Abstract: Black Canadian artists and scholars challenge racist and nationalist discourses of Canadian nationhood and citizenship that place First Nations people, people of African descent and other people of colour who are born in Canada and can claim Canadian nationality based on birth, as outsiders. By contesting the ‘master narrative’ of Canadian nationhood and by interrogating blackness within Canada, these artists and scholars claim “African Canada” as a “convergence of multiple African diasporic voices, coming from different ethno-cultural, linguistic and national spaces, but together articulating a deliberately transgressive Canadianness.”
diasporic voices\textsuperscript{2}, coming from different ethno-cultural, linguistic and national spaces, but together articulating a deliberately transgressive Canadianness that not only takes cultural differences into account but also positions the lived experiences of black Canadians as an essential part of a wider discussion about what it means to live” (Davis 2006, 70) and survive in Canada.

The way blackness is identified and named in Canada is contingent on a number of factors including, but not limited to, such things as time of settlement, sense of belonging, migratory factors and cultural connections to a perceived homeland. The purpose of this short essay is not to describe Canadian blackness; instead, this piece attempts to historicize and reconnoiter the various multi-disciplinary and interdisciplinary engagements with the black Canadian experience. By no means is this discussion meant to be exhaustive as one of the limitations of much of the available scholarship focuses on Ontario while negating black geographic locations in Edmonton, Calgary, Saskatoon, black francophone places such as Quebec and Ottawa, and other communities settled by black pioneers.

This discussion necessitates that we begin with the legacy of black Canadian-born populations, those descendants of African-Americans who migrated to Canada as slaves, freed people, and loyalists. Their historical accounts of settlement (Nova Scotia, British Columbia and Alberta) and nascent nation building have been documented by various scholars (see for example Winks 1971; Clairmount & Magill 1997; Pachai 1989; Kilian 1978). Despite the long existence and presence of black people in Canada since the early 17th century, African Canadian experiences often get read through an African-American and Caribbean immigrant lens. Identity then for black Canadian-born individuals comprises both pride and alienation. As Clarke (2002) points out, “there is a Canadianness about African-Canadian culture that cannot be subsumed under the banner of an ‘imperial’ African Americanism,” (46) nor can it be fused with the Caribbean Canadian migrant experience. Indeed, the denial of what Clarke (2002) refers to as African Canadianite - “the perpetual marginalization” of African Canada “within white majority discourse” (49) and black Canada placement outside of Canada – forces this particular group to be vigilant in their claims of rootedness while dealing with cultural invisibility and white racism in Canada. As such, “black identities (are) locked outside of a Canadian ‘norm’ and are constructed not only as entirely recent and migratory, but also as increasingly inimical to the nation state,” (Davis 2006, 23) producing a double consciousness in black Canadian identity.

The problematic of a ‘black Canadian’ identity (an implied oxymoron either or but not both) is linked to the Canadian origins discourse that is grounded in myth making around white Canadian nation-building and historiography. Ethnocentrism and racism have shaped Canadian identity in
a monolithic way, obscuring blackness as ‘Other,’ in turn making it secondary and inconsequential to Canadian history. Indeed, through “acts of symbolic and physical displacement, official Canadian cultural discourses orchestrate and limit how blackness can be rhetorically presented in Canada” (Harris 2004, 367) and also how blackness is theorized and analyzed. But the black Canadian experience needs to be centered for its contributions to Canadian ‘arrival’ histories and stories, similar to what has been constructed through the white/European imagination.

Furthermore, Black Canadian identity is not simply about exclusion, but also covers the ontological and existentialist questions and insights about the problematic of black identity associated with how black Canadians come to know, and understand themselves and also how they choose to define/name their racial, cultural, sexual and national identities. For people of African descent, black Canadian identity is heterogeneous, encompassing national, transnational and diasporic components. Therefore, as stated above, black Canadian identity has to be qualified anytime one speaks of it because it is differentiated across ethnicity, culture, language and national origin. Black Canadian hybridity moves beyond the singularity of identity as two or more identities or cultures come together or collide, through a creolized process, to form a particularized hyphenated existence (e.g. African-Canadian, black Nova Scotian, Jamaican-Canadian, Ghanaian-Canadian etc.), which arguably is what being Canadian is all about.

