the margins in this text are complex and we will return to it later in this chapter. In "Winter Dog," the sight of a romping collie on a southwestern Ontario night brings back memories of the narrator's childhood experiences with a similar dog on Cape Breton's coastal pack ice. And "As Birds Bring Forth the Sun" is a story that harkens back to a life on the margins generations ago, though the narrator remembers the story from a modern Toronto hospital room. Though each of these stories evokes a detailed image of the Atlantic region, they are only memories conjured up by those who have left the margins for the centre.

Several of MacLeod's stories deal with regional-national tensions by focussing on the act of leaving Cape Breton for the centre, as Laurence's novel deals with the same tensions by focussing on Morag's act of leaving Manawaka for the centre. In "The Closing Down of Summer," Bay Street in Toronto is the portal through which MacKinnon's crew must pass to the mines of other countries: South Africa, Zaire, Haiti, Chile, Bolivia, Guatemala, Mexico, and Jamaica (As Birds 26). The miners are reluctant to leave their homes, delaying the departure and easing it with moonshine and familiar Gaelic songs. While their bonds with their regional identity are preserved through their occupation and through their constant use of the Gaelic language, the necessity of leaving in order to continue mining has resulted in feelings of alienation and isolation from home.

They are rendered inarticulate in their isolation, unable to bridge the gap that has formed between themselves and their families.

In "The Boat," escape from the region is the result of less pragmatic concerns than the closure of local mines that provide employment. In this story, MacLeod introduces problematic representations of the sea and the fishery as a vocation, undermining the apparently cohesive regional identity we saw in Chapter Four. Tensions arise within this Cape Breton family over the pursuit of ambitions outside of the region. While the father has been a fisherman all of his life, he confesses to his son that "he had always wanted to go to the university" and the son slowly comes to see that his father "had never been intended for a fisherman either physically or mentally" (The Lost Salt 146). In contrast, his mother has a great love for the sea and for her husband's vocation as a fisherman, and "her horizons were the very literal ones she scanned with her dark and fearless eyes" (133). The father, his daughters, and his son all display an affinity for books, and through them the world outside the region, while the mother hates the books and everything they represent, launching "a campaign against what she had discovered but could not understand" (137). The mother's contempt for books is equalled only by the contempt she feels for the tourists from "away" that flood the region every summer. The narrator is heir to the warring interests of each of his parents, though he sees early that he cannot pursue one except at the expense of the other: "school ended in the third week in June and the lobster season on July first and I wished that the two things that I loved so dearly did not exclude each other in a manner that was so blunt and too clear" (145). His five sisters before him have expanded their interests beyond the region through the books that

litter his father's room, and to their mother's chagrin they each leave the region, going "to Boston, to Montreal, to New York with the young men they met during the summers and later married in those far-away cities. The young men were articulate and handsome and wore fine clothes and drove expensive cars and [the] sisters . . . were tired of darning socks and baking bread" (142).

In this text MacLeod has introduced the conflicting desires of those within the region to stay and yet to leave. Illusions of cohesive regional identity are complicated by the representation of characters who love the sea and those who hate the sea, characters who want to insulate the region from outside influences, and those who want to explore beyond regional boundaries. The representation of books within the story helps to illustrate these unresolved tension between the margin and centre. The books that crowd the father's room offer him a refuge from his chosen life within the region. These books all literally originate outside the region, coming from "second-hand bookstores which advertise in the backs of magazines" and "in later years they came more and more from [the] sisters who had moved to the cities" (135). The role of the books in enticing the daughters of the house away from the region is clear: not only were they the physical artefacts from a world outside the region, but they provided an imaginative window to the world beyond regional boundaries. It is difficult, however, to collect all the references to books in the text into a pat characterization of books as anti-regional. The irony of students who are studying the "water imagery of Tennyson" while watching lobster boats strew traps along the ocean floor implies gentle resistence to canonical British texts in postcolonial Canadian classrooms. Water imagery also figures in the father and son's

discussion of David Copperfield, where an access point to the text is "the Peggottys and how they loved the sea" (146). And when tourists characterize the father as a Hemingway figure and proceed to explain to him who Hemingway was, the unwarranted condescension of the Americans is made blatantly obvious as the narrator notes that "in a way it did almost look like one of those unshaven, taken-in-Cuba pictures of Hemingway" (The Lost Salt 141).

