UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW

DEPARTMENT OF SCOTTISH LITERATURE

A thesis submitted for the degree of Master of Philosophy

'Landscapes of Eden and Hell in the Modern Scottish Novel'

LEAH N. RANKIN

JUNE 2002

SUPERVISED BY DR GERARD CARRUTHERS

ProQuest LLC.
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 – 1346

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

The following thesis examines the portrayal in a number of modern Scottish novels of Edenic and hellish landscapes, these depictions being primarily connected with the effect of Calvinism on the Scottish mentality. The novels are linked by their focus on landscape, on the discrepancies between public and private lives, mythology (specifically relating to notions of Eden and hell) and in their in-depth examination of the Scottish psyche. It will be argued that the chosen novelists implicitly argue that the Calvinist inheritance in Scotland creates a type of hell (incorporating sometimes false paradises) in respect to the detrimental aspects of the religion resulting in an unamenable environment and even sometimes a dystopia. Initial note of the 'kailyard' mode of writing is taken in an attempt to compare and contrast the Edenic façade of this writing with the later, more modern novels in question, which deal more realistically and in greater depth with the Scottish cast of mind and with Scotland overall. The later novelists produce what I would call truer versions of artifice compared with the 'kailyard' sketches and it will be argued that in the former, the incorporation of the themes of evil as well as good produce harder hitting representations of Scotland, highlighting a new, more philosophically and religiously engaged direction for Scottish fiction during the twentieth century.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank first and foremost Dr Gerry Carruthers for his continued help and support throughout my BA (Hons) degree at Strathclyde University and my MPhil degree at Glasgow University. Your guidance and patience have been greatly appreciated. I will hopefully have the pleasure of your supervision at PhD level in the near future. Thank you to the staff at Strathclyde University Library, Glasgow University Library, The Mitchell Library, Glasgow and The National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh. I would also like to thank my flatmates, Karla, Caroline, SJ and Joanne, and also my friends, especially Lainnie, Lisa, Leigh and Rhona – thank you for your help and for many a drunken night out. I would lastly like to thank my family - Mum, Claire and David - for their continued support and my Dad for giving me the determination to get through University.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Landscapes of Eden and Hell: The Kailyard and the Real Scotland

The Scottish cast of mind in the Victorian period can be generally characterised in terms of a number of dualities: a Manichean division in religion, a split in private and public life, where outward morality and private sin clash, and a duality in respect of retaining a distinct Scottish identity in the face of widespread Anglicisation.[1] These characteristics retain their importance in later Scottish thought and culture and are evident to a large degree in modern Scottish literature, defined from 1901 onwards, but an unusually small amount of literature of the Victorian period actually dealt with them[2], as George Blake, writing in 1951, points out:

> The bulk of Scottish fiction during the nineteenth century [...] fell into either of two categories: the domestic or the parochial on the one hand, the romantic on the other [...] The Scots storyteller either followed Scott and Stevenson through the heather with a claymore at his belt, or he lingered round the bonnie brier bush, telling sweet, amusing little stories of bucolic intrigue as seen through the windows of the Presbyterian manse.[3]

Those who adhered to the kailyard mode of writing, predominant from the 1880s to the late 1890s, focused on a superficial view of parochial Scotland rather than concentrating on Scotland as a nation and the overall Scottish psyche, for which failings they were heavily criticised. An attempt will be made in the following chapter to highlight that these general characteristics of the Scottish psyche are more evidently examined in later Scottish literature, and also briefly to examine the kailyard phenomenon in terms of the effect that it had on modern Scottish writing in terms of a reaction. Landscapes and notions of Eden and hell will also be discussed as these are main elements in the discussion of how Scottish literature has been shaped from the Victorian period; they tend to recur over and over again, very tellingly in the novels that will be focused on in subsequent chapters – George

---

[1] Olive and Sydney Checkland bring this point to the forefront in *Industry and Ethos: Scotland 1832 – 1914* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997; 1984), p. 133. The Checklands' book importantly brought together discussion of literary, economic and social matters. Such duality of course has frequently been identified as of more longstanding existence. For a reading of Scottish cultural dichotomy along such lines from the late seventeenth century see David Daiches, *Literature and Gentility in Scotland: the Alexander lectures at the University of Toronto, 1980* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1982) and Daiches, *The Paradox of Scottish Culture: The eighteenth-century experience* (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1964).

[2] There are a number of very successful novels published during the nineteenth century, such as James Hogg's *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824) and, most especially, by Robert Louis Stevenson with *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886) and *Weir of Hermiston* (1894), which reflect the wide dualities diagnosed in the Scottish mind of the Victorian and earlier periods.

[3] George Blake, *Barrie and the Kailyard School* (London: Arthur Baker, 1951), p. 13. Blake's book represented an important post-World War II reappraisal of the literary character of Scotland.

Douglas Brown's *The House with the Green Shutters* (1901), Catherine Carswell's *Open the Door!* (1920), Willa Muir's *Imagined Corners* (1931), J.M. Barrie's *Farewell Miss Julie Logan* (1932) and Robin Jenkins's *The Cone-Gatherers* (1955).

An apparent Manichean division, in respect to religion in Victorian society, is discussed by Olive and Sydney Checkland in *Industry and Ethos: Scotland 1832 – 1914:*

> Victorian religious life in Scotland in its evangelical form, as a major part of its inheritance from its Knoxian church, was shot through with an almost Manichean distinction between good and evil. This left little room for the middle ground upon which real debate about human behaviour could take place, and where most of life resided. It reduced the question of behaviour to a simple addiction to the good or the bad, the former to prevail only through Christian atonement.[4]

This Calvinist inheritance is evident to a large degree in the Scottish literature that does not find consolation in landscapes of the past or in romantic, sentimental notions of Scotland. As Cairns Craig points out in *The Modern Scottish Novel*: *Narrative and the National Imagination*:

> Calvinism was the foundation of the key institutions – religion, education – through which Scottish identity was shaped, and through which it maintained its distinctness during Scotland's participation in the British Empire: whether for or against Calvinism's conception of human destiny, no Scot could avoid involvement in the imaginative world that Calvinism projected.[5]

Colin Manlove in *Scottish Fantasy Literature: A Critical Survey*, claims that 'however far the writers of Scots fantasy may be from their roots, they all show something of the influence of Calvinism. Some of them take an almost Manichean view of the world. In Hogg's *Confessions* [...] it seems largely the devil's territory.'[6] This is evident too in later fantasy writing. All of the novels that will be discussed can be described as Scottish fantasy literature, according to Manlove's identification of three main features in this strain of literature – 'the stress on the unconscious, on uncertain identity and on

---

[4] Olive and Sydney Checkland, *Industry and Ethos: Scotland 1832 – 1914*, p.133.

[5] Cairns Craig, *The Modern Scottish Novel: Narrative and the National Imagination* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), p. 37.

[6] Colin Manlove, *Scottish Fantasy Literature: A Critical Survey* (Edinburgh: Canongate Academic, 1994), p. 8.

femininity.'[7] To take some of the largest features in each case: Brown incorporates the devil from Scottish folklore to some extent in the figure of Gourlay; Carswell uses dream imagery and emphasises the importance of the unconscious; Muir has a doppelganger in the two namesakes in her novel, while stressing uncertain identity and the unconscious; Barrie's wintry tale contains the ghost of Julie Logan; and Jenkins uses an 'unreal' and fantastic setting in his novel.

George Douglas Brown's and Willa Muir's novels do take on a view of the world as being overrun with evil and malignancy in highlighting the truths about small town life in Scotland; at times they overdo the bleakness but it could be argued that they are balancing the picture with the kailyarders' view of everything being essentially good. Barrie's and Carswell's novels are poised somewhere in the middle; both highlight the damaging effects of Calvinism, which can produce a type of hell, but Barrie sticks with the middle ground between hell and heaven – a type of purgatory in Catholic theological terms[8] – with Carswell rejecting institutional religion to reclaim a type of Eden. Jenkins's *The Cone-Gatherers* highlights these Manichean divisions by replaying a contemporary version of the Fall, with characters embodying the two polar stances of good and evil in a universal tale.

The reasons behind these novelists drawing such a bleak picture of Scottish life will be examined later on in the chapter, but if the kailyarders are primarily considered it is evident that they take an antithetical view. The earlier writing of 'Ian Maclaren' (John Watson) and S.R. Crockett

---

[7] Colin Manlove, *Scottish Fantasy Literature: A Critical Survey* (Edinburgh: Canongate Academic, 1994), p. 247.

[8] Margaret Oliphant also deals with the notion of purgatory in a number of her supernatural tales, much like Barrie in *Farewell Miss Julie Logan*. 'The Open Door' (1882), for example, one of her best-known tales, is centred around the ghost of a boy who is finally released from purgatory by a Protestant minister who, although he does not believe in the doctrine of purgatory, knew the boy in life and recognises his suffering in being trapped between worlds: " 'Lord,' the minister said – 'Lord, take him into Thy everlasting habitations. The mother he cries to is with Thee. Who can open to him but Thee? Lord, when is it too late for Thee, or what is too hard for Thee?' [...] I sprang forward to catch something in my arms that flung itself wildly within the door. The illusion was so strong that I never paused till I felt my forehead graze against the wall and my hands clutch the ground – for there was nobody there to save from falling, as in my foolishness I thought. Simson held out his hand to me to help me up [...]'It's gone,' he said, stammering, - 'it's gone!' " (Jenni Calder (ed.) *A Beleaguered City and Other Tales of the Seen and Unseen*, Edinburgh: Canongate, 2000, p. 206).

(though it could be argued that this is less so with Barrie), portrays an essentially 'good' view of the world. Ian Campbell points to this notion in *Kailyard*:

> Kailyard literature will in general be good literature, that is to say, the reality it imitates will be one in which good endings come to those who deserve them (with artistically necessary exceptions). Where the better forces of society triumph on most occasions, where Churchgoing and Christian morality retain on paper the hold they were rapidly losing in real life. This blanket generalisation does not exclude aimless tragedy, unexplained early death, a host of sympathetic situations which are at the centre of many short stories whose aim is clearly the reader's tear. Yet the overall moral balance is one of accepted 'good.'[9]

The kailyarders, then, take up the opposite polar stance, with their work being dismissed as sentimental slop and untrue in regards to their portrayal of Scotland. Urbanisation and industrialisation were widespread, changing the face of Scotland and affecting the lives of the Scottish people dramatically. But, as George Blake points out, 'what had the Scottish novelist to say about it? The answer is – nothing, or as nearly nothing as makes no matter. They might well have been living in Illyria as in the agonized country of their birth' (*Barrie and the Kailyard School*, p. 9). Instead, many writers looked back to the old traditions of Scotland that seemed to be disappearing forever, with the onset of industrialisation making Scotland more in line with Britain as a whole in respect to specifically Scottish experience being rendered largely irrelevant. Olive and Sydney Checkland note the difference between Scottish and English writers at this period:

> Victorian Scotland had no one like Mrs Gaskell (1810 – 65) who in the 1850s wrote of the industrial realities of Manchester, or Arnold Bennett (1867 – 1931) who in Edwardian times depicted the towns of the Potteries. Thus it was possible for Scottish literature either to live largely in a previous pre-industrial age, or to indulge in an unrealistic idyll as with the Kailyard school.
>
> (*Industry and Ethos: Scotland 1832 - 1914*, p. 139)

The success of the kailyard writers at the time points to the fact that Scots had not yet faced up to the violent change of industrialisation and the consequences of it. It is not unreasonable to suggest, therefore, that the nostalgic tales of the 'cabbage-patch' were, to an extent, shaped by the readership of the time. Edwin Muir points towards this notion in *Scottish Journey* (1935):

---

[9] Ian Campbell, *Kailyard* (Edinburgh: The Ramsay Head Press, 1981), pp. 87 – 88.

> Two things mainly contributed to set Scotland, an eminently realistic country, on such a path: the breakdown of Calvinism, a process salutary in itself, but throwing off as a by-product an obliterating debris of sentimentality, and the rise of an industrial system so sordid and disfiguring that people were eager to escape from it by any road, however strange. The flight to the Kailyard was a flight to Scotland's past, to a country which had existed before Industrialism.[10]

It can be argued that kailyard writing stemmed from fear – fear of the industrial changes that were taking place on a huge scale, which appeared to wipe out distinctly Scottish traditions in its wake, and a fear in the fact that religion, by which Scottish institutions and, therefore, Scottish identity had been shaped for centuries, was losing its hold on the country's culture. In the face of such radical change, writers retreated to the Scottish traditions of a time that had just passed, concentrating on stability, on lack of change and on a narrow focus to escape from the present realities that they were forced to deal with. The consequence of these changes was that Scottish identity was even more unstable and fragile, being thrown into uncertainty, with writers of the period attempting to concentrate on a pre-industrial age, where religion was still a dominant – perhaps the primary – force in Scotland. Cairns Craig discusses the consequences for Scottish writing of these harsh realities:

> If it is true that the novel is the form *par excellence* of the modern nation state then, in a nation which is not an independent state and is uncertain whether its nationality is British or Scottish, the novel is likely to be the first form to suffer. Flawed novels and fictive national tradition will necessarily collude in a self-destructive cycle of pervasive fraudulence about the nation which can never break through the 'glamour' of this fake invention of tradition to provide a narrative of the modern Scotland of 'real' history [...] Kailyard literature, with its inherent sentimentality and its flight from the realities of industrial Scotland, becomes both the symptom of the state of the national imagination – a national imagination without a state – and the sickness to which Scottish writers will continue to fall victim whenever they try to engage with the nature of modern Scotland.[11]

Rather than dealing with the changing face of Scotland, then, kailyard writing focused on small communities of a past age, communities that in reality would be changed dramatically in light of urbanisation and industrialisation.

---

[10] Edwin Muir, *Scottish Journey* (Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing, 1996; 1935), pp. 67 – 68.

[11] Cairns Craig, *The Modern Scottish Novel: Narrative and the National Imagination*, p. 14.

Edwin Morgan in his essay 'The Beatnik in the Kailyaird' summarises this school of writing:

> A typical Kailyaird theme of the Maclaren-Crockett school at the end of the nineteenth century might show the "lad o' pairts" in some country village who is carefully nurtured by the local dominie and minister, goes to university in a city like Glasgow, and quickly dies of consumption, perhaps with a ray of light from the setting sun falling neatly on his calm white face as he expires.[12]

Fear is implicit in the fact that so many kailyard stories focus on deathbed scenes, highlighting the high mortality rate of growing cities like Edinburgh and Glasgow. Olive and Sydney Checkland note that 'many promising men overstrained themselves, dying early'[13] when studying at Scottish universities, illustrating the potential dangers of dwelling in large industrial cities which were subject to overcrowding and poor conditions. Rather than concentrating on the reality behind these early deaths or on any of the factors behind the new industrial age, the kailyarders focused on the sentimentality of death to provoke reader response, concentrating largely on the good of the community, on education and the ability to 'get on', regardless of poverty and the effects that the strain of university brought the young lad o' pairts, and on religion. The quaintness and narrow-focus of these stories is evident in the following quotations, taken from Ian Maclaren's *Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush* (1894) and S. R. Crockett's *The Lilac Sunbonnet* (1896):

> It was good manners in Drumtochty to feign amazement at the sight of a letter, and to insist that it must be intended for some other person. When it was finally forced upon one, you examined the handwriting at various angles and speculated about the writer. Some felt emboldened, after these precautions, to open the letter, but this haste was considered indecent.[14]

> A great humble-bee, barred with tawny orange, worked his way up from the front door of his hole in the bank, buzzing shrilly in an impatient, stifled manner at finding his dwelling blocked as to its exit by so mountainous a bulk. Ralph Peden rose in a hurry [...] He had instinctively hated bees and everything that buzzed since he was a child he had made certain experiments with the paper nest of a tree-building wasp. [15]

---

[12] Edwin Morgan, 'The Beatnik in the Kailyaird', *New Saltire*, no. 3, Spring, 1962, pp. 65 – 74, p. 68.

[13] Olive and Sydney Checkland, *Industry and Ethos: Scotland 1832 – 1914*, p. 115.

[14] Ian Maclaren, *Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1895; 1894), pp. 20 – 21.

[15] S. R. Crockett, *The Lilac Sunbonnet* (Glasgow: Collins, 1954; 1894), p. 262.

The roles of the minister, doctor and dominie are well respected in these tight-knit communities, with the church and schoolhouse providing the heart and the backbone of the towns. Scottish society is implicitly shown to be held together by these institutions, which are distinctly Scottish in flavour. Religion, specifically when focusing on the Auld Lichts, is shown to be of the old Scottish tradition, constituting hell-fire sermons and the wrath of God, again showing an element of fear in kailyard writing, as is shown in the following:

> As you ken, that wicked man there, Jo Cruickshanks, got [...] drunken, cursing, poaching Rob Dow, to come to the kirk to annoy the minister. Ay, he hadna been at that work for ten minutes when Mr. Dishart stopped in his first prayer and ga'e Rob a look [...] and so awful was the silence that a heap o' the congregation couldna keep their seats [...] Mr. Dishart had his arm pointed at him a' this time, and at last he says sternly, 'Come Forward.'[...] Rob gripped the board to keep himsel' frae obeying, and again Mr. Dishart says, 'Come Forward,' and syne Rob rose shaking, and tottering to the pulpit stair like a man suddenly shot into the Day of Judgement. 'You hulking man of sin,' cries Mr. Dishart, not a tick fleid, though Rob's as big as three o' him, 'sit down on the stair and attend me, or I'll step down frae the pulpit and run you out of the house of God.' [...]'And since that day,' said Hobart, 'Rob has worshipped Mr. Dishart as a man that has stepped out o' the Bible.'[16]

Barrie acknowledges drunkenness and other vices, such as small-mindedness in connection with religious denominations in his sketches, whereas Maclaren and Crockett, both Free Church ministers, offer far more tameness in their stories and do not deal with religion as being a dividing factor in Scotland. The unreality of their stories is evident in the following quotation:

> 'Was he intoxicated?' The crudeness of this question took away Drumtochty's breath, and suggested that something must have been left out in the creation of that advocate. Our men were not bigoted abstainers, but I never heard any word so coarse and elementary as intoxicated used in Drumtochty.[17]

Barrie's treatment of his characters, in *Auld Licht Idylls* at least, is different from that of other kailyard practitioners and, as such, he should not be labelled in the same category as Maclaren and Crockett. The latter two depict purely idyllic notions of Scottish town life, but, as Eric Anderson points out, 'Barrie treats religion as a joke. The reader is invited to watch the antics of his Auld Lichts – their

[16] J.M. Barrie, *Auld Licht Idylls* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1891; 1888), p. 24.

[17] Ian Maclaren, *Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush*, p. 184.

absurdly narrow views and humbugging self-righteousness – and to laugh.'[18] An example of Barrie's treatment of the narrow-mindedness of his characters is evident in the ironically titled *Auld Licht Idylls:*

> To the Auld Licht of the past there were three degrees of damnation – auld kirk, playacting, chapel. Chapel was the name always given to the English Church, of which I am too much of an Auld Licht myself to care to write even now. To belong to the chapel was, in Thrums, to be a Roman Catholic, and the boy who flung a clod of earth at the English minister – who called the Sabbath Sunday – or dropped a 'divet' down his chimney was held to be in the right way. The only pleasant story Thrums could tell of the chapel was that its steeple once fell.
>
> (pp. 19 – 20)

It cannot be denied, on the other hand, that Barrie is heavy handed in the use of sentimentality and nostalgia also, specifically in *A Window in Thrums* (1889) and *The Little Minister* (1891), with this aspect of his writing being shown in the following passage: 'At this window she sat for twenty years or more looking at the world as through a telescope; and here an awful ordeal was gone through after her sweet untarnished soul had been given back to God.'[19] We see such lachrymose writing again in the following passage:

> The minister was with her when she died. She was in her chair, and he asked her, as was his custom, if there was any particular chapter which she would like him to read [...] 'I shut the Book,' the minister said, 'when I came to the end of the chapter, and then I saw that she was dead. It is my belief that her heart broke one-and-twenty years ago.'
>
> (*A Window in Thrums*, p. 210)

Barrie balances out his stories, by ironical means, in acknowledging the petty-mindedness of village life as well as portraying the idyllic side, but all too often, and at least with some justification, this goes unnoticed and he is grouped with Maclaren and Crockett and accused of passing over 'the negative side of rural life – the small-mindedness, the self-satisfaction, the barrenness of thought, the obsessive gossiping, the deep class distinctions.'[20] On the whole this is a valid criticism, as 'the Kailyarders

---

[18] Eric Anderson, 'The Kailyard Revisited', Ian Campbell (ed.) *Nineteenth-Century Scottish Fiction: Critical Essays* (Manchester: Carcanet New Press, 1979), pp. 130 – 147, pp. 137 – 138.

[19] J. M. Barrie, *A Window in Thrums* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1934; 1889), p. 10.

[20] Olive and Sydney Checkland, *Industry and Ethos: Scotland 1832 – 1914*, p. 140.

created [...] a world of romantic illusion, a cottage Garden of Eden,'[21] but increasingly the kailyard school has been all too readily dismissed. The main critique of this writing is that it does not reflect the 'true' Scotland (or anything approximating an honest version of Scotland) of the time and that it is overly sentimental. If the first of these criticisms is addressed it should be noted that Barrie et al. did not attempt to draw a picture of contemporary Scotland. As Eric Anderson points out 'they assume, as Scott assumed, that their readership is interested in the manners of the age that had just passed.'[22] This is evident in *Auld Licht Idylls* when Barrie points out that 'there are few Auld Licht communities in Scotland nowadays' (p. 11) and in 'there are a score or two of them [weavers] left still [...] though there are now two factories in the town' (p. 12). It is apparent also that the kailyarders must have portrayed some truth about Scotland at that time, such as boys being able to attend university despite poverty and their early deaths due to overwork. Alistair McCleery points to the second of these criticisms, that the kailyard school is too sentimental, by noting that these idylls display 'not a cloying sentimentality, as some have wrongly said, but the absence of any sense of national as opposed to local or communal identity.'[23] McCleery goes on to comment on the positive aspects of this school which are largely ignored by critics:

> The angry young men of that generation [after the Great War] in dismissing the writers of the Kailyard as traitors to national consciousness lost sight of the positive elements within it [...] Not only was the Kailyard marginalised but the expression of sympathy, of community of feeling was outlawed. The image of Scottish culture as hard and macho, producing engineers rather than poets, sinners rather than celebrants, was nothing new but the Kailyard sought to let in a chink of liberal light, to soften and humanise. Or should that read 'feminise'? For these were masculine, patriarchal values shaping a culture which neglected imagination, soul, the balancing influence of the feminine [...] This imbalanced culture further reveals itself in an emphasis on the rational, the logical, on material success [...] Kailyard writers attempted to subvert that in showing an alternative to material success in the importance of filiative ties, to use Edward Said's phrase, that is, of attachment to family, community and landscape.[24]

---

[21] Gillian Shepherd, 'The Kailyard', Douglas Gifford (ed.) *The History of Scottish Literature Volume 3*, (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1988), pp. 309 – 318, p. 314.

[22] Eric Anderson, 'The Kailyard Revisited', in *Nineteenth-Century Scottish Fiction: Critical Essays,* p. 132.

[23] Afterword to the Scottish Classics edition of *Farewell Miss Julie Logan* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1989; 1932), pp. 89 – 94, p. 89.

[24] Ibid. pp. 90 – 91.

I do not agree on the whole with the notion that the kailyarders place importance on landscape (there is very little of it in the 'cabbage-patch' stories) but McCleery does highlight important notions that are generally overlooked. The popularity of the stories at the time points towards the need for this feminine aspect, which was long since neglected in the Scottish mentality, to be re-balanced but, as Blake points out, 'the Kailyard novel was a late flower of the Presbyterian predominance in Scottish life; that and memories of the Jacobites were shortly to prove unacceptable to twentieth-century citizens,'[25] as was the neglect of the negative side of small-town life that also needed to be rebalanced.

The first scathing attack on the kailyard which drew notice was J.H. Millar's 'The Literature of the Kailyard' (1895); it describes the stagnancy of this mode of literature and attacks the false depiction of Scotland that was shown to the English:

> His writings [Barrie's] are eagerly devoured in England by people who, on the most charitable hypothesis, may possibly understand one word in three of his dialogue: and to the curious superstitions which the Southern breast has long been nourished with regard to Scotland must now be added a new group of equally well-grounded beliefs; as for example that the Auld Lichts formed a large majority of the people of Scotland, and that the absorbing interest, if not the main occupation, of nine true-born Scotsmen out of ten is chatter about church officers, parleyings about precentors, babble about beadles, and maunderings about manses.[26]

His sarcastic tones ring true throughout in his emphasis on the ridiculous nature of certain aspects of these stories, with Millar's essay influencing George Douglas Brown, who subverts the kailyard mode by way of imitation to highlight the bleaker aspects of village life in Scotland. The safe ground of the kailyard life, which Ian Campbell describes in the following passage, was dwindling in respect of interest and was not safe any more as a consequence, in part, of the first novel of modern Scottish literature:

> In sexual morality, in political challenge, in representation of rapid social change, the kailyard was safe ground. The reader did not come to it to change his views fundamentally; he did perhaps come for novelty (the novelty of language which required a gloss, the novelty of situation which described Thrums to an Englishman or an émigré) but the novelty, while it could give emotional gratification to a desire for sympathetic grief, would not overturn a world-picture, nor challenge a social view. (*Kailyard*, p.117)

[25] George Blake, *Barrie and the Kailyard School*, p. 52.

[26] J. H. Millar, *The New Review*, Vol. 12, Jan – June 1895, pp. 384 – 394, p. 384.

It was precisely Brown's challenge to this depiction of Scotland that did overturn and challenge the way that Scots were viewed outside of their own country and also within it; it caused Scots to face up to the truth concerning the dualities and divisions within their psyche which kailyard literature totally failed to achieve and to highlight to outsiders the truth about the Scottish character and small town life in respect to the negative aspects of them.

The House with the Green Shutters is an iconic text in respect of it standing for an attack on a diseased Scotland and a diseased portrayal of Scotland; it is a novel that is continually referred to due to Brown's conscious stance against the kailyard school and, arguably, because it signalled a new direction for Scottish literature. Along with a departure from these idyllic tales, *The House with the Green Shutters* also moves away from Victorianism. The kailyard mode can be likened to Victorianism in a wide sense as a central critique of both lies in identifying the too ordered, rigid and rational constructs that are concerned with appearance and public life rather than with deeper, hellish aspects that are occurring beneath the surface façade of private existences. Brown attacks this disease in the appearance of Scottish culture by showing human nature 'as it really is' in Scottish village life; his emphasis is on the depth of human nature, although he concentrates on the negative, with his novel influencing all of the writers that will be discussed in the main body of this thesis. Brown, Carswell, Muir, Barrie (in *Farewell Miss Julie Logan*) and Jenkins present different, paradoxically more convincing versions of artifice than kailyard writing; they provide deeper representations of Scotland by acknowledging the dark as well as the light, evil as well as good and by highlighting the many strands that make up the Scottish mentality. None of these writers take heed of industrialisation to a large extent in the novels that will be focused on; Brown and Carswell do acknowledge it and Muir does too in an international context, but it could be argued that for them the Scottish psyche was a more important occupation for them to engage with, especially considering that a distinct sense of Scottish identity seemed even more under threat due to widespread industrialisation in Britain as a whole. The picture that these novelists produce of Scotland is far bleaker than the representation of good and idyllic existences evoked by their kailyard predecessors. Brown et al. wanted to rebalance the picture, to show the neglected truth about Scotland and her idiosyncrasies by way of an in-depth examination of the Scottish frame of mind. They suggest that the Calvinist outlook is so bleak that it creates a type of

hell, resulting in some of the works embodying a Manichean split, with the balance leaning to the darker side.

