

The Unsaid of the Grand Dérangement: An Analysis of Outsider and Regional Interpretations of Acadian History

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Abstract: This review article explores how historians' interpretations of the grand dérangement have varied from early scholarship in the 1800s to scholarship in 2012. Using Thomas Barnes' "Historiography of the Acadians' Grand Dérangement, 1755" as a starting point, this article seeks to compare and contrast literature speaking to the historic process as interpreted by regional and outside scholars. Overall, this review article seeks to assess how scholarly trends of analysis of the grand dérangement have been maintained over time, and how others have shifted.

Introduction

The grand dérangement, or the Acadian Deportation is a central event in Acadian history. This event has been recounted by numerous historians and has been deeply influenced by Acadian oral traditions. Within the colony of Acadie or Nova Scotia, Acadians remained politically neutral from both French and British settlers. On numerous occasions, the British requested that Acadians swear oaths of allegiance to the Crown; however, the vast majority of the population continuously refused. Fearful that that Acadians would become allies with the French or the Mi'kmaq, it was decided that Acadians would be removed. On September 5, 1755, Lieutenant-Colonel John Winslow announced to the Acadian men of Grand-Pré that all Acadians would be exiled from the colony of Nova Scotia. Over the course of 1755, 7,000 Acadians were deported by ship to North Carolina, Virginia, Philadelphia, and Maryland, others were transported to Europe. Over 14,000 Acadians were deported between 1755 and 1762. In

1763, the Treaty of Paris ended the Seven Years' War and British authorities allowed Acadians to return to Nova Scotia.¹

In this article I explore various interpretations of the grand *dérangement* by historians who work within the region and those who do not primarily study the region or Acadians, who I classify as 'outsiders.' First, I will provide an overview of an article written by Thomas G. Barnes in 1988, which examined the historiography of the grand *dérangement* and provides a critique on regional and outsider understanding of the event. I use Barnes' work as a starting point to provide my own analysis of the scholarship on the grand *dérangement* between 1988 and 2012. I will demonstrate that regional and outside scholars present contrasting views of the grand *dérangement* in regards to when it began, who was responsible, and to what degree it is spoken of when recounting Acadian history.

In 1988, Thomas G. Barnes, a professor emeritus of history and law at the University of California, Berkeley, published an article titled "Historiography of the Acadians' Grand *Dérangement*, 1755." In this article, Barnes argues that the grand *dérangement* had been, for the most part, understood historically rather than historiographically. Historiography explores how historians have understood and studied historical work. Acadians and Acadian oral tradition tend to distance accounts of Acadian history from historical fact and have been heavily influenced by the mythologization of the Acadian past. Barnes attributes this understanding to the legacy of Acadian oral tradition in the post-deportation era, an oral tradition that placed an emphasis on survival rather than evidence.²

¹ Thomas G. Barnes, "Historiography of the Acadians' Grand *Dérangement*, 1755," *Quebec Studies* 7 (1988): 77; Naomi E. S. Griffiths, *Contexts of Acadian history, 1686-1784*. (McGill-Queen's Press-MQUP, 1992): 103; John Mack Faragher, *A Great and Noble Scheme* (New York: W.W Norton and Company Inc, 2005): 348, 422, 575; Stephen White, 'The True Number of the Acadians,' in *Du Grand Dérangement à la Déportation: nouvelles perspectives historiques*, ed. Ronnie-Gilles LeBlanc (Moncton: Chaire d'Études Acadiennes, 2005): 21-56.

² Barnes, "Historiography of the Acadians," 76-77.

Prior to 1895, all material written about the grand dérangement was written by non-Acadian ‘outsiders.’ Early writings, including the works of Thomas Chandler Haliburton in 1829, Thomas Akins in 1869, and Alfred William Savary in 1897—all Anglophone historians—provided critical accounts of the Deportation. Savary was particularly critical describing the event as a genocidal conspiracy. This early literature written by outsiders also had a tendency to defend British action and the role of Governor Charles Lawrence in the deportations. These historians did not write sympathetically about the Acadians and often portrayed them as responsible for their own fate.³

Any material published on the deportation after 1849 would have been influenced by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s poem *Evangeline: A Tale of Acadie*. Originally published in 1847, the poem recounted a tale of a young Acadian girl’s journey to reunite with her lover Gabriel after they were separated by the grand dérangement. Longfellow, a Cambridge poet who never travelled to Nova Scotia, used the work of various early writers on Acadian history, including Thomas Chandler Haliburton, as references when writing his poem. Although Longfellow uses Haliburton’s work as a reference point, the scene Longfellow sets is quite different. Haliburton provided a critical stance on the situation describing images of destruction and a people who were hopeless. On the other hand, Longfellow’s poem painted a picture of Nova Scotia as a primeval forest and Acadians as the innocent victims who were able to persevere after experiencing tragedy.⁴

Various editions of *Evangeline* were translated into French between 1864 and 1887. It was at this time that Acadians became aware of the poem, which spread throughout communities, and entered the education system. The oral traditions surrounding the

³ Ibid., 78-9; Thomas Chandler Haliburton, *An historical and statistical account of Nova-Scotia*. 1. Halifax: 1829; Akins, Thomas B., ed. *Selections from the Public Documents of the Province of Nova Scotia*. Halifax: 1869; Alfred William Savary (and W. A. Calnek) *History of the County of Annapolis Supplement*. Toronto: 1897.