When the narrator of this story accepts that his love for the fishery excludes his love for books, he leaves school and tells his father that they will fish the sea together for as long as the father lives. When the father is lost overboard on the last day of the season, the text suggests that he may have given his life so that his son might be free to choose the life outside the region that he never had. And so we see the son, who now teaches at a "great Midwestern university," is now rejected by his mother for his choice, saying "it is not an easy thing to know that your mother looks upon the sea with love and on you with bitterness because the one has been so constant and the other so untrue" (150). The final image is of the father's remains that have washed up on the shore, "with the brass chains on his wrists and the seaweed in his hair" (151). The sea, loved by the mother, shackles the father in death as it did in his life.

This representation of internal tension within the region is continued in the story, "The Vastness of the Dark." Finally coming of age, James has decided to leave the region, saying, "today I leave behind this grimy Cape Breton coal-mining town whose prisoner I have been all my life" (The Lost Salt 39). He resents his mother's immediate assumption that he is merely leaving for another mine, and is determined to sever all

connections to home, saying, "I can feel free to assume my new identity which I don like carefully preserved new clothes taken from within their pristine wrappings. It assumes that I am from Vancouver which is as far away as I can imagine" (50-51). There is conflict between James's grandparents over his leaving, as there was over James's father's departure a generation ago. While the grandfather loves coal-mining and wishes his son and grandson to follow in his footsteps as a miner, the grandmother encourages her son and then her grandson to leave the region, saying, "there was never anything for one to do here" (47). James encounters a travelling salesman on the road, a man who is from "away." Through the eyes of the man from away, the people of Nova Scotia "are only so many identical goldfish leading identical incomprehensible lives within the glass prison of their bowl" (60). The encounter with this man prompts James to view regional-national tensions in ways he has not considered before, saying "the people on the street view me behind my own glass in much the same way and it is the way that I have looked at others in their 'foreign license' cars and it is the kind of judgement that I myself have made"(60). James's reflections about what it means to be from "here" or from "away" and how he has participated in prejudicial attitudes similar to those he is now subjected to further complicate simplistic characterizations of the region as idyllic and the centre as unappealing. Admittedly, the text narrowly averts the identification of those from outside the region with everything repugnant: the man from away is swinish in appearance and reprehensible in character. But despite his coarse language, his racism, and his sexism, the text complicates easy equations between outsiders and the type of behaviour this man exhibits, saying "it seems that neither these people nor this man are in any way unkind

and not to understand does not necessarily mean that one is cruel" (60). But although the text seems to absolve both those from within the region and those from without of bad intentions, it continues to preserve the gulf between the two, emphasizing the lack of understanding that exists between them. The inhabitants of MacLeod's constructed region are like "people it is impossible to know or to fully understand" (The Lost Salt 162).[18] In MacLeod's work, regional identity continues to be defined in opposition to national identity, constructing the nation as a foil to the region.[19] A sense of greater national identity seems to be absent in these stories, at times reducing the nation to "Other" in an attempt to heighten regional boundaries. Although the nation serves as a springboard for regional divisions between staying and leaving, these are regional, not national, concerns, and the nation appears as no more than the omnipresent catalyst for these concerns. This consistent opposition between region and nation contrasts with Laurence's work, which seems to suggest that regional and national identities function in much the same way, although on different scales.

---

[18]For further discussion on the tensions between the desire to leave the region and the desire to stay in MacLeod's work, see Kulyk Keefer (Under Eastern 233-38).

[19]A case can be made for the construction of Halifax as Other against which the Cape Breton region is defined in the story, "In the Fall." This tension is also evident in MacLeod's afterword for Barometer Rising. Since this construction does not appear consistently throughout MacLeod's stories, and regional boundaries *are* consistently defined in opposition to the nation, Halifax as Other seems to take second place to the nation as Other.

Chapter Six: Comparisons and Conclusions

Reflecting on his Highland heritage, the narrator in "The Road to Rankin's Point" asks, "What is the significance of ancestral islands, long left and never seen?" And what is the significance of the more recent ancestral islands each of these authors is heir to, the Canadian regions their works evoke so strongly, but in different ways? An examination of the island motif used so differently by Laurence and MacLeod serves as a useful contrast between their regional visions.