Nimijean (2005) points us to Hugh Segal’s suggestion that Canadian identity can be “found in its actions, both past and current” (6). As such, we are reminded that the Canadian landscape, and issues around national identity, should be read as a post-colonial site of contested engagements between different racial and ethnic groups instead of it being, simply, based on the hegemonic experience of Euro-Canadians. For example, multiculturalism, a policy enacted to celebrate difference and to promote “the cultural and racial diversity of Canadian society” is an expression of Euro-Canada’s power and control and subsequent subjugation and exclusion of First Nations, blacks and other citizens of colour. As an integrationist model that is used to “portray Canada favourably” both internationally and domestically, multiculturalism has not eroded or escaped the white settler myth because it has been built around it. Fundamentally, it has not allowed for power sharing between racial and ethnic groups within Canada, even as it has allowed for a particular ‘ideological distinctiveness’ that Canadians use to differentiate themselves from their American neighbours (Nimijean 2005). That is, there is a Canadian ambience of superiority because the nation has dealt with difference, not as a melting pot as has been the practice in the United States, but as a cultural mosaic (Nimijean 2005; Mackey 2002) where cultural distinctiveness is said to be celebrated.
What has become increasingly evident in Canada is that how scholars and artists problematize blackness is inextricably connected to a number of social and political factors that informs identity formation. Using a multidisciplinary approach they have examined the discursive and material reality of what it means to be (black) and live blackness in the Canadian context. Tettey and Puplampiu (2005) for example look at black continental Africans and first generation experiences of immigration, settlement, belonging and citizenship. The issue of racial identity for continental Africans is complicated by the cultural and ethnic variations of blackness and how blackness is claimed, or not claimed, in relation to a black North American sensibility. Cecil Foster (2007) maintains that black identity in modernity is often in flux amidst the precariousness of Canadian racial politics and multiculturalism contending that blackness “in multicultural Canada becomes a site of confusion” (398). Rinaldo Walcott (1997, 2001), from a Cultural Studies perspective, analyzes and critiques black identity and representations in literary works, media and black popular culture. Like Foster (2005), he challenges black essentialism asserting that black Canadian identity is primarily diasporic. Scholars such as Walcott are more concerned about the possibilities within the present time for blacks, rather than being fixated on origins and regrets of the past. Conversely, Foster (2005) and others present a redemptive quality of blackness in a broader humanistic framework, which diverges from someone like Andre Alexis (1995) who prefers if African Canadian artists and scholars produce work about blacks that are of the Canadian nation. Clarke (2002) however, posits blackness as “not just skin colour, but a polysemous consciousness” (188). These scholars demonstrate that the discursive and physical reality of what it means to be black in the Canadian context is varied. They have destabilized the notion of a universal blackness by demonstrating that blackness in Canada is a contested and fractured terrain.

**African Canadian Presence in Canada: From Slavery, Displacement To Immigration**

As a result of the racial and/or economic disadvantages and discrimination that black Canadians encounter within a white dominated Canadian society, it is not surprising that much of the scholarship on blacks in Canada has focused primarily on race-class analyses, highlighting the impact of racism on black life and how it contributes to marginalization. Moreover, since much of the experience of black Canada is viewed through the lens of immigration, scholarly literature also tends to follow this particular trajectory. Consequently, a dominant theme that has emerged is black people’s subjectivity and identity as workers; their first experience associated with slavery. Canadians are generally in denial about slavery as an aspect of their history as it stands in stark contrasts to the image of a benevolent nation that Canada projects to the world. Thus, reference to slavery
in Canada is often in the context of the enslaved escaping from their U.S. masters via the Underground Railroad and finding freedom in Canada. But as Winks (1997), Walker (1984), Tulloch (1975), Pachai (1989), and Pachai and Bishop (2006) discuss, enslaved Africans were imported to Canada, albeit on a small scale. However, regardless of its scale and intensity, slavery was practiced in Canada for almost three centuries.

Afua Cooper’s recent monograph, *The Hanging of Angelique: The Untold Story of Canadian Slavery and the Burning of Old Montreal* (2009) fills an important gap in the literature since so little is known about the experiences of bonded women and men on Canadian soil. Angelique’s story is an important piece in centering and historicizing black women’s resistance during slavery. Cooper painstakingly provides some glimpse, however partial, of Angelique’s life as a servant for a very prominent Montreal family. According to Cooper, Angelique was an enslaved woman with a “long tongue” who cursed not only her mistress, but also others in the household and the French in general (173). This woman who resented being enslaved eventually met her demise when she was hung for allegedly setting fire to her mistress home.