⁴ Barnes, “Historiography of the Acadians,” 78; Naomi E.S. Griffiths, “‘Longfellow’s *Evangeline*:’ the birth and acceptance of a legend,” *Acadiensis* 11, no. 2 (1982): 28-30, 33-34

grand d rangement had been salient in Acadian communities since their return in 1763; however, the poem provided them with a missing element and cultural tool they could employ to tell their story of survival and perseverance. Acadian writing on the grand d rangement emerged in 1895 with the work of  douard Richard. Other Francophone scholars, including Antoine Bernard continued to write Acadian history into the 1920s. These regional accounts had a stronger focus on survival and return to a homeland and were critical of British action, characterizing Governor Lawrence as a villain during the grand d rangement. Within these later accounts, it is also evident that there was an influence from Longfellow’s poem. The presence of Acadian oral tradition and myth, Barnes argues, created a distance from the historical facts of the grand d rangement. Additionally, after the publication of the poem, Anglophone historians appeared to have an altered perception of the grand d rangement, becoming more sympathetic towards the Acadians.⁵

Moving forward, I will add to the historiographical understanding of Acadian history in the examination of Acadian historical literature since Barnes’ publication in 1988 until 2012 to determine if and how interpretations of Acadian history have changed. I will be using the term “outsider” to situate literature written by scholars outside the region of the Maritime Provinces, particularly American and British historians. I also use the term “regional” to refer to those working in the Maritimes, those who have spent a significant portion of their academic career studying the Acadians or the Maritimes, and/or self-identify as Acadian.⁶ Most significantly, scholars placed into the category of regional interpretations examine Acadian history at a more local level than those categorized within outsider interpretations.

⁵ Griffiths, “Longfellow’s Evangeline,” 36; Barnes, “Historiography of the Acadians,” 75-82.

⁶ For example, Naomi Griffiths is a historian who is not from the Maritimes nor Acadian; however, as she has spent the vast majority of her career studying Acadians, she is classified as a regional scholar.

Outsider Interpretations

There has been a tendency for outsider interpretations of the grand dérangment to be critical, less sympathetic toward Acadians, and defensive of British action. As an outsider himself, Barnes provides an interpretation of the grand dérangment that can be analyzed within the historiographical framework he employs in his article. In his analysis of the grand dérangment, Barnes compares the grand dérangment to other diasporas of the twentieth century, such as the Holocaust and Czarist pogroms; yet, he describes it as ‘modest’ in comparison. At times, Barnes is defensive of British action, but he maintains a balance between his critique and his defense of these actions throughout his article. Barnes only accounts for the deportations in 1755 and does not address the other deportations that came before or later in the process.⁷

In some cases, the outsider interpretation of the grand dérangment has not shifted from the early accounts described by Barnes. For example, Christopher Hodson’s 2012 book *The Acadian Diaspora* begins with a discussion of the grand dérangment and shifts to an analysis of its aftermath. Outside of agriculture and maintenance of a familial community structure, Hodson does not argue the Acadians were successful in maintaining their identities and social cohesion in the post-deportation era. Barnes notes that many Anglophone historians were sympathetic to British action and believed that the Acadians were responsible for their own fate; and Hodson portrays a similar lack of sympathy for the Acadians who experienced exile.⁸

Similar to interpretations of Halibuton, Hodson suggests that Governor Charles Lawrence was successful in his goals to suppress Acadian power in exile to other British colonies. In addition to working against the positions of regional scholars, Hodson criticizes their positive interpretations and the influence of the Acadian oral tradition of continuity and perseverance

⁷ Ibid: 75, 78.

⁸ Hodson, *The Acadian Diaspora: An Eighteenth-Century History* (Oxford University Press: 2012): 18-43; Ibid: 82; Barnes, “Historiography of the Acadians,” 79; Ibid, 11.

present in their work.⁹ In the following excerpt, Hodson criticizes of past interpretations of the grand dérangement:

Yet histories of the *grand derangement* have emphasized continuity, persistence, and a happy ending. For, seen from one angle, the Acadians' stopovers in the odd locations inventoried above are little more than brief, unpleasant interludes. Splintered by the violence of 1755, Acadian society seemed to reconstitute itself by instinct over the next two generations, with each "broken fragment of the former community"¹⁰ moving toward a broader, more lasting reunion. Slowly and torturously, loved ones found each other again crossing oceans and continents to gather in villages that resembled, save for a few environmental variations, those they had left behind in Nova Scotia—especially in southwestern Louisiana, where hundreds of Acadians settled beginning in the mid-1760s, and on the rivers and streams in present day New Brunswick, where those who managed to evade the raids of the 1750s established settlements on the ragged margins of British Canada. These areas remain the centers of Acadian (or Cajun) life even today.¹¹ In the face of such tenacity, the Acadians' North American, Caribbean, South Atlantic, and European voyages tend to come off as obstacles that merely reinforced their stubborn particularity and cemented their common desire to lock arms and re-create a lost world.¹²

⁹ Ibid: 54; Ibid: 216.