Morag Gunn's "quest for islands" is a metaphoric search for identity, for a place that she can make into a home, and a place she can belong to after the dispossession she experienced on the margins of Manawaka. This search for place has also been a search for ancestors, seeking to reconcile the mythical heroes of story, Piper Gunn and his woman, with the tangible ancestors of the region of her birth, Prin and Christie Logan. Adoption is possible for Morag, and when she has finally adopted a new region (McConnell's Landing) and new ancestors (Simon and Sarah Cooper, Catharine Parr Traill) Morag says, "I've made an island" (380). But her complacency is undermined by her question, "Are islands real?" and her own answer, "islands are unreal. No place is far away enough away. Islands exist only in the head. And yet I stay. All this, the river and the willows and the gronk-gronk-gronk of the mini-dinosaur bullfrogs, it may be a fantasy. But I can bear to live here, until I die, and I couldn't elsewhere" (308). Morag's flight from Manawaka has culminated in the adoption of a new identity, not the fantasy of a Highland ancestry, but a fantasy rooted in the reality of the Canadian landscape. Old roots make room for new in Morag's reconciliation of her many sources, reiterating

Kroetsch's vision of the Canadian as a work of postmodern architecture. And only now, "Morag began to see that here and now was not, after all, an island. Her quest for islands had ended some time ago, and her need to make pilgrimages had lead her back here" (380). Neither Morag's present home nor her current identity are islands, contained within themselves, but are connected to her past, both recent and ancestral, by the myths she has shaped about her regional and ethnic identity.

For the characters in MacLeod's stories, "the significance of ancestral islands" seems to be a very real concern in defining present identity. MacLeod's statement that "if you're an island group of people and then you go to another island . . . that means something" is manifested in his fiction. For example, in "Island," the people who keep the light on MacPhedran's Island "told themselves they were already used to [isolation], coming as they did from a people in the far north of Scotland who had for generations been used to the sea and the sleet and the wind and the rocky outcrops at the edge of their part of Europe" (83). For MacLeod, island identity is both a link with an ancestral past and with a more recent New World history; island identity is derived from Scottish history and perpetuated by Cape Breton regionalism. And unlike Morag, who comes to the realization that "islands are unreal," this island identity seems very real to MacLeod's characters in terms of the regional identity we have seen constructed in this thesis. Island/regional identity in MacLeod's works relies heavily on internal cohesion and isolation from the rest of the nation. Laurence's use of the island motif is part of a quest motif in The Diviners: Morag's search for an identity and a place of refuge is described in terms of a "quest for islands." But MacLeod's characters do not go in quest of islands.

They appear inextricably bound to an island identity and although they may journey out into the world, their return to the region, in body or in spirit, is often inevitable. Whereas Morag is able to adopt a new region within the Canadian nation, MacLeod's characters seem unable to feel truly at home outside the region. And whereas Morag comes to the conclusion that "here and now was not, after all, an island," no such possibility seems to exist for MacLeod's characters who are bound to the region. Though the identity of the Atlantic region may change from prosperity to decline, its isolation and difference from other regions is preserved in MacLeod's stories.

The substantial differences to be found in the way that Laurence and MacLeod construct regional identity should by no means be confused with the difference in the two regions these authors construct in their fictions. Regionalist writing is frequently interpreted only in the light of the "peculiarities" of the region it represents, rather than examining the ways in which the work constructs regional identity.[20] A catalogue of the differences between Western and Atlantic regional identity would be substantial indeed, but it seems more relevant to contrast *how* Laurence writes her region with how MacLeod writes his. Readings of regionalist texts that accept the version of the region presented as incontestable fact, ignoring the fact that even realist conventions are still only conventions, reduce regionalist writing to local colour writing, and fiction to mere documentary. So while we noted in Chapter One that the similar tendencies of Laurence and MacLeod to explore Scots heritage in specific regional settings have resulted in

---

[20]For example Kulyk Keefer states that the point of her critical study is "to emphasize . . . the fundamental coherence of the Maritime ethos and vision, and also its significant points of difference from other regional cultures" (<u>Under Eastern</u> xii).

dissimilar critical approaches to their works, this does not at all reflect upon the very distinct geographic regions out of which they are writing. It does, however, reflect the way in which these two regionalist writers construct their regional visions.

Laurence's construction of a prairie town relies heavily on the tensions that characterize that town. All of her novels, and most importantly The Diviners, display awareness of the differences between the inhabitants of the region and the particular discord that arises from them. Specifically, differences in class and race within the region distinguish The Diviners, bringing to light the multiplicity of identities present in this place, and in fact, in all places. The necessity of locating one's own identity in relation to regional identity relies heavily on individual circumstances, upon which race, class, family, history, and gender are brought to bear. Rather than constructing a dominant regional identity, Laurence emphasizes the variety of identities possible within a particular region. In general, her text may be seen as juxtaposing two broad categories of identity within the region: the native presence and the pioneer or settler presence. This interpretation, however, is complicated by her attention to livelihood and class structures that also foster regional heterogeneity. So although regionalist writing is often predicated on generalizations about a given region, and Laurence's is no exception, her generalizations are based on tensions, such as those found related to issues of class and race, that are specific to the region. The heterogeneous mix of identities represented in The Diviners is very much a manifestation of the Canadian West.