Although the face of Calvinism had changed from Victoria's time on the throne, with the emphasis being on God's love rather than with the older Calvinist faith, which embraced notions of the wrath of God and hell-fire and damnation, according to Olive and Sydney Checkland, 'it took much more time for attitudes so deeply ingrained to change in the inner being of Scots.'[27] This shift in Calvinism was brought about by a crisis and loss in faith. This crisis was three-fold in form, originating from theology, natural science and literary criticism pertaining to the Bible:

> The theological challenge came in the form of an attack on Calvinist belief, especially the notion of predestination. By the 1870s all sections of Presbyterianism had turned away from this formerly central belief, except for the northern province of the Free Church, the irreconcilables of the Gaelic Presbyteries. The natural-science threat took the form of the challenge posed by evolutionary thinking to the Book of Genesis and the story of the Creation it contained [...] The new German 'higher criticism' threatened the Bible itself. It applied textual and other tests of consistency and origins. [28]

So, although this shift away from God's wrath and judgement was beneficial to the Scottish people, it was not easy to shake off the stricter Calvinist preachings. The fact that the detrimental effects of Calvinism, which had been prevalent in Scottish thought for four hundred years, were still evident in modern Scottish society points to the religion's importance in terms of any discussion relating to the cast of mind of the Scot. The main doctrines of Calvinism are discussed in the following: "Central to all this was the Calvinistic belief in Predestination and the doctrine of the Elect. It asserted that inscrutably chosen from the beginning of time were those who should 'sit on His right hand', and those who should be damned to eternal exclusion, and indeed to hell's fires."[29] The negative effects of Calvinism are mainly concerned with these beliefs: the psychological problem of not knowing whether one was to be damned or saved; the overbearing nature of those who believed themselves to be saved and their resulting critical and watchful behaviour of others that they believed to be damned; the belief

---

[27] Olive and Sydney Checkland, *Industry and Ethos: Scotland 1832 – 1914*, p. 137.

[28] Ibid. pp. 128 – 129.

[29] Ibid. p. 118.

in those who considered themselves to be saved that they could sin without consequence; the stifling atmosphere and repression created by trying to appear good at all times and, hence, one of the Elect.

If the notion of Predestination is first considered it is evident that this was a chief dividing factor in Scotland: - 'Scottish Calvinism had always laid emphasis on popular education, on individual responsibility, on an answerability to God for his gifts (which condemned waste and so favoured thrift).'[30] For those individuals who were hard working and profitable it appeared clear to them that they were one of the chosen, with these people "using evangelisation as an attack on the working-class 'non-elect' ".[31] This stress on individuality produced a competitive nature which in turn resulted in an over-bearing sense of pride, and a large element of scorn and jealousy towards those who were also successful and who posed a threat to others' individuality, as with Brown's protagonist, Gourlay. The Protestant work ethos, as a result of Predestination or the notion of the Elect, then, was responsible for small-mindedness and a sense of inferiority in the working-classes that divided Scottish society into those who believed they were to be saved and those who were to be automatically damned. The notion of the Elect was also damaging in the sense that because salvation was already decided yet was unknown for sure, Scots were inwardly split; if they were saved then they were released from any moral obligation but because they had no certainty of this they were divided between private sin and outward respectability. Outward appearance was very important in terms of 'seeming' to be saved; constant scrutiny of others was manifest, such as that seen with the 'bodies' in *The House with the Green Shutters*, as people spied on and criticised others who, they believed, were less likely to be saved, to take the emphasis off of themselves. The notion of the all-seeing Calvinist God, a very Scottish concept, who judged and was potentially wrathful, encouraged the scrutiny and judgement of others, with this unremitting watching making a private life nearly impossible. People were subjected to living as if under a microscope, especially in small towns like Brown's Barbie, Barrie's glen in *Farewell Miss Julie Logan* and Muir's Calderwick, leading to many being forced to live out very private, isolated lives under the watchful eye of others, as is evident with the Gourlay family in Brown's novel. People had to conform to sustain the status quo (which naturally involved repression) or be judged.

---

[30] Olive and Sydney Checkland, *Industry and Ethos: Scotland 1832 – 1914*, p.12.

[31] Callum G. Brown, *Religion and Society in Scotland Since 1707* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997), p. 178.

Paradoxically, the egalitarian Protestant ethos is another factor responsible for everybody knowing everybody else's business and for people pulling others down:

> In principle the Kirk session of the Presbyterian Churches was democratic, controlled by the lay members, with their influence extending upward to presbyteries, synods and the General Assembly. The basis of Presbyterianism was thus intended to be democratic.[32]

Due to this democracy everybody had their say where church matters were concerned, and because the majority of people at this time were involved with the church, people felt justified in knowing what was happening with everybody else. The Scottish notion of 'I kent his faither' stems from this democracy, whereby everybody in small towns had knowledge of everybody else's family history, specifically concerning their faults, and this was used to repress people from 'getting on' as they were constantly reminded of family vices, with a suggestion being made that the sins of the father and mother were transferred on to their children. Children, then, could not escape from their parents' or other family members' sins and vice versa and this was used to suppress and to maintain the status quo, that of masculine, logical and reasoned thought.

Calvinism also repressed the feminine and the unconscious as these were unknown and not to be trusted, with Presbyterianism being responsible for undermining women by way of the doctrine of Original Sin. Guilt felt about sex was palmed off on to women, as they stemmed from Eve, the original sinner, and stood for temptation and sin. The overtly masculine society of Calvinism used religion as an excuse to repress femininity and the unconscious, which is generally associated with women, as they were suspect and could unbalance the norm of the logical and rational masculinity of the church. As Olive and Sydney Checkland point out 'the church bore a large responsibility for a Scottish inhibition on revealing the inner self.'[33] Repressive ideas stemming from Calvinism also include the stifling of creative thought; art and literature were rejected, with literature being considered lies that got in the way of the truth of the Bible. Blake points out that the church-influenced education system encouraged this rejection of art and literature as it was 'apt to be classical and mathematical, taking a poor view of

---

[32] Olive and Sydney Checkland, *Industry and Ethos: Scotland 1832 – 1914*, p. 119.

[33] Ibid. p. 137.

cloud-capp'd towers and gorgeous palaces' (*Barrie and the Kailyard School*, p. 10). Landscape and nature were further dismissed, as nature was the devil's place and not to be trusted. The rejection of creative and of imaginative thought led to a stilted, repressed and sterile environment, leading to the novelists that are being discussed to portray Scotland as a type of hell (possibly with the exception of Carswell). The iconic landscapes that the novelists produce, and which are representations of Scotland as diseased, all suggest an element of failure in coming to terms with Scotland's stifled and repressed environment. Beth Dickson in 'Foundations of the Modern Scottish Novel' comments on this notion in respect to Brown, Barrie and other Scottish writers:

> At the core of the novels of Brown, Hay, Munro and Barrie is a regularly repeated set of themes which are more self-reflexive than reflective, and which had the effect of circumscribing the scope of their work as explicit social commentary, though it provides the backbone of many of the assumptions with which the rest of twentieth-century Scottish Literature has to deal: what they imply in their works is that as writers they were involved in a fight for survival in a country which seemed to them to have no place for the literary imagination. [34]

The depiction of a sick Scotland is apparent in Jenkins, Muir and Carswell also; each deals with the inimical environment in different ways but what they all have in common is their focus on the aspects of the Scottish psyche that leads to such rejection of imaginative vitality and on myth and landscape. The Scottish poet and writer Edwin Muir is worth mentioning in respect to these points. In his poetry, for example, in 'Scotland 1941' (1943) and 'Scotland's Winter' (1956), he uses myth and landscape to show Scotland's stagnant nature, which he mostly attributes to Knox's influence in the country. In *Scottish Journey* (1935) he also highlights the stilted atmosphere of the country, which he sees as having no sense of itself and no place for the creative imagination:

> Scotland is gradually being emptied of its population, its spirit, its wealth, industry, art, intellect, and innate character. This is a sad conclusion; but it has some support on historical grounds. If a country exports its most enterprising spirits and best minds year after year, for fifty or a hundred or two hundred years, some result will inevitably follow.
>
> (p. 3)

---

[34] Beth Dickson, 'Foundations of the Modern Scottish Novel', Cairns Craig (ed.) *A History of Scottish Literature Volume 4* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1989; 1987), pp. 49 – 60, p. 50.

Muir goes on to explain why, as he sees it, such mass emigration is occurring in Scotland:

> What makes the existence of the mass of the people in Scotland so unsatisfactory [...] is not the feeling that they are being subjected to English influence, but rather the knowledge that there is no Scottish influence left to direct them [...] they live in a sort of vacuum [...] A certain meaningless and despondency hangs round; [...] they are out of things; and people emigrate readily without knowing why.[35]

The emigration of many Scottish writers, such as Barrie and Carswell who moved to England, along with Brown's and Willa and Edwin Muir's removal from Scotland for many years, points to the notion that Scotland rejects creativity, with Edwin Muir citing three main reasons for this; the main influences on Scottish culture are the Reformation, which was obviously hostile to the creative imagination, Anglicisation, which was, and continues to be, divisive of the Scottish psyche, and industrialisation, which was inimical to the imagination and emotions. Muir identified a split in the Scottish mentality that is evident in all of the novels in question, which Douglas Gifford points to in the following quotation:

> It can be argued with real force that Edwin Muir's theory of a Scottish dissociation of sensibility is still an important and defining concept in terms of Scottish fiction, whereby emotion and thought are separated to the excessive and unhealthy development and exclusion of the one and whereby the other finds creative expression in the recurrent themes of personal disintegration, family division, and national dualism in many [...] modern Scottish novels.[36]

According to Muir a Scotsman feels in Scots and thinks in English; the frame of mind of the Scot is fundamentally split due to the onset of Anglicisation, a dualism that is manifest in Scottish literature. G. Gregory Smith in 1919 comments on this division which is evident in a number of themes and subjects:

> Does literature anywhere [...] show such a mixture of contraries as his [the Scot] in outlook, subject and method; real life and romance, everyday fact and the supernatural, things holy and things profane, gentle and simple, convention and 'cantrip', thistles and thistledown? [...] There is more in the Scottish antithesis of the real and fantastic than is to be explained by the familiar rules of rhetoric. The sudden jostling of contraries seems to preclude any relationship by literary

[35] Edwin Muir, *Scottish Journey*, (Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing, 1996; 1935), pp. 27 – 28.

[36] Douglas Gifford, 'Modern Scottish Fiction', *Studies In Scottish Literature*, Vol. 13, 1978, pp. 250 – 273, p. 252.

> suggestion. The one invades the other without warning. They are the 'polar twins' of the Scottish Muse.[37]

This 'Caledonian antisyzygy', which Hugh MacDiarmid utilised to argue that there was a distinct Scottish literature in the Scottish Renaissance of the 1920s and '30s, is apparent in Brown, Barrie, Jenkins, Muir and Carswell. They all portray a dualism in the Scottish character, which appears to be full of contradictions. *The House with the Green Shutters* and *Open the Door!* highlight family divisions within a divided culture; Duror in *The Cone-Gatherers* is split in terms of Manichean divisions associated with Calvinism, where he also displays an outward facade which is not in keeping with his private thoughts and actions; Joanna in *Open the Door!* and Elizabeth in *Imagined Corners* both experience a split between viewing sex as being healthy and natural and as it being sinful due to their religious backgrounds, with both also being divided in respect to whether they should conform to a masculine, Presbyterian society or reject it; Barrie's protagonist in *Farewell Miss Julie Logan* displays a dualism in respect to the outer and inner man being at odds – he is innately attracted to beauty and creativity but has to repress these due to his Presbyterian ministry; Brown highlights the dissociation of sensibility in Gourlay and his son, with one being full of emotion but with little common sense and the other being rational, headstrong and seemingly devoid of emotion.

Evident in all of the novels are characters who experience a sense of personal disintegration; this leads to a self-destructiveness in those who are deeply repressed and unable to cope as a result of attempting to stifle a fundamental part of themselves, as in Duror in *The Cone-Gatherers,* William Murray in *Imagined Corners* and the young Gourlay in *The House with the Green Shutters*, in an escape from Scotland and her inherent dualities and repressions altogether, like Elise and Elizabeth in *Imagined Corners*, or a reconciliation with Scotland in the characters' own terms, such as in the character of Joanna in *Open the Door!.* It is significant that it is the female characters who are seemingly best able to cope with such a divided and stilted country, with the exception of Mrs Gourlay and her daughter who are destined to fall with their entire family. As J. B. Pick points out in relation to *Imagined Corners* 'the only two characters [...] who prove capable of facing life honestly are Lizzie

[37] G. Gregory Smith, *Scottish Literature: Character and Influence* (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1919), p.4.

and Elizabeth Shand.'[38] This may be due to the fact that traditionally women have had to deal with a Presbyterian, patriarchal society that has tried to repress them and keep them down more than men and have, as a result, found healthy outlets for this claustrophobia, such as turning to their unconscious and to nature and landscape, which are associated with the feminine. It is too limiting to categorise these outlets as applying only to women and to suggest that all female characters use them, however; Duror, for instance, also at first turns to nature for solace. Other female characters, such as Willa Muir's Mrs Ritchie, turn diabolical due to the combination of repression building up and no outlets being available.

Landscape is shown in all of the novels that are discussed to represent a healthy outlet and means of spiritual catharsis for the characters, with the exception of *Imagined Corners*. I would suggest that there is a Scottish slant on the reasons why these novelists are drawn to landscapes; Calvinist thought has outlawed nature and landscape so that Scottish society is not harmonised with nature and fertility, which are viewed as negative things. The novelists in question highlight landscape as being natural and healing, not the devil's place (as a manifestation of the 'fallen world') as Calvinists believe, but something that can be drawn upon for spiritual strength and an avenue of escape from the stifling communities in which their characters live. Their portrayals of landscape are significantly different from those of the kailyarders, however. Examples of landscape and nature in Maclaren's and Barrie's works are shown in the following quotations:

> In the moonlight the grass seemed tipped with hoarfrost. Most of the beeches were already bare, but the shoots, clustering round them, like children at their mothers' skirts, still retained their leaves of red and brown [...] Gavin was standing on grass, but there were patches of heather within sight, and broom, and the leaf of the blaeberry [...] The mystery of the woods thrilled the little minister. His eyes rested on the shining roots, and he remembered what had been told of him of the legend of the Caddam, how once on a time it was a mighty wood, and a maiden, most beautiful stood on its confines, panting and afraid, for a wicked man pursued her [...] Both were for ever lost, and the bones of her pursuer lie beneath a beech, but the lady may still be heard singing in the woods if the night be fine.[39]

> No one can desire a sweeter walk than through a Scottish pine wood in late September, where you breathe the healing resinous air, and the ground is crisp and springy beneath your feet, and gentle animals dart away on every side, [...] Many a time on market days Flora had gone singing through these woods, plucking a posy

[38] J. B. Pick, Introduction to *Imagined Corners* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1987), pp. vii – xi, p. ix.

[39] J. M. Barrie, *The Little Minister* (London: Cassell and Co. Ltd., 1891), pp. 34 – 35.

> of wild flowers and finding a mirror in every pool as young girls will; but now she trembled and was afraid. The rustling of the trees in the darkness, the hooting of an owl, the awful purity of the moonlight in the glades, the cold sheen of the water, were [...] omens of judgement [...] It was with a sob of relief she escaped from the shadow and looked upon the old glen once more.
>
> (Maclaren, *Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush*, pp. 144 – 145)

The function of landscape is, in the quotation taken from *The Little Minister*, to establish the character of Babbie in a mythical setting. Gavin is reminded of the myth surrounding the woods and immediately following this episode he sees Babbie for the first time dancing and singing amongst the trees. She is, therefore, portrayed as a Jacobite, romantic heroine, such as might be found in Scott's novels, with Gavin being unsure whether she is real or not and suspicious of whether she is the devil. Maclaren uses landscape in much the same fashion; he implicitly shows landscape and nature as not to be trusted, of being the devil's arena, with woods potentially being places of sin and darkness where one can get lost.

Landscape and nature are also used to emphasise the Edenic settings of some of the kailyard sketches. Crockett's *The Stickit Minister* (1893), for example, centres around a Utopian existence as is evident from the following quotations: 'License and ordination he passed like mile-stones which marked his progress towards the white-walled manse in a sunny glen which should be a home for a new Adam and Eve';[40]

> The black-faced sheep breaking down the fences and straying on the line side, and the torrents coming down the granite gullies, foaming white after a water-spout, and tearing into his embankments, undermining his chairs and plates, were the only troubles of his life.
>
> (p. 39)

Although Edenic descriptions similar to those above are included in *Open the Door!*, Carswell distances herself by way of irony from these Utopian settings to highlight the fantasies of her protagonist. Carswell also balances out her novel by illustrating realistic, dystopian elements, which Crockett does not acknowledge in *The Lilac Sunbonnet* or in *The Stickit Minister*. Other instances of nature being described in kailyard stories have the sole purpose of description only, and emphasise the

[40] S. R. Crockett, *The Stickit Minister* (London: T. Fischer Unwin, 1893), p. 235.

soft focus and attention to small detail in the kailyard stories: 'Margaret's was an old-fashioned garden, with pinks and daisies and forget-me-nots, with sweet-scented wall-flower and thyme and moss roses, where nature had her way and gracious thoughts could visit one without any jarring note' (*Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush*, p. 37); 'The kail grows brittle from the snow in my dank and cheerless garden. A crust of bread gathers timid pheasants round me. The robins, I see, have made the coalhouse their home' (*Auld Licht Idylls*, p. 4).

Brown uses landscape in *The House with the Green Shutters* to emphasise the juxtaposition of human cruelty and the natural state of things, much like Jenkins in *The Cone-Gatherers*. Both highlight man's cruelty, which is made manifest when compared to nature and landscape, with both authors showing characters who are oblivious to the beauty of the natural world. Gourlay is too wrapped up in his own self-importance to notice nature, his son chooses drink as an outlet instead and the 'bodies' are too busy concentrating on envy and maliciousness to utilise nature as any process of catharsis. The sterile environment of Barbie wins over at the expense of the natural environment, which offers beauty and a means of escaping the claustrophobic atmosphere of the characters' surroundings. In *The Cone-Gatherers* Duror initially uses nature as an outlet; it helps him to deal with his unhappy existence, but when he can no longer cope he is described in terms of corrupting nature and is compared to Calum and his goodness and affinity with nature to illustrate man's contamination of the natural state of things. Brown and Jenkins, like Carswell, Muir and Barrie use landscape to highlight the psychological and emotional state of their characters; landscape and nature are not described for their own sake but are instead used to reflect the inner state of characters. Landscape in *Farewell Miss Julie Logan* highlights the inner feelings of Barrie's protagonist; like the surrounding barren landscape, which is cut off and indistinguishable due to the snow, he is psychologically cut off from his emotions. He has a love of beauty and nature, which is revealed in his love of the manse garden, but he has to repress these aspects of himself due to his role as minister. Joanna in *Open the Door!* views landscape and nature as idyllic when she is fooling herself that she is happy and when she does find fulfilment at the end of the novel; the surrounding beauty is harmonised with her inner state of well-being. She develops a semi-mystical relationship with nature, like Elizabeth, to help her achieve a sense of herself and to escape the restrictions imposed upon her. Elizabeth in Muir's novel constantly looks to the landscape surrounding Calderwick as a means of escaping the stilted and at times

malicious environment of the town but Muir emphasises the fact that nature and landscape are not powerful enough allies to combat Scotland's repressive nature, and so rejects them. The novelists, then, do not adhere to the way in which the kailyarders present nature and landscape. Since the kailyarders do not acknowledge the stagnant and repressive atmosphere in their small towns they do not present landscape as a means of solace or as an avenue of escape; since their villages are idyllic, there is seemingly no need to turn to nature or landscape. The kailyarders obviously do not use landscape in terms of reflecting the psyche of their characters either as they do not deal with a deep insight into human nature; they incorporate nature and landscape in their sketches almost purely for description and that is why there is so little of it in Maclaren's, Crockett's and Barrie's stories. Furthermore, the representation of woods as being dark and sinister places is only found in Jenkins's novel although the functions of these are different; the kailyarders presumably depict woods in this manner as the novelists or their characters of that period would possess the Calvinist view of the world and nature – that it can not be trusted. Jenkins, on the other hand, is concerned with a universal landscape; he shows the woods in his novel to be full of light and dark, good and evil, just as humans are. He views nature as something that is beautiful and a source of catharsis, but highlights man's corruption of it.

Another central theme that all of the authors have in common is the use of myth, specifically concerning Eden, heaven and hell and the devil. Brown's novel includes the devil from Scottish folklore. Gourlay is constantly described as surrounded by blackness and above the forces of nature when he rides on his black horse and defies the elements; he gradually becomes diabolical but it could be argued that it is the 'bodies' who collectively make up the devil due to their evil and malice, which in turn makes Barbie a type of hell. In Barrie's novella Adam Yestreen is (with religious irony) stuck in a state of purgatory due to his repressions; as a release from these he is sent, by God or the devil, a ghost in the shape of a beautiful woman. She is good on the one hand and evil on the other; she releases Adam from his stilted life temporarily but she may have also caused the death of a previous minister and been sent from the devil. They are viewed as a version of Adam and Eve; she tempts him away from his old life and he is deliriously happy with her in an Edenic state of existence before he banishes her away to, presumably, remain in her state of purgatory. Muir's *Imagined Corners* is similar to Brown's *The House with the Green Shutters* in respect to the townspeople making life a

living hell for each other; they are unforgiving, judgmental and malicious, and subject everyone to constant scrutiny. It is especially bad for Elizabeth, an outsider, Elise, her sister-in-law, who returns to the claustrophobia of her hometown after leaving in her youth, and William Murray, the local minister. Elizabeth and Elise do not conform to the town's social norms in respect to following the status quo and being repressed as a result; they reject the social roles that they are expected to play out as they cannot really 'live' in following them, as these dull their spirits. William is inwardly split between what he sees as the true God, who is loving, and Calderwick's notion of God, who is judgmental and full of vengeful anger. He spiritually and physically drowns as a result of this inner struggle. Muir implicitly suggests that a type of hell is experienced when freedom is disallowed, and a sense of heaven when liberty is achieved and a sense of 'belonging' to the universe is felt.

Joanna Bannerman, Carswell's protagonist, constantly searches for Edenic landscapes due to the claustrophobia of her middle-class, religious upbringing. She is an ironic version of Eve; she tempts men and is excluded from public life to a large extent due to her gender, much as Eve is the archetypal woman excluded from society, but she plays out a negative Christian message in her unconventionality, her sexual relations with a married man and the fact that her Adam at the end is a younger, virginal male. Throughout the story she finds false Edens; in Italy with her husband and with her married lover in London. She eventually finds fulfilment with her 'ideal' partner, Lawrence, and they play out a version of Adam and Eve in their re-birth at the end of the novel, with their acquired knowledge, echoing the notion of the Tree of Knowledge in the Garden of Eden, leading them both to a type of new creation. Jenkins is also ironic in his use of Christian myth; his story is set in a mythical Garden of Eden, with a modern day version of the Fall being replayed. Jenkins is critical of religion, however; his atheist beliefs and the fact that he views religion as being harmful in terms of the stilted environment produced by Calvinism and the divisions that it inevitably brings illustrate his irony. He explores good and evil in the novel, with Calum being inherently good and innocent and Duror embodying the opposite extreme of evil. Calum is portrayed as a Christ-like figure and he is eventually crucified by Duror, who becomes diabolical and is a version of the justified sinner.[41] Jenkins plays

[41] Duror is similar to the character of Robert Wringhim in James Hogg's *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824) in that both are diabolical to an extent due to their Calvinist beliefs.

about with the notion of the Garden of Eden, showing that man contaminates nature and is incapable of sustaining the reality of an Eden due to the fact that man is equally capable of evil. He replays a version of the Fall to highlight the notion that we are all living in a fallen world as our capacity for love, forgiveness and charity is deeply limited due to Calvinist influence; he portrays Calum as being inherently good and devoid of evil to show man's flawed nature and how far we are from Eden.

From Brown's *The House with the Green Shutters* the novels go full circle to Jenkins who also shows a diseased Scottish landscape. Their 'truer' versions of artifice are healthier than the kailyarders' portrayal of Scotland in that they acknowledge the detrimental factors in the Scottish psyche and explore what has caused these and the effects that they have on the inhabitants of Scotland. They offer a portrayal of the country as it really is without resorting to landscapes of the past to escape the present realities or sentimental, romanticised notions of how they would like it to be. As Ian Campbell comments in relation to Brown, '*The House with the Green Shutters* has the power to change permanently the readers' view of Scotland. The experience of the book, and the sustained power after its conclusion, interact with remembered or imagined experience, and the product is Scotland' (*Kailyard,* p. 127). The same can be said of the other authors discussed; their writing is not polemic in terms of writing as a direct attack on the kailyard mode but rather to depict Scotland realistically and to change the readers' view of the country and her people from the stereotypical Scotsman, and woman, of the kailyard writers. It may not be a complimentary picture that they show, but at least it is an honest one, as Robin Jenkins points out in his depiction of the Calvinist character:

> Dour, puritanic, suspicious, canny, philistine: the epithets are justified. We display a darkness and violence of soul over trivial objects, alongside a proneness to dreary sentimental yearnings [...] We are great ones for sitting primly on the dustbin lid in public: though in private none can excel us in describing with abandon, relish and ingenuity, the contents of that dustbin [...] Admit the superficial greyness, therefore, and put it boldly in the picture: it can itself be a source of strength, as George Douglas Brown showed [...] We have been a long time in acquiring our peculiarities: in spite of ourselves, they are profound, vigorous, and important; and it is the duty of the Scottish novelist to portray them.[42]

[42] Robin Jenkins, 'Novelist in Scotland', *Saltire Review*, Autumn, 1955, pp. 8 – 9, p. 8.

CHAPTER 2

GEORGE DOUGLAS BROWN

From Idylls to Nightmares: Uprooting the Kailyard

In 1901 the publication of George Douglas Brown's *The House with the Green Shutters* marked a new direction for Scottish literature. Brown's novel is commonly heralded as the first work of modern Scottish literature due to the date of its publication and the author's very evident attack upon the predominant kailyard school. The novel is an iconic text in respect of this and, as such, is frequently referred to. Much criticism, therefore, exists in terms of the novel itself and in terms of Brown's influences and motives for writing such a dark tragedy. A number of critics overstate Brown's aims and claim that he wrote *The House with the Green Shutters* as a direct reaction against the sentimental, and fundamentally false, idylls of Scottish village life which appear in the writings of J.M.Barrie, S.R.Crockett and 'Ian Maclaren' (John Watson). Other commentators have placed many claims on the author and his work, namely that the novel is overhung by the author's personal experiences and his own dark disposition; these claim that Brown wrote such a macabre story due to his acute disgust of humanity; that one of the primary aims in writing the novel was to document social changes that took place at the turn of the century; that the version of Scottish village life that Brown imparts to the reader is even more false and flawed than that of his predecessors. All of these notions will be addressed in the following chapter and an attempt will be made to understand *The House with the Green Shutters* in terms of landscapes of Eden and hell and the Scottish psyche. More specifically, the text will be studied in relation to the subversion of the kailyard mode of writing, the reasons behind why Barbie is such a hellish town, the consequences for the Gourlays and the relationships within the Gourlay household, especially between father and son.