¹⁰ Here Hodson is citing Faragher, *A Great and Noble Scheme*. New York: W.W Norton and Company Inc: 2005

¹¹ Here Hodson cites Brasseaux (1985), "A New Acadia: The Acadian Migrations to South Louisiana, 1764-1803," *Acadiensis* 15, 1 (1985).

¹² Hodson, *The Acadian Diaspora*: 6.

In the quote above, Hodson provides a critique of the influence of Acadian oral tradition and mythologization and their influence on the historiography of Acadians. According to Griffiths, there is a tendency within the Acadian oral tradition to focus on the return to Acadie and the strength of the people. Hodson distances himself from the rhetoric of strength and survival and argues that there were fewer opportunities for social cohesion among the Acadian exiles due to “the harsh imperatives of a vast market for colonial labor.”¹³

Hodson does, however, provide a deeper understanding of the situation after the Acadians left Acadie and offers more detailed information on their arrivals at various colonies and their further destinations of France and the Caribbean. Hodson argues that agriculture became a significant factor for Acadians who had been exiled to other countries and provided a cheap labour force, especially in the tropics. He asserts that the Acadians essentially became slaves in tropical climates based on the agricultural advancements in Nova Scotia and adaptations of dike construction techniques developed in Port Royal, Minas Basin, and Grand Pré that were originally adapted from techniques from eleventh century France. Although Hodson sees the grand dérangment as a process rather than a single event, he is not telling a story of the Acadian exiles; rather, he is providing a global overview of the aftermath.¹⁴

Emmanuel Klimis, a researcher in Political Science at Université Libre de Bruxelles in Brussels, Belgium, and Jaques Vanderlinden, an emeritus professor in Law at Université de Moncton, place the grand dérangment within an international political sphere. Klimis and Vanderlinden analyze the deportation through international law and attempt to provide justification for the 1755 deportations. Their analysis is defensive of British action while introducing modern policy to examine a historic process.

¹³ Naomi E.S. Griffiths, “‘Longfellow’s Evangeline:’ the birth and acceptance of a legend,” *Acadiensis* 11, no. 2 (1982): 28-30; Barnes, “Historiography of the Acadians,” 77; *Ibid*: 7.

¹⁴ *Ibid*: 108-117; *Ibid*: 154-179, 249; *Ibid*: 26; *Ibid*: 71-90.

With a focus on policy, Klimis and Vanderlinden frame the grand *dérangement* as ethnic cleansing. This emphasis on policy and international dialogue creates a degree of distance from the analysis of Acadian history because the international framework that is being employed would not have existed at the time of the grand *dérangement*.¹⁵

Other outside scholars, most notably, Geoffrey Plank and John Mack Faragher, place significant emphasis on British imperial policy as the determining factor in the expulsion of the Acadians from Acadie.¹⁶ Both scholars (Plank, a British historian, and Faragher, an American historian) examine the grand *dérangement* in the wider period between 1755 and 1763. Faragher acknowledges the uniqueness of the Acadian position as neutral subjects after 1690, because concessions such as these were not common at this time. Faragher provides a detailed overview of imperial policy, the grand *dérangement*, and its aftermath; however, the overview is significantly less critical than Hodson's, and places blame and criticism on the British officials rather than the Acadians.¹⁷

Faragher strongly asserts that the grand *dérangement* was a process of ethnic cleansing and bases this claim on the United

¹⁵ Although Jaques Vanderlinden is situated within the Maritimes, the position taken in this chapter and his pairing with an outside scholar led to his placement as an outsider within this article; Emmanuel Klimis and Jacques Vanderlinden, "Deux juristes face a un évènement historique ou du bon usage du droit aux faits," in *Du Grand Dérangement à la Déportation: nouvelles perspectives historiques*, ed. Ronnie-Gilles LeBlanc, (Moncton: Chaire d'Études Acadiennes, 2005): 60; Ibid, 60; Ibid, 58-9.

¹⁶ Geoffrey Plank is a professor of Early Modern History in the School of History at University of East Anglia; John Mack Faragher is a professor of History and American studies in the Department of History at Yale University

¹⁷ John Mack Faragher, "'A Great and Noble Scheme: ' Thoughts on the Expulsion of the Acadians," *Acadiensis* 36, 1 (Autumn 2006): 82; John Mack Faragher, *A Great and Noble Scheme*. (New York: W.W Norton and Company Inc, 2005); Geoffrey Plank, *Unsettled Conquest: The British Campaign Against the Peoples of Acadia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003): 152; Geoffrey Pank, "King George II and the Acadian Removal," in *Du Grand Dérangement à la Déportation: nouvelles perspectives historiques*, ed. Ronnie-Gilles LeBlanc (Moncton: Chaire d'Études Acadiennes, 2005): 90.