MacLeod's construction of regional identity differs significantly from Laurence's on the point of internal difference. His texts use ethnicity, occupation, and class to

construct a relatively homogeneous sense of regional identity. While Laurence identifies the Métis as the "Other" within her constructed region, MacLeod seems to rely on internal unity to represent those outside of the region as "Other." While Laurence presents Scots heritage as fostering ancestral identity for one sector of the population, MacLeod represents it as virtually the only ethnic identity within his population. And while Laurence risks essentializing the experiences of Western peoples by reducing them to the local interaction between Manawaka's Scottish and Métis communities, she resists constructing a unified regional identity that is defined against the rest of the nation. In contrast, MacLeod comes dangerously close to doing just that. All statistics of settlement aside, it is clear that no region in Canada can be as ethnically homogeneous as MacLeod represents Cape Breton to be. For example, Anne Marie MacDonald's recent novel, Fall on Your Knees, problematizes traditional representations of Cape Breton identity as primarily Scots and Irish by focussing on Lebanese, Jewish, and black narratives as well. MacLeod's tendency to write solely about one community within the region may expose his work to readings that argue he disregards tensions within the region in favour of a defining specific regional identity.[21] This could certainly serve to exclude MacLeod's texts from nationalist readings, whereas Laurence's representation of the nation seems to open her texts to both regionalist and nationalist interpretations.

---

[21]Significantly, Herb Wyile observes that critics such as Ricou and Kulyk Keefer are inclined to perpetuate such problems in their critical treatments of regional writing from the Prairies and the Maritime region, tending to homogenize regional identity in their rush to define the region against national identity (271).

In MacLeod's stories the apparent homogenous identity constructed within the region indicates a stronger bond between ancestral heritage and regional identity than we find in Laurence's text. In the case of MacLeod, Highland Scots heritage is frequently represented in terms of relatively recent, local culture rather than an ancestral, distant culture. The use of Gaelic in the stories illustrates this point. The loss of Gaelic is a recurrent motif in his stories, particularly in the second collection, as it is in The Diviners. But within MacLeod's Cape Breton, where Gaelic was a significant presence that served to define the region against other regions in Canada, the loss of the ancestral language appears as a regional loss. While Laurence focusses on the loss of ancestral languages as well, her regional construction is not characterized by the loss of a single heritage. Rather Morag, Christie, and Dan McRaith with their lost Gaelic are complemented by Jules with his lost French and Cree, and even by Brooke with his lost Hindi. Laurence's text presents the loss of ancestral heritage on an individual basis, rather than on a regional basis. And while some of MacLeod's characters recognize their inability to speak Gaelic, as Sal does in "The Tuning of Perfection," their reaction to this loss is characterized by nonchalance (in the case of Sal) or acceptance (in the case of Carver). In contrast, Pique in The Diviners displays anger in reference to her inability to speak the language of her father, feeling as she does that her heritage has been denied her. MacLeod represents Gaelic as a language of childhood, of the elderly, and as a commodity that is kept alive by tourism and government programs. It was a vibrant presence in the region, but this vibrancy is now fading. In The Diviners, Gaelic is a symbol of the past but is never represented as a living language in the region. It lives on

in the form of a once-discarded Gaelic Bible, in a collection of the poems of Ossian, and in sound recordings Morag will never understand. Her refusal to take Gaelic lessons betrays her willingness to allow Gaelic to continue as a symbol of her past rather than an active part of her future. Efforts to resurrect Gaelic in the schools and in folklore festivals in MacLeod's stories represent the preservation of a living heritage as a regional, rather than an individual concern. Thus the bonds between region and Scots heritage appear to be nearly synonymous in MacLeod, but not so for Laurence.

Despite the contrasting regional visions of Laurence and MacLeod, the role of story in fostering regional identity is a key point in connecting their works together. Both authors recognize the importance story plays in constructing ethnic and regional identity. In The Diviners, the stories of Christie and Lazarus function as myths from which Morag and Jules draw both ancestral and local identity. Christie draws identity from the myths of Ossian and the history of the Highlands of Scotland, and Lazarus draws identity from Cree legends and the history of the Métis rebellions. In turn, Morag and Jules pass these inherited myths on to their daughter, Pique, supplementing them with stories of Christie and songs of Lazarus and Piquette. The stories Pique has heard from her parents evoke the geography, history, and culture of a region she has never seen, and Pique's search for identity culminates in her decision to return to the region of these stories to discover her roots. And Morag's profession as a writer is not incidental to these themes, but rather an integral part of her status as a diviner of the stories that create and reveal identity.