Brown's background, living during his early years in Ochiltree, placed him in the homeland of great writers such as Boswell, Galt and Burns, in whom he took pride. Ayrshire, as Walter Elliott describes it, is 'the fertile county, low between the moors and the sea; sentimental, noble, gross; learned; infinitely alive, infinitely curious; gossipy, quick-witted, drunken.'[1] Brown had an insider's knowledge of village life; he knew it intimately, as he was a part of it. He thrived on the countryside and had an astute gift for detail, both of his natural surroundings and of the people that he encountered.

[1] Walter Elliott, Introduction to James Veitch (ed.) *George Douglas Brown* (London: Herbert Jenkins Ltd., 1952), pp. 5 – 8, p. 5.

Brown appeared to possess a deep insight into humanity from an early age, as Veitch documents, that would stand him in good stead for the landmark novel for which he seemed destined to write. [2] The author fulfilled the role of the lad o' pairts, who, though from a deprived background, was given the opportunity to attend Glasgow University and then Oxford. He studied Classics, and the Greek influence in *The House with the Green Shutters* is clear; this influence is one of the main strands that run throughout the novel. [3] Although Brown was a gifted student and had a very close and loving relationship with his mother, his life was marred by his illegitimacy and of his father's refusal to accept or acknowledge him. [4] Brown, then, was extremely sensitive to the critique of others, imagined or otherwise. This aspect of his background plagued him and led to a number of critics suggesting that the darkness of his novel was due to his own personal bitterness and deep-seated sense of appearing an outcast. Such a personal animus does intrude somewhat into the novel but it should be considered whether this is due to Brown's nature and his background or to his attempt to address and rebalance the Edenic landscapes of the kailyard.

If one turns to Edwin Muir, it is apparent that he was of the opinion that Brown's book was tainted by a disgust of humanity and by the author's bleak disposition:

> Young Gourlay suffers from beginning to end, yet his sufferings do not awaken compassion in the author, but a mood which one can only call disgust. The human race was disgusting to Douglas as it was to Swift [...] It was to Douglas, one feels, a metaphysical indignity that the people whom he delineated in *The House with the Green Shutters* should exist: and his novel came clean out of a burning negation of life as he knew it, and with most intensity, therefore, out of a negation of his own being. [5]

---

[2] In *George Douglas Brown*, Veitch describes Brown when he was still at school as being 'fully alive to the rich gallery of character around him. Every eccentricity, every foible and trick of speech were stamped upon his brain. He had, for his age, an uncanny insight into human nature' (p. 22).

[3] The Greek influence is evident in the chorus of 'bodies', the nemesis in the shape of James Wilson, the Greek sense of terror in nature, the stroke of the Gods upon men and the Greek law that states that men have to bear the consequences of their own actions, those who tempt fate, hubris, and the hamartia of Greek literature, the fatal flaw of pride found in Gourlay.

[4] This aspect of Brown's life is discussed by James Veitch in *George Douglas Brown*. See pp. 21 – 23 for an example.

[5] 'George Douglas', in *Latitudes*, 1924, pp. 31 – 46, p. 35. I would suggest that Muir holds this view because he personally possessed a disgust of humanity, as is evident in his autobiography: 'I walked to and from my work each day through slums [...] These journeys filled me with a sense of degradation: the twisted faces, the obscene words casually heard in passing, the ancient, haunting stench of pollution and decay, the arrogant women, the mean men, the terrible children, daunted me, and at last filled me with an immense, blind dejection. I had seen only ordinary people before; but on some of the faces that I passed every day now there seemed to be things written which only a fantastic imagination could have

Muir, then, has made the same premise that many critics have made. According to the accounts of many men who knew him well, however, Brown was an optimist who had no spite against humanity, or, in his later years, even against his father. [6] The author appears far from dark and discontented in Neil Munro's relation of meeting him:

> I had looked for a man somewhat bitter, too, a cynic, a pessimist, somewhat contemptuous of the country he came from as one might well be who wrote *The House with the Green Shutters*; and ten minutes' conversation revealed him for a boyish, cheerful, laughing, whimsical person, well enough pleased with the world as he found it, tolerant to a fault.[7]

It is best, though, to turn to Brown's own comments to discover why his personal dislike colours the novel. He admitted that 'I hate scandal, malevolence, and all manner of cruelty, and in this book I tried to hold them up to scorn and loathing. Hence the unpleasantness of the characters.' [8] As a satirist it is not surprising that Brown holds these up to scorn by way of sneering at his characters; he holds them in contempt to distance himself from their actions. It is not that Brown had a hatred of all humanity but rather a hatred of cruelty and malice which is evident in the poetic justice in the novel; he comments that 'I'd rather have the sinner at all times than the man who mocks at his infirmity.' [9] Another main reason for the overbearing blackness is concerned with Brown's opinion of Barrie's, Maclaren's and Crockett's writing mode:

> It was antagonism to their method that made me embitter the blackness [...] which was a gross blunder, of course. A novelist should never have an axe of his own to grind. If he allows a personal animus to obtrude ever so slightly it knocks his work out of balance. [10]

---

created, and I shrank from reading them and quickly learned not to see.' *An Autobiography* (London: Hogarth Press, 1964; 1954), p. 91.

[6] Brown's lack of hatred towards humanity in general is evident in Andrew Melrose's account of the author in the chapter 'Reminiscences' in Cuthbert Lennox (ed.) *George Douglas Brown* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1903), pp. 232 – 235, and Brown's lack of spite towards his father is recounted in James Veitch (ed.) *George Douglas Brown*, pp. 53 – 54.

[7] Veitch (ed.) *George Douglas Brown*, pp. 158 – 159.

[8] Ibid. p. 163.

[9] Lennox (ed.) *George Douglas Brown*, pp. 150 – 151.

[10] Veitch (ed.) *George Douglas Brown*, p. 153.

Brown, then, was aware of his own faults in his work but his comment above should not be read as an admission that he wrote *The House with the Green Shutters* as a direct attack on the kailyard. George Blake points out in *Barrie and the Kailyard School* that 'one must refuse to believe that any considerable work of the creative order – and *The House with the Green Shutters* is certainly that – can be produced as a sort of polemic, a mere retort like any letter to the Editor' (pp.98 - 99). And yet, many critics have claimed this very fact. Brown was aware of his book being thus misinterpreted and addressed this fact: "Those who hint that I've deliberately set myself to say 'black', whenever Barrie and Maclaren say 'white' are talking burble. It was not for its own sake that I painted Barbie so, but because of its effect on the Gourlays." [11] It is perhaps misleading, then, to say that Brown was a victim of his wry and awkward nature, of his troubled past or that he wrote his iconic novel simply to attack humanity or the sentimental writings of Scotland. Brown's primary interest, as can be seen from the quotation above, was in the human side of the novel, in reflecting the Scottish mentality and Scottish life 'as it really was' to achieve realism of character. His primary interest was not to document social changes, like the railways and industrial development, as he highlights that the village mentality stays static despite the technological changes occurring around them; the village is not interested in change, choosing to concentrate on malignancy instead. Brown concentrates on portraying the Scottish character in a more honest manner by acknowledging the negative side of human nature. His old teacher William Maybin confirms that 'pure scholarship was not his strongest point; it was the humanistic in literature that held him.' [12] In *The House with the Green Shutters* Brown focuses on the psychology of the characters; unlike the kailyarders he portrays 'real' people. Brown shows that emotions cannot be controlled and confined, that evil and good co-exist; he depicts a truer version of artifice by highlighting characteristically Scottish traits and examining how these can work against a community, resulting in Barbie's bleak landscape. As Christian Civardi points out:

> what Barrie and the Kailyarders failed to realize, or deliberately ignored, was that all the instances of petty jealousy which they staged in their novels, especially Barrie in *A Window in Thrums*, would gradually build up and end up by poisoning the moral

[11] Veitch (ed.) *George Douglas Brown*, p. 156.

[12] Ibid. p. 39.

> fabric of the community. This was one of the main points that Brown wanted to make.' [13]

The result is a 'healthier' version of Scottish life in terms of depicting Scotland in a more realistic fashion compared with the diseased and claustrophobic idylls of sentiment and retrospect which preceded his writing. Brown's manifesto of taking Scottish fiction in a different path and focusing on the human side of his characters were primarily his reasons in allowing the blackness to intrude. These aims are highlighted by a correspondent for *The Ayr Advertiser* in an edition that appeared shortly after the novel was published:

> *The House with the Green Shutters* was written as it was, partly because he considered the ordinary cut-and-dried style of fiction wrong – that a book should be a living thing, not a mechanism, stiffly moving and hampered by the garments of convention; he wrote the end first, and became enamoured of his figures – and, alas! he knew that in some lives there is an inevitableness of disaster. [14]

Brown's novel is clearly a living thing, not limited by convention, but instead being original and full of movement and vivid detail. He considered the tried-and-tested kailyard formula to be stagnant, and rejected this to place emphasis instead on strong psychological realism. As Andrew Melrose says of Brown, "he was a realist, not because he loved sordid details and the limning of ugly subjects, but because he would have his characters so true to life that they would 'leap at you from out the page.' " [15]

The House with the Green Shutters is not an anti-kailyard novel but rather a clever reworking of the typical kailyard props which are mimicked and subverted. I would agree with Ian Campbell when he describes Brown's technique as being 'rather subversion than counterblast, achieved through the appropriation of Kailyard elements which are made to self destruct.' [16] Brown undermines the main fabric of kailyard life and attacks the institutions, such as the church and school system, which make up the backbone of the typical Edenic communities portrayed in *Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush* (1895) and

---

[13] Christian Civardi, 'The House with the Green Shutters: A Chapter of the Moral History of Scotland' in *Recherches Anglaises et Americaines*, no. 5, 1972, pp. 194 – 206, p. 205.

[14] Lennox, (ed.) *George Douglas Brown*, p. 150.

[15] Ibid. p. 199.

[16] Ian Campbell, 'George Douglas Brown's Kailyard Novel', *Studies in Scottish Literature*, vol. 12, 1974 – 5, pp. 62 – 73, p. 65.

The Lilac Sunbonnet (1894) amongst others. Ian Campbell also comments, however, that such mimicry narrows the potential of the novel and that Brown's attack on the 'bodies' is ineffective in terms of reality: 'Its sardonic imitation of the kailyard form had given it a narrowness limiting its range – and its single-minded baiting of the kailyard prototype Scots had distorted Barbie almost beyond credibility.' [17] It is possibly true that Brown is limited by modelling Barbie on a kailyard village but the fact that the novel attacks the kailyard from the inside is far more effective than any other means of critique and this overrides any limitation in the setting. To address Campbell's further charge that Barbie is incredible is to ignore the fact that such a small community can so easily be taken over by malicious gossiping. Blake illustrates the effect that such gossiping can have in *Barrie and the Kailyard School*: 'Such people had a curiously powerful influence, often malignant enough, on the social atmosphere of any small and isolated community in the middle decades of the nineteenth century,' which people today may not understand as 'the bus and the popular Press have changed all that by now' (p.97). The truth, of course, lies somewhere between the two extremes of Thrums and Barbie but Brown's scathing subversion of the kailyard cliché is more 'true-to-life' in terms of acknowledging the detrimental factors of human nature.

Brown's undermining of the kailyard plays on the fact that the professions are of paramount importance in such writing; the dominie is supportive and does everything in his power to help his pupils; the doctor tends to his patients with care and skill; the minister provides the moral archetype, resulting in his parishioners being able to look up to him and seek guidance. Brown offers the reader the antithesis of such an ideal and Christian community. Barbie possesses two ministers, one from the Free Church and the other from the established church to show the divisions that arose from the Great Disruption of 1843. Neither of these men are respected or provide any moral centre within Barbie. The Free Church minister is 'a great man for gathering gowans and other sic trash [...] They say he's a great botanical man' (*Green Shutters*, p.61). [18] No mention is made, however, of him being a 'great man' in

---

[17] Ian Campbell, 'The House with the Green Shutters: Some Second Thoughts', *The Bibliotheck*, 10, 1980 – 81, pp. 99 – 106, p. 105.

[18] *The House with the Green Shutters*. Penguin Twentieth-Century Classics edition (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985; 1901), with an introduction by Dorothy Porter. All subsequent page references relate to this edition.

terms of his livelihood. The Reverend Mr. Struthers is no better; he is 'a man of lowly stock who, after a ten years' desperate battle with his heavy brains, succeeded at the long last of it in passing the examinations required for the ministry' (*Green Shutters*, p.172). [19] Struthers is stupid and vain, his only apparent interest being to speak at length about the university rather than about the good of the town or of his concerns for his flock. Gourlay comments that ministers 'have plenty of money and little to do – a grand easy life o't' (*Green Shutters*, p.140). There is an obvious ironic contrast with the kailyard in this statement; throughout this mode of writing it is stressed that ministers scrape by on a pittance and are so dedicated to their presbytery that they would do anything in their power for them. Instead, what we have with Barbie is two ministers, both ill-equipped and uninterested in dealing with their congregations, being more interested in plants and the university. The ministers are mentioned so rarely that Blake makes the mistake of stating that 'Brown does not anywhere in his one remarkable novel mention the Kirk or the Minister' (*Barrie and the Kailyard School*, p.94). Brown does comment on the ministers, but mentions them only to undermine their roles. The kirk itself is not a central or important part of Barbie; the green shuttered house stands high up in the village where the church ought to be. In his notebook, Brown's first draft of the novel reads 'the hands of the kirk-clock.' [20] In the published text the word 'kirk' is omitted, highlighting the fact that Brown scaled down the significance of the church to move away from the kailyard stories which were saturated by religion and mention of the church and ministers, and also to echo the way in which religion at the time was losing its grip on Scottish life and becoming less significant to the Scottish people.

The village doctor of the kailyard is further played down in Brown's story. After a disagreement with Gourlay concerning the birth of his son, the doctor is written out of the novel in the same paragraph as he was introduced: 'Him and Munn never spoke to each other again, and Munn died within the twelvemonth – he got his death that morning on the Fleckie Road. But, for a' so pack's they had been, Gourlay never looked near him' (*Green Shutters*, p.73). The school system that the kailyard holds so dear is also perversely shown up by the author in a subversion of the traditional lad o' pairts role. Gourlay junior derives no benefit from his school or university career, as the schoolmaster and the

[19] The term 'lowly stock' in this passage points to the gossipy nature of the narrative at times, showing that the narrative voice is infected by belonging to Barbie.

[20] Document MS8171, which can be found in The National Library of Scotland.

dominie appear to be of no help to their pupils. MacCandlish, the headmaster, is at a loss as to how he can prevent young Gourlay from playing truant. When Gourlay confronts him he merely bleats 'But what can I do?' (*Green Shutters*, p.133). The dominie, Bleach-the-boys, recognises the fact that 'yon boy's the last youngster on earth who should go to College' (*Green Shutters*, p.142). He recognises young Gourlay's acute perceptiveness which causes him to be afraid of the outside world; he 'was cursed with an imagination in excess of his brains' (*Green Shutters*, p.140), but fails to intervene. He is more interested in reading *The Wealth of Nations* than in the welfare of one of his pupils and takes his frustrations out on the boys in his charge instead of helping them. The teachers are unable to inspire their pupils; one appears unable to influence young Gourlay to even attend his classes and the other is more at fault as he recognises that John's nature is not compatible with attending college. He does nothing, however, to dissuade him or to voice his concerns to John's parents. It is not so much that John is unsuitable to attend university, though, but that the entire schooling system is unsuitable, as it lets down the pupils. Ian Campbell in *Kailyard* points towards this subversion of the education system and the role of the lad o' pairts:

> Since this novel [...] closely follows the conventions it ridicules, it is necessary to include the local-boy-makes-good-at-University *motif*. The audience expects it, and is gratified to find it there. Yet finding it there, they find it grotesquely misapplied. For though the crudity of the father's response may not denigrate education for the ministry immediately, the long-term results of sending John to University are appalling. Nor is the fault confined to John. The other students are a sorry lot, and the University itself a parody of what is worst in the system.
>
> (p.95)

Brown explicitly shows that the Scottish education system is of no use, that there are teachers who are more concerned with their own interests than in their pupils and who would rather expel scholars than help them.

The most effective way that Brown subverts the kailyard mode is in his handling of the 'bodies', as Ian Campbell and Brian Vogel point out in 'The House with the Green Shutters and The Seeing Eye':

> The bodies, the lounging gossips of *The House with the Green Shutters* are Brown's much praised device by which he catches the kailyard habit of passing village affairs through the council of leisured men, working men of a small affluence with time to waste in gossip. In Maclaren and in Barrie these men would be kindly, intelligent, the backbone of a decent community, quick to help when needed and offering a strong resistance to undesired change. Their place is the churchyard and the weekly market, their role indispensable in a well-run community. [21]

The 'bodies' are the instrument used to attack the notion of well-meaning kailyard villagers as they also attack the fibre of the community in which they live. As the kailyard is a diseased vision of Scottish life, the 'bodies' are Brown's vision of the diseased reality of Scotland. The friendly villagers that are synonymous with the Edens of Barrie, Crockett and Maclaren, amongst others, are remodelled into the malignants of the hellish Barbie. The community, if it can be called that, is spiteful, unforgiving and cruel. It lacks certain core elements which a typical town would possess: there is no church at the heart of Barbie; a distinct lack of 'community spirit' is noticeable; no children run around and play on the streets; the village doctor and minister are all but absent; there is no moral centre or imaginative vitality in the village; there is no creative outlet for the inhabitants. Brown goes some way to delve into the reasons behind Barbie's bleak landscape; he dissects the Scottish mentality to get to the root of the 'nippy locality' (*Green Shutters*, p.92). An example of this is evident in one of many digressions from the story:

> For many reasons intimate to the Scots character, envious scandal is rampant in petty towns such as Barbie. To go back to the beginning, the Scot, as pundits will tell you, is an individualist. His religion is enough to make him so. For it is a scheme of personal salvation significantly described once by the Reverend Mr Struthers of Barbie. 'At the Day of Judgement, my frehnds,' said Mr Struthers; 'at the Day of Judgement every herring must hang by his own tail!' Self-dependence was never more luridly expressed. History, climate, social conditions, and the national beverage have all combined (the pundits go on) to make the Scot an individualist, fighting for his own hand.
>
> (*Green Shutters*, p.64)

Brown, then, looks beneath the surface, which the kailyarders fail to do, and his critique of Barbie can be read as a critique of Scotland. The egalitarian Protestant ethos, a high level of education with little opportunities, a keen sense for competition and a struggle for profit, which had the agricultural improvements of the eighteenth century as a catalyst, all combine to create an environment

[21] Ian Campbell and Brian Vogel, 'The House with the Green Shutters and the Seeing Eye', *Studies in Scottish Literature*, vol. 27, 1992, pp. 89 – 104, p. 96.

of envy and spite. Brown attacks the materialistic nature of the village and the malevolence that springs primarily from the Protestant ethos. The notion of 'I kent his faither' is instilled in the mentality of Barbie to remind people who appear to be bettering themselves, and who pose a threat to others' individualism, of their parents' and grandparents' backgrounds to prevent them from getting 'above their station.' This point is made explicit in the novel: 'It is in a small place like Barbie that such malignity is most virulent, because in a small place like Barbie every man knows everything to his neighbours detriment. He can redd up his rival's pedigree, for example, and lower his pride (if need be) by detailing the disgraces of his kin' (*Green Shutters*, pp. 64 – 65). Young Gourlay is affected by this mentality; since his father is viewed with scorn he is also, with the villagers expecting him to turn out just like his father. They gloat at his failings and expect him to fail at university, as is evident in the following quotation: 'Young Gourlay seemed bent on making good the prophecy of Barbie. Though his father was spending money he could ill afford on his education, he fooled away his time' (*Green Shutters*, p. 130). The people suppress each other and in the confines of such a small community as Barbie, as with small communities throughout Scotland, the covetousness, pride and scorn of individuals swells to such an extent that the whole village is affected and becomes corrupt and diseased. Consequently it is not surprising that Gourlay is hated with such passion, being the most successful businessman in town, and that the town lacks a moral centre.

Barbie has become a dystopian nightmare due to all the detrimental factors of the Scottish psyche attacking the main core of the town. As such the language that Brown uses is built up to create a vision of hell, as the Calvinist mentality produces this effect. Biblical illusions are also interwoven throughout the novel, such as in the episode of young Gourlay's birth being recounted by Johnny Coe:

> Ye mind what an awful day it was; the thunder roared as if the heavens were tumbling on the world, and the lichtnin sent the trees daudin on the roads, and the folk hid below their beds and prayed – they thoucht it was the Judgement! But Gourlay rammed his black stepper in the shafts, and drave like the devil o' hell to Skeighan Drone [...] I saw them gallop up the Main Street; lichtnin struck the ground before them; the young doctor covered his face wi' his hands, and the horse nichered wi' fear and tried to wheel, but Gourlay stood up in the gig and lashed him on through the fire.
>
> (*Green Shutters*, p.72)

The ongoing battle between Wilson, Gourlay's nemesis, and Gourlay is described in terms of a 'pretty hell-broth brewing' (*Green Shutters*, p.105); 'damn ye' is repeatedly used throughout; the 'bodies' 'hissed like a cellarful of snakes' (*Green Shutters*, p.114); Gourlay's downfall had 'an unholy fascination' for the 'bodies' (*Green Shutters*, p.202). The lack of imaginative energy in the town leads to the villagers being entrapped in scorn and hatred rather than seeking a means of escape and as such the town is a version of hell. Brown paints the picture of the people of Barbie so black that critics have commented that there is only one moral point in the entire novel, when the Deacon continues to verbally attack Gourlay after his death:

> Wylie looked at him for awhile with a white scunner in his face. He wore the musing and disgusted look of a man whose wounded mind retires within itself, to brood over a sight of unnatural cruelty. The Deacon grew uncomfortable beneath his sideward, estimating eye. 'Deacon Allardyce, your heart's black-rotten,' he said at last. The Deacon blinked and was silent. Tam had summed him up. There was no appeal.
>
> (*Green Shutters*, p. 233)

This is not the only moral instance in *The House with the Green Shutters*. Brown is continually making moral points when he highlights the landscape in the novel. The most obvious example of this is when Gourlay is travelling on the brake to Skeighan:

> The brake swung on through merry cornfields where reapers were at work, past happy brooks flashing to the sun, through the solemn hush of ancient and mysterious woods, beneath great white-moving clouds and blue spaces of the sky. And amid the suave enveloping greatness of the world, the human pismires stung each other and were cruel, and full of hate and malice and a petty rage.
>
> (*Green Shutters*, p.139)

Landscape and nature provide an outlet for Barbie but they fail to realise or take advantage of this. Since their lives are devoid of imagination they live in a vacuum which allows no beauty or creativity in or out. Cairns Craig comments on this point in *The Modern Scottish Novel: Narrative and the National Imagination:* 'The imagination warps ripeness into threat in this sterile environment; nature has no succour to offer because its potential goes unnoticed – unnoticed by the characters, but not by the author' (p.63). Brown is constantly pointing out throughout the novel that the burgh is oblivious to the landscape surrounding them. They fail to see any beauty in the world, instead choosing to concentrate on the ugliness of loathing and envy. Gourlay's materialism means that he lacks the ability to look

beyond his own success. Brown highlights this fact in the first page of the novel; Gourlay was 'dead to the fairness of the scene' (*Green Shutters*, p.39). Later on in the novel the same notion is voiced: 'It was not in Gourlay to see the beauty of that grey wet dawn' (*Green Shutters*, p.87). Young Gourlay suffers from the same defect as his father: 'He was too vain, too full of himself and his petty triumph, to have room for the beauty of the night' (*Green Shutters*, p.165). Young Gourlay is even more at fault, however, as it is innate in him to draw on landscapes and natural beauty but he does not benefit from it, preferring to seek a means of escaping the claustrophobic nastiness of Barbie in drinking:

> In his crude clay there was a vein of poetry; he could be alone in the country, and not lonely; [...] he might have learned the solace of nature for the wounded when eve sheds her spiritual dews. But the mean pleasures to be found at the Cross satisfied his nature, and stopped him midway to that soothing beauty of the woods and streams, which might have brought healing and a wise quiescence.
>
> (*Green Shutters*, p.177)

Iain Crichton Smith makes an important point concerning landscape in the novel:

> Instead of describing a landscape for its own sake, Brown creates it [...] only to annex it into a specific human consciousness [...] Brown has learned to make landscape a function of human psychology. He hardly ever writes about it for its own sake. The book is essentially about human beings, and that is a good thing. [22]

The linking of landscape and the human element is apparent throughout the entirety of the text. In the examples given above of Gourlay and his son the descriptions of landscape reveal more about their characters than having the function of simply describing the scenery surrounding Barbie. Brown, then, concentrates on what the landscape has to say about the characters; he illustrates that the peoples' lives are absent of any realisation of beauty and, as such, are rotten and depraved. This is illustrated in the following passage in respect of the 'bodies':

> On the beautiful evening in September, when a new crescent moon was pointing through the saffron sky like the lit tip of a finger, the City Fathers had assembled at the corner of the Fleckie Road. Though the moon was peeping, the dying glory of the day was still in the town [...] But though the bodies felt the fine evening bathe them in a

[22] Iain Crichton Smith, 'The House with the Green Shutters', in *Studies in Scottish Literature*, vol. 7, no.s 1 and 2, July – Oct, 1969, pp. 3 – 10, pp. 3 – 4.

> sensuous content, as they smoked and dawdled, they gave never a thought to its beauty.[23]

The 'bodies' are indifferent to nature; the contrast between the human and the natural accentuates the fact that their behaviour is an offence against the natural condition of things. This is not to say that Brown felt that the human race in general is guilty of such behaviour but rather the wholly negative traits that the people of Barbie project out are an offence to their natural environment. Young Gourlay seems to realise this fact when he contemplates being 'an eyesore in nature, a blotch on the surface of the world, an offence to the sweet-breathing heavens' (*Green Shutters*, p. 231). Brown also accentuates the pettiness of his characters when compared to nature by way of mock-heroic satire. Gourlay is an anti-hero; he is laid out in terms of being in a Greek tragedy, such as when he defies the angry heavens in a thunderstorm, but he is not worthy of being in such a tragedy. An index of how small the characters are is to be seen in terms of literary genre; they do not deserve to be characters in a Greek tragedy or to be heroic. They are part of a farce, with Brown undermining them by setting them up in such a way only to laugh at their failure of achieving such epic standing; they are thwarted in their status because they are an offence against the natural condition of things. As Francis Russell Hart points out, 'the only good world present is that of nature, and nature is a pastoral dream from which man in his petty malignity is cut off.' [24] Nature, if drawn upon, is a source of catharsis and the 'bodies', more than anyone, are in deep need of recognising this fact. As the Gourlay family and the people of Barbie are indifferent to nature, nature is indifferent to the squalid lives of those who reside in Barbie. This is best realised in the following passage:

> Their loins were loosened beneath them. The scrape of their feet on the road, as they turned to stare, sounded monstrous in the silence. No man dared to speak. They gazed with blanched faces at the House with the Green Shutters, sitting dark there and terrible, beneath the radiant arch of the dawn.
>
> (*Green Shutters*, p.247)

The notion of life and nature continuing unaffected by the death of the entire Gourlay family exacerbates the fact that the 'bodies' and Barbie will also be unchanged; the notions and ideas that

---

[23] *The House with the Green Shutters*, p.179.