Nations definition. The United Nations Commission defines ethnic cleansing as:

a purposeful policy designed by one ethnic or religious group to remove by violent and terror-inspiring means the civilian population of another ethnic or religious group from certain geographic areas. To a large extent, it is carried out in the name of misguided nationalism, historic grievances, and a powerful driving sense of revenge. This purpose appears to be the occupation of territory to the exclusion of the purged group or groups.¹⁸

In this definition, Faragher relates the grand dérangement to modern instances of ethnic cleansing in both Yugoslavia and Rwanda. Similar to the emphasis Faragher places on ethnic cleansing, Savary argues the actions of Lawrence and the other British officers in the grand dérangement had genocidal intention. Conversely, many regional scholars do not see the grand dérangement as genocide. Maurice Basque, the director of Le Centre d'études acadiennes at Université de Moncton, argues that analyzing the grand dérangement through this framework of ethnic cleansing risks trivializing events like the Holocaust.¹⁹

It is important to note that ethnic identities may not have been very clear the time of the deportations. As a result, the application of ethnic cleansing as an explanation becomes complicated and was likely less based on racial qualities but on religion and political position. Plank notes that in order to understand this history and identity of a people, it is important to analyze the inter-people relations in a people's history. Faragher

¹⁸ United Nations Commission 1992: 469; as cited in Faragher, "*A Great and Noble Scheme*," 3.

¹⁹ Faragher, "*A Great and Noble Scheme*," 4, 11; Faragher, "*A Great and Noble Scheme*," 3; Alfred William Savary (and WA Calnek). *History of the County of Annapolis*. Toronto. 1897: 63; Barnes, "'Historiography of the Acadians' Grand Dérangement, 1755:" 79; Maurice Basque. "Atlantic Realities, Acadian Identities, Arcadian Dreams," In *Shaping an Agenda for Atlantic Canada*, ed. Donald Savoie and John Reid. Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 2011: 66.

notes that relationships between Acadians and Mi'kmaq were sustained through intermarriage and common religion. Additionally, there was the degree to which it was common for the various populations living together in Nova Scotia in this time period to borrow from one another's cultures as they "adopted attributes of savagery or civility for the purpose of deception" in order to gain additional power.²⁰

As a result, ethnic identities in this pre-deportation period became increasingly complicated around strategies of alliance, survival and co-existence. Before 1749, the colonial administration attempted to place Mi'kmaq and Acadians into two distinct groups that would allow them to follow certain political, cultural, and economic development strategies as determined by the colonial officials. Thomas Peace, an assistant professor in History at Huron University College, argues that these relations were strongest in the seventeenth century. This likely resulted in the difficulty the colonial government experienced in categorizing ethnic populations in the eighteenth century. When the administration, in particular Samuel Vetch and Richard Philipps, attempted to implement this plan, it became evident that the "close ties between the Mi'kmaq and the Acadians made it difficult to distinguish the affairs of one group from those of the other and Mi'kmaq bands and Acadian villages often stood ready to support each other in times of conflict."²¹

In fact, when Acadians were asked to take the last oath of allegiance prior to the deportations, many refused unless they would be exempted from British military service, which may have been based on these prior alliances with the Mi'kmaq. In 1737,

²⁰ Geoffrey Plank, "The Two Majors Cope: The Boundaries of Nationality in Mid-18th Century Nova Scotia," *Acadiensis*, 25, no. 2 (Spring 1996): 21; Faragher, *A Great and Noble Scheme*: 63; Faragher, "A Great and Noble Scheme," 85; Geoffrey Plank, "The Two Majors Cope," 21; Plank, "The Two Majors Cope," 20.

²¹ Plank, *Unsettled Conquest: The British Campaign Against the Peoples of Acadia*: 161; Thomas Peace. "A Reluctant Engagement: Mi'kmaw-European Interaction along the Annapolis River at the Beginning of the Eighteenth Century." Forthcoming; Plank, *Unsettled Conquest: The British Campaign Against the Peoples of Acadia*, 161

Father Jean-Louis Le Loutre was a significant player in the successful movement of Acadians from Acadie to Île Royale; in addition he was principal person of contact between the Mi'kmaq in Acadie and French forces on Île Royale. This position led him to move his mission from Shubenacadie to French territory, encouraging his Mi'kmaq allies to follow him as he moved away from the peninsula. Acadians believe that they remained in Acadie after 1710 on their own terms, not because of British demands or oaths.²²