The enslavement of people of African descent on Canadian soil influenced their social status and that of later arrivals. In other words, the racist and sexist ideologies that suggested that blacks were inherently suited for certain kinds of work were established in slavery. Historian, James Walker (1985) noted that these “traditions... have resulted in a prescribed economic position for blacks...which fixed them at the lowest level of the social class hierarchy. Their colour was a label announcing their inferior position” (34). No one was exempt. By the mid-1850’s Canada was home to free blacks (some of whom came to Canada to work as labourers), slaves and loyalist who came from the United States. But, opportunities were limited and many of these newly arrived migrants were forced to work as part-time seasonal workers. Referring to Nova Scotia, Pachai and Bishop (2006) make clear that, “while black labour was used to help build roads and buildings and the fortunes of white society, they remained on the periphery of Nova Scotian society” (18). The price of never being fully incorporated or accepted as members had grave implications for African Canadians, one being the construction of Canadian identity as European.

Unquestionably, the role of the Canadian state in nation building was critical—as it functioned (and still does) as a gatekeeper to ensure that Canada’s national identity remained intrinsically European. For example, the migration of Caribbean people to alleviate the Post Second World War labour shortage changed the face of many major Canadian cities, yet, a white European norm maintains primacy in the Canadian national identity. To be clear, Caribbean people have never been upheld as the ‘right stock’ or preferred subjects to settle in Canada. In fact, immigration
officials and government representatives relied on seemingly putative cultural differences to render black bodies unfit to belong to the Canadian nation. Those deemed undesirables were only sought after when labour needs remain unmet, evidenced by the establishment of temporary programs, such as Canada’s various domestic workers schemes and a Seasonal Agricultural Program which today continues to rely on black bodies and other bodies of colour. The status of these migrants is unclear; they are temporary, and easily disposed of without an opportunity to make Canada home. These immigration programs are racialized, gendered and classed and reflected the federal government’s agenda in managing immigrant populations to meet its fluctuating and cyclical labour demands. Scholars such as Vic Satzewich (1989; 1991), John A. Shultz (1982), B. Singh Bolaria, and Peter S. Li (1988) have explored the exclusionary nature of Canada’s immigration policies, and how Caribbean people have been absorbed into the labour force once they entered the country.

An obvious limitation that exists in the initial scholarship regarding Canada’s immigration policies is the absence of a gender analysis in the formation of state policies. While there is recognition that the state plays a critical role in the organization and demarcation of the Canadian labour force on racial lines, how it creates and produces a sexual division of labour is often ignored. This was most evident in two domestic schemes, the first of which was initiated between 1910 and 1911 and the second in 1955. These government-sponsored programs were designed to meet the social reproduction needs of middle-class whites for cheap labour. They also reinforced black women’s identity as workers as one of the conditions of eligibility for the second scheme was to be without dependent children. Jamaican domesticst faced deportation in 1977 “because they had violated the conditions of the Scheme by failing to list their dependent children on their applications to migrate” (Bakan and Stasiulis 1997:125).

The experiences of these women would have been lost to historical obscurity had it not been for scholars such as Frances Henry (1968), Jane Sawyer Turrittin (1976) and Makeda Silvera (1983), Calliste (1991), Daenzer (1993), and Bakan and Stasiulis (1997). Scholars and activists not only brought attention to the plight of these domestic workers, but also highlighted the power of human agency despite overwhelming odds. Silvera (1983) for example chronicles the oral histories of African Caribbean domestic workers in southwestern Ontario in the 1980’s. In Silenced, Silvera underscores the particular ways that Caribbean women lived and worked by exemplifying how black female bodies and labour are configured as expandable in migrant work associated with paid reproductive labour.

Other examples of how black women’s identity is linked to work are also reflected in the recruitment of nurses and to a lesser-degree, teachers
(Cole 1967; Calliste 1993; Flynn 2004). While the proclivity have been to narrowly define black women as workers, there are a number of studies that have moved beyond this realm to explore other aspects of their subjectivities as mothers, community activists, academics (Calliste 1995; Crawford 2007; Tharao and Cornwell 2007; Bramble 1999; Gooden 2008; Flynn 2011). Additionally, Wanda Thomas Bernard’s research on social workers (2006) and, Flynn and Taylor’s (2009) discussion of black women in various fields also provided some insight into the challenges they face as workers. Other scholars use a black feminist and anti-racist framework to look more critically at the interplay between racism and sexism in the political and personal lives of black women. They highlight how black women negotiated identities within black nationalist and mainstream feminist movements over the gender/race divide (Massaquoi and Wane 2007; Crawford 2007; Robertson 1999; Bobb-Smith 2003; Carty 1994).