[24] Francis Russell Hart, *The Scottish Novel: A Critical Survey* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1978), p. 135.

make up the mentality of the town are rooted too deeply in the townspeople to realistically expect change.

For all of the bleak aspects of the novel, it should also be pointed out that Brown is laughing at his 'cartoon' characters. Undeniably his characters can be viewed in these terms; they possess a cartoonish quality, which is made evident in the following passage:

> He grabbed his son by the coat-collar and swung him out the room. Down High Street he marched, carrying his cub by the scruff of the neck as you might carry a dirty puppy to an outhouse. John was black in the face; time and again in his wrath Gourlay swung him off the ground. Grocers coming to their doors [...] stared sideways, chins up and mouths open, after the strange spectacle. But Gourlay splashed on amid the staring crowd, never looking to the right or left. Opposite The Fiddler's Inn whom should they meet but Wilson! A snigger shot to his features at the sight. Gourlay swung the boy up – for a moment a wild impulse surged within him to club his rival with his own son.
>
> (*Green Shutters*, p. 132)

The novel is not wholly black and morose. Brown at times adopts a flippant approach to his characters. He satirises his caricatures of the kailyard to allow some comic touches into the novel, without letting this comic tone undermine the seriousness of what he sees as being a diseased Scotland. His novel is still extremely realistic in its portrayal of Scottish life for all these humorous moments, and should not be viewed as being 'merely depressing' as John Speirs finds in an only partly justifiable critique of the novel. [25] Some goodness is allowed in, albeit thwarted goodness. The potential of humaneness is acknowledged but it comes to nothing. This is evident in the character of Jock Allan who could have been a possible partner for Mrs Gourlay, as is discussed in the following quotation:

> Allan had been in love with young Gourlay's mother when she herself was a gay young fliskie at Tenshillingland, but his little romance was soon ended when Gourlay came and whisked her away. But she remained the one romance of his life. Now in his gross and jovial middle-age he idealized her in memory; he never saw her in her scraggy misery to be disillusioned; to him she was still the wee bit lairdie's dochter, a vision that had dawned on his wretched boyhood, a pleasant and pathetic memory. And for that reason he had a curious kindness to her boy.
>
> (*Green Shutters*, p. 150)

---

[25] John Speirs, 'Nineteenth-Century Scotland in Allegory', in *Scrutiny*, vol. 7, no. 4, March, 1939, pp. 450 – 457, p. 457.

Mrs Gourlay had the potential to be happy with someone other than her overbearing husband but there is seemingly a bad spell put over the village, a type of conspiracy to be evil and to keep good out prevails. The potential of good is shown but is kept from becoming a reality in Barbie; the 'bodies' hinder goodness in any form, with their Calvinist mentalities creating a version of hell in the town.

The 'bodies' worst instance of evil doing is undeniably the downfall of Gourlay and consequently his whole family. Gourlay is a scapegoat for the village; he represents them in terms of materialism and yet he is a better and stronger character than the 'bodies'; they, therefore, seek to destroy him. Brown describes the 'bodies' involvement in the tragedy in the following:

> It was strange that a thing so impalpable as gossip should influence so strong a man as John Gourlay to his ruin. But it did. The bodies of Barbie became not only the chorus to Gourlay's tragedy, buzzing it abroad and discussing his downfall; they became also, merely by their maddening tattle, a villain of the piece and an active cause of the catastrophe.
>
> (*Green Shutters,* p.105)

The 'bodies', then, drive Gourlay on to his end. Their prying, all-seeing eyes, which are synonymous with the Calvinist omnipresent God (as well as with nightmarish supernatural eyes), cause Gourlay's family to be all but recluses. Mrs Gourlay is never described outwith her house; Janet is also mostly confined to the Gourlay household with her mother; young Gourlay is afraid of venturing out into the real world and instead seeks refuge in reading his mother's trashy novels in the confines of the house. Gourlay himself does not associate with the townspeople; he refuses to gossip with the 'bodies'; he does not drink in the local pub; he is apart from Barbie in every respect other than that of his business dealings. This is not surprising, as Iain Crichton Smith points out: 'Gourlay is only doing what is natural in isolating himself from these people. They represent no values either human or divine.' [26] The consequence of the 'bodies'' never-ending speculation and cruelty is that the Gourlays have to live out unbearably public lives: the 'bodies' were 'watching a tragedy near at hand, and noting with keen interest every step in it that must lead to inevitable ruin. That invariably happens when a family tragedy is played out in the midst of a small community' (*Green Shutters*, p.202). The endless watching is highlighted in the recurring vision of eyes: 'In a dull little country town the passing of a cart is an event,

[26] Iain Crichton Smith, 'The House with the Green Shutters', *Studies in Scottish Literature*, vol. 7, no.s 1 and 2, July - Oct, 1969, pp. 3 – 10, p. 7.

and a gig is followed with the eye till it disappears' (p.41); 'He passed up the street and through the Square, beneath a hundred eyes' (pp.239-40); 'Gourlay was the aim of innumerable eyes' (p.207). The family has to live as if under a microscope, resulting in them being forced to live out very private, isolated lives within the confines of the house with the green shutters. As Dorothy Porter points out in her introduction to the novel, the Gourlays live in 'a house divided within, whose shutters cannot protect, although they exclude.'[27] The strain of this leads to the family attacking each other's roles causing a fragmentation within the house. There is a distinct lack of elements apparent in the household: compared to the warm, orderly, clean and impressive façade of the house, the interior lacks all of these things; there is no love or fondness apparent between the family; there is a clear lack of unity within the household, causing the family to live out their own hellish existences quite separately.

The strain of the hellish townspeople, the fact that his household does not function as a family unit and his own hand in his downfall all exacerbate the demonical strain in Gourlay's nature. He is described in these terms throughout: there is 'something inhuman' in Gourlay's rage (*Green Shutters*, p.205); a 'hard, triumphant devilry' plays around his 'black lips' (*Green Shutters*, p.127); 'red hell lap out o' his e'en' (*Green Shutters*, p.209). According to Brown's notebook he initially had Gourlay riding a brown horse: "Gourlay 'made a point' of always driving with a brown" (MS8171, National Library of Scotland). This was altered to a black, which is more effective in terms of Gourlay's black character and the supernatural connotations. The portrayal of Gourlay in these terms leads to the question of whether Gourlay is in fact the devil living in the hell of Barbie. He is expressed in diabolical terms that gradually build up until he is described in terms of possessing more animal traits than human ones. Gourlay is not the devil, however; as George Rosie points out 'John Gourlay is a hard man to sympathise with. But, for all that, his creator assures [us] that he is not an evil man.' [28] Although he is diabolical, especially towards his son, his behaviour is no worse than that of the 'bodies' who continue to inflict hatred on him and his family. Indeed, he is less guilty than the townspeople as some positive elements are evident in his character and it is primarily the 'bodies'' embittering Calvinist attitudes towards him that cause Gourlay's behaviour to escalate. It is the 'bodies', therefore, that

---

[27] Dorothy Porter, Introduction to *The House with the Green Shutters*, pp. 7 – 24, p. 19.

[28] George Rosie, *Radio Times*, 29 Nov – 5 Dec 1980, p. 27.

combine together to make one devilish entity due to their Calvinist mentalities. Cairns Craig points towards the fact that it is Calvinism that is primarily responsible for this demonic side of Gourlay:

> The fierce communal ethic of the repressive forms of Calvinism [...] creates its own antagonist in a form which is equally Calvinist, for the only individual capable of surviving a repressive society of this kind is one who accepts a terrible – a fearful – isolation, one who engages in a terrifying extension of the self, an aggrandisement of the ego, until the individual is transformed from a God-fearing into a fear-inspiring creature – a diabolically 'fearful' presence to all who live within the boundaries of our ordinary and fear-haunted society.[29]

It is Calvinism that causes Gourlay to be diabolical, isolated and feared by the inhabitants of Barbie, as this is the only way that he can cope with living in such a hellish town. According to Brown, then, it is Calvinism that is the real devil in the novel, with the 'bodies' being viewed as demonic due to their embracing of the religion.

Brown may have introduced the demonic into his novel to mark the difference between his characters and those of the kailyard and also to take heed of the characteristically Scottish tradition of fantasy. These notions are illustrated in 'The Devil Damn Thee Black: A Note on The House with the Green Shutters':

> By introducing the rhetoric of the demonical, Brown both accentuates the contrast between Gourlay and the saints of the Kailyard and also takes his novel out of the category of documentary realism or naturalism to provide a blend of the real and the fantastic that many see as characteristically Scottish. [30]

Brown had access to traditional Scottish folklore and poetry, studying Burns and Davidson amongst others. The devil is a common motif both in Scottish folklore stories and in Scottish poetry. It would also make sense that Brown would look back to more credible Scottish writers in an attempt to break away from the kailyard school; he follows their example and also looks to different modes, primarily Greek, to find a new way forward for Scottish fiction. *The House with the Green Shutters* in these terms may be likened to Hogg's *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824) and

---

[29] Cairns Craig, *The Modern Scottish Novel: Narrative and the National Imagination*, p. 38.

[30] Alistair McCleery, 'The Devil Damn Thee Black: A Note on The House with the Green Shutters', *Scottish Literary Journal*, vol. 16, 1, May, 1989, pp. 43 – 49, p. 49.

Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886) amongst other novels, in which the devil is a common factor and in which the diabolical is related to elements in the Scottish psyche. [31]

The relationship between Gourlay and his son can also be viewed in wider terms, associated with the mentality of Scotland. Gourlay's diabolical personality is in stark contrast with his fearful son. This point is made clear in the two characters' quite different reactions to the same stimuli. It has already been described how Gourlay defied all the elements to bring a doctor to his wife in childbirth. His bravery and manly stature in this event cause the 'bodies' to be impressed in spite of themselves. His son's reaction following a thunderstorm is quite different, however:

> The heavens were rent with a crash and the earth seemed on fire. Gourlay screamed in terror. 'The heavens are opening and shutting like a man's eye,' said Gourlay; 'oh, it's a terrible thing the world' – and he covered his face with his hands.
>
> (*Green Shutters*, p.131)

Gourlay and his son are complete opposites; Gourlay views his son as effeminate and a failure while his son detests his father's overbearing and bullying nature. Douglas Gifford raises an important point with reference to the relationship between the two characters:

> Isn't Brown's implication that, lacking the discipline and willed control of his father, John is only half a person, and that his tragedy will come from this *hamartia*, his fatal flaw? Thus the central theme of the book, as expressed through the contrast between father and son, can be seen as that of (Scottish?) fragmented or dissociated personality; the father all arid shrewdness and insensitivity, the son excessive feeling lacking intellectual control. [32]

---

[31] The diabolical elements in the Scottish psyche are related to the Manichean divisions in Calvinism, with Francis Russell Hart's *The Scottish Novel* (1978) providing a good basis for discussion in relation to the preoccupation with evil found in a number of Scottish novels: "Anti-kailyarders are offended by sentimental images of man's goodness because they find man grotesquely fallen. They find more salvific force in the evil grandeur of a Calvinist megalomania than in glimpses of kindness behind the dour façades of Thrums and Drumtochty. When George Douglas Brown claimed his House with the Green Shutters was 'more complimentary to Scotland,' I take it he meant that it is truer doctrine to have a powerful vision of evil than a poignant vision of redemptive innocence. Perhaps he envisioned the program Hugh MacDiarmid finds in the words of J.D. Scott: 'to realize the demoniac quality of the national character, to unfasten the bonds of religion, respectability, sentimentality, and success which hold it down, to find out what the Scot really is' – to discover, that is, that the Scot 'really is' demoniac" (pp. 115 – 116).

[32] Forthcoming from chapter 25 'George Douglas Brown: The House with the Green Shutters', (eds. Sarah Dunnigan, Douglas Gifford, and Alan Macgillivray) *A Guide to Scottish Literature* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2002).

John and his father would together make a whole person; as they are they are flawed, the one lacking the positive elements of the other and vice versa. Gourlay's strength and control have to be admired and his son's feelings and sensitivity are admired to a degree. The fragmented personalities of the two characters are at odds with each other and work against each other but neither character is wholly good or bad, as Ian Campbell reveals – 'Brown was too well versed in his Greek dramatic studies [...] not to know the Aristotelian injunction that the tragic character must have elements of good and bad together, not merely bad.' [33]

The dualism of the father and son and the tensions which arise from these cause 'personal, family, community and national disintegration' according to Gifford, with the novel belonging to 'a school of Scottish fiction which has its own particular and almost obsessive preoccupation with the divided self and divided family, within divided community and nation.'[34] In this respect the implications which Brown makes in the novel are far-reaching in terms of Scotland. Gourlay and his son could embody any father and son in Scotland. Gourlay is an alienated hero, possessing qualities that are admirable but finding no expression for these qualities in the diseased landscape in which he lives. John suffers from the same fate; he is inarticulate due to his fearfulness of the world and can only muster up the courage to express himself when drunk. They are unable to bring together and express the positive aspects which they possess; Gourlay's strength and control and John's imagination and sensitivity. This is a fundamental division in Scotland, one which is expressed even after Gourlay's death: 'Thae damned e'en,' he said slowly, 'they're burning my soul! Look, look!' he cried [...] 'see, there, there! – coming round by the dresser!' (*Green Shutters*, p.232). Gourlay in his death has become a physical embodiment of the divisions: 'the human is fragmented. Eyes and glower. Not man looking on man.' [35] It is these divisions which help to bring the Gourlays down; John slays his father due to their continual conflict, which is brought on by their essential differences, and the fragmentary Gourlay comes back to haunt his son to death.

---

[33] Ian Campbell, 'George Douglas Brown: A Study in Objectivity', Ian Campbell (ed.) *Nineteenth-Century Scottish Fiction: Critical Essays*, pp. 148 – 163, p. 151.

[34] Douglas Gifford, *A Guide to Scottish Literature* (forthcoming).

[35] Dorothy Porter, Introduction to *The House with the Green Shutters*, p. 15.

Brown offers no hope in the novel that Scotland will 'bring together its head and its heart.'[36] Ian Campbell implicitly mentions this fact in 'George Douglas Brown: A Study in Objectivity': 'A superficial examination of the medium in which young John Gourlay and his contemporaries grow up shows an alarming lack of sustaining or morally improving forces.' [37] The future generations of Barbie appear unable to break out of the mentality that their parents imprint upon them. No hope is apparent at the closing of the novel that the gulfs between head and heart are coming closer together or that the moral degradation of past generations will improve in the future offspring of Barbie. Brown shows a town where evil is much more evident than in the Arcadian security of the kailyard, and at the closing, as Jeffrey Sommers points out, 'although the sun may make a radiant arch over the House with the Green Shutters, there is, clearly, no glorious new dawn for Brown's Scotland.'[38]

[36] Douglas Gifford, *A Guide to Scottish Literature* (forthcoming).

[37] Ian Campbell, 'George Douglas Brown: A Study in Objectivity', *Nineteenth-Century Scottish Fiction: Critical Essays*, p. 155.

[38] Jeffrey Sommers, 'Review of The House with the Green Shutters', in *Studies in Scottish Literature*, vol. 19, 1984, pp. 252 – 258, p. 258.

CHAPTER 3

CATHERINE CARSWELL

Closed Doors and Caged Birds: False Edens in Scotland and Beyond

Scottish women's writing has only come into focus and formed an important place in the Scottish literary canon in relatively recent years. It is only in the last decade or so that the reading and study of neglected writers such as Catherine Carswell and Willa Muir, amongst others, has increased and developed, with the republication of their work bringing their novels to a new generation of readers. Douglas Gifford and Dorothy McMillan address the need to include writing by Scottish women in critical studies and comment on the fact that, up until recently, women's writing has been largely ignored:

> From early Gaelic women poets and Mary, Queen of Scots to the eighteenth-century travellers and Joanna Baillie, from the role of women in balladry to the long and impressive tradition of Scottish women novelists who seem at last to be coming into their own, Scottish literature presents a terrain which has not hitherto been mapped in a relief which shows where its women came from, and the real contribution they make to Scottish culture and culture generally.[1]

The publication of recent volumes of criticism, such as Christopher Whyte's *Gendering the Nation: Studies in Modern Scottish Literature* (1995)[2] and Carol Anderson's and Aileen Christianson's *Scottish Women's Fiction 1920s – 1960s: Journeys into Being* (2000)[3], redress the long neglect of some Scottish women novelists, with these two latter critics rightly pointing out that "the reappearance of 'lost' women novelists has not only expanded the Scottish literary 'canon', it has brought new contexts in which to read the work of writers like Rebecca West or Naomi Mitchison, already well-known, if still insufficiently discussed." [4] The inclusion of these novelists in critical studies, then, is important in the context of Scottish culture, the Scottish literary tradition and in terms of comparison and contrast with other writers.

---

[1] Introduction to (eds.) Douglas Gifford and Dorothy McMillan, *A History of Scottish Women's Writing* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), pp. ix – xxii, p. ix.

[2] Christopher Whyte (ed.), *Gendering the Nation: Studies in Modern Scottish Literature* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996).

[3] Carol Anderson and Aileen Christianson (eds.), *Scottish Women's Fiction 1920s – 1960s: Journeys Into Being* (East Lothian: Tuckwell Press, 2000).

[4] Carol Anderson and Aileen Christianson, Introduction to *Scottish Women's Fiction 1920s – 1960s: Journeys into Being*, pp. 7 – 19, p.7.

One such 'lost' author who has been brought to critical attention in recent years is Catherine Carswell. She was born into a middle-class Glasgow family in 1879, her parents being deeply religious, God-fearing people who belonged to the Free Church of Scotland. Both of her published novels, *Open the Door!* (1920) and *The Camomile* (1922) have large autobiographical elements to them, with the novels documenting this background: Carswell's protagonists experience the restrictions placed upon them by the middle-class society of the time and, in the case of Joanna in *Open the Door!*, by the religious preoccupations of her parents. Both novels, especially *Open the Door!,* detail Scottish life at a time when industry in Glasgow was thriving and where there was a buzz of energy around the city in connection with shipbuilding, architecture and art, specifically The Glasgow School of Art and Charles Rennie Mackintosh, and learning institutions, such as Glasgow University, where Carswell studied.[5] Perhaps most importantly, her novels focus on the changing perceptions of women at the turn of the century and are amongst the first to challenge stereotypes concerning women and their experiences.[6] Carswell's novels should not, then, be simply classed as feminist writing, although 'fresh in the Scottish context, is the way in which women are the true subjects of her novels, as opposed to being seen from outside. *Open the Door!,* for example, is iconoclastic in the way female sexuality is foregrounded in the narrative.'[7] The two published novels also combine elements of bildungsroman, autobiography,

---

[5] This background is described in Olive and Sydney Checkland's *Industry and Ethos: Scotland 1832 - 1914*, in respect to shipbuilding, art and architecture: 'Clydeside's shipbuilding achievement was by 1900 moving to its final phase, providing much of the world's merchant tonnage, together with the building of naval vessels to outdo the vast effort being made by Germany to match Britain on the high seas' (p.22); 'Glasgow and indeed Scottish prosperity reached its peak in two international exhibitions held in Kelvingrove Park [...] In 1901 there were no less than a million and a half attendances, viewing exhibits celebratory of art, industry and science. The city was proud of itself, abounding in confidence and assertion' (p. 40); "Between 1885 and into the earlier part of the new century Scotland did produce an artistic manifestation that was characteristically its own. This was the group known as the Glasgow School, or the 'Glasgow boys' [...] The Glasgow School exercised its greatest influence on Scottish art in the Edwardian years", with Charles Rennie Mackintosh being 'one of the leading figures in the Art Nouveau movement [...] whose masterpiece was the Glasgow School of Art (1897 – 9 and 1907 – 9)' (pp. 143 - 144); 'More important as architectural changes [than houses] were the factories, mills, warehouses, bridges, harbours, railway stations, banks, municipal buildings, churches. This demand was reflected in a steady increase in design and building to the 1850's; thereafter there was an even more rapid acceleration' (p. 144). The production of ships, art and architecture, along with scientific developments, meant that 'by 1900 Glasgow had become a world-ranking city, standing just below London, Paris, Berlin and New York' (p. 182).

[6] Margery Palmer McCulloch, 'Fictions of Development 1920 – 1970', Douglas Gifford and Dorothy McMillan (eds.) *A History of Scottish Women's Writing*, pp. 360 – 372, p. 361.

[7] Ibid. p. 361. Cheryl Maxwell points out that 'the nineteenth-century female Bildungsroman is marked by the absence of sexual experiences for its heroine.' (" 'I'd rather be a girl...because I like boys best': Building the sexual self in *Open the Door!*", Carol Anderson (ed.) *Opening the Doors: The Achievement of Catherine Carswell* (Edinburgh: Ramsay Head Press, 2001), pp. 109 – 123, p. 111).

modernism and Scottish literature, highlighting the fact that Carswell's writing goes beyond feminist thought.

Open the Door!, the novel that will be focused on in the following chapter, was primarily written, and is set, before the Great War and combines nineteenth-century realism, shown in terms of conventional structure and authorial authority, with twentieth-century modernism, that is evident in the exploration of the inner self and the unconscious, which goes beyond nineteenth-century realism. The novel focuses on the social and personal restrictions imposed on the protagonist, Joanna Bannerman, and her search for an identity, a homeland and love, and is an examination of her sexual self, as she tends to define herself in terms of the men in her life; the novel has no real plot but instead follows Joanna through childhood to the age of thirty.

John Carswell, the author's son, points out in the introduction to the novel that 'its characters are not imprisoned by anything but themselves and the liberation they seek is not social but personal' (p. xii).[8] This is certainly true in the case of Joanna; the freedom she seeks is personal but it should be considered that it is the social and general constraints that have been placed upon her by the conventions of the time that cause her to feel imprisoned and restricted. Her personal constraints involve freedom to develop the self, emotional freedom and intellectual growth, with social restraints being connected with her smothering family, the influence of the church and social, class and gender constructs, where women were excluded to a large degree in society and had limited opportunities. These limitations, and Joanna's attempted flight from them, are placed against the backdrop of Glasgow, Edinburgh, the fictional Duntarvie, London and Italy, with the Glasgow setting being the most realistic and solid, primarily due to the social commentary. Recurring imagery is used to communicate Joanna's struggle, centring on doors, cages, birds, water and nature, with the meaning of this symbolism constantly changing throughout the novel. Doors are used to represent enclosure and restrictions and,

---

This attitude gradually changed at the turn of the century and female sexuality was focused on but, as Maxwell points out, this change in attitude only concerned sex within marriage (p. 111). Carswell's novel is iconoclastic as she shows sexual desire and sex outside of marriage to be healthy also.

[8] *Open the Door!* Canongate Classics edition (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1996; 1920), with an introduction by John Carswell, pp.v – xvi. All subsequent page references relate to this edition.

when opened, new opportunities and freedom; cages centre around the entrapment that Joanna appears to crave in her early relationships; water is used to voice the notions of rebirth, her submergence when she feels unhappy and unfulfilled, and spiritual and emotional cleansing; nature can be applied to feelings of openness and liberty and also to Joanna's search for sexual fulfilment and a place in which she belongs, which is expressed in terms of floating seeds trying to find a place to be ripened. The bird imagery concentrates on birds of fragility and domesticity, such as sparrows and caged birds, predatory birds, falcons and hawks, and birds of rebirth, like the phoenix and the bird of paradise. These all correspond to Joanna's restrictions in her family life, the power relations which are involved in her relationships with men and her emotional rebirth at the closing of the novel.[9]

Criticism has been made of the heavy and frequent use of this symbolism and the way in which Carswell feels compelled to give an additional explanation of what these symbols stand for rather than letting the imagery speak for itself. Margaret Elphinstone in 'Four Pioneering Novels' points towards this:

> Carswell's close working friendship with D. H. Lawrence may have something to do with this, as he tends to use portentous images in much the same way. Perhaps it also suggests a lack of confidence that the novel would be read with understanding. Willa Muir does the same thing in the moralising passages in *Imagined Corners*, as if neither author quite dared to let women's experience speak for itself. [10]

Elphinstone's comments concerning Carswell's sense of inferiority as a writer are justified, as can be seen from Carswell's own comments. In *Lying Awake* (1950), which was published posthumously, the author states, in relation to writing, that 'in a man there is nothing ridiculous, certainly nothing

---

[9] Some examples of the bird imagery in the novel are shown in the following, with the quotations corresponding to Joanna's feeling of entrapment in her family home, her relationship with men, where they take possession of her and she becomes their prey, and with her rebirth at the end: 'At that word, as at a signal, both pigeons took flight, Joanna followed the swift passage across the clear tube of sky, then sighing turned to face the dark interior' (p. 49); 'Joanna could feel the unsheathed boldness of his eyes like weapons, there in the darkness like weapons ready to strike. And suddenly she remembered something of the hawk in his face' (p. 185); 'When would she be driven to the place where she might strike her roots and at last raise her leaf and her bud? She recalled Mr Moon's legend of the bird of paradise. It was one thing to die to the world, to devour the sweet spices and so for ever lose your foothold. It was another to find a resting place in some new way of life' (p. 409).

[10] Margaret Elphinstone, 'Four Pioneering Novels', *Chapman*, 74 – 75, Autumn/Winter, 1993, pp. 23 – 39, p. 24.

disgraceful here. In a woman there tends to be something of both.'[11] Jan Pilditch also points out that 'Carswell's letters display a crucial lack of confidence.'[12] In a letter to J. De Lancey Ferguson, for example, she writes that 'I believe Mr Shirley mentioned to you that I was daring to bring out a new life of Robert Burns [...] I am far from thinking my Life will be nearly all I should wish it to be.'[13] The language used and the fact that Carswell writes off her book before it is even published indicates her level of confidence. Carswell's sense of inferiority may have stemmed from the lack of interest in and neglect of women writers, and Scottish women writers specifically with their two-fold marginal status; she did not even consider herself a novelist as she had only written two, showing a profound lack of confidence in her own abilities as a writer. Fellow male writers of the Renaissance overshadowed women writers of the period, with Hugh MacDiarmid dismissing Carswell's novel as 'a deft but superficial study in personalities',[14] which indicates that little support was given to female writers, not even by their male counterparts. Ironically, however, considering her challenge to female limitations, Carswell seems to suggest along the way that it is more natural for men to write and that they are, therefore, more suited and able to write than women; she unconsciously adheres to the patriarchal order concerning men being more accepted and adhered to in general and in terms of writing and journalism. In *Lying Awake* she comments that she must have been quite a good writer, as a fellow critic automatically assumed that a man was responsible for her writing:

> Still I must have achieved at least some success, because [...] William Archer, in a London journal asked (rhetorically), who 'this man' could be who was writing dramatic criticism in a Scottish newspaper that was equal if not superior to anything the London critics were doing just then.
>
> (p. 118)

Carswell can only justify her writing abilities when measured against fellow male writers, to which she always thought herself inferior, and not in its own terms. She even went so far as to say that a woman

---

[11] Catherine Carswell, *Lying Awake: An Unfinished Autobiography and Other Posthumous Papers* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1997; 1950), p. 118.

[12] Jan Pilditch, " 'And so my days are full': The letters of Catherine Carswell", Carol Anderson (ed.) *Opening the Doors: The Achievement of Catherine Carswell*, pp. 51 – 64, p. 52.