Based on these Mi'kmaw-Acadian alliances, one of the aims of Governor Charles Lawrence and Governor William Shirley and other British officials was to sever these relationships with the physical removal of the Acadians from their Mi'kmaw allies. Of course, the British dealt with the Mi'kmaq separately with the negotiation of treaties throughout the eighteenth century. Captain Jean Baptiste Cope, a Mi'kmaw man who had strong language and negotiation skills, was deeply involved in the negotiation of the 1726 and 1752 treaties with the British. Captain Jean Baptiste Cope did not move to French territory with Father Le Loutre, although many Mi'kmaq from the Shubenacadie area did follow him. Due to his acculturation with the Acadians and the British, he was able to communicate with British officers and less subject to classification. Plank suspects that Captain Jean Baptiste Cope adopted the title of Captain after the earlier Captain Henry Cope, a successful British officer, because it was common for Aboriginal peoples in this time to adopt prominent names of people who had departed the territory in order to gain more power, further complicating the ethnic identities at this time.²³

Barnes notes that early literature places Lawrence at the center of the blame for the grand dérangement; however, Faragher and Plank both describe larger imperial and colonial plans. They

²² Ibid, 144; Plank, "The Two Majors Cope," 30; Plank, *Unsettled Conquest*: 111; Naomi E.S. Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian: A North American Border People, 1604-1755* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005): 281; Ibid, 307

²³ Plank, *Unsettled Conquest*: 162; Plank, "The Two Majors Cope," 28-36; Plank, "The Two Majors Cope," 31; Ibid: 37.

emphasize that there were plans to exile the Acadians prior to Lawrence's arrival in Acadie. The deportation in 1755 devised by Lawrence was an adaption from an earlier plan developed in 1747 by Governor William Shirley. The plan was only moderately adapted by Lawrence to ensure the Acadians would be adequately dispersed so that they would not be able to retain any collective power after the plan's implementation. In fact, Plank notes that prior to Lawrence's arrival in 1753, the council in Nova Scotia had discussed the possibilities available to remove the Acadians from the colony.²⁴

Faragher notes that New England played an important role in the early phases of the deportation plan and the processes that were overlooked by London at the time of Lawrence's request to deport the Acadians. Through the emphasis Faragher places on New England and the Americanization of the grand d rangement as an imperial scheme, in addition to the ethnic complications described by Plank it is evident that the causes of the deportation are larger than the actions of Lawrence alone. The grand d rangement was a process, not a singular event, and was certainly not undertaken by a single actor, but by numerous imperial orders. The outsider interpretations make a significant contribution to the analysis and criticism of the various imperial and international policies and procedures that resulted in the occurrence of the grand d rangement and how Acadians experienced its aftermath.²⁵

Regional Interpretations

The Acadians make up a large proportion of the ethnic minorities of Atlantic Canada; however, they have been largely excluded from Atlantic Canadian historiography. In 1971, the *Acadiensis* journal was established as a much needed platform for the study of the Atlantic region. Early publications of the journal were written by scholars who became known as "the Acadiensis

²⁴ Barnes, "Historiography of the Acadians," 79; Faragher, "A Great and Noble Scheme," 90; Plank, *Unsettled Conquest*: 145; Ibid: 145; Plank, *Unsettled Conquest: The British Campaign Against the Peoples of Acadia*, 141-2

²⁵ Faragher, "A Great and Noble Scheme," 90; Faragher, *A Great and Noble Scheme*: 479.

generation,” a group of scholars who focused on Maritime history and historiography. During this period of scholarly production on the history of the Atlantic region, Acadian historiography was absent. P.D Clarke notes when attending the Atlantic Canada Studies conference in 2000, Naomi Griffiths and Jacques Paul Cauturier presented the only Acadian papers at the conference out of a total of forty-five. He saw this as an absence of Acadian historiography or *Acadianité* from “the Acadiensis generation” and argues that the “unsaid” says a lot about historiography.²⁶

The “unsaid” was also quite prevalent within regional literature addressing the history of Acadians. Nicolas Landry, a professor of history at the Shippigan Campus of Université de Moncton, Nicole Lang, a professor of Canadian and Acadian history at the Edmundston Campus of Université de Moncton, and Naomi Griffiths, a professor emeritus in the Department of History at Carleton University, make strategic decisions to provide the reader with an absence of the grand dérangement. While other scholars spend entire books interpreting the event, Griffiths’ 2005, *From Migrant to Acadian: A North American Border People, 1604-1755*, ends just prior to 1755 deportation and Landry and Lang provide the following analysis:

Starting in 1750, the strengthening of French and English territories increased the political insecurity of the Acadians. The Deportation, which began in 1755 and continued until 1762 ended their peaceful life and led to lost lives among the deported and those who managed to escape. In addition to the loss of their possessions, the Acadians who managed to survive were scattered in the English colonies in America or England and faced the hostile reception of local people. Some reclaimed the Maritimes after 1763 and spurred the emergence of a new Acadia.²⁷

²⁶ P.D. Clarke. “L’Acadie perdue; Or, Maritime History’s Other,” *Acadiensis*, 30, no 1. (2000): 73; Clarke. “L’Acadie perdue,” 73; *Ibid*, 73.