**Intersectional Identities: Moving Beyond Black Singularity**

Clearly, an examination of how black people have participated in constructing multiple identities and subjectivities in relation to how they are defined by society is critical in our understanding of how blackness is constructed in Canada. This has led to the recognition among scholars and artists that the black Canadian experience cannot be explored in isolation of mutually constituted factors of gender, class, sexuality and other markers. It is important to challenge androcentrism and heterosexism as some perspectives of black social and political thought have overlooked or marginalized the voices and contributions of black women and/or black gay men and women. Collections such as *Back to the Drawing Board: African-Canadian Feminisms* (Wane, Deliovsy, and Lawson 2002) and *Theorizing Empowerment: Canadian Perspectives on Black Feminist Thought* (Massaquoi and Wane 2007) not only insist on the development of a feminist theory that speaks to the particularities of black women’s lives in Canada, but also underscores how race, class, gender and to a certain extent sexuality operates as simultaneous oppressive forces. Still, much work needs to be done to incorporate sexuality to discussions of blackness. Scholars such as Silvera (1997) and Crichlow (2004) have explored same-sex relationship and the impact of homophobia on the lives of black gay men and women from a Caribbean diasporic perspective, which also deals with the additional oppression that they encounter in having to deal with racism in white gay organizations and spaces in Canada. In addition, two edited collections (Elwin 1998; Silvera 1991) have examined black and/or Caribbean lesbian identities and experiences in relation to sexuality, relationship, family, racism and homophobia while Callixte (2005) highlights how Caribbean migrants construct, negotiate and name their same gender desire despite the globalizing of western, normative and essentialist sexualities.
Literary Works

Literary works also evidence blackness, disrupt notions of homogeneity with the Canadian nation state and recognize the multiplicity of black Canada(s)—culture, knowledge, negotiations and experiences. Addressing issues of (un) belonging, (non) citizenship and erasure, literary authors such as Clarke (2002) articulate how black identities emerge despite multiply systems of domination that attempt to limit blackness. As McKittrick (2002) highlights, Clarke “writes black Canada as counter to and inside the nation” (28). Clarke (2002) insists that Canada, therefore black Canada(s) are spaces that wraps ‘Americanite’. Yet, “an African-Canadian sensibility may be articulated at the very point it seems to vanish” (49). That is, black Canada “possesses a Canadian dimension that is recognized by engaging with black cultural works located” (10) in Canada that address black existence in Canada.

Articulating the angst of oppression, African Canadian (many who are of Caribbean descent) writers explore belonging in relation to race, culture and identity. They attempt to locate African Canadian experiences within a contemporary reality through examining the historical and present relationship of black Canadians and black representations in literature. For example, Lillian Allen (1999) and Andre Alexis (1995) tackle displacement and (un) belonging, Allen through poetry while Alexis uses fiction to engage with the Canadian landscape. In Nalo Hopkins’ science fiction novels (1998, 2000), the subjects are shaped by African and Caribbean cultures while in Esi Edugyan’s Half-Blood Blues (2011) and Lawrence Hill’s Any Know Blood (2008) the authors capture the complex ways that race is employed in Canada. In both Edugyan’s and Hill’s novels, the protagonists experience varied treatment because of their skin-tone.

Echoing concerns relating to race, gender, sexuality and class, authors such as Dionne Brand (1994; 1998) Makeda Silvera (2002), and M. Nourbese Philip (1992) confronts Canada on slightly different terms. Brand’s –Bread out of Stone (1994) – articulates a black activism that challenges sexism, homophobia, racism and violence against black people, particularly men. In her novel, In Another Place Not Here, Brand (1996) makes visible same-sex female relationships and the issues around longing for home (Trinidad) while residing in Canada. Similarly Silvera’s transnational novel, The Heart does not Bend (2002) tackles intergenerational issues, motherhood, same-sex relationship among an immigrant family living in Jamaica and Canada. Philip’s work on the other hand, uses contemporary and historical relationships to explore the social construction of black female bodies. In her piece “Dis Place-The Space Between” she writes “a historical present” (McKittrick 2006, 46) of black women’s bodies.