[13] Letter dated 5 December 1929, in The Mitchell Library, MS 5311, p. 1.

[14] Hugh MacDiarmid, 'Newer Scottish Fiction II', *The Scottish Educational Journal*, July 1926, reprinted in Alan Riach (ed.) *Contemporary Scottish Studies*, pp. 346 – 351, p. 350.

writer like Virginia Woolf displayed 'overweening vanity' when she claimed that she could equal or better the achievements of male writers.[15]

This ambiguity in relation to gender is also evident in *Open the Door!*. Margery Palmer McCulloch in particular comments that the feminist challenge in the novel is limited:[16]

> Joanna [...] enters the world of work as an artist, but in keeping with the conventions of the time in relation to women and the arts, she becomes a sketcher of fashion designs [...] Here Carswell does not challenge the convention of women being directed into what were considered the minor arts, but endorses it through her depiction of Joanna. In addition, although both author and heroine lived through the period of the struggle for women's enfranchisement, the discourse does not include the question of women's rights.[17]

Palmer McCulloch concludes that the novel is 'ideologically ambivalent so far as a wider concept of women's emancipation is concerned.'[18] This is true in relation to the fact that Joanna's work is not profiled to any great degree, so that the reader gets no real idea of what this independent young woman does, and the fact that 'we get little notion of Joanna herself outside the ebb and flow of her emotions for whichever man is her love of the moment.'[19] The fact that the suffrage movement is not mentioned may be put down to the notion that the novel is primarily concerned with Joanna and her personal struggles rather than concentrating on wider social struggles that were on-going at the time. So, although the social context of the novel is almost fully developed, it only serves as a backdrop to

---

[15] Cited in Alison Smith's chapter 'And Woman Created Woman: Carswell, Shepherd and Muir, and the Self-Made Woman', Christopher Whyte (ed.) *Gendering the Nation: Studies in Modern Scottish Literature*, pp. 25 – 47, p.31.

[16] Glenda Norquay in her chapter 'Catherine Carswell: Open the Door!' also points out that there is no mention in the novel of the growth of the Independent Labour Party, women's fight for the vote or the range of new employment opportunities at this time. Douglas Gifford and Dorothy McMillan (eds.) *A History of Scottish Women's Writing*, pp. 389 – 399, p. 396.

[17] Margery Palmer McCulloch, 'Fictions of Development 1920 – 1970', *A History of Scottish Women's Writing*, p. 361.

[18] Ibid. p. 361.

[19] Alison Smith, *Gendering the Nation: Studies in Modern Scottish Literature*, p. 28. This quotation ties in with Hugh MacDiarmid's dismissive comment of Carswell's novel being 'a deft but superficial study in personalities' quoted on the previous page, showing that later criticism also recognises the lack of this aspect in the novel. It should be noted, however, that it also affirms Carswell's valid and important focus on Joanna's personal struggles in the novel.

Joanna's experiences. The novel does, however, profile a female character who earns her own living and moves to London to live by herself, which is very rare considering the social restrictions imposed on women at the turn of the century. Olive and Sydney Checkland point towards the notion that social restrictions were still very much in place at this time, which highlights the daring nature of Joanna in taking up residence by herself in the metropolis; she tries to escape from the very things that are described in the following quotation:

> Any intelligent Scottish girl growing up in 1900 could have been forgiven for doubting whether there would ever be any change in her position in society. Was she not required to fetch and carry for her brothers – for whom apprenticeships and advance education were reserved? Did she not live every aspect of her life in deference to the wishes and commands of her father, who ruled the household? And when, with her metamorphosis, she became a married woman, in obeying her husband was she not following precisely in the steps of her mother and grandmother before her? [20]

Smith also makes an important point in terms of the limited challenge to gender in the novel, concerning the treatment of sex:

> Her heroines lust after it, know instinctively that it's good and honest to do so, but have to call it 'the final abandonment', 'the other thing'; it can't, of course, be described in anything but euphemism. Even the metaphor of opening the door is an implicit demand to let not just physical desire but the sexual act into the novel. Here's the paradox of the woman writer whose main subject is female desire at a time when women were not decently meant to voice or even to have desire. Carswell is a writer for whom decorum and decency are very important terms, terms which touched her personally; this is the writer who in 1915 lost her reviewing position at the *Glasgow Herald* for deigning to review well Lawrence's banned novel *The Rainbow* (even though she duly noted the 'revolting detail' of it). Here we have a writer used to suffering in the name of 'decorum'.[21]

Decency and the adherence to convention appear to be equally important to Carswell as giving women's experiences a voice, which limits her in the novel; although her novel is daring in respect to the exploration of female sexual desires and in its general challenge to conventions which are shown up for the limitations that they impose on women, Carswell still tends to be held back by convention and propriety, which mars her novel at times.

---

[20] Olive and Sydney Checkland, *Industry and Ethos: Scotland 1832 – 1914*, p. 200.

[21] Alison Smith, *Gendering the Nation: Studies in Modern Scottish Literature*, p. 30.

The duality concerning the adherence to conventions and the challenging of them is also found in Joanna. She fights free of her middle-class family and strives to be independent but she also needs and clings to them and generally accepts her role in middle-class society. She defies convention by having an affair with a married man, the artist Louis Pender, but this affair ends conventionally with Louis returning to his wife. Joanna is split between her desire to rebel, to defy convention and to reject the world, and her apparent need to return to convention and to be accepted by society. A very telling passage in relation to this division in Joanna is shown in the quotation below; Joanna wears two sets of clothes so that she can attend a prayer meeting which her mother has organised and also a dance, which she secretly goes to later on in the night:

> And when the girl had put on over it her day blouse and a dark skirt, covering all with a coat, no one would have guessed her secret. She pulled a pair of black stockings over her bright blue, silk ones, and she hid her slippers and a black lace fan in the inside pocket of her coat.
>
> (*Open the Door!*, pp. 172 – 173)

Joanna is shown to conform outwardly, which is shown in her respectful façade, and the fact that she does attend the prayer meeting in the first place, but she also displays non-conformity by attending the dance by herself, by keeping it a secret from her family and by not adhering to her outward appearance and, by implication, the middle-class respectability that it suggests. As Jan Pilditch points out 'she has an inner self which is at odds with social and cultural expectations',[22] although she manages to resolve some of this divide and gives in to convention to a certain extent at the closing. Pilditch also points out that Joanna is split by more than convention: 'The theme of the divided self is especially poignant in Joanna who is torn between the Calvinist sense of the father and the ineffectual religion that has become an excuse for suffering and passivity in her mother.'[23] This religious divide manifests itself in Joanna; she has a sense of self-sacrifice and passivity, which echoes her mother, with her father's beliefs being epitomised in her feelings of pride and resoluteness.

---

[22] Jan Pilditch, 'Opening the Door on Catherine Carswell', *Scotlands*, 2, 1994, pp. 53 – 65, p. 56.

[23] Ibid. p. 57.

Her father, Sholto, is viewed as a repressive figure by bringing control to the disarray in the household. He is not overbearing but signifies order and, therefore, restrictions to Joanna. He dies early on in the novel but returns to Joanna in a dream where he appears at the front door and tries to push his way back into the house. Joanna's response is to shut the door on him and to shut out also his repression: " 'For,' she said to herself in that conscienceless moment, 'We can do as we please now he is gone' " (*Open the Door!*, p. 28). The legacy of her father's religion lives on, however, with the scroll that hangs high on the wall reading 'As for me and my house, we shall serve the Lord.' It is in part due to her Calvinist background that Joanna has such a desire to escape from her family, along with the middle-class values and restrictions that are imposed on her. When Juley holds a prayer meeting for her, Joanna is surrounded by people who are repressed and who, therefore, want to repress others. One such woman is Eva Gedge,[24] her mother's friend, who was 'essentially a divider. Barren of life herself, her deepest passion was to balk and defeat the entering of others into life' (*Open the Door!*, p. 161). Such Calvinist-stilted people are rejected by Joanna, along with the middle-class propriety that they represent. She realises the restrictions imposed on her by her family when she visits her friend Phemie Pringle's house and is amazed that 'all of the doors of all the rooms were left open, and long conversations were carried on by people in different rooms, on different floors' (*Open the Door!*, p. 169). She contrasts this with the 'quiet, sad-coloured life at Collessie Street, with its intense spiritual currents' (*Open the Door!*, p. 170) and finds herself even more determined to escape from the closed doors of her own home to the openness and freedom that she feels deprived of because of her deeply religious background.

Throughout the novel Joanna's attitude is ambiguous towards her family; initially she rejects them, especially her mother and what she stands for, but when she discovers a sense of her own identity she learns to accept them. She is ashamed of her mother's inefficiency and idiosyncratic religious beliefs and attempts to break free from her mother's hold on her and her desire for her children to be missionaries. Joanna appears to resent Juley for imposing her own wishes on her family and for her ready emotionalism, as can be seen in the following quotation:

---

[24] The allusion made throughout the novel to the Garden of Eden and the myth of Adam and Eve, which will be discussed in detail later on in the chapter, is evident in the name of Eva which is resonant of Eve.

> Joanna felt miserably inclined to shake off her mother's touch which had increased to a meaning pressure on her shoulder. It seemed to violate her, and she guessed with hatred at the pleased, ready tears in her mother's eyes.
>
> (*Open the Door!*, p. 8)

In her search for self, Joanna becomes aware of her own sexuality and strives to be awakened; she wants to be the opposite of her mother, who had never been truly awakened sexually by her husband, Sholto, as is shown in the following:

> When she felt the stirrings of passion in herself she was dimly ashamed, and had to reason that after all this world was peopled by God's own ordinances. Only the yielding up of oneself to mere delight was sinful. As for Sholto, he too was faintly ashamed of his sensual self, but it was not so strong that he could not keep it fairly easily in hand.
>
> (*Open the Door!*, p.14)

Joanna attempts to reject the notion that sex is something to be ashamed of, although her parents' religious beliefs communicate this. She is again split, however, between the notion that sex is sinful, highlighting the Calvinist principles which she was brought up to believe in, and that sex and sexual desires are natural and healthy. When Joanna is engaged in her affair with Louis Pender she contemplates her inner struggle that results from these two opposing views; she is racked by guilt and has to admit to herself that there is a part of her that does not adhere to the good, Christian life that she was reared to embrace:

> Joanna's discovery was that 'evil' (in the Christian sense of the word) quite as much as 'good' had made her alive, that 'evil' quite as much as 'good' had made her an individual, a human being, a divine creation herself capable of creative life. Further she perceived that this admission altered everything. It was as if before her eyes the Creator had once more divided chaos with a word into darkness and light. No longer did her 'good' show dimmed and confused by her evil, nor her evil faintly transfused by her good. Her good was now dazzling and apart, a pure element of light: her evil was utter and separate, a pure element of darkness. They were the two sides of a coin. The dove was on one side; on the other side the hawk. To obliterate either was to invalidate the coinage, to deflame the mint from which it had issue. And the two could be mingled only in the discreditable act of destruction.
>
> (*Open the Door!*, p. 248)

Joanna accepts that her craving for sex with a married man is as natural a part of her as the guilt and feelings of being evil in doing so. She is torn between her religious upbringing and her own feelings, which communicate that sex is nothing to be ashamed of; Carswell voices the notion that the Calvinist sense of guilt concerning sex is unhealthy due to the repression of natural urges that it produces, and that the doctrine of Original Sin undermines women, as can be seen with Joanna's parents.

Juley's and Sholto's beliefs in terms of religion are akin to Carswell's own mother's and father's and, perhaps not surprisingly, in *Lying Awake*, Carswell states that she did resent growing up in such a stringently religious background in Scotland, with her parents' spare time being constantly filled with helping the needy:

> There have been times when I resented the place of my birth. Such resentment might have been more lasting and more just had I been one of those ragged, bare-legged, blue-footed, verminous and valgus children, whose condition [...] often aroused my envy while occupying much of my father's leisure and my mother's compassion.
>
> (p. 15)

Although their Calvinist backgrounds 'forbade any self-indulgence'[25] and the fact that there was no art and hardly any literature in their house, excepting the Bible, Carswell admired her parents' strict and conventional social and religious codes in respect to their dedication to those in poverty. She states that she did not have any 'serious regrets as to my religious upbringing,'[26] presumably due to the fact that her parents followed the Moody and Sankey religious revival who, 'with their emphasis on God's love and forgiveness, helped to push the harshness of Calvinism from people's minds.'[27] Carswell's opinion may have been very much different had her parents clung to the old Calvinist faith and instead believed in hell-fire and the wrath of God, but as the author explains in *Lying Awake* 'my parents [...] softened the idea of hell, and we were subjected to no such inhuman terrorism' (p. 42). So, although Carswell did not regret her religious upbringing, Calvinism still left imprints that were perhaps easier to forget or disregard when she moved to London. Although her parents were not followers of the old Calvinist

[25] Catherine Carswell, *Lying Awake*, p. 42.

[26] Ibid. p. 42.

[27] Olive and Sydney Checkland, *Industry and Ethos: Scotland 1832 – 1914*, p. 130.

faith, with its notions of Original Sin, Carswell would have been exposed to it, or at the very least been aware of it, leading to her rejecting 'the notion that women are responsible to a God who created them for childbirth and a subservient existence.'[28]

Carswell's views concerning sex and religion are important in the context of presenting Joanna as an ironic Eve figure. The author makes numerous references to Adam and Eve and frames the novel in the Bible to emphasise the mythological element. This framing is evident in the chapter headings – 'Open the door and flee' (2 Kings ix 3), 'Open a door of utterance' (Col iv 3) and 'Behold, I make all things new' (Rev xxi 5). Carswell plays about with mythology; there is a resonance of Eve in Joanna although she is a subverted version of the original figure. Joanna's parents do not work as Adam and Eve as they are conventional, non-rebellious, safe and innocent. They do not give into temptation as Joanna does but it is ironic that it is the daughter rather than the mother who is Eve. It is Juley who gives the Christian message to her daughter but it is Joanna who plays the part and who lives out the negative Christian archetype by giving in to temptation. Joanna is also excluded from society in her role as mistress, which resembles Eve, who stands for the archetypal outcast. At the end of the novel Eve finds her Adam but Carswell is again ironic, as Joanna is the sexually experienced, older woman compared to the younger, virginal male. Carswell appears to have the last laugh concerning religious notions of women being cast out due to the notion of Original Sin and having guilt placed upon them for sex; she rejects the patriarchal Calvinist God that is used as an excuse to place women in a subservient role, where women are expected to be dutiful wives and mothers.

The notion of rejecting the traditional wife and mother roles is highlighted in Joanna who casts aside ideas of women being limited to motherhood and to a second-class status. Sarah Dunnigan points out that "religion creates its own gendered desires: Joanna seeks to (re)fashion a spiritual identity separate both from her mother Juley and from the patriarchal religion or 'evangel morality.' " [29] She remains adamant that she will not be defined solely in terms of motherhood and being a dutiful wife, as Juley and her sister Georgie are, or as being, in religious terms, the archetype of Madonna. At first she

---

[28] Alison Smith, *Gendering the Nation: Studies in Modern Scottish Literature*, p. 26.

[29] Sarah Dunnigan, 'The hawk and the dove: religion, desire and aesthetics in *Open the Door!*', Carol Anderson (ed.) *Opening the Doors: The Achievement of Catherine Carswell*, pp. 93 – 108, p. 93.

has to reject what Juley is and what she represents to define herself, as Joanna cannot find her own identity with her mother still trying to shape her, as can be seen in the following quotation:

> But by Juley every step of this social and artistic advance was subtly opposed. It was a strange, unremitting conflict. The more the mother perceived the daughter's gifts, the more desperately she deplored any little worldly success the girl might have. There was unscrupulous warfare between them.
>
> (*Open the Door!*, p. 160)

Despite Joanna's attempted flight from her family she does find herself depending on them and even embracing all that her mother represents, as is evident in the following quotation: 'Swaddled from before birth in religious emotionalism, in romance and spiritual exaltation, it was natural that she should cling to these suffocating wrappings' (*Open the Door!*, p. 225). Joanna knows that to reject her mother she must also be devoid of the love and comfort that she can bring to her and that she needs. As Joanna grows emotionally and finds freedom to express herself she no longer has to escape from Juley. Joanna achieves a sense of herself so no longer has to shut her mother out. They share a special bond when Joanna rushes to be with her when she is dying: 'But now, for this little while, she felt close to her mother as never before. Without speech they seemed to share the secrets of life and death' (*Open the Door!*, p. 349). Even when her mother dies, Joanna refuses to find solace in prayers, as her mother did, and instead turns to landscape which has always been her primary avenue of escape since she was a child.

Landscape and nature in the novel are fundamentally linked to the men in Joanna's life. Her first awareness of the opposite sex occurs at Duntarvie, which is based on Mount Quharrie.[30] Joanna has a deep affinity with the landscape here and falls in love with her cousin, Gerald, when she is visiting Duntarvie as a child. He awakens her feelings, and her masochistic tendencies with men, which recur in later relationships, first become apparent with him:

> He shot chaffinches and robins with his revolver and afterwards skinned them. Yet she asked for nothing better than to stand watching while the plumage was slit down the breasts and slipped deftly from the piteous little bodies of Gerald's victims. The young man's lean wrists and his long fingers, so dark and merciless thrilled the child

[30] Carswell describes in detail her fondness of the place in *Lying Awake*, which was for her a type of 'paradise' (p. 47), with clear autobiographical elements appearing in *Open the Door!*

> to the soul. Secretly she imagined herself a little fluttering bird in their cruel grasp; and she felt she would gladly have let them crush the life out of her for their own inscrutable ends.
>
> (*Open the Door!*, p. 34)

This is also one of the first instances that involves bird imagery in the novel; Joanna increasingly pictures herself as a bird flying away from the confines of Glasgow where she does not have nature as an outlet. When compared to Duntarvie, Glasgow is seen as stilted and full of tensions, with Duntarvie representing freedom and openness. Joanna's close relationship with the place is apparent in the quotation below:

> But before turning homeward between the beech trunks, she stooped once more to the ground, and leaning on her two palms kissed the moist grass till the taste of the earth was on her lips. 'If I forget thee, O Duntarvie,' she whispered, 'let my right hand forget its cunning.' (She was not clear about the meaning of this phrase; but she loved working with her hands, and the words expressed her emotion better than any other words she knew).
>
> (*Open the Door!*, pp. 32 – 33)

Duntarvie is a type of Eden for Joanna where she does not have to face up to her stifling family life and where she has unbounded freedom. It is also associated with childhood for her, a time that obviously lacks all of the tensions and responsibilities of adult life. When she returns to Glasgow the only outlet that she has is that of her dreams; she distances herself from reality and goes on a quest for a perfect fairytale lover. She is a frequent victim of self-deception in relation to trying to live out a dream existence: 'She had believed, because she had so strongly desired the likely thing to be true' (*Open the Door!*, p. 92). Carswell uses irony to distance herself from Joanna in the instances in which she fools herself and lives in a dream world, as is apparent in the quotation below:

> Yet all the time a lover was what she increasingly sought. In the streets, at church, on tramcars and steamers, at concerts, even at religious meetings, Joanna was for ever seeking faces that would suit the hero's part in those dreams of which the constant heroine was herself.
>
> (*Open the Door!*, p. 51)

Joanna finds a lover in Bob Ranken, to whom she becomes engaged, but is faced with the reality of relationships. Her pride comes in the way and she realises that she has been deceiving herself and that her romantic illusions do not correspond with reality. Joanna gets her ideas about how a man should be

from her father, who was forceful and took charge; Bob is the antithesis of this male typecast, with Joanna realising that 'it was through her dreams that Bob hurt her' (*Open the Door!,* p. 103). Again her sado-masochist tendencies are revealed in this relationship:

> Blind she was to his pathos and his decency. She could only hate him for being afraid of her, and she hated herself for having made him afraid. She would like him to have beaten her and made her his, but instead he was cringing now in expectation of punishment. So she sat aloof and forbidding, her hands folded, watching her power in misuse.
>
> (*Open the Door!,* p. 73)

She associates Bob with the Botanic Gardens in Glasgow and with the landscape of the city, which does not live up to her dreams of romance and excitement, which her next lover fulfils for her. Mario Rasponi represents a sense of the erotic for Joanna with his Italian background: 'He was energy itself, but energy pent, not radiant. Joanna had never been so aware of anything; had never imagined anything so living' (*Open the Door!,* p. 93). Although she does not initially love Mario she marries him and returns to his native land. Joanna again convinces herself that this is the door of escape that will make her happy although, significantly, the lead-up to the marriage 'took its place [...] in what was still a dream life' (*Open the Door!,* p. 97). This dream state is highlighted in the way in which Joanna pictures the landscape of Italy: 'She imagined Vallombrosa as a wonderful, classic valley, shaded by great trees such as never grew at home' (*Open the Door !,* p. 109). The landscape is initially described as Edenic, with a pastoral setting illustrating the uncomplicated and beautiful life that Joanna expects to live in Italy:

> They grew tired and sat down, and Joanna counted her happy years. Sheep came and cropped the short grass near them, and in another part of the dimpled field two little horses never ceased waving their tails. The hours went winged. Here life seemed quite simple. There was no past, no future, only the simple, beautifully rounded present.
>
> (*Open the Door!,* p. 116)

The notion of *locus amoenus* surrounds Joanna; she constantly sees everything as being beautiful and perfect around her, whether things really are perfect or not. A foreshadowing of what her life will be like in reality with Mario, for example, goes unheeded by her: 'How would you like to live in a cage, a cage full of sunshine and beauty and delight, a cage of which the man you loved kept the key?' (*Open the Door!,* p. 101). Joanna does become a prisoner to her new husband and is locked away

and constantly watched by his sister, Maddalena, while he is out all day: 'He was her escape into reality' (*Open the Door!,* p. 103). She finds solace in the landscape but even this begins to remind her of her own state. She describes a hedge of roses and its flowers 'which showed more fragile than ever because of the hale scarlet and yellow hips which were maturing on the same stems at the new buds' (*Open the Door!,* p. 130). This is the same as the situation with Mario; he is the more mature bud taking over the space of the new and younger one that is trying to grow but is restricted in doing so. He 'had drugged her spirit' (p. 129) so that even the 'hillsides were soulless' (*Open the Door!*, p. 131). Her loneliness and isolation means that Joanna considers the fact that she does not belong anywhere. In her marriage she always imagines herself returning to Scotland but she knows that she did not feel as if that were her homeland either: 'Had she not felt alien in Edinburgh? Even in Glasgow had she not felt herself a changeling? And here was a new loneliness engulfing her. Was there no place in the world where she might feel at home?' (*Open the Door!,* p. 124).

Joanna realises that her escape to Italy, with all its beauty of landscape and exoticism, is nothing more than a false Eden and simply another place where she does not feel at home. A symbol remains with her though in the form of a distinct house and all that it represents, which is in the midst of the Italian landscape and is, significantly, hidden behind cypresses. La Porziuncola is the residence of a woman celebrated for her loves and 'Joanna had a vivid memory of the little sunken door in the wall, where it was said the lover was wont to enter' (*Open the Door!*, p. 131). The door of the house becomes a symbol of adventure and passionate love, what she thought life would be like in Italy but instead representing the things that are lacking in her marriage with the violently possessive Mario. Joanna escapes from this unhealthy relationship after Mario's death. Her freedom in this instance is symbolised in the freeing of snared birds:

> As each took flight, Joanna's heart went with it. Had not she too been snared? Snared indeed by her own desire; but still more, by her own desire set free. And each bird as it went from her, was a thank-offering for freedom.
>
> (*Open the Door!*, p. 142)

On her return to Glasgow, Joanna feels herself awakened and considers the fact that she seemed 'to re-enter life like one new-born' (*Open the Door!,* p. 159). She returns to her mother's stifling

grasp, however, with closed doors and windows - showing Freudian notions - standing for the restraints that Joanna returns to. She soon finds another door of escape in her relationship with the married artist Louis Pender; it is their affair that is primarily centred on in the novel, with Joanna taking her own studio in London to be near him. He is likened to art more than to landscape, although Carol Anderson in 'Behold I Make All Things New: Catherine Carswell and the Visual Arts' points out that 'art is linked to nature' in the novel.[31] The fact that nature or landscape do not feature to a large extent in their relationship points to the notion that Joanna's and Louis's relationship is not pure and natural; for Louis it is artificial and based on aesthetics, with Joanna not experiencing any feelings of being truly connected with him as she is with nature.[32] The immobility of their relationship due to his marriage is illustrated in their first meeting, which is shown in the following quotation: 'The woman remained perfectly still in the doorway. She was stiff with shyness and delight, and could move neither backward into the room nor forward into the corridor' (*Open the Door!*, p. 183).

Joanna's desire for sacrifice is granted with Louis, as she wants to give herself to him totally knowing that he can not do the same due to his wife. As Sarah Dunnigan points out, 'he signifies sexual desire, conceived as a sinful temptation for Joanna/Eve.' [33] Joanna gives into temptation but the relationship is shown to be unhealthy from the first, not because of the issue of sex outwith marriage, but because Louis only views Joanna as something beautiful to possess, with Joanna defining herself solely in terms of her lover: 'So long as Louis believed in himself she was content. Even to be the toy and the refreshment of one who knew himself a creator of beauty was enough' (*Open the Door!,* p. 228). She is enchanted by his ability to create art and falls in love with the idea of having an affair with such a skilled and intelligent man; she moves from one cage to another in an attempt to find the sort of Eden that matches her ideals. It becomes apparent that he cannot give up his former life for her and a foreshadowing of the conventional end to their relationship is made clear when Louis refuses to give Joanna a painting, as 'my wife hates me to part with any of my stuff' (*Open the Door!*, p. 282). Joanna

---

[31] Carol Anderson and Aileen Christianson (eds.) *Scottish Women's Fiction 1920s – 1960s: Journeys into Being*, pp. 21 – 31, p. 23.

[32] Her relationship with Lawrence, which is shown as healthy, is surrounded with nature imagery, with Joanna experiencing a sense of belonging and wholeness with Lawrence that is linked to nature and landscape.

[33] Sarah Dunnigan, *Opening the Doors: The Achievement of Catherine Carswell*, p. 103.

realises that she is largely excluded from Louis's life, as society has no place for her in the role of mistress that she has taken on:

> The sense her lover had conveyed of inhabiting a world from which she was excluded, his animation, his complete unconsciousness of her presence, the impossibility of thrusting her presence upon him by a gesture – these had been bitterness.
>
> (*Open the Door!*, p. 314)

Joanna, then, has to contend with the general exclusion of women from public life at this period along with being excluded from her lover's life in public due to her status as a mistress. She is cast out from society because she represents the archetypal exclusion of Eve, primarily due to her association with sin and temptation. She again takes flight from the man in her life and turns to Lawrence Urquhart, a student and close friend of Carl Nilsson. Power relations are again important in terms of her very brief engagement to Lawrence. He is 'what at the eleventh hour would save her from Louis' (p. 239), with Joanna knowing that he is totally in her power: 'She must have him no longer content but entirely at her mercy' (*Open the Door!*, p. 237). Her engagement is nothing more than a perverse way of getting back at Louis, however, and she returns to her former lover, realising that she depends upon him: 'As he watched her in cold fury she ceased to be the kestrel poised: she became instead the small bird that flutters close to the ground for its life' (*Open the Door!*, p. 249). Joanna likens Louis to a hawk due to his possession over her and the fact that she is his prey, but their relationship comes to a head when she sees him out with his wife in public; he cannot acknowledge that he knows Joanna – 'There had not been the faintest change on his face. It was less an acknowledgement than a denial. It would rob her of identity' (*Open the Door!*, p. 342).