²⁷ Landry and Lang, *Histoire de l’Acadie*, 126.

Rather than addressing the grand dérangement specifically, Landry and Lang choose to emphasize the strength and perseverance of the Acadian people before and after the tragedy. They address the marginalization the Acadians have endured politically, religiously, and socially both before the expulsion and upon their return to Acadie. Landry and Lang weave a continuous thread of Acadian political strength through the pre- to post-deportation timeframes. This strength is what led to the reconstruction of the Acadian economy and agriculture as the Acadians re-established themselves within the provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island, eventually leading to the emergence of the Acadian Renaissance in the 1880s.²⁸

Compared to the outsider literature, religion is a more dominant theme within the regional interpretations. In the early settlement of Port Royal, Landry and Lang, like most outsider historians, provide focused analysis on Mi'kmaq conversions to Catholicism and the role religion played in the development of the colony. Aside from the important role Catholicism played in developing relations of coexistence with the Mi'kmaq, regional interpretations fall short of addressing the role of the Mi'kmaq at length. Peace argues that the Acadian-Mi'kmaq relations are more evident when examined locally. Although regional historians place a greater emphasis on the local during the grand

À parti de 1750, la fortification des territoires français et anglais a pour effet d'accentuer l'insécurité politique des Acadiens et des Acadiennes. La déportation, qui débute en 1755 et se poursuit jusqu'en 1762, met fin à leur vie paisible et entraîne de nombreuses pertes de vie parmi des déportés et chez ceux qui réussissent à enfuir. En plus de la perte de leurs possessions, les Acadiens et les Acadiennes qui parviennent à survivre sont dispersés dans les colonies anglaises d'Amérique ou encore en Angleterre et plusieurs doivent affronter l'accueil hostile des populations locales. Certains regagneront les Maritimes après 1763 et on assistera alors à l'émergence d'une nouvelle Acadie.

²⁸ Nicolas Landry and Nicole Lang, *Histoire de l'Acadie* (Sillery : Septentrion, 2001) : 126; Ibid: 69, 73; Ibid: 112; Ibid: 132.

dérangement, Acadians are given more agency but less attention is paid to the Mi'kmaq.²⁹

While Plank and Faragher provide detailed accounts of the importance of the Mi'kmaq at a more macro level, Griffiths argues that the close relations and intermarriage between Acadians and Mi'kmaq is speculation. Although Landry and Lang are not as dismissive of intermarriage as Griffiths, there is not much attention paid to Acadian-Mi'kmaq relations outside of their significance to religious relationships and the founding of Acadie. Most regional interpretations of the grand dérangement tell a very different story from that of Hodson and Klimis and Vanderlinden. While Hodson does not believe the Acadians were able to reconstruct their identities post-deportation, regional scholars (both historians in the 1800s and those writing between 1988 and 2012) demonstrate that this was possible, even without returning to Acadie proper.³⁰

With a more detailed explanation of religious developments at a local level, Landry and Lang are able to provide further insight into the implications of Catholicism as a political power. Although the British did not look upon it favourably, Catholicism gave the Acadians a degree of political advantage under the British rule whereby they were still able to practice and teach their religion in British controlled territory. Landry and Lang make a significant effort to address the important political and social advancements of the Acadians rather than dwelling on the events of the grand dérangement and letting it define the Acadians as a people.³¹

In 2005, Ronnie-Gilles LeBlanc, a former archivist at the Centre d'études acadiennes at Université de Moncton and Parks Canada historian, published an edited volume titled *Du Grand Dérangement à la Déportation: nouvelles perspectives historiques* which filled a much-needed gap in the scholarship on the grand

²⁹ Ibid: 147; Thomas Peace, "A Reluctant Engagement: Mi'kmaw-European Interaction along the Annapolis River at the Beginning of the Eighteenth Century," 26.

³⁰ Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian*: 179; Hodson, *The Acadian Diaspora*: 210-15.

³¹ Landry and Lang, *Histoire de l'Acadie* : 67.

dérangement. The volume includes both Anglophone and Francophone scholars, and chapters are written in both English and French. This collection distances the contemporary literature from what Barnes described as “eschewed linguistic-ethnic ideology” that contained within it Anglophobia and Francophobia that was common up into the 1960s.³²

In his contribution to the volume, LeBlanc draws the historiographic period back to 1749 rather than placing the focus on 1755, and other scholars in the collection situate the grand dérangment with this earlier start date. Establishing 1749 as the beginning of the grand dérangment, LeBlanc notes that there were a series of deportations that occurred between 1749 and 1752 where 2,900 Acadians were displaced, stressing the importance of paying attention to the years preceding the 1755 deportations. Not only did the deportation start before 1755, such removals continued until 1764. These dates that go largely unaccounted for lead LeBlanc to argue that the grand dérangment was a process rather than a focused imperial scheme based on the aftermath of the battle at Fort Beauséjour.³³

Overall, the authors of *Du Grand Dérangement à la Déportation: nouvelles perspectives historiques* pay significant attention to 1749 as an important year preceding 1755 because it also precedes the initial arrival of Cornwallis and the policies that were implemented as a result of his arrival. The year 1749 is also significant because it marks the founding of Halifax. With the establishment of Halifax, there was an increase in British military power and a decrease in Acadian movement to Île Royale and Acadian trade relations with the French. In addition, the Mi'kmaq were placed under Cornwallis' scalp-bounty, further differentiating the populations through different policy implementation. Overall, LeBlanc argues that the control established at Halifax and the plans being implemented by colonial officials suggests the grand dérangment should be

³² Barnes, “Historiography of the Acadians,” 80.