The characters of MacLeod's stories share regional identity also disseminated through myth and story. In "As Birds Bring Forth the Sun," the men from a particular

region draw their identity, and their sense of alienation from the centre, from an inherited story, the myth of the *cù mòr glas a' bhàis*. And in "Vision," local history and ancestral history are connected in a web of stories that the narrator sees as becoming part of himself, "the way that such things do, went into [him] in such a way that [he] knew it would not leave again but would remain there forever" (As Birds 128). While none of MacLeod's characters are specifically identified as writers in the way that Morag is in The Diviners, Kulyk Keefer points out that "they all possess the education and sensibility to be accomplished tellers of their own stories" (Under Eastern 234).

In the case of both MacLeod and Laurence, story is presented as more than mere entertainment. It is a powerful force that both creates, and is created by, identity. And in both cases, the local and the familiar anchor identity to a specific place, to the region known intimately as home. For each author, the local and the particular serve as springboards into fiction that probes the relationships of ancestral myth to identity and place to identity.

Works Cited

Alexander, Flora. "The Idea of the Highlander in The Diviners." British Journal of Canadian Studies 7 (1992): 83-90.

Barratt, Harold. "Writing in Cape Breton: A Critical Introduction." Essays on Canadian Writing. 31 (1985): 175-91.

Berry, Reginald and James Acheson, eds. Regionalism and National Identity: Multi-Disciplinary Essays on Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Christchurch, NZ: Assn. For Canadian Studies in Australia and New Zealand, 1985.

Davey, Frank. "Towards the Ends of Regionalism." Riegel *et al.* 1-17.

Doyle, James. "Alistair MacLeod." Dictionary of Literary Biography: Canadian Writers Since 1960. Ed. W. H. New. Detroit: Gale, 1987.

Florby, Gunilla. The Margin Speaks: A Study of Margaret Laurence and Robert Kroetsch From a Post-colonial Point of View. Lund, Swed.: Lund UP, 1997.

Frye, Northrop. "From Nationalism to Regionalism: The Maturing of Canadian Culture." Aurora: New Canadian Writing 1980. Ed. Morris Wolfe. Toronto: Doubleday, 1980. 5-15.

Gittings, Christopher. "Canada and Scotland: Conceptualizing 'Postcolonial' Spaces." Essays in Canadian Writing 56 (1995): 135-61.

—. 'Sounds in the Empty Spaces of History': The Highland Clearances in Neil Gunn's Highland River and Alistair MacLeod's 'The Road to Rankin's Point.'" Studies in Canadian Literature 17 (1992): 93-105.

Goldie, Terry. Fear and Temptation: The Image of the Indigene in Canadian, Australian,

and New Zealand Literatures. Kingston: McGill-Queen's P, 1989.

Heaney, Seamus. "The Regional Forecast." Literature of Region and Nation. Ed. R. P. Draper. New York: St. Martin's, 1989. 10-23.

Hobsbawm, Eric. "Inventing Traditions." Hobsbawm 1-14.

—, and Terence Ranger, eds. The Invention of Tradition. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1983.

Hornsby, Stephen. "Scottish Emigration and Settlement in Early Nineteenth-Century Cape Breton." The Island: New Perspectives on Cape Breton's History 1713-1990. Ed. Kevin Donovan. Fredericton, NB: Acadiensis, 1990. 49-69.

Howells, Coral Ann and Lynette Hunter, eds. Narrative Strategies in Canadian Literature: Feminism and Postcolonialism. Milton Keynes: Open UP, 1991.

Jordan, David. New World Regionalism. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1994.

Keefer, Janice Kulyk. Rev. of As Birds Bring Forth the Sun and Other Stories, by Alistair MacLeod. Antigonish Review 66-67 (1986): 113-16.

—. Under Eastern Eyes: A Critical Reading of Maritime Fiction. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1987.

Keith, W. J. "Margaret Laurence's The Diviners: The Problems of Close Reading." Journal of Canadian Studies 23 (1988) 102-16.

Kortenaar, Neil ten. "The Trick of Divining a Postcolonial Canadian Identity: Margaret Laurence Between Race and Nation." Canadian Literature 149 (1996): 11-33.

Kroetsch, Robert. The Lovely Treachery of Words. Toronto: Oxford UP, 1989.

Lacroix, Jean-Michel and Coral Ann Howells. "Identity in the Making: Emerging

Canadian Culture and Images of Canadianess" Canada on the Threshold of the 21st Century: European Reflections on the Future of Canada. Ed. C. H. W. Remie and Jean-Michel Lacroix. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1991. 243-44.