There are numerous other diasporic angst novels that also negotiate
multiple temporal and spatial locations. Austin Clarke’s Toronto Trilogy – *The Meeting Point* (1967), *Storm of Fortune* (1973) and *The Bigger Light* (1975) addresses’ racism, settlement issues and alienation that an undocumented Caribbean domestic worker and her friends and family faces. In the trilogy, the protagonist, Bernice has to deal with sexual/racial exploitation, invisibility and separation from her family. The psycho-socio impact of racism is dealt with through the immigrant experience. Similarly, Cecil Foster’s *Sleep on Beloved* (1995) explores Caribbean immigrant issues around separation as well as motherhood and mother-child reunification.

**Other Articulations**

Autobiographies of black Canadians growing up during the mid-20th century have been critical in understanding what it means to grow up black and Canadian (see for example Best 1977; Talbot 1983; Foggo 1990; and Grizzle 1998). Other work exposes how hierarchized relations of power between white and a non-white population has produced, and continues to produce racial inequalities. The resistance to institutionalized systemic forms of oppression has been documented by Peggy Bristow (1994), Adrienne Shadd (2010) and Natasha L. Henry (2010). Others have examined education (Dei 2000; Wane 2002), immigration (Mensah 2002; Mathieu 2010), and the criminal justice system (Henry 1995; Nelson 2000). Mensah (2002) for instance takes a multi-disciplinary look at diverse black ethnic experiences in Canada, accounting for differences in social conditions and status while Dei (2000) challenges the Canadian educational system with a critical anti-racist approach. Plaza (1999, 1998) in separate studies explores the obstacles faced by Caribbean migrants and their children in the pursuit of university level studies. Focusing on how racism, sexism, place of birth and various other factors influence the schooling experiences of Caribbean children, Plaza argues that the factors impacting incorporation of Caribbean migrants and their children have implications for how these groups are situated within the larger Canadian society. Exploring the domain of higher education particularly, Njoki Nathani Wane (2002), underscores the difficulties black women face in carving out a critical space in an arena which has historically been the preserve of educated and elite white males and more recently white women. She insists that black women write and create texts as way to contribute to academic discourses but also to carve out a space for themselves in the academy.

While Wane marks an academic space, authors such as Dorothy Shadd Shreve (1983) and Carol Duncan (1997) underscore religion as foundational to black people’s identity. Writing about the black Canadian born community, Shreve (1983) discusses how the BME and AME church meet the multiple and diverse needs of a population that were often dehumanized in Canadian society while Duncan (1997) examines the role of the church in Caribbean people’s lives. Although additional work has been
done on the meaning of spirituality in the lives of blacks (see Waldron (2005) for example) there is still a paucity of research in the area of religion and spirituality, particularly its manifestations with new migrant communities from the continent.

**Black Identity and Popular Culture**

A new generation of activists, scholars, and artists are reimagining how blackness is constituted and reconstituted over time. Using post-colonial discourse, Cultural Studies, African diasporic, transnational and feminist frameworks among others, scholars inscribe the long presence of people of African descent in Canada. The work of Katherine McKittrick (2006, 2010) for example combines critical race theory with cultural geography to explore the racialized and gendered production of place and space in Canada. McKittrick demonstrates the various ways that Canada is informed by a historical and contemporary black presence and how black Canadian identities and practice arise and was impacted by the Canadian landscape.

The use of transnationalism as a theoretical and analytical framework is evident in the work of a few scholars who are exploring for example, the historical roots of a transnational community culture (see for example Plaza 2007, 2008). Trotz (2006) critiques the focus on binaries, such as origins/destination and home/away as the only way to map enduring cross-border linkages, which ignores other journeys such as those that occur between multiple diasporas such as Toronto and New York. In “The Continuity Of Global Crossings: African-Caribbean Women And Transnational Motherhood,” Crawford (2011) problematizes the relationship between female migrant labour, motherhood and transnationality as she examines the experiences of working-class African-Caribbean women in Canada who simultaneously work and care for their children from aboard amidst socio-economic and immigration uncertainty during the 1970s to mid-1990s. Gooden (2011) examines the ways that Caribbean migrants craved out spaces for themselves by creating transnational communities using informal and formal networks in Toronto.