³³ LeBlanc, “Du Dérangement des guerres au Grand Dérangement,” 17-18; *Ibid*, 20.

viewed more in terms of a revolution or a process that was ongoing before and after 1755.³⁴

While LeBlanc emphasized the situation prior to 1755, Earle Lockerby, an independent historian, addressed issues in the historiography of the deportation post-1755 addressing the dispersal and destruction that occurred in 1758 on Île Saint-Jean. Like LeBlanc, he seeks to draw attention to the other deportations that happened before and after 1755. Lockerby agrees with Barnes that the myth of Evangeline and Acadian oral tradition can interrupt Acadian historiography. He argues that the story of Evangeline accounts for the distortions in historical understandings of this event and that 1755 distracts from the deportations outside of Grand Pré, particularly the dispersals on Île Sainte-Jean in 1758.³⁵

Lockerby presents Major General Jeffery Amherst and Lieutenant-Coronel Andrew Rollo as key players in the deportations from Île Saint-Jean, who removed all inhabitants, took control, and expand Port-la-Joie. All deportees were first destined to be prisoners at Louisburg before being taken on ships to Europe. Lockerby describes the horrible conditions, illness, lack of necessities, inadequate clothing, and shipwrecks that led to deaths upon the deportation ships. Lockerby also addressed those Acadians who were able to escape and seek refuge in New Brunswick, Quebec, and the Gaspé. Similar to perspectives expressed by scholars LeBlanc's collection, Lockerby demonstrates the regional and political differences at play in different Acadian communities and their varied experiences of the grand dérangment.³⁶

³⁴ Plank, *Unsettled Conquest*: 124; LeBlanc, "Du Dérangement des guerres au Grand Dérangement," 14.

³⁵ Earle Lockerby, "The Deportation of the Acadians from Ile St.-Jean, 1758," *Acadiensis* 27, 1 (Spring 1998): 46; LeBlanc, "Du Dérangement des guerres au Grand Dérangement," 17; Lockerby, "The Deportation of the Acadians from Ile St.-Jean," 45; Here Barnes (1988) presents an argument that differs from the perspective presented in Griffiths (1982) that is examined later in this article; Lockerby, "The Deportation of the Acadians from Ile St.-Jean," 46.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 76; *Ibid.*, 82.

A. J. B. Johnston, a former staff historian with Parks Canada who is now an independent historian, describes the deportations in 1755 and examines those that occurred at Île Saint-Jean in 1758 and Cape Sable Island in 1756. He argues that Acadian deportations were not unique events and that it was not uncommon for people to enter into permanent or temporary exile in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, whether it was within or across borders. While providing some justification for British action, he compares the Acadian deportation to other events of forceful removal in that time period, such as the Huguenot Diaspora in seventeenth century England and the removal of the Oklahoma Cherokees through the 1838 Indian Removal Act.³⁷

Johnston notes that there were also early removals of Acadians during pre-deportation French rule. With French undertaking deportations of the Acadians themselves, this account could be interpreted as defensive of British action. Similar to Léger's perspective, Johnston notes that it was unlikely that these decisions were based on ethnicity. As a result, ethnic cleansing would not be an appropriate term as decisions were made in pre-emptive action based in religion and political positions in order to reduce the risks to the colonial government.³⁸

Looking closer at the grand dérangement, Maurice Léger, an independent historian and researcher, presents an argument for the role religion played in the deportation of the Acadians. Protestants made up a significant proportion of the colonial population and predisposed the Acadians to discrimination on religious grounds. Léger argues that their status as Roman Catholics should not be overlooked as a factor for deportation because regardless of their religious freedom they were still viewed as others. This examination correlates to the argument put forward by Plank

³⁷ A. J. B. Johnston, "The Acadian Deportation in a Comparative Context: An Introduction," *Journal of the Royal Nova Scotia Historical Society* 10 (2007): 116; Johnston, "The Acadian Deportation in a Comparative Context," 119-122.