Laurence, Margaret. The Diviners. 1974. Afterword Timothy Findley. Toronto: McClelland, 1989.

—. Heart of a Stranger. Toronto: McClelland, 1976. Toronto: Bantam-Seal, 1980.

—. The Stone Angel. 1964. Afterword Adele Wiseman. Toronto: McClelland, 1989.

Litvack, Leon B. "The Continuity of Culture: Celticity in the Writings of Alistair MacLeod." Working Papers in Irish Studies. Ft. Lauderdale, FL: Nova University, 1993: 7-16.

MacLeod, Alistair. As Birds Bring Forth the Sun and Other Stories. 1986. Afterword Jane Urquhart. Toronto: McClelland, 1992.

—. "Island." The Lost Salt Gift of Blood: New and Selected Stories. Princeton: Ontario Review, 1988. 78-110.

—. The Lost Salt Gift of Blood. 1976. Toronto: McClelland, 1983.

—. Interview. Brick 36 (1989): 19-28.

McKay, Ian. "Tartanism Triumphant: The Construction of Scottishness in Nova Scotia, 1933-1954." Acadiensis 21.2 (1992): 5-47.

New, W. H. A History of Canadian Literature. London: Macmillan, 1989.

Nicholson, Colin, ed. Critical Approaches to the Fiction of Margaret Laurence. Vancouver: U of British Columbia P, 1990.

—. "Footprints On the Soul: A Scots-Canadian Connection in the Work of Sorley

MacLean and Alistair MacLeod." Maes-Jelinek 146-53.

—. "Regions of Memory: Alistair MacLeod's Fiction." British Journal of Canadian Studies. 7 (1992): 128-37.

—. "Signatures of Time: Alistair MacLeod and His Short Stories." Canadian Literature 107 (1985): 90-101.

—. "The Tuning of Memory: Alistair MacLeod's Short Fiction." Howells and Hunter 30-39.

Piercy, Marge. Rev. of The Diviners, by Margaret Laurence. New York Times Book Review 23 Jun. 1974: 6.

Ricou, Laurence R. Vertical Man, Horizontal World: Man and Landscape in Canadian Prairie Fiction. Vancouver: U of British Columbia P, 1973.

Riegel, Christian, *et al.*, eds. A Sense of Place: Re-Evaluating Regionalism in Canadian and American Writing. Edmonton: U of Alberta P, 1997.

Thomas, Clara. The Manawaka World of Margaret Laurence. Toronto: McClelland, 1975.

Trevor-Roper, Hugh. "The Invention of Tradition: The Highland Tradition of Scotland." Hobsbawm 15-41.

Urquhart, Jane. Afterword. As Birds Bring Forth the Sun and Other Stories. By Alistair MacLeod. Toronto: McClelland, 1992. 168-74.

Verduyn, Christl, ed. Margaret Laurence: An Appreciation. Peterborough, ON: Broadview, 1988.

Wainwright, J. A., ed. A Very Large Soul: Selected Letters From Margaret Laurence to

Canadian Writers. Dunvegan, ON: Cormorant, 1995.

Waterson, Elizabeth. "The Lowland Tradition in Canadian Literature." Reid 203-31.

Woodcock, George. "The Human Elements: Margaret Laurence's Fiction." The Human Elements: Critical Essays. Ed. David Helwig. Ottawa: Oberon, 1978. 134-161.

—. The Meeting of Time and Space: Regionalism in Canadian Literature. Edmonton: NeWest, 1981.

—, A Place to Stand On: Essays By and About Margaret Laurence. Edmonton: NeWest, 1983.

Wyile, Herb. "Regionalism, Post-nationalism, and Post-colonialism: The Case of Canadian Literature(s)." Proceedings of the Sixth International Literature of Region and Nation Conference, August 2-7, 1996. Ed. Winnifred M. Bogaards. Vol. 2. Saint John, NB: University of New Brunswick, 1998. 267-76.

Works Consulted

Bader, Rudolph. "The Mirage of The Sceptr'd Isle: An Imagological Appraisal." Ariel 19.1 (1988): 35-44.

"Bag-pipe." Encyclopaedia Britannica. 11th ed. 1910.

Beckmann, Susan. "Language as Cultural Identity in Achebe, Ihimaera, Laurence and Atwood." World Literature Written in English 20 (1981): 117-34.

Berces, Frances. "Existential Maritimer: Alistair MacLeod's The Lost Salt Gift of Blood." Studies in Canadian Literature 16 (1991): 114-28.