Other scholars such as Kelly (2004) use critical Cultural Studies and post-colonial theory as frameworks to suggest that black American popular culture has a huge influence on black Canadian identity, particularly with youth, in relation to self-identification, expression and materialism. The domination of some aspects of American culture (particularly African-American culture) in Canada reinforces the way that blackness orients itself in Canada as “Other,” and “outside the norm of what it means to be Canadian” (91). The rebelliousness of African American Hip/Hop culture, its resistance to the state and its Cool Pose patriarchal dogma offers alternative ways of being in a white world, which is appealing to urban black Canadian youth, particularly black young men, who seek to empower
themselves. The plethora of images that emanate from the United States plays a part in how black Canadian youth define themselves in relation to a national identity, and in relationship to an international or diasporic blackness. Conversely, Charmaine Nelson’s (2010) edited text challenges the dominance of African America culture in Canada, especially in relation to hip-hop.

African Canadians who have lived in Canada for several generations and second generation Caribbean Canadians tend to situate themselves in different ways in terms of the Canadian nation than their parents or predecessors. They appear to be less preoccupied with how their identity is perceived among mainstream Canadians. Karen Flynn and Evelyn Marrast (2009) suggest in their discussion of five (D’bi Young, Motion, Estelle Boatang, Nth Digri and Dwayne Morgan) second-generation Caribbean-Canadian spoken word/dub poet/performance artists “there is definitely willingness by the artists to unapologetically insert themselves on the Canadian performance/literary landscape, while claiming a space within the larger Canadian society.” Karen Richardson, one of the editors of T-Dot Griots, echoes a similar analysis in An Anthology of Toronto’s Black Storytellers (2004). The intent of the volume was to highlight the multi-layered texture of black identity, which Richardson summarizes in the afterword by pointing out, “we are Toronto's black storytellers; standing together in hopes that the world might see us, Africans in a foreign land where transplanted roots fight for a foothold in the snow. ... Our words live here and in case you haven't noticed -- so do we” (166). This quest to claim visibility in a society that continues to position blacks outside of the nation will continue to be a preoccupation as long as there is denial about, or continued stereotypical representations around blackness.

Conclusion
In situating and mapping the experiences of black Canadians from an interdisciplinary perspective, it is clear that artists and scholars play an important role in defining and redefining what it means to be black in Canada. In thinking through (or reviewing) Black Canadian Studies, it is apparent that the histories and the experiences of people of African decent in Canada are rich as they are diverse. The trajectories of arrivals, immigration and settlement are all noteworthy in showing how black identities have been shaped by multiple ethno-cultural and linguistic markers as well as through the politics of resistance against white racism and colonial oppression. Black Canadian existence transgress rigid identity politics based on a homogenous collectivity and fosters a supple heterogeneity from within, which is intergenerational, national, diasporic and transnational. Moreover, blackness is symbolically expressed and materially actualized through black Canadian contributions, achievements and resilience in the arts, academia, media and politics.
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**Endnotes**

1 George Elliott Clarke (2002) uses the term “African Canada” to historicize the space that African Canadians occupy. According to Clarke, “African Canada” is an entity that has its origins in the late 1700’s when African Americans arrived in Canada during the American Revolution, see Clarke’s *Odysseys Home: Mapping African-Canadian Literature*, pp. 15 and 73-74. Clarke’s reference to “African Canada” as an ‘entity’ should be equated with the historical trajectory that brought about the existence of African American presence in Canada, as a particular black ethno-cultural group, rather than it being seen or presented as a monolithic body that exclusively defines black Canadian identity and experience.

2 The traditional meaning of the word ‘diaspora’ refers to the dispersal of a group of people from their homeland. Throughout time, due to war, political and religious persecution people have lived in exile, or away from their homeland for long periods of time hoping that one day they will return to their country of origin. We are most familiar with the term ‘diaspora’ in denoting the Jewish experience of dispersal and exile but there is also the legacy of an African diaspora due to the forced movement of African people to the Americas and the Caribbean as a result of European colonization and enslavement. In contemporary times, the word diaspora has taken on a new meaning, especially for immigrants and formerly colonized people. There are no fixed notions of homeland or real physical movement back to one’s country of origin because migration and border crossings have become multiple within global capitalism, in turn, constituting secondary diasporas worldwide (e.g. Africa-Caribbean-Canada).