When the relationship disintegrates Joanna undergoes a rebirth, with the symbolism of the latter part of the novel becoming more abstract. She remembers a voice from her childhood as she tries to re-enter life anew:

> And though it was a voice from childhood, Joanna had never truly heard it before. It was the still, small voice of a new birth, of a new life, of a new world. It was a new voice, but it was the oldest of all the voices. For it was the voice before creation, secure, unearthly, frail as filigree yet faithful as a star.
>
> (*Open the Door!*, p. 388)

When Joanna recovers from this spiritual and emotional rebirth she awakens a new woman; her self that belongs in childhood is painfully reconciled in her adult life. This is the last of her unarticulated changes, where the outcome is not made clear until the transformation is complete. She appears to have achieved a sense of self now that she is free of Louis's and her mother's suffocating influence. She is no longer restricted and achieves a sense of having a new life and identity following a painful 'death.' It is this new self that presents itself to Lawrence. It is made apparent that he is the perfect partner for Joanna; she is reminded of nature and of all the feelings of being connected with the outside world, which she experienced at Duntarvie, when she sees him:

> Why was it, she had asked herself, that seeing Lawrence's features anew after absence, was like being confronted suddenly by some vital memory from childhood? He was only an acquaintance of her adult years. Why then should his eyes recall so strongly the very look of the pools in the burn at Duntarvie?
>
> (*Open the Door!*, p. 332)

It is significant that the couple meet up at Duntarvie for their eventual union[34] and for Joanna to realise and accept that a relationship with Lawrence would be a healthy and equal one; unlike her other lovers, Lawrence will not try to shape her and she finds a door to enter into rather than to escape from. Landscape is of prime importance in the conclusion, as rural Scotland is a reflection of Joanna's inner world; here her feelings are in harmony with the outer world.

According to Alison Smith, Carswell uses 'an eroticised notion of nature to help her back to Eden';[35] the natural world provides a liberating landscape for Joanna, who realises that she needed to be entrapped by her family and by the men in her life to truly experience freedom. She thinks that she has found her Eden, which is explicitly pointed out by Carswell in 'he was Adam to her Eve,' and "they were 'in the beginning' of their new creation" (*Open the Door!,* p. 428). In nature imagery, he is 'the clod of earth' to her 'seed' (*Open the Door!*, p. 429), although a valid criticism that can be made is that

[34] The meeting between the couple at the place where Joanna connects with nature and where she found her essential self in childhood has been justifiably criticised for being too tidy by Carol Anderson in *Scottish Women's Fiction 1920s – 1960s: Journeys into Being*, p. 29.

[35] Alison Smith, *Gendering the Nation: Studies in Modern Scottish Literature*, p.26.

'Lawrence carries a great symbolic weight, [...] too much for his thinly drawn self.'[36] Aileen Christianson and Carol Anderson note that since landscape offers a sense of freedom and spiritual solace in the novel, this suggests 'the possibility of a reclamation of nature for women without necessarily limiting them to that traditional binary opposition of woman/nature and man/culture.'[37] This does seem to be the case; nature and landscape are primarily used to voice Joanna's reconciliation with her older childhood self which results in a feeling of belonging rather than simply illustrating that she connects with nature simply because she is a woman. Another important point is that she does not merely return to the place of her childhood but to Scotland also. Joanna appears to have found a place where she belongs by finding and acknowledging a sense of Scottish identity and, as Jan Pilditch points out, for Joanna, the 'right man is, and must be, Scottish.'[38] Her feelings of Scottish identity have also been stifled up until this point as her confusion with who she was and her need to escape distorted her Scottish self. Joanna's experiences with different men and different places leads to her finally accepting Scotland, and Lawrence, as she realises that the country is not much worse than anywhere else, and that Lawrence is far less patriarchal than the other men who have shared her life. Italy and the sensual Catholicism of Mario are no better than Presbyterian Scotland; the English Louis is much like Mario in that they are both too patriarchal for Joanna. She eventually feels that she no longer has to run away from her birthplace because nowhere else lives up to her ideals and her different lovers turn out to be less suited to her than the Scottish Lawrence. She can eventually face up to her Scottish identity and embrace it as she has, up until this point, totally denied this aspect of herself in her need to look for somewhere else to call home. Now that she feels that she belongs in Scotland she no longer has to repress this fundamental part of herself.

The suggestion at the conclusion of the novel is that Duntarvie is not the solution for the couple in terms of remaining there to live; Joanna has found herself so that she can fit in better in the wider, urban world. Andrew V. Ettin points out that pastoral literature, which *Open the Door!* can be seen as belonging to, serves the purpose of expressing an ideal, but a limited one:

---

[36] Alison Smith, *Gendering the Nation: Studies in Modern Scottish Literature*, p. 29.

[37] Carol Anderson and Aileen Christianson, Introduction to *Scottish Women's Fiction 1920s – 1960s: Journeys into Being*, p. 15.

[38] Jan Pilditch, 'Opening the Door on Catherine Carswell', *Scotlands*, 2, 1994, pp. 53 – 65, p. 63.

> The first [purpose], which is the one most commonly associated with [pastoral literature], is to express an ideal or supposed ideal of life [...] It is worth mentioning though, that the idyll may be carefully circumscribed, falling short of perfection or shown to be fragile or limited when measured against the standards of wider society [...] The pastoral world may look ideal in itself, or when measured against the immediate alternative; but [...] its shortcomings become clear.[39]

So, although in *Open the Door!* Duntarvie is portrayed as a type of Eden, it, nevertheless, is limited when compared to the wider society of Glasgow or London for instance. It is, therefore, not the answer for the couple but they will instead use their newly acquired knowledge and sense of belonging to fit into the larger world, with the notion that they have found knowledge anew echoing the myth of the Tree of Knowledge in the Garden of Eden, reasserting the two characters in the roles of Adam and Eve.

Despite Joanna finding an ideal partner, a Scottish identity and a sense of self at the end of the novel, which brings an optimistic close, for many critics it is the conclusion that is the most unsatisfactory aspect of the novel. Criticism is centred around the ending, where Joanna abandons her new-found freedom, which she has fought so hard for, to the new man in her life. It should be noted that Carswell might still be being ironic concerning the romantic ideals of her heroine at the close. Joanna's instinct is to run to Lawrence with all her energy because he holds her life in his hands:

> Every thought, every desire, every invigorating cell of Joanna's renewed body leapt on the instant in unison with this declaration of her spirit. Lawrence must not go. She must stop him. She had never known anything as she knew this. She had never experienced living knowledge till now. Lawrence too must be pierced with this new, dazzling ray of knowledge or there would remain only darkness.
>
> (*Open the Door!*, p. 424)

The build-up to Joanna's union with Lawrence is deflated, however, by Joanna falling over just as she reaches him: 'With her eyes on Lawrence's face she tripped badly on the root, and as he darted forward to save her, she pitched forward right upon his breast' (*Open the Door!*, pp. 426 – 427). If read ironically, then, Carswell is still distancing herself from Joanna, with her romantic aspirations and desires. There is no evidence of irony, however, at the very end of the novel when the lovers eventually

---

[39] *Literature and the Pastoral* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), p. 30.

unite: " 'No need to ask the moon if she is happy!' Lawrence mused. 'She looks fulfilled...like a web of ripe seeds that has this moment been scattered' " (*Open the Door!*, p. 431).

The conventional ending wins over against the possibly more believable ending that since Joanna has just found herself she will be fulfilled without men. Alison Smith in 'And Woman Created Woman: Carswell, Shepherd and Muir, and the Self-Made Woman' comments on this unsatisfactory close:

> Two possibilities face each other in the novel: that woman can find and fulfil herself best in isolation from man, and that woman cannot be complete without man. It's a battle with no clear winner as Carswell dares herself nearer and nearer the autonomous self only to pull away at the last moment into the conventional and rather unconvincing satisfaction of the ideal and 'natural' match.[40]

So, at the price of believability, the novel does close traditionally, highlighting the importance for Carswell of decorum and decency which in turn illustrates the period in which she was writing. The conventional ending may be due also to the autobiographical element in the novel; Carswell found her ideal partner and wants the same for her character. Katherine Mansfield claims that the autobiographical nature mars the novel in that Carswell's characters 'carry her away',[41]with Margaret Elphinstone stating that the novel is ' wonderful if you can believe it.' [42] Elphinstone also claims that the main flaw is 'when we are asked to believe that marriage to Lawrence will solve all Joanna's internal conflicts.'[43] It should be noted, however, that Carswell does not explicitly state that Joanna and Lawrence will marry, or that Carswell is suggesting that all of Joanna's conflicts will be resolved at the closing. Cheryl Maxwell comments on the notion of marriage at the end of the novel:

> Many readers may assume that their final union will result in marriage, but there is no suggestion of this. It would have been virtually impossible for Carswell, writing

---

[40] Alison Smith, *Gendering the Nation: Studies in Modern Scottish Literature*, p. 28.

[41] Katherine Mansfield, 'Reviews: A Prize Novel', " 'Wanted a New World': the '*Athenaeum*', 1919 – 1920", reprinted in Clare Hanson (ed.) *The Critical Writings of Katherine Mansfield* (London: MacMillan Press, 1987), pp. 94 – 95, p. 95.

[42] Margaret Elphinstone, 'Four Pioneering Novels', *Chapman*, 74 – 75, Autumn/Winter, 1993, pp. 23 – 39, p.27.

[43] Ibid. p. 26.

> in the 1920's, to show her heroine 'living in sin' with her chosen partner at the novel's end, but it is not impossible for her readers to draw that inference.[44]

It is also clear that Carswell did not consider the ending to be a solution for her protagonist. In one of her letters she states that 'the only point is that Joanna does fashion or find out some way for herself and some truth.'[45] This is apparent in Carswell's use of irony towards the end of the novel; it shows that Joanna still has not achieved complete truth or knowledge in terms of an identity even when she has found an 'ideal' partner in Lawrence; she has some realisation but we are still left wondering if this is yet another false Eden.[46]

---

[44] Cheryl Maxwell, *Opening the Doors: The Achievement of Catherine Carswell*, p. 121.

[45] *Lying Awake*, p. 186, addressed to F. Marian McNeill, dated 24 April 1928.

[46] Jan Pilditch in her article 'Opening the Door on Catherine Carswell' acknowledges that the ending may be unsatisfactory to some readers but comments that the lack of a social dimension in no way weakens the novel and that, instead, the ending is an honest attempt to define the female self and to redefine a relationship between the sexes: 'The capacity of love to reconcile opposites is a view which may, ultimately, be termed idealistic, and the ending of the novel could therefore be described as lacking in a social dimension [...] But any attempt to redefine relationships between the sexes inevitably abstracts itself to some degree from the social dimension and Carswell was not the only woman of her time to refuse to allow this issue to narrow to the (perhaps simpler) issue of the gaining of the vote' (*Scotlands*, no.2, 1994, p.64). Pilditch concludes her article by stating: "After all, who would deny her that last flamboyantly female appropriation of the moon, the very symbol of romance, 'like a web of ripe seeds that has this moment been scattered'?" (p. 64).

CHAPTER 4

WILLA MUIR

Hell-fire and Water: Examining the Elements of Calderwick

The republication of Willa Muir's work, most noticeably her novels, *Imagined Corners* (1931) and *Mrs Ritchie* (1932), has caused critical attention to be directed towards her writing in the past decade or so. In the Canongate Classics volume, *Imagined Selves* (1996), Kirsty Allen in her introduction points out that this volume:

> gathers together, for the first time, some of the real and imagined lives of Willa Muir, one of the finest female intellectuals that Scotland has produced this century. Many of her works have been out of print for more than fifty years; others have never yet been published. Here, at last, is another major missing piece from the jigsaw of Scottish women's writing. [1]
>
> (p. v)

Muir's writing is diverse, iconoclastic and ambiguous, as will be discussed in detail later on in the chapter, and although her novels and other writing should hold an important place in the Scottish canon, her work has been largely ignored. Muir's status as a Scottish woman writer is at the root of such unawareness of her work; she addresses marginality and gender issues in her writing to challenge the roles allocated to women in a patriarchal, particularly Presbyterian society. [2] Her subversion of Scottish village life can be likened to George Douglas Brown's reversal of kailyard writing, but Muir's agenda is primarily concerned with a challenge to female stereotypes, as well as creating a 'truer' depiction of Scottish society compared with the kailyarders. Her critique of Calderwick, the fictional town which is the setting of her two published novels, *Imagined Corners* and *Mrs Ritchie*, is modelled on her home town of Montrose, where she experienced first hand the limitations placed upon her in terms of gender, whilst also feeling a lack of 'belonging' due to her origins as a Shetlander. Muir highlights the notion of fitting in in *Belonging: A Memoir*:

---

[1] The Canongate Classics volume *Imagined Selves* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1996) brings together Muir's novels and essays, with an introduction by Kirsty Allen, p. v – xiii. All subsequent page references relate to this edition.

[2] These concerns have only really come into sharp focus in regard to women's writing recently, with Muir's work being addressed in, for example, Alison Smith's 'And Woman Created Woman: Carswell, Shepherd and Muir, and the Self-Made Woman' in Christopher Whyte (ed.) *Gendering the Nation: Studies in Modern Scottish Literature*, Margaret Elphinstone's 'Willa Muir: Crossing the Genres' in Douglas Gifford and Dorothy McMillan (eds.) *A History of Scottish Women's Writing*, Aileen Christianson's 'Dreaming Realities: Willa Muir's *Imagined Corners*' in Carol Anderson and Aileen Christianson (eds.) *Scottish Women's Fiction 1920s – 1960s: Journeys into Being* and in an edition of *Chapman* which is mostly dedicated to essays on Muir (71, Winter 1992 – 93).

> The question of 'belonging' had preoccupied me nearly as far back as I remember [...] I did not feel that I belonged whole-heartedly to Montrose. Well before I was three, I explained, I had discovered that I did not really belong to the Montrose way of life. My people spoke Shetland at home, so my first words were in the Norse dialect of Shetland, which was not valid outside our front door. [3]

The notion of 'belonging' is an important and recurring motif in the author's work. [4] Muir examines 'belonging' in terms of self, gender, society and nation. All of these aspects interlock and are Muir's primary concern in *Imagined Corners*, the novel that will be discussed in the following chapter.

Criticism of Muir's work centres around her psychological approach to her characters, her inconsistent attitude concerning gender and the fact that *Imagined Corners*, it can be claimed, is not properly structured and appears to be two separate novels elided into one. Muir's training in psychology is evident in all of her writing and it has been claimed that the author saturates her work in the clinical style that she employs. Kirsty Allen, in her introduction to the Canongate Classics edition of the novel, cites an anonymous reviewer in *The Times Literary Supplement* who comments of *Mrs Ritchie* that 'in spite of the careful photography of the details, the lingering thoroughness of the dissection, the result is nearer to science than to art' (p. x). Janet Caird also shares this view, which is illustrated in the article 'Cakes Not Turned': 'The effect of these little lectures in psychology is to make the characters appear specimens rather than credible people.' [5] Kirsty Allen points out that this particular novel "was justifiably criticised by various contemporary reviewers for its spate of abstract theorising and its disconcerting resemblance, in places, to a psychological 'case study.' " [6] The same criticism could be made of *Imagined Corners* but the psychological matter is not as prevalent in this novel in comparison to *Mrs Ritchie* and does not spoil the tone of the novel. The examination in *Imagined Corners* of the subconscious and dreams, as well as the revelations concerning the

---

[3] *Belonging: A Memoir* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1968), p. 19.

[4] Edwin Muir also experienced similar problems in regard to fitting in, which is recounted in *An Autobiography*. He states that when he came to Glasgow, his fellow workers 'chaffed me because of my Orkney accent, and that made me grow more tongue-tied than I had been before' (p. 91). He also claims that 'the old sense of security was gone [...] My father and mother felt lost because they were too old, and I because I was too young' (London: Hogarth Press, 1964; 1954), p. 93.

[5] Janet Caird, 'Cakes Not Turned', *Chapman*, 71, Winter 1992 – 93, pp. 12 – 19, p. 17.

[6] Kirsty Allen, Introduction to *Imagined Corners*, p. x.

psychological motives of the characters, enables Muir to delve under the surface façade of her characters to concentrate on the mentalities of the realistic people that she portrays.

The psychological make-up of the characters is one of the main praise-worthy achievements in the novel and is important in terms of unconscious conformity or non-conformity to the society of Calderwick. Conformity, in Muir's opinion, is to accept unquestioningly the role expected of you, which is based mainly on gender. Muir comments on such gender typecasting in *Belonging: A Memoir:*

> As a schoolgirl I shrugged my shoulders at the gap between the self I knew and the female stereotyping expected of me, but when I moved to the university I began to find the discrepancy comic. There was no lack of discrepancies affecting all the women students, not merely myself.
>
> (p.140)

Muir's views on gender appear clear-cut but the author is actually very ambiguous in relation to this topic, a fact that can be appreciated if one looks to her other writing. In the essay 'Women: An Inquiry' (1925)[7], Muir voices the idea that women are naturally more spontaneous and closer to unconscious life than men and have naturally different skills, capabilities and outlooks as a consequence of this. Such a notion emphasises the idea that there are innate dissimilarities between males and females. Muir is, then, paradoxically undermining the notion of equality between the sexes, indeed giving a reason for them, and appears to approve of different gender roles.

Patricia Rowland Mudge in her article 'A Quorum of Willas,' refers to two unpublished stories of Muir's, 'Mrs Muttoe and the Top Storey' and 'The Bridge' which both reveal Muir's inconsistent attitude towards gender. [8] In 'Mrs Muttoe and the Top Storey' the author writes about an equal partnership between a husband and wife which surprisingly ends with the wife taking on a dependent female stance by hanging on to her husband for support: 'Dick's hand groped towards her and she caught it and clung to it' (p. 3). 'The Bridge' portrays a seemingly strong woman who tries to leave her incompatible husband only to return to him and rescue him from a near fatal situation, where she ends

---

[7] 'Women: An Inquiry' in Kirsty Allen (ed.) *Imagined Selves* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1996; 1925), pp. 1 – 25.

[8] Patricia Rowland Mudge, 'A Quorum of Willas', *Chapman*, 71, Winter, 1992 – 93, pp. 1 – 7, p3.

up 'crumpled and sobbing at his feet' (p. 3). Muir's attitude, then, as Rowland Mudge points out, lies between her abhorrence of the patriarchal system and her apparent adherence to it: 'While she detested the male-dominance she saw around her, championing the feminist cause wasn't her primary concern. Even if it had been, Willa's opinions were too inconsistent to be taken seriously.' [9] I would disagree with Rowland Mudge on her point that feminism was not of great concern to Muir; just because Muir's notions of gender were inconsistent does not mean that they were not of chief importance to the author and should not, therefore, be dismissed so easily. Instead I would argue that gender is of equal importance to Muir in *Imagined Corners* along with the Scottish cast of mind. I do not accept the assertion that the novel focuses on 'the self-realisation of a gender rather than a nation' but rather that Muir gives predominance to nation and gender alike. [10] As Kirsty Allen rightly points out, Muir 'was a Scot who resented Scotland, although her writing is obsessively Scottish in its themes and attitudes.' [11]

I would suggest that Muir's ambivalence is a product of her Scottishness. In other words, Muir, as a consequence of being Scottish, displayed characteristically Scottish psychological hang-ups, namely a dualism in character and an undercurrent of uncertainty that affected her deeply. It is not, therefore, that Muir was not greatly concerned about issues but instead her conflicting ideologies and paradoxes in personality came about by her exhibiting typically Scottish traits. The author's life is filled with apparent contradictions, not just concerning gender. Muir's lack of 'belonging' from a very early age is revealing as it shows a deeply ingrained insecurity from the start. Muir is an accomplished and diverse writer whose work includes fictional and non-fictional novels, essays, a memoir, many translations, short stories and radio scripts and yet she was not convinced of her ability and constantly doubted herself. Furthermore, her continual insistence that her husband, Edwin Muir, and she were equal partners seems to be undermined somewhat by the fact that she took a back seat to her husband's writing, sometimes sacrificing her own literary talents to support him. P.H. Butter comments in relation

---

[9] Patricia Rowland Mudge, 'A Quorum of Willas,' in *Chapman*, 71, Winter, 1992 – 93, p. 3.

[10] Quotation from Susanne Hagemann's chapter 'Women and Nation' in Douglas Gifford and Dorothy McMillan (eds.) *A History of Scottish Women's Writing*, pp. 316 – 328, p. 320. Originally discussed in her article 'Die Schottische Renaissance: Literatur und Nation im 20 Jahrhundert', *Scottish Studies,* 13, 1992, pp. 53 – 67, p. 53.

[11] Kirsty Allen, Introduction to *Imagined Corners*, p. v.

to this point that Muir's 'greatest work, I think she would gladly agree, was to make possible the production of (Edwin Muir's) poetry.' [12] Muir claimed that she did not resent her husband for foregoing her own interests in writing but she again seemingly contradicts herself by suggesting that she was resentful of this fact:

> It shouldn't bother me. Reputation is a passing value, after all. Yet it is now that I feel it, now that I am trying to build up my life again and overcome my disabilities [...] Because I seem to have nothing to build on, except that I am Edwin's wife and he loves me. That is much. It is more in a sense than I deserve. And I know, too, how destructive ambition is, and how it deforms what one might create. And yet, and yet, I want to be acknowledged.[13]

Muir's strong and often critical character, where "her openness and her refusal to be ignored did not endear her to conventional and 'proper' Edinburgh society, where women were expected to take a back seat"[14] was also marked by insecurities that made her at times appear wholly dependent on her husband, and these contrasting qualities can be seen in the two Elizabeths of *Imagined Corners*. There is a strong autobiographical element in the novel as Kirsty Allen points out in the introduction, and aspects of Muir's character are evident in the two namesakes: Elise's strength, independence and natural opposition to the patriarchal Presbyterian system and Elizabeth's weakness, constant doubting of herself and her dependence on her husband Hector. Such dualism points towards deep-seated uncertainties that affect the Scottish psyche as a whole. Insecurity of identity has haunted the mentality of Scots since at least the Union of 1707, causing the nation to continually access her role in Britain and her own distinct national identity. The supposedly schizophrenic nature of Scots has Calvinism and the Union at the heart of it, where the Elect believe themselves to be saved but cannot be certain and Scots are split between their own language, distinct institutions and identity and the powerful influences of Anglicisation. [15]

---

[12] Cited in Janet Caird's article 'Cakes Not Turned,' in *Chapman*, 71, Winter 1992 – 93, p. 12.

[13] Kirsty Allen, Introduction to *Imagined Corners*, p. xii. Originally from Muir's 'Journal' 1951 – 53 (20 August 1953), box 6, Willa Muir archive in the University of St. Andrews Library.

[14] Catriona Soukup, 'Willa in Wartime', *Chapman*, 71, Winter, 1992 – 93, pp. 20 – 24, p. 22.

[15] Edwin Muir discusses the split in the Scottish mentality in *Scott and Scotland: The Predicament of the Scottish Writer* (Edinburgh: Polygon Books, 1982; 1936) in relation to the Scot having no homogeneous language: 'This linguistic division means that Scotsmen feel in one language and think in another; that their emotions turn to the Scottish tongue, with all its associations of local sentiment, and their minds to a standard English which for them is almost bare of associations other than those of the

Muir and her husband were well aware of the crippling effects of Presbyterianism and the Union on Scottish writers, a fact that Willa Muir addresses in relation to her husband in *Belonging:*

> The emptiness of Scottish life which he had been aware of during his Journey and was now aware of in St. Andrews, a hiatus caused, he felt, by the lack of an organic society with an alive centre, seemed to him to have crippled Walter Scott in spite of his genius and was bound to cripple any writer still trying to produce Scottish literature.[16]
>
> (p. 194)

Muir's uncertainty of her writing skills, if considered in relation to the quotation above, does not seem surprising. She was hampered more than her husband in literary terms, however, by being affected by what Joy Hendry calls 'a double knot on the peeny,' namely, being a woman and being Scottish. [17] Muir was evidently greatly affected by her two-fold marginal status and this had a bearing on her work: Janet Caird comments that 'the more one reads of and about Willa Muir, the more one is aware of potentialities unfulfilled'[18] Muir realised the fact that she was hampered by limitations that carry distinctly Scottish labels and attempted to overturn such restrictions by satirising the society that enforces them. She voices a future ideal rather than a retrospective one in terms of Scottish identity and gender ideologies; she creates a contemporary, realistic world that enables her to explore the psychological nature of her characters and their national inhibitions in order to push forward a change in attitudes.

In structural terms, Muir has been criticised for concentrating two distinct sets of characters into the one novel. Muir admitted that 'my first novel had enough material in it for two novels, which I

---

classroom' (p. 8). Muir also points out that 'when a nation loses its language it loses an essential unifying element in its life, and as soon as that happens the things which divide it begin to take precedence over the things which unite it' (p. 43).

[16] Edwin Muir's *Scottish Journey* (Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing, 1996; 1935) describes Muir's travels throughout Scotland, in an attempt to search for a Scottish identity. The picture he paints is bleak in terms of finding a stagnant, crippled country that cannot move on from her past. The reference to Walter Scott relates to Edwin Muir's *Scott and Scotland: The Predicament of the Scottish Writer* that was published the following year in which Muir examines the author and his country.

[17] Chapter from Gail Chester and Sigrid Nielsen (eds.) *In Other Words: Writing as a Feminist* (London: Hutchinson, 1987), pp. 36 – 54, where Hendry discussed the two-fold marginality status of Scottish women writers (p. 36).

[18] Janet Caird, 'Cakes Not Turned', *Chapman*, 71, Winter 1992 – 93, p. 12.

was too amateurish to see at the time'[19] causing critics to claim that this is a blot in the book. Janet Caird claims that 'the two groups are awkwardly linked in the action'[20] which is an unfair criticism. The two sets of characters, namely the Shands and the Murrays, overlap in the story, specifically Elizabeth Shand and William Murray, so that the idea of focusing on two families works. [21] The plots concerning the two families link successfully and by introducing both groups of characters Muir can examine a wider scope of humanity; Muir includes people who conform – Mabel and John Shand, Aunt Janet, Sarah Murray – non-conformists – Elise and Ned – and characters who appear to conform but question their roles – Elizabeth, Hector and William. Muir could also be criticised for overdoing the contempt in *Imagined Corners*, like George Douglas Brown in *The House With the Green Shutters*. The novel is not wholly dark and dreary but I would suggest that Muir had to make her novel bleak to an extent in order to create a true sense of what it is like to grow up in Scotland surrounded by Presbyterianism and a stagnant society that stifles individual thought and creativity. To draw the picture any other way would be to defeat the purpose of exposing the detrimental factors in Scottish life in order to overturn these and plea for a change for the better.

The main threads running throughout *Imagined Corners* are concerned with individual identity, gender constructions, social conformity and limitations, religion and the national psyche. The first of these is important in the context of authority; the individual experiences of characters and their unconscious thoughts and dreams are given supremacy in the novel. This point is apparent in the 1987 edition of the novel, where J.B. Pick quotes Muir as stating that 'nobody has seen that the dreams I give

---

[19] *Belonging: A Memoir*, p. 163.

[20] Janet Caird, 'Cakes Not Turned,' in *Chapman*, 71, Winter, 1992 – 93, p. 12.