Berry, Reginald and James Acheson, eds. Regionalism and National Identity: Multi-Disciplinary Essays on Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Christchurch, NZ: Assn. For Canadian Studies in Australia and New Zealand, 1985.

Carpenter, Dave. "Writing Home." Rev. of The Lost Salt Gift of Blood: New and Selected Stories, by Alistair MacLeod. Canadian Literature 129 (1991): 152-54.

Chalykoff, Lisa. "Overcoming the Two Solitudes of Canadian Literary Regionalism." Studies in Canadian Literature 23 (1998): 160-77.

Chambers, Robert D. "Notes On Regionalism in Modern Canadian Fiction." Journal of Canadian Studies 11 (1976): 27-34.

Coger, Greta M., ed. New Perspectives on Margaret Laurence: Poetic Narrative, Multiculturalism and Feminism. Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1996.

Cogswell, Fred. "Some Notes on the Development of Regional Fiction in the Maritimes." Essays on Canadian Writing 31 (1985): 192-200.

Davey, Frank. Post-National Arguments: The Politics of the Anglophone-Canadian

Novel Since 1967. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1993.

Davidson, Arnold E. "As Birds Bring Forth the Story: The Elusive Art of Alistair MacLeod." Canadian Literature 119 (1988): 32-42.

Davidson, Cathy N. "Geography As Psychology in the Writings of Margaret Laurence." Regionalism and the Female Imagination: A Collection of Essays. Ed. Emily Toth. New York: Human Sciences, 1985. 129-38.

Dunn, Charles W. Highland Settler: A Portrait of the Scottish Gael in Nova Scotia. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1953.

Easingwood, Peter. "Semi-autobiographical Fiction and Revisionary Realism in A Bird in the House." Howells and Hunter 19-29.

Gaskill, Howard, ed. Ossian Revisited. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1991

Goldie, Terry. "Folklore, Popular Culture & Individuation in Surfacing and The Diviners." Canadian Literature 104 (1985): 95-108.

Gom, Leona. "Laurence and the Use of Memory." Canadian Literature 71 (1976): 48-58.

—. "Margaret Laurence: The Importance of Place." West Coast Review 10.2 (1975): 26-30.

Groß, Konrad. "Identity–Identities: Infamous Canadian Pastime, Venerable Quest, or Trivial Pursuit?" O Canada: Essays on Canadian Literature and Culture. Ed. Jørn Carlsen. Aarhus: Aarhus UP, 1995. 26-37.

Gunnars, Kristjana, ed. Crossing the River: Essays in Honour of Margaret Laurence. Winnipeg: Turnstone, 1988.

Harrison, Dick. "Orphan and Amputee: A Search For Ancestors in The Diviners and

Wallace Stegner's Angle of Repose." Riegel 139-161.

—. Unnamed Country: The Struggle for a Canadian Prairie Fiction. Edmonton: U of Alberta P, 1977.

Hook, Andrew. "Scotland and Romanticism: The International Scene." The History of Scottish Literature. Ed. Andrew Hook. Vol. 2. Aberdeen: Aberdeen UP, 1987. 307-22.

Howells, Coral Ann. "In Search of Lost Mothers: Margaret Laurence's The Diviners and Elizabeth Jolley's Miss Peabody's Inheritance." Ariel 19.1 (1988): 57-70.

—. Private and Fictional Words: Canadian Women Novelists of the 1970's and 1980's. London: Methuen, 1987.

Irvine, Lorna M. Critical Spaces: Margaret Laurence and Janet Frame. Columbia, SC: Camden, 1995.

Jordan, David, ed. Regionalism Reconsidered: New Approaches to the Field. New York: Garland, 1994.

Lane, Dorothy. "'A Habitable Kingdom': The Canadian Crusoe Motif in Traill's Canadian Crusoes and Laurence's The Diviners." Margaret Laurence Review 2/3 (1992-93): 1-7.

Laurence, Margaret. A Bird in the House. 1963. Afterword Isabel Huggan. Toronto: McClelland, 1990.

—. Dance on the Earth: A Memoir. Toronto: McClelland, 1989.

—. The Fire-Dwellers. 1969. Introd. Allan Bevan. Toronto: McClelland, 1973.

—. A Jest of God. 1966. Introd. G. D. Killam. Toronto: McClelland, 1974.

—. Long Drums and Cannons: Nigerian Dramatists and Novelists 1952-1966. London: Macmillan, 1968.

—. Selected Letters of Margaret Laurence and Adele Wiseman. Ed. John Lennox and Ruth Panofsky. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1997.