³⁸ A.J.B. Johnston, "French attitudes Toward the Acadians, ca. 1680-1756," in *Du Grand Dérangement à la Déportation: nouvelles perspectives historiques*, ed. Ronnie-Gilles LeBlanc, (Moncton: Chaire d'Études Acadiennes, 2005): 148; Léger, "La Déportation et la religion," 123; Johnston, "The Acadian Deportation in a Comparative Context," 119.

around complications in ethnic categorization. With the limited ability to use ethnic identifiers to deport the Acadians, Léger suggests religion, more specially Catholicism, was an ethnic identifier that could be used in order to exile portions of the population.³⁹

Landry and Lang place an emphasis on religion rather than the events of the grand dérangment which could reflect a priority on religion within the perspective of regional scholars.⁴⁰ The role the clergy played in the success of the Acadian Renaissance in the 1880s reflects the importance of religion within contemporary Acadian political and nationalistic movements. Ronald Rudin, a professor of history at Concordia University, also argues that there is a tendency for Acadians to avoid addressing the grand dérangment directly. His study of Acadian history at commemorative events exposes the distance Acadians create between historical fact and public memory. This distortion within public memory seems to have influenced regional scholars and created a common theme of absence within regional interpretations of the grand dérangment. P.D. Clarke notes that the “unsaid” says a lot about historiography. Historians, therefore, must be as attuned to silences within the construction and interpretation of these complex histories.⁴¹

Conclusion

In 2005, there was a shift in both outsider and regional scholarship with the publication of John Mack Faragher’s *Great and Noble Scheme*, Geoffery Plank’s *Unsettled Conquest*, Naomi Griffiths’ *From Migrant to Acadian*, and Ronnie-Gilles LeBlanc’s edited volume *Du Grand Dérangement à la Déportation*:

³⁹ Maurice A. Léger, “La Déportation et la religion” in *Du Grand Dérangement à la Déportation: nouvelles perspectives historiques*, ed. Ronnie-Gilles LeBlanc, (Moncton: Chaire d’Études Acadiennes, 2005): 123; Léger, “La Déportation et la religion,” 123; Plank, “The Two Majors Cope,” 20; Léger, “La Déportation et la religion,” 114.

⁴⁰ Landry and Lang, *Histoire de l’Acadie* : 65.

⁴¹ Ronald Rudin, *Remembering and Forgetting in Acadie: A Historian’s Journey Through Public Memory* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009): 107; Clarke. “L’Acadie perdue,” 73.

nouvelles perspectives historiques. These publications met a need identified by Clarke in 2000 as a lack of historiographical interpretation on Acadian history.⁴² These contributions, as well as others examined throughout this article, present important, yet varying interpretations of a key event in Acadian history.

In some regards, outsider and regional interpretations of Acadian history between 1988 and 2012 fall within similar critiques presented by Barnes in 1988. Christopher Hodson follows in the footsteps of early 1800s historians in his critique and lack of sympathy of Acadians in their post-deportation situation. On the other hand, Faragher and Plank provide less critical stances on the Acadians and are more critical of British action. Outsider interpretations, including Klimis and Vanderlinden, Faragher, and Hodson focus on imperial and international policies involved in the process of the grand d erangement and its aftermath. Lastly, I believe that the contemporary outsider interpretations of the grand d erangement view the grand d erangement as a process rather than a single event, which is important in understanding the overall influence of the deportations.

Regional interpretations certainly still sustain influence from Acadian oral tradition and the mythologization of history from Longfellow's *Evangeline*. Oral tradition and myth produce master narratives that become embedded into the lives of a people and become reconstructed throughout history. The focus Acadians had on returning to a homeland and their renewed strength in the post-deportation era created an overall distance from the grand d erangement itself. Some regional scholars still remain distant from the grand d erangement in their interpretations of Acadian history. As a result, the post-deportation understanding of the grand d erangement has created a distance between Acadians and their history. Myth, oral tradition and narratives of survival continue to be dominant in Acadian history. While there is an absence of engagement with the deportations in the regional literature, regional historians' emphasis on the political, religious, and localized elements of the grand d erangement provides

⁴² Clarke. "L'Acadie perdue," 73.

significant insight that is not as present in the outsider interpretations.⁴³

Both outsider and regional literature sustain traces of what Barnes referred to as a collective “making sense” of the grand dérangment. As pre-emptive as the grand dérangment may have been, it is evident that the scholars examined in this article provide a wide array of interpretations behind the process of the grand dérangment. These interpretations are grounded in local political structures, nationalistic goals, religion, and agricultural labour. Each Acadian community experienced exile in different ways, and there is no way to identify a single cause for the grand dérangment. This article has shown that the majority of the literature, whether regional or outsider, provides a more coherent interpretation of the grand dérangment than was present in 1988 and sustains a focus on survival rather than betrayal. When these literatures and the various factors they identify as leading to the deportation are then placed within the view that the grand dérangment as a *process* rather than a singular *event*, they provide a more coherent understanding of the grand dérangment and how Acadians continue to live in its legacy.

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⁴³ Paul Connerton. *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989): 21; “Richard, Le récit de la Déportation comme mythe de création dans l’idéologie des Conventions nationales acadiennes (1881-1937).” *Acadiensis*, 36 (2006): 76.

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