[21] I would agree with Aileen Christianson in her chapter 'Dreaming Realities: Willa Muir's *Imagined Corners*' in her assertion that the two sets of characters are an advantage in the novel in terms of giving Muir's text a wider focus: 'A novel concentrating solely on the Murrays would have referred back to the harsh world of George Douglas Brown's *The House with the Green Shutters*. One dealing with the Shand family would have allowed a more modern exploration of gender and sexuality, linking it with Catherine Carswell's *Open the Door!* [...] But by intertwining the two different kinds of novel through the process of doubling and pairing [...] Muir ensures that the Murrays' lives provide a dark undertow to the Shands', showing that any narratives of growth and change also contain the potential for unfulfilled lives, madness and death, widening the novel's scope beyond the limitations of either tradition' (Carol Anderson and Aileen Christianson (eds.) *Scottish Women's Fiction 1920s – 1960s: Journeys Into Being,* pp. 85 – 96, pp. 86 - 87*).*

my characters are meant to be at least as important as their waking actions.' [22] According to Muir being true to oneself is of paramount importance in terms of 'belonging,' although social conformity makes this realisation difficult to implement. Elizabeth's weakness lies in the fact that she is a product of her upbringing; she wants to live out the kind of life expected of her, which is specifically connected with getting married, being a good wife and having a family. These traditional notions are at times at odds with her more liberal side that develops when she attends university; she adopts a more open-minded approach to how women should behave and starts to question her own role in relation to society. These antipathetic sides of Elizabeth's character are evident throughout: 'Elizabeth was more a prude than either of them realised. She had freed herself only partially from the prevailing suggestion that sex was shameful' *(Imagined Corners*, p.79). Her unconventional side is shown in the following, where she defends her friend against people who conform fully:

> Mabel's set are always trying to have a dig at Emily Scrymgeour. I even heard Mrs Melville calling Emily vulgar because she nods and smiles to her own maid when she meets her in the street. And I said in a loud voice that I'd stop and pull my Mary Ann by the tail if she were to pass me without seeing me. They didn't like that.
>
> (*Imagined Corners*, p. 79)

All of the female characters in the novel have to deal with selves that are being repressed by society; Calderwick in general has the impulse to deny identity, especially female identity. There is a marked negation of identity where no self-exploration occurs; the town suppresses individuality as it is viewed as dangerous in terms of upsetting the status quo. The townspeople judge and reject people who deviate from the normal social code of behaviour; they suppress their own identity to conform and as a result seek to suppress everyone else as it is unbearable for the inhabitants to see others achieving liberated identity and a true sense of self. Elise, Elizabeth's sister-in-law, realises this fact and knows that she cannot be true to herself if she stays in such a smothering atmosphere. She, therefore, makes a break for freedom from the constraints of the society she inhabits when she is still a teenager by running away with an older man. When Elise returns to Calderwick in her forties she is forced to face up to the small-mindedness of the town. She is represented as the prodigal daughter in a reversal of the original story. It is significant that gender has been reversed in this instance; Muir is perhaps commenting on

[22] J. B. Pick (ed.) *Imagined Corners* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1987), Introduction pp. vii – xi, p. ix.

the fact that men are forgiven for their sins more easily than women, especially where sex is concerned. The prodigal son is welcomed back and accepted, whereas Elise is welcomed back by only some members of her family and is not fully accepted. She ran away and committed a sin when she was still a teenager but the mindset of the town works against her; because her sin involved sex outwith marriage, especially due to the fact that it was with a married foreigner, she is not accepted by the townspeople who are largely unforgiving and is simply labelled unchaste, despite the time that has lapsed since she went off with her lover and of her being married to a respectable doctor since then.

Elizabeth, on the other hand, is an outsider to the village and experiences difficulties in fitting in due to her ignorance of the strict social expectations and stereotypes that are in place. Elizabeth is criticised for not fitting into the stereotype and starts to take heed of the gossip when she experiences problems in her marriage to Hector; she blames herself for not being a 'good' wife and strives to suffocate her liberal attitude to become the personification of the 'Noble Wife.' In doing so she is conforming to society and being untrue to her emerging, unconscious sense of self; she hides behind a mask, as this is what is expected of her, and represses her identity:

> Elizabeth, hidden within the self-made figure of the Noble Wife, was shielded for the time from social disapproval as effectively as a pneumatic tyre is shielded from the bumps of a hard road. Moreover, she now presented the comforting appearance that Hector expected of her. She must have known this instinctively for she first bathed and powdered her face and then put on her prettiest dress.
>
> (*Imagined Corners*, p. 126)

Elizabeth's self-constructed loss of identity allows her to fit into the mould of the female typecast. She tries to behave like her sister-in-law, Mabel, who wears feminine dresses and make-up to adhere to the cultural construction of women looking attractive solely for men.

Elizabeth's role as the 'Noble Wife' is surrounded by imagery of enclosure; she is frequently confined in an empty house, doing her duty of waiting for her husband to come back from work or from the men's club. Muir concentrates on the fact that women are excluded to a large extent from public life and, as such, are closer to their subconscious selves than men. Elizabeth's dreams, then, are given an authoritative voice as she struggles to come to terms with her identity as a newly married woman:

> She awoke with an anguished feeling that she was lost and no longer knew who she was [...] When she was almost rigid with terror the name 'Elizabeth Ramsay' rose into her mind and the nightmare vanished. Her body relaxed, but her mind with incredible swiftness rearranged the disordered puzzle of her identity. She was Elizabeth Ramsay but she was also Elizabeth Shand [...] Elizabeth Ramsay she was, but also Elizabeth Shand, and the more years she traversed the more inalterably would she become Elizabeth Shand.
>
> (*Imagined Corners*, p. 64)

Elizabeth's struggle with her identity results in a disjointed notion of self. She stifles and ignores her subconscious thoughts and in doing so she is imprisoning herself.

The heaven and hell imagery in the novel is associated with notions of freedom and imprisonment. A state of heaven is achieved when a sense of freedom is attained, specifically if this freedom corresponds between inner life and the outer world. 'Belonging' is the result of this state of harmony being realised, as Margaret Elphinstone points out in her chapter 'Willa Muir: Crossing the Genres':

> Belonging is represented [...] in terms of an Edenic state of both unity of self and union with what Muir calls 'the universe'; lapse from this state of belonging is marked by a sense of dislocation, and of entrapment in a maze of misconceptions and dead ends. [23]

Muir represents hell as a state in which one is cut off from freedom and, as a result, a sense of imprisonment is experienced. In cutting off her unconscious self Elizabeth is denying herself the liberty which the unconscious maintains. Freedom can be achieved through the unconscious, as dreams and unconscious thought provides an outlet for women in a male-dominated society, where social constructions stifle female identity and exclude women to a large degree. Unconscious thought is viewed as dangerous as it represents the unknown and could disrupt convention. Muir illustrates this point in her essay 'Women: An Inquiry' (1925):

> The morality honoured by men is thus a morality designed to preserve the systems which men create. Because it upholds the values of consciously organized life it distrusts the impulses of unconscious life, which it calls original sin, or personifies as a devil. (p.21)

[23] Margaret Elphinstone, 'Willa Muir: Crossing the Genres', Douglas Gifford and Dorothy McMillan (eds.) *A History of Scottish Women's Writing*, pp. 400 – 414, p. 400.

Unconscious thought is quashed making realisation of the self almost impossible. Elizabeth's fragmented self is constantly battling to deny the unconscious and to deny, therefore, her very self. When she realises that she does not 'belong' in the town 'in mythic terms she moves from Eden to the Tower of Babel.' [24] This notion holds for anyone who does not 'belong' and it is a strong theme in the novel. Muir adopts theological and Christian imagery to emphasise the importance of these notions; the seemingly insignificant characters are set up in universal terms, where their inner battle for freedom against imprisonment takes on a wider significance. Their battle is a war between God and the devil and good and evil, where good is represented in terms of freedom and 'belonging' and hell is a state of despair and enclosure due to a lack of 'belonging.' The individual characters, then, carry a huge weight that is emphasised in the opening of the novel; the inhabitants are situated in Calderwick, in Scotland and then in terms of the universe. Their lives take on a cosmic significance.[25] The narrator is like an omnipotent God in attempting to steer the characters towards an Edenic state of existence. This is evident when Elizabeth tries to play out her false role and deny an essential element of herself; the narrator employs a clinical detachment, as Elizabeth is ignoring her unconscious feelings and, as such, she is condemning herself to suffering and torment:

> 'This is not me! What *have* I been doing?' These more stable moments emerged like rocks once the waves of emotion were spent. They might have served Elizabeth as a basis for self-examination but, being young and indeterminate, she preferred to gaze with increasing bewilderment at the crosscurrents of the sea. Elizabeth had a habit of turning her back on the land.
>
> (*Imagined Corners*, p. 116)

Elizabeth constantly turns to nature for solace when she is considering the problems between Hector and herself. Recurring images of the sea are apparent as Elizabeth stifles her unconscious; the sea represents her unruly and wild emotions she associates with the passion that she and Hector felt for each other when they first met. She thinks that by looking to the sea she can regain this sense of

---

[24] Margaret Elphinstone, *A History of Scottish Women's Writing*, p. 402.

[25] Muir's *Mrs Ritchie* also contains imagery of heaven and hell, with a similar cosmic battle being played out. Muir's main protagonist denies and represses her identity to such an extent that she becomes diabolical. She has potential but it is denied her, resulting in the crushing of her creative side and the denial of her unconscious and physical self. Mrs Ritchie ends up destroying herself and her family by her over-bearing sense to repress the need to 'belong.'

impulsive passion. She struggles with the deeper truth, which is made manifest in the wave imagery in the novel; she only looks to the surface of things and ignores the deeper currents. Elizabeth mistakes lust for love when she marries Hector and is blind to the fact that they are unsuitable for each other. Hector is awkward and out of place when mixing with Elizabeth's friends who are educated and use words and speak about topics that he cannot understand. Elizabeth, on the other hand, thrives on such occasions indicating their completely opposite and incompatible characters. Elizabeth in her self-deceiving, therefore, only associates her husband with the natural environment outside of their home life so that she does not have to confront their incompatibility: 'She saw with immediate clearness that it was only inside a room, in the world of talk, of articulate expression, that Hector was trivial. Out of doors, with no roof but the sky, he was like an impersonal force' (*Imagined Corners*, p. 175). Elizabeth adopts the naïve attitude that she can find herself and regain the impetuous feelings that brought the couple together in the first place by turning to the landscape, but Muir emphasises the fact that nature cannot be relied upon and is indifferent to human suffering:

> For the first day or two she took long, solitary walks, seeking an assurance from the sea, the grass, and the leafless trees in the little valleys that she was still the same Elizabeth. The house seemed to be agitated by stormy emotions, but out of doors, she thought, in the slower, larger rhythm of the non-human world, she would again find herself, and, in consequence, find Hector too.
>
> (*Imagined Corners*, p.118)

Nature is of no help to Elizabeth, as she cannot find herself by turning to the landscape of Calderwick; her identity has to be contemplated and realised in the context of society as it is bound up with human constraints. The non-human world, then, is ineffective in terms of reaching a sense of self; she turns her back on the land to concentrate on the sea but it is in terms of the land that she must resolve her fragmented identity. Elizabeth has no inner harmony so cannot connect with nature to achieve a unified state of 'belonging.' She must first solve her identity crisis, and nature cannot provide a means of helping her, as it is indifferent.

Elizabeth views nature as something that she can be attached to and that she can depend upon since Hector is detached and distant to her. Andrew V. Ettin in *Literature and the Pastoral* examines the role of nature in regard to human experiences:

> Nature [...] is one of the few phenomena that we can 'possess' only by our love for it. We cannot exactly own it, but we do not have to own it in order to enjoy it or feel that it is ours to enjoy [...] We still maintain some power over it through our power to interpret it. It stands, one might say, as an ideal substitute lover when we feel that human lovers are perversely independent of our wills.
>
> (pp. 21-22)

It is in such a way that Elizabeth looks to nature; she rejects the Calvinist notion of nature and the world as being the devil's place. This notion of Calvinist mistrust in nature is concisely stated in Northrop Frye's words:

> What the Bible condemns is only what it calls idolatry: the feeling of the numinous, of divine presence, may be experienced in or through nature, but should not be ascribed to nature. That puts man in the grip of an external power, which, as he has projected it from himself, means that he is enslaving himself to it. Nature is a fellow creature of man, and there are no gods in it: the gods that have been found in it are all devils, and for his knowledge of God man has to turn to the human and verbal world first. [26]

Elizabeth occupies the opposite extreme of this; she is a Romantic and a nature worshipper, believing in the doctrine of pantheism. Muir implicitly shows, however, that this extreme is not good either; as Alison Smith highlights: 'Muir is keen to reject nature as a helpful ally for women.' [27] I would suggest that Muir's attitude to landscape in this respect is due to the author's own experience, which is mentioned in *Belonging,* and not due to her possessing a Calvinist outlook in terms of nature. Muir describes how she looked to nature when she felt that she might lose her husband: "I could not forget the utter indifference of the lake and the mountains when I was in agony. I had told myself then that I could no longer 'kid' myself about having a special relation to the Universe" (p. 84). Muir, then, could not find an ally in the landscape when she was suffering and the same holds for her character, as Smith points out: '*Imagined Corners* demands that women (and men too) must have a different relationship with what was Carswell's final saviour, nature.' [28]

---

[26] Northrop Frye, *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature* (London: Routledge and Keegan Paul Ltd., 1982), p.68.

[27] Alison Smith, 'And Woman Created Woman: Carswell, Shepherd and Muir, and the Self-Made Woman', in *Gendering the Nation: Studies in Modern Scottish Literature*, p. 26.

[28] Ibid. p. 44.

Nature is not the answer, then, for Elizabeth. It is Elise who is her saviour and who encourages her to be true to herself. Neither character fits into the mould of what is expected of females in the town; they do not conform and as such they are judged. The social constructions of Calderwick are steered towards repressing female identity. Strict stereotypes are in place with traditional notions of women being confined to the house being constantly adhered to. All of the residents keep the others in check, as the following quotation shows in relation to Elizabeth's behaviour: 'Little things, Hector, little things; like running about without gloves and saying damn, and screaming with laughter in the street like a mill-girl – all little things, Hector, but they count for a great deal' (*Imagined Corners*, p. 75). Mabel, unlike Elizabeth, 'keeps up her position wonderfully' (*Imagined Corners*, p. 75) by conforming to Calderwick's notion of how women should behave and look. There are clear-cut definitions in relation to women in the town – they are either respectable and conform, which inevitably carries the label of them being unexciting, or strive to be different, which also carries a stereotype, mainly associated with being labelled a fallen woman. Non-conformers are judged severely, as can be seen from Hector's opinion of Elise before he meets her: 'A sneering, godless bitch, that's what she is. Probably drinks like a fish. I shouldn't wonder. Lying about in the streets of Monte Carlo most likely and damned glad to come here for a decent meal' (*Imagined Corners*, p. 78).

Women, then, carry the stigma of being labelled 'whores of Babylon' or are viewed as the Virgin Mary, both of which clearly goes back to the notion of Original Sin and the Fall of mankind. Such black and white definitions of women being chaste or unchaste are connected with outward appearances; as long as women seem to behave appropriately they will not be condoned. The definitions are obviously not so unequivocal but outward conformity is more important to the mindset of the town than the truth behind how people actually are and behave; seeming to be good is of primary importance and has at its roots the Calvinist doctrine of the Elect. As long as women adhere outwardly at least to their allocated roles then they will not be subjected to scrutiny by the townspeople.

A chief role that is traditionally designated to women is to keep their husbands under control, a point that is made explicit in the following:

> Hector, like all the other men of his acquaintance, accepted unthinkingly the suggestion that women were the guardians of decorum – good women, that is to say, women who could not be referred to as 'skirts'. Good women existed to keep in check men's sensual passions. A man, driven by physical desire, they argued, is mad and reckless, and his sole protection from himself is the decorum of women.
>
> (*Imagined Corners*, p. 77)

In such a patriarchal society, men are forgiven for being unfaithful due to their wives' adherence to the dull 'Noble Wife' role and it is the wives who are blamed for their husbands' infidelities; if they had been doing their job right in keeping their spouses in check then the men would not be unfaithful. Women cannot behave in the same way as their husbands. Although Mabel is unhappy and bored in her marriage to John, she is too concerned with her social prestige that her marriage to John brings her to ruin their relationship. The social constructions of the town work against women, as Mabel realises: 'The only thing she could have done was to be unfaithful to her husband, but for a Calderwick woman to do that is not to drift: the whole social current sets the other way' (*Imagined Corners*, p.118). Gender constructions are instilled in the mind of the characters to such an extent that they are unconsciously adhered to and, therefore, never questioned, a point that is made evident in the case of Sarah and William Murray:

> It did not occur to her that William, being stronger and less tired, might carry the tray into the kitchen. Nor did it occur to William. He had not quite escaped the influence of his father, who had ruled his house, as he had ruled his school, on the assumption that [...] it was beneath the dignity of a man to stoop to female tasks. But although this assumption lay at the back of William's mind it appeared so natural that he had never recognised it.
>
> (*Imagined Corners*, p.16)

It is not just women who are limited by their expected social roles, but men too. The male constructions that are in place result in Hector distancing himself from Elizabeth when she acts like all the other women in the town:

> In becoming estranged from his wife Hector was only doing what the whole of Calderwick expected of him. Wives, in Calderwick, were dull, domestic commodities, and husbands, it was understood, were unfaithful whenever they had the opportunity.
>
> (*Imagined Corners*, p. 117)

Hector cannot escape from the shadow of his father, who was a well-known womaniser and alcoholic. It is assumed by the inhabitants of Calderwick that his son will turn out the same way which steers Hector towards the same fate as his father. He cannot escape from the stigma surrounding his family, just as women cannot break free of the stigma surrounding them if they are labelled unchaste. He has to leave the town in order to 'live'; he considers the fact that it is 'better to drown in the open sea than in that stagnant muck' (*Imagined Corners*, p. 44).[29]

Ned Murray is a further male character who is denounced; he suffers from mental illness, where he confines himself to his house due to his fear of evil. His erratic behaviour escalates to such an extent that his sister Sarah is forced to lock him in the house against his will until a doctor arrives. In being confined to the house Ned is associated with female characteristics, as Margaret Elphinstone points out: 'The restraint imposed on Ned seems ironically to reflect a female rather than a male destiny, as if, by receiving the label of madness, Ned has also taken on the attributes of femininity.' [30] He tries to break out of his home and gain freedom but is unable to do so and, as such, is confined to a type of hell. The same notion holds for women who are unable to break out of the confines of their domestic worlds; they live out a hellish existence, being unable to attain a sense of liberty. Ned is rejected by society, as he does not adhere to the Calderwick idea of how men should be. When he is labelled mad he automatically takes on negative characteristics of femininity, namely being unstable and irrational. Calderwick is united against Ned as he cannot comply with the sanity of others and is persecuted for it. He is confined to an asylum and also to a permanently hellish state, as no freedom is possible and he does not 'belong'.

In the society of Calderwick everyone suffers to maintain the status quo, where boundaries in terms of behaviour exist around the people. As the contradictory title of Muir's novel suggests, people are imagined into corners; possibilities are cornered by limitations, as no outlet exists for the inhabitants. Judgement holds society in place, with the disruption of gender and class norms being

[29] Class distinctions are also at the heart of social constructs. Hector, for example, would prefer to work in the mill rather than in the office of his brother's factory but is unable to do so because of his middle-class family. He cannot, therefore, like the other men in Calderwick, hold a steady job, as he is totally unsuited to the type of work carried out in the office.

viewed as moral squalor. If people do not comply they upset the stability of the town which is kept in place by the church and other institutions. The reader is encouraged to examine Calderwick which is set out to be viewed under a microscope: 'The sand-scoured, windswept little streets were filled with clear light; everything was sharply focussed as if seen through a reducing lens' (*Imagined Corners*, p. 18). The latter two chapter headings – 'The Glass is Shaken' and 'Precipitation' – indicate that a type of experiment is being conducted. The town is viewed as if encased in a glass snow shaker, with disruption occurring when the glass is shaken and everything returning to normal when the snow settles again, with William's turmoil over religion, Hector's and Elizabeth's arrival in the town and their marital problems, her loss of self and the impending visit by Elise all causing the town to be shaken and the flow of water to be disrupted. It could be the omniscient author or omniscient God carrying out the experiment, as either of these can organise the providence of the characters. The glass can be viewed as an invisible barrier surrounding the town, which limits and confines the characters, much like the unseen social codes which also limit and confine. The many disruptions that occur within the town happen when elements are added to the solution of Calderwick and a chemical reaction takes place to see whether characters dissolve, fit in, or whether they are insoluble. The imagery connected with this experiment is evident from the beginning of the novel:

> Human life is so intricate in its relationships that newcomers, whether native or not, cannot be dropped into a town like glass balls into plain water; there are too many elements already suspended in the liquid, and newcomers are at least partly soluble. What they may precipitate remains to be seen.
>
> (*Imagined Corners*, p.2)

Water imagery is used to communicate the unconscious social constructions that flow against non-conformity and to express the general mindset and workings of the town, as is evident in the language used in the following: 'Scandal in Calderwick percolates at first by a kind of osmosis from one mind to another before it becomes a current' (p. 121); 'Elizabeth had yielded herself to the stream of traditional wifehood and the boat of her soul no longer rocked' (p. 126); 'This time he was striving against the current, not carried away by it' (p. 273). Water obviously has connotations connected with theological symbolism also. Water equals life and is associated with spiritual re-cleansing and with

[30] Margaret Elphinstone, 'Four Pioneering Novels', in *Chapman*, 74 – 75, Autumn/Winter 1993, pp. 23 – 39, p. 35.

rebirth. In the latter two quotations it is apparent that the water symbolism is connected with Elizabeth and William repressing essential elements of themselves; they are not 'living' by doing this, just as Elizabeth's attempted spiritual cleansing with the sea surrounding Calderwick is unsuccessful, as she is not alive to who she really is. Instead she is drowning and submerging her true identity.

It is evident that in terms of the experiment Elise, Hector, Elizabeth and Ned are insoluble. The two women have the extra burden of dealing with a Presbyterian society that works against them. The establishment of Scottish Presbyterianism is traditionally overtly masculine and anti-feminine; it instils the notion of Original Sin and it also lacks traditionally female characteristics, such as tenderness, clemency and understanding. Muir is highly critical of Scottish Presbyterianism and, as such, she is ironic in her use of God in the novel; it is clear that God is a kind of devil. The community creates the Calderwick God and they shape this God in their own image. Their God is created to put down everything that is individual and to emphasise everything that is repressive. The people preach isolation and separation due to their view that lack of change is equivocal to moral good. They think that by keeping people separate then they are more likely to conform for fear of judgement and a sense of stability and permanence will, therefore, be achieved. Calderwick is in such a state of monotony as is illustrated in the quotation below:

> She could have predicted what was to be seen at any hour of the day. It was now ten o'clock and as if noting the answer to a sum she observed that the baker's van was precisely at the head of the street and that the buckets of house-refuse were still waiting by twos and threes at the kerb for the dust-cart. She would have been disturbed had things been otherwise.
>
> (*Imagined Corners*, p. 7)

Being seen to conform is of paramount importance to Calderwick's notion of God so that people have to stifle their individuality and sense of self to become themselves a construct of their society, playing out false roles. Presbyterianism, then, according to Muir, tortures and destroys the self that seeks to belong. The townspeoples' idea of God supports the subordination of women; the inhabitants never question this issue but the narrator does. Alison Smith points out that 'the watchful eye over this novel, the narrator, is the opposite of this God in every way in a book that explores both

female and male identity with a positive emphasis on the former.' [31] The majority of the residents assume that 'the female sex was devised by God for the lower grades of work and knowledge' (*Imagined Corners*, p. 16) and so the patriarchal society uses God as an excuse for the male dominated system of beliefs and values. The notion of judgement and punishment being made evident on earth as well as in heaven or hell is also ingrained into the characters' psyche, as can be explicitly seen in Elise's return: 'Although she was nearly sixty-four Janet still believed that the good were rewarded and the wicked punished not only in the next world but in this, and Lizzie's apparent immunity from punishment upset her' (*Imagined Corners*, p. 157). In addition to this, the doctrine of Original Sin is very much connected with the Calvinist God of Calderwick, whereby guilt felt about sex is transferred on to women and being associated with temptation and sin undermines them. Elise realises the damaging effects of this doctrine on women and the way that Presbyterian society embraces this notion to repress women:

> You know it's much more difficult for a thinking girl to swallow tradition than for a thinking boy. Tradition supports his dignity and undermines hers. I can remember how insulted I was when I was told that woman was made from a rib of man, and that Eve was the first sinner, and that the pains of childbirth are a punishment to women [...] It took me a long time to get over that [...] It's damnable the way a girl's self-confidence is slugged on the head from the beginning.
>
> (*Imagined Corners*, pp. 216 - 217)

It is not only women, however, that are affected by the damaging and stifling effects of Calvinism. The character who is affected most of all is the minister, William Murray. He struggles with the opposing theological notions that haunt him as he tries to cope with his faith. This inner struggle leaves him imprisoned mentally and spiritually and it is set out in cosmic proportions. The minister has always preached the love of God but begins to feel spiritually cut off from God and the church when he is unable to help his brother Ned. His views of God drastically change when he lets his wrath out on two of his parishioners, a state that he assumes acknowledges God's anger as well as His love:

> One could not create light without dispelling darkness. For years he had shut his eyes to the fact of evil; but now he had heard the word of God, and he would deal

[31] Alison Smith, *Gendering the Nation*: *Studies in Modern Scottish Literature*, p. 39.

> faithfully with evil wherever he found it [...] The wall in front of William Murray was no longer smooth, without handhold or foothold, no longer blank. It now had both lights and shadows on its surface. He could climb it.
>
> (*Imagined Corners*, p. 107)

William's rebirth into the church is an unhealthy one; he feels that he now 'belongs' but this is a false realisation. Instead of preaching the love of God he starts preaching 'hell fire and the wrath of God and original sin' (*Imagined Corners*, p. 190). In acknowledging that good and evil coexist he also acknowledges a state of heaven and hell and, therefore, becomes embroiled in Calderwick's notion of God that is primarily concerned with judgement. The Scottish Calvinist God who exists in Calderwick is a God of judgement instead of the real God and, as such, it is a God that is always seeing and spying on the townspeople. Northrop Frye explains the notion of judgement and an omnipotent God in *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature:*

> The role of God as Father, however defined in dogma, keeps shifting from the benevolent to the diabolical, from a being genuinely concerned for man to an essentially malicious compound of wrath and condemnation. One consequence of having a creation myth, with a fall myth inseparable from it, has been the sense of being objective to God, or, more specifically, of being constantly watched and observed, by an all-seeing eye that is always potentially hostile.
>
> (p. 110)

William believes that he has found a truer version of God by accepting His wrathful side, which encourages judgement and the spying on of people, but he is continually plagued by guilt and uncertainties. He is pushed further into an agonising state when he confines his brother to an asylum and all of his doubts reach a hellish culmination:

> And what was to keep a man from making a false step? How could he know if it was God or the Devil that prompted him? How discriminate between righteous anger, for instance and unrighteous? There was no answer to that, save the conviction, now pressing heavily upon the minister, that both kinds of anger were of the Devil.
>
> (*Imagined Corners*, p.271)

William, then, is confined to a fragmented sense of self; he and his brother compliment one another in terms of Ned's fear of the world and his realisation of evil and William's trusting character who sees nothing but good. In confining his brother to live out a hellish existence he is also confining himself to

the same state. He does not know if it was God or the devil that encouraged him to send his brother away, nor can he know; he feels an incredible sense of guilt that he could not help him spiritually and, as such, he mentally and physically drowns. Again the unconscious is given priority, with William dreaming about being submerged in a river: 'One false step, and he knew he would be lost in one of the dimpling whirlpools around him' (*Imagined Corners*, p. 272). This dream mirrors his death where he is blinded by the elements of a snowstorm and falls into the river and drowns whilst contemplating his spiritual battle. It is significant that he dies in such a way – his blindness in the snowstorm is his blindness that allowed the Calderwick God to replace the true God that he embraced in his life and it is this that submerges him.