Lemieux, Anglelika Maeser. "The Scots Presbyterian Legacy." Riegel 163 - 86.

MacKinnon, Ken. "Alistair MacLeod's Fiction: Long Homeward Journey from Exile." Rev. of As Birds Bring Forth the Sun and Other Stories, by Alistair MacLeod. Atlantic Provinces Book Review 13.2 (1986): 3.

MacLeod, Alistair. Afterword. Barometer Rising. By Hugh MacLennan. 1941. Toronto: McClelland, 1989. 221-35.

—. Interview. Books In Canada. By Mark Fortier. Aug. - Sept. 1986: 38-39.

—. Interview. Lives and Works. Ed. Bruce Meyer and Brian O'Riordan. Windsor, ON: Black Moss, 1992.

—. Interview. "The World Is Full of Exiles." Studies in Canadian Literature 20 (1995): 150-60.

MacNeil, Ann Marie. "Change and Development in Alistair MacLeod's Use of the Past in His Short Stories." MA Thesis, Acadia University, 1995.

MacPhee, Dianne Celia. "Highland Culture as the Essence of Being in the Short Stories of Alistair MacLeod." BA Thesis, Acadia University, 1994.

"MacPherson, James." Collins Encyclopaedia of Scotland. Ed. John Keay and Julia Keay. London: Harper, 1994. 670-71.

Maes-Jelinek, Hena, Kirsten Holst-Petersen and Anna Rutherford, eds. A Shaping of

Connections: Commonwealth Literature Studies – Then and Now. Sydney: Dangaroo, 1989.

McCrone, David. Understanding Scotland: The Sociology of a Stateless Nation. London: Routledge, 1992.

Monkman, Leslie. A Native Heritage: Images of the Indian in English-Canadian Literature. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1981.

—. "The Tonnerre Family: Mirrors of Suffering." Journal of Canadian Fiction 27 (1980): 143-50.

New, W. H. "Colonial Literatures." New National and Post-colonial Literatures: An Introduction. Oxford: Clarendon, 1996. 102-19.

—. "A Shaping of Connections." Maes-Jelinek 154-63.

Nicholson, Colin. "A Tribute From Scotland." Margaret Laurence Review 1 (1991): 3-4.

Pell, Barbara. "Cameo and Conflict." Rev. of As Birds Bring Forth the Sun and Other Stories, by Alistair MacLeod and Visitations, by Elizabeth Brewster. Canadian Literature 118 (1988): 169-71.

Peterman, Michael A. "Catharine Parr Traill." Dictionary of Literary Biography: Canadian Writers Before 1890. Ed. W. H. New. Detroit: Gale, 1990.

Prebble, John. The Highland Clearances. London: Secker, 1963.

Rao, Eleonora. "Dreaming of Elsewhere: Margaret Laurence's The Diviners." Margaret Laurence Review 4/5 (1994-95): 17-22.

Reid, W. Stanford, ed. The Scottish Tradition in Canada. Toronto: McClelland, 1976.

Ricou, Laurence R. "Empty as Nightmare: Man and Landscape in Recent Prairie

Fiction." Mosaic 6.2 (1973): 143-60.

Riegel, Christian, ed. Challenging Territory: The Writing of Margaret Laurence. Edmonton: U of Alberta P, 1997.

Rocard, Marcienne. "The Dispossession Theme in Margaret Laurence's The Diviners." World Literature Written in English 21 (1982): 109-14.

—. "The Métis in Margaret Laurence's Manawaka Works." Études Canadiennes 5 (1978): 113-17.

Sparrow, Fiona. "This Place is Some Kind Of Garden": Clearings in the Bush in the Works of Susanna Moodie, Catharine Parr Traill, Margaret Atwood and Margaret Laurence." Journal of Commonwealth Literature 25 (1990): 24-41.

Stevens, David. "Writing Region Across the Border: Two Stories of Breece Pancake and Alistair MacLeod." Studies in Short Fiction 33 (1996): 263-71.

Thomas, Clara. "Margaret, Morag, and the Scottish Ancestors." British Journal of Canadian Studies 7 (1992): 83-90.

—. "The Wild Garden and the Manawaka World." Modern Fiction Studies 22 (1976): 401-11.

Wainwright, J. A. "You Have To Go Home Again: Art and Life in The Diviners." World Literature Written in English 20 (1981): 292-311.

Ware, Tracey. "Race and Conflict in Garner's 'One-Two-Three Little Indians' and Laurence's 'The Loons.'" Studies in Canadian Literature 23 (1998): 71-84.