Muir explicitly points out in the novel the similarities between William and Elizabeth: 'In marrying Hector Elizabeth had entered upon a discipline that was to bruise her as much as the discipline of the Church had bruised the minister' (*Imagined Corners*, p. 251). Both experience a sensation of drowning in their problems, as well as having a mystical connection with the outer world in common; both also have a tendency to deny their physical entities at the expense of their spiritual sides. William and Elizabeth 'consistently ignore, or misinterpret, the physical world, as if it were not a part of the self'[32] Muir emphasises the fact that the inner world and the outer world must correspond to feel a sense of 'belonging' but both characters keep the two completely separate and, so, neither fully fits in. Both are imprisoned in institutions that are not large enough to hold them. They have extra burdens placed on them by society, as Margaret Elphinstone mentions in *A History of Scottish Women's Writing*: 'Elizabeth has assumed the additional burden of being not only a wife, but a Noble Wife, so William has to be not only a man, but also a Minister' (p. 406). The consequences of this is that neither 'belongs' and so both are confined to a sense of hell, entrapment and dislocation. Neither wants to break down the walls and boundaries that hold them but both manage to do so at the end.

The social constructions of Calderwick, then, are examined throughout *Imagined Corners* and a critique is made of these in terms of Scotland as well as gender. Muir resented Scotland for these

[32] Margaret Elphinstone, 'Willa Muir: Crossing the Genres', *A History of Scottish Women's Writing*, p.407.

limitations and, like George Douglas Brown, explicitly brings to the forefront the detrimental elements of the Scottish psyche, which is illustrated in the following: [33]

> There is an undercurrent of kindly sentiment that runs strong and full beneath many Scots characters, a sort of family feeling for mankind which is expressed by the saying: 'We're all John Tamson's bairns' [...] It is a vaguely egalitarian sentiment and it enables the Scot to handle all sorts of people as if they were his blood relations. Consequently in Scotland there is a social order of rigid severity, for if people did not hold each other off who knows what might happen? The so-called individualism of the Scot is merely an attempt on the part of every Scot to keep every other Scot from exercising the privileges of a brother. We should misunderstand Calderwick as completely as Elizabeth did if we did not recognise the sentiment underlying its jealous distinctions, its acrimonious criticisms and its awkward silences.
>
> (*Imagined Corners*, pp.263 – 264)

Muir is obviously adopting a comical tone in her treatment of Scottish individualism, as there is nothing kindly about it; individualism lies behind petty gossiping, small-minded arguments and limitations in terms of who is 'good' enough to speak to whom. The Protestant ethos is primarily to blame for these constructions. In the Presbyterian church everyone has a say where church matters are concerned and, because the Calvinist God is a God of judgement, parishioners are given the excuse they need for prying into everyone else's business, trying to catch evil-doers out. This point is made evident in the case of Mary Watson, a dour, criticising, God-fearing woman:

> Miss Watson felt it was her duty to see that all was well with the world around her, in case God should be jeopardised in His heaven by aberrant humanity. Her father had been an elder in St. James's United Free Church [...] She had not been allowed to inherit his eldership, which was perhaps the reason why her moral vigilance, unremitting in general, was especially relentless towards the minister and elders of that church.
>
> (*Imagined Corners*, p. 11)

---

[33] An example of the digressions concerning the Scottish cast of mind in Brown's novel is evident in the following quotation: "In every little Scottish community there is a distinct type known as 'the bodie.' 'What does he do, that man?' you may ask, and the answer will be, 'Really, I could hardly tell ye what he does – he's juist a bodie!' [...] The chief occupation of his idle hours (and his hours are chiefly idle) is the discussion of his neighbour's affairs. He is generally an 'auld residenter'; great, therefore, at the redding up of pedigrees. He can tell you exactly, for instance, how it is that young Pinoe's taking geyly to the dram: for his grandfather, it seems, was a terrible man for the drink – ou, just terrible – why, he went to bed with a full jar of whisky once, and when he left it, he was dead, and it was empty. So ye see, that's the reason o't" (*The House with the Green Shutters*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985; 1901, p. 59).

Religion is a major factor in the construction of the Scottish psyche; it is used to maintain the status quo, to lay sin and guilt on women, to make people conform outwardly, to separate people rather than to bring them together, as an excuse for the patriarchal state and to repress the unconscious and notions of freedom. Calvinism, then, regulates both the individual and the society in which they live. Scottish Presbyterianism is clearly of importance to Muir; she recognises the damaging effects of it and voices her objections, specifically to the Calvinist version of Original Sin, in *Belonging*:

> For Calvinist Scots, only the Elect were forgiven their share of original sin [...] As no one could be certain of election, Calvinists spent much of their time on earth in rehearsing Judgement, censoring their own and other people's conduct, showing up others as less likely than themselves to be counted among the Saints.
>
> (p. 249)

It is precisely the notion of showing up other people's behaviour to take the emphasis off of oneself that makes the townspeople focus on obvious targets. The strong emphasis on individuality means that people are jealous if they see others prosper. The transferring of guilt and sin onto others is behind Hector's entrapment. Everyone reminds him of what his father was like, with the sins of Charlie Shand being transferred onto his son. Hector realises that he cannot be himself and 'belong' under the influence of so many people bringing up his father's conduct, where he too is labelled a 'black sheep': 'He hadn't a dog's chance in Calderwick. The place was too full of his father' (*Imagined Corners*, p. 128). This is primarily why he has to distance himself from the place also; Hector, like Elise and Elizabeth, has to escape from the critical eye of society.

Calderwick is bleak in terms of communicating a negative image of Scottish identity, specifically Scottish female identity. Elizabeth and Elise both embody the fragmentation of self that is characteristically Scottish. The divided head and heart of Scotland are evident in the two women: Elise is rational, detached to a certain extent from her emotions, self-controlled and strong, while Elizabeth is a roller-coaster of emotions, dependent on Hector, completely tuned in to her feelings and impulsive. Elise believes in separateness, evidently a trait that she has been unable to shed from her days in Scotland, while Elizabeth thinks that a oneness exists in relation to being connected with earth-life and the environment and also with other people. The two women compliment each other: Elise realises that 'you and I, Elizabeth, would make one damned fine woman between us' (*Imagined Corners*, p. 246).

Elise has escaped from the confines of her Scottish Presbyterian background by retreating to Europe, which is represented in the novel in terms of liberty and open-mindedness; Elizabeth respects and admires Elise for showing her a world of escape and freedom away from the town when she realises how dead she has felt since moving there. Elizabeth, however, does not realise that this escape comes at a price: 'Without suspecting for a moment that Elise had cut herself to the quick to achieve her detachment, she envied her that detachment' (*Imagined Corners*, pp. 171-172). Elise has to redefine herself outside of Scotland to try and abandon the beliefs and values of the town, which is a microcosm of Scotland, which crushes the individual, especially if one is a woman. This type of remodelling must come at a price as it involves Elise wiping out all of the negative aspects of the Scottish mentality that were impressed upon her from a very early age. Elise cannot fully ignore or forget her past, however, but her arrival back in the town lets her resent it less and recognise that the people who impose the strict regulations are weak-minded and prejudiced without feeling bitter or resentful of them. It is clear that Elizabeth will need to distance herself from Scotland and its distinct way of thinking to find herself again. She is emotionally bruised and her inner state is represented in the landscape of Europe, to which she escapes once Hector has left her for another woman: 'She had never imagined that vines looked like that ... She had imagined something more lush... not this dry, bright landscape with those gnarled little trees, that looked as if they had been maimed and tortured...Crippled, like herself' (*Imagined Corners*, p.281).

Healthy identity for the characters is never achieved in terms of Scotland or gender in the novel. Elizabeth and Elise leave Scotland, and possibly men, behind but their situation is not fully resolved at the end. Margaret Elphinstone points out that 'for a Scottish woman, it seems, the issue of Belonging is most painful when it relates to Scotland, and yet it is in relation to Scotland that it must be resolved.' [34] The bleak outlook at the closing of *Imagined Corners*, then, seems to be that women cannot solve conflicts in terms of their inner state and stay in Scotland. There is a vague sign of hope when Mary Watson realises at William Murray's funeral that 'I think we all trauchle ourselves and other people ower muckle,' (*Imagined Corners*, p. 280) but this is a false hope, as the people will not change overnight, and it has come too late for Elise and Elizabeth. Elise is left with the idea that 'it

[34] Margaret Elphinstone, *A History of Scottish Women's Writing*, p. 405.

might be her *Gebiet* to clear away stones of prejudice and superstition so that other girls might grow up in a more kindly soil,' (*Imagined Corners*, p. 281) while Elizabeth looks towards Europe as a type of Eden, where she will not have to deal with tradition or social constructions. This latter idea is ironic, however, due to the fact that Elise's Europe appears to be just like Scotland: 'She [Elizabeth] conjured Elise to tell her that elsewhere the world was not like Calderwick, so arid, so desiccated into conventions, so removed from all that was spontaneous and natural' (*Imagined Corners*, p. 244). Significantly, there is no answer given to this question. The gnarled trees that Elizabeth describes embody the whole of Europe in terms of being nothing like the Eden that Elizabeth expects. She has to face up to her identity in Scotland but she runs away and, as a result of this, it is doubtful whether she will initially 'belong' in Europe either. Elizabeth, though, as Kirsty Allen points out, has a strength 'which will carry her beyond the pain of the novel's closing pages and outwards into a new world of independence, self-knowledge and self-reliance.' [35] Whatever the women achieve, an encouraging tone is evident in the closing, whereby it is evident that the women are in charge of their own destinies, instead of their fates being decided for them by the social currents of Calderwick or by the hell-fire of a judgmental, patriarchal God.

[35] Kirsty Allen, Introduction to *Imagined Corners*, p. viii.

CHAPTER 5

J.M. BARRIE

The Purgatory of Scotland: A Final Farewell to the Kailyard

James Matthew Barrie's success as the author of 'kailyard stories', including *The Little Minister* (1891) and *A Window in Thrums* (1889), is paradoxically also the author's downfall in respect to his work being neglected and labelled sentimental slop. Barrie is, more times than not, grouped in the same category as S.R. Crockett and 'Ian Maclaren' (John Watson), the most well-known kailyard writers, and it is partly for this reason that his writing tends to be heavily criticised and passed over by today's readers. J.H. Millar's celebrated and influential essay 'The Literature of the Kailyard',[1] which heavily criticises this mode of writing, is another reason behind Barrie's unpopularity, as Millar asserts that Barrie was the founder of this school of literature, as will be discussed later on in the chapter. R.D.S Jack also notes that George Blake, in his *Barrie and the Kailyard School*, is 'responsible for strengthening Millar's link between Barrie and the so-called Kailyard School of authors.' [2] Jack goes on to rightly point out that Blake does at times note that Barrie is a superior author, but "the fact remains that he *is* placed in the same school and is sometimes viewed as the 'guiltiest', having squandered the greatest potential." [3] 'Hugh MacDiarmid''s (C. M. Grieve's) critique of Barrie is a further reason behind the author's work being overlooked, as 'later writers and readers tended to accept at face value MacDiarmid's valid but damning criticisms of both Barrie and Munro and as a result those writers have been neglected ever since.' [4] The majority of commentators, like MacDiarmid, tend to focus on the sentimental, backward-looking and escapist aspects of the author's work but this is surely doing Barrie an injustice in ignoring his other writing.[5] Indictments of the kailyard school are, on the

---

[1] J. H. Millar, *The New Review*, vol. 12, January - June, 1895, pp. 384 – 394.

[2] R. D. S. Jack, *The Road to the Never Land: A Reassessment of J. M. Barrie's Dramatic Art* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1991), p. 21.

[3] Ibid. p. 22.

[4] Beth Dickson, 'Foundations of the Modern Scottish Novel' Cairns Craig (ed.) *The History of Scottish Literature Vol. 4*, p. 59.

[5] Barrie's other writing, *Sentimental Tommy* (1869), *Tommy and Grizel* (1900), *The Little White Bird* (1902) and his plays, such as *Peter Pan* (1904), show that Barrie is a skilled and diverse writer, with these novels and plays showing a move away from his kailyard stories in their modernist concerns and their lack of sentimentality and narrow focus. The modernist focus of his writing in his later works is discussed by R.D.S Jack in *The Road to the Never Land.* Jack points out the linking between psychology and literature and the ideas of the New Criticism, 'with their emphasis on impersonal concern for the literary work as independent object and consequent opposition to extrinsic concerns such as authorial intention' (p. 7). Jack notes that Barrie 'presented a curiously complex view of art in *Sentimental Tommy*, which suggested that the artist was a purveyor of deceit, both in the sense of deceiving himself and his audience' (p. 7), showing very modern notions. Jack also praises *Peter Pan*, the author's best-known work: 'I believe that [*Peter Pan*] also provides the final justification for moving the balance of critical attention away from the psychological to the metafictional; from

whole, tenable but the following chapter is concerned more with Barrie's move away from his kailyard past and, it could be argued, his total detachment from it.

Lynette Hunter, in her article 'J.M. Barrie: The Rejection of Fantasy'[6] comments that the author 'has been accused of being a fantasist and sentimentalist, yet his later novels and plays are mainly concerned with exploring the delusions of fantasy and sentimentalism' (p. 39). Barrie, on this reading, bridges the gap between reality and 'falseness,' with the latter being a predominant critique of his emotional pictures of Scottish village life. The version of Scotland that Barrie produced is frequently labelled false as he attempted to "create a quaint and picturesque view of a small Scottish town, and they were so convincing that for years they coloured the English public's image of what North Britain was 'really' like." [7] Of course Scotland was nothing like this at the time when Barrie was writing, with the face of the country being altered permanently by the industrial revolution. In his last work, *Farewell Miss Julie Logan* (1932), Barrie still embodies fantasy in the shape of the ghost of the woman in the novella's title but the author undoubtedly departs from false, idyllic depictions of Scottish life and sentimentalism to focus on a deeper psychological profile of his protagonist, a minister, Adam Yestreen. This little-known novella is his masterpiece as some critics have pointed out[8] and is a type of personal lustration for Barrie as he takes a forceful leave of the kailyard mode. For these reasons it will be *Farewell Miss Julie Logan* that will be the main topic of discussion in the following chapter, specifically concerning the Scottish frame of mind, in terms of the detrimental aspects of Calvinism that Barrie voices in the novella.

---

simplicity, sentiment and escapism to complexity, the will to power and the reality of the archetype. It is one of the most ambitious works ever contemplated' (p. 155). This divergence from the kailyard school in Barrie's other writing shows that the author was not caught up in the past, as he has been accused of purely on the basis of his kailyard sketches, but incorporated modern notions, as is also evident in *Farewell Miss Julie Logan*.

[6] Lynette Hunter, 'J. M. Barrie: The Rejection of Fantasy', *Scottish Literary Journal*, no. 5, May, 1978, pp. 39 – 52.

[7] Ibid. p. 39.

[8] Allen Wright in 'Kelvinside, Kirriemuir and the Kailyard' points out that the dramatist 'James Bridie' (Osborne Henry Mavor) 'rightly recognised [*Farewell Miss Julie Logan*] as a masterpiece' (p. 136), while claiming that the novella 'was the story Stevenson was trying to write all his life and couldn't. He hadn't the gift' (*Chapman*, no. 11, Spring, 1989, pp. 134 – 137, p. 135). Leonee Ormond in *J.M. Barrie* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1987) also states that it 'is his one undoubted masterpiece in prose' (p. 137).

The reasons behind Barrie's departure from the school of writing that proved very profitable and successful for him appear clear. Barrie continues to be classed as an exiled Scot who held up and sold out his home country to the ridicule of the English. A.T. Cunninghame, writing in 1933, claims that 'one had no qualms in pigeonholing Barrie as one of those Scots who had prostituted literature to a career as Ramsay MacDonald did politics'[9] and forty-five years later literary critics sustained this view which is apparent in the following:

> Barrie treated his Scots characters with a kind of condescending patronage, parading them before the eyes of his English public as charming if gutless oddities. Scotland must be the supreme country of export – mercenary soldiers, evicted clansmen, talent and brains for centuries, and, in the case of the Kailyarders, neatly parcelled and innocuous puppets masquerading as Scots characters. George Douglas Brown was to pay his Scots characters at least the compliment of hating them. [10]

Part of Barrie's unpopularity with more contemporary critics undeniably comes from the fact that he produced overly sentimental, totally unrealistic and falsified stories of what Scotland was like simply to cater for and profit from the market at that time and it is interesting that J.B. Caird, amongst others, views Brown's *The House with the Green Shutters* (1901) as more 'complimentary' to Scotland than Barrie's outputs, presumably due to the truth about the Scottish character that is depicted. Barrie's tales provided a means of escape for their readership, and were hugely popular at that time, but Brown depicted a 'truer' version of Scottish life than the kailyarders by acknowledging the local nastiness and pettiness that made up a large part of it; Barrie, on the other hand, coated his villagers in sickly sweetness while laughing at them and holding them up for his readers to do the same. Barrie, then, was underhand about his characters and Scotland; as George Blake comments 'he simply could not play fair with his puppets' (*Barrie and the Kailyard School*, p. 66). [11] Barrie poked fun at his characters and it is

---

[9] A. T. Cunninghame, 'Sir J. M. Barrie' in *The Modern Scot*, April 1933, pp. 31 – 37, p. 31.

[10] B. Caird, 'A Scotsman on the Make: A Note on Barrie's Novels', *Brunton's Miscellany*, 1977 – 78, pp. 25 – 27, p. 25.

[11] In *Farewell Miss Julie Logan* Julie is evidently a puppet, but this is to Barrie's credit as he consciously sets this character out in such a way to emphasise her unreality and to highlight that Adam is, in turn, her puppet; she has total control over him, is responsible for his actions, and plays about with his feelings.

this element of sniggering at Scots behind their backs that did not endear him to many of his native country people; they evidently preferred the honesty of Brown to the sneak.[12]

It is understandable that Barrie made an effort to evade the stigma surrounding him in respect to kailyard writing, a fact that can be appreciated even more when one considers that he was perhaps more heavily criticised than either Crockett or Maclaren. This point is due to many commentators naming Barrie as the founder of the kailyard school, most famously J. H. Millar in his 'Literature of the Kailyard' essay:

> If to-day in Scotland hardly the humblest rag is without its study of native life, and if ne'er a Free Kirk probationer, too modest to aspire to the smug heresies and the complacent latitudinarianism of his teachers, but manfully resolves that he too will storm the world with his *Cameos from the Cowcaddens*, or his *Glimpses of the Goosedubs*, it is Mr. Barrie's doing. [13]

George Blake and others note, however, that this mode existed before and after Barrie and that the author was only the most successful of these writers, not the originator.[14] Such claims have dented Barrie's reputation as a distinguished author, with his name and the name of the kailyard school being inseparable. If anything, I would argue that Barrie should be distanced from this literary mode; he is

---

[12] The unpopularity of Barrie compared to Brown is made clear if one compares Brown's reception from the locals of his home town, Ochiltree, which is cited in Cuthbert Lennox's *George Douglas Brown* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1903) and the local views and opinions in Kirriemuir of Barrie (cited in George Blake's *Barrie and the Kailyard School*, London: Arthur Baker, 1951). Blake recounts the reaction from locals when he attended Barrie's funeral in 1937: "Seeking to ascertain something of local opinion on the day's great event, all I could get out of the potman was a grunted 'Barrie? Him! Not a hundred per cent, not a hundred per cent.' The precise meaning of this strange phrase was not at once clear to me but, making my way to the square which covers almost all the whole metropolitan area of Kirriemuir, I was astonished to see that the pavements were only thinly lined; one could pick and choose the position on the kerb anywhere. I found myself beside a gamekeeper [...] He questioned me earnestly: 'Is it a funeral?' And when I had explained the provenance of these excitements, he lingered uneasily for five minutes or so and then turned away down a side street, the decision implying the depth of regional feeling about a matter of which the London newspapers had made so much" (pp. 54 – 55). The reaction to Brown from locals was very different according to Lennox: "The people of Ochiltree, among whom he had been brought up, were proud of 'Geordie Broon', for he reflected glory upon the little community and the district of Kyle" (p. 159). The friendly reception shown to Brown can be attributed to the fact that "the latest 'Ochiltronian' to 'arrive' showed no disposition to forget the companions and friends of his boyhood's days, but seemed anxious rather to share his glory with his birthplace and the inhabitants thereof" (p. 162).

[13] J. H. Millar, *New Review*, vol. 12, 1895, p. 384.

[14] Edwin Morgan in 'The Pursuit of Peter Pan' (*T.L.S.*, 13 October 1978) is just one of many to make this point.

clearly a more skilled, diverse and accomplished writer than any of his kailyard successors, producing many famous plays and other prose, and his move away from such sentimentalism and flawed depictions in his later years should be acknowledged to a greater degree. The fact that Barrie did part company with the kailyard may be due to the notion that the literary market was changing and that such idyllic stories would in time prove less popular, especially following Brown's scathing attack and modernism's submergence of such shallow examinations of life and character, but Barrie's abandonment of the 'cabbage patch' model appears to be centred around more personal issues concerning the author rather than with the changing market.

It would appear that Barrie needed to cleanse himself of the kailyard; perhaps he felt that he had been treated unfairly by critics and a Scotland that had turned her back on him or possibly he felt that he had to portray the detrimental aspects of the Scottish mentality in a more honest manner. In his kailyard stories he laughs at the religious divisions of Scotland and offers a purely superficial examination of character, but in *Farewell Miss Julie Logan* he offers a more complex psychological case study which shows the serious notion of a sick Scotland, while also illustrating his full potential as a writer, redressing any criticism of his writing skills being on a par with Crockett and Maclaren. Barrie, like Willa Muir, was a Scot who disliked Scotland. This point is made evident in one of Barrie's letters, written as from a visitor's or tourist's perspective on one of his infrequent visits to his homeland. Dated 13 August 1920, the letter reveals that " 'I am never merry' when I see sweet Scotia, or never merry any more" and 'I daresay I shall be thinking with Dr. Johnson that the best road in Scotland is the road out of it.' [15] His apparent hostility towards Scotland points to the notion that he resented the country for the limited opportunities available there and the stagnant environment that caused many writers to move to London as Barrie himself did. He would have been well aware that Calvinism was the primary cause of this stagnancy and makes a critique of the religion and the damaging effects produced by it in the novella. Scotland also held no more than childhood memories for the author, a lot of them unhappy ones at that. As Alexander Scott points out in 'The Lost Boy: J.M. Barrie': 'there is a profound sense in which his whole career was shaped, or twisted, by a Scottish

[15] Viola Meynell (ed.) *The Letters of J.M. Barrie* (London: Peter Davies, 1942), pp. 179 – 180.

childhood from which he emerged - or failed to emerge - with wounds too deep to heal.'[16] Like Willa Muir, though, Barrie felt compelled to write about Scotland and in *Farewell Miss Julie Logan* he highlights the Scottish psyche and forcefully breaks away from the saturated nostalgia that tainted his previous work.

A study of *Farewell Miss Julie Logan* reveals a release for Scottish fiction; like Brown's *The House with the Green Shutters* Barrie mimics the kailyard type of story. He does this to illustrate its narrowness and absurd attention to detail and to express a release from these limitations. The novella is explicitly and implicitly Scottish throughout, in that it is set in Scotland and is a study of the country's mentality whilst also embodying characteristically Scottish traditions in literature, namely fantasy and folklore.[17] The attacks on Barrie, most famously by Hugh MacDiarmid, who commented that 'you may be sure anything Sir James Barrie writes is not Scottish'[18] may have spurned the author on to addressing his native country; MacDiarmid's criticism was extremely damaging to Barrie and tended to be adhered to by other commentators, as is evident in the quotation below:

> In speaking of Barrie's Scottishness or non-Scottishness, Mr. Grieve had obviously in mind Barrie's failure to treat of the fundamentals of Scottish character lying below the surface, to treat of life outside the sewing circle, or, if you like, to take the lid off the sewing circle. [19]

---

[16] Alexander Scott, 'The Lost Boy: J. M. Barrie', *Scottish Review*, no. 18, May, 1980, pp. 32 – 36, p.32.

[17] *Farewell Miss Julie Logan* is related to the characteristically Scottish fantasy tradition in a number of ways. Colin Manlove in *Scottish Fantasy Literature: A Critical Study* (Edinburgh: Canongate Academic, 1994) points towards distinctly Scottish themes in this strain of literature, which can be applied to Barrie's novella: 'Scottish fantasy has less of a sense of evolution and progression: more frequently it records stasis' (p. 12), as with the static glen that is locked from the outside world; 'English fantasy more often deals with the quest outwards, where Scots fantasy deals with the inwards search' (p. 12), as is evident in Adam's inward search concerning the truth about Julie, which in turn leads to him questioning his sanity and beliefs; 'In Scottish fantasy the fantastic experience and the world from which it emanates are very close to ours – into which they can come at any time' (p. 13). This point is evident in *Julie Logan* in that she enters into our world rather than appearing into a different, totally fantastic world that is not ours. Manlove also notes that a characteristic in this mode of writing is 'the emphasis on the power of women and the worth of feminine values' (p. 246) which is obviously found in the novella and in other works by Scottish authors, such as John Buchan's *Witch Wood* (1927) and Lewis Grassic Gibbon's *Sunset Song* (1932).

[18] Cited in A.T. Cunninghame's 'Sir J.M. Barrie' in *The Modern Scot*, April, 1933, p. 31.

[19] Ibid. p. 32.

Barrie's response to such criticism was *Farewell Miss Julie Logan*, where he addresses the critique made of him, specifically relating to his writing only offering a superficial depiction of the Scottish mentality and a mostly falsified portrayal of Scotland. It would be foolish, however, to suggest that Barrie wrote the novella as a direct response to criticism as there appears to be a more personal reason behind his last work. The fact that the author penned the novella in an outburst of feverish writing suggests a personal catharsis was involved, with his letters also pointing towards a determination fuelled by a type of release for the author: "It is terribly 'elusive' I fear and perhaps mad, but was I not dogged to go through with it!"; 'The thing I've set off writing is badgering me, as I meant it to be six pages and it is now six and twenty and I question whether I have reached the middle. A spate, but I'm afraid of muddy water.'[20] It is also significant that Barrie offered his novella as a free gift with *The Times* and that, according to Denis Mackail, 'he wasn't thinking of publishers, or of editors, or even [...] of readers. He was as bewitched as his hero.'[21] Uncharacteristically, Barrie was writing the wintry tale apparently for himself and without the preoccupation of what the readers wanted or expected or for profit. The writing of his last book came at a time after a long bout of illness and depression and after a period of thirty years since he had written about the Scottish scenes of his earlier work. Mackail comments that 'the long, long pause had stored up an immense reserve'[22] and Barrie violently set to work to produce a piece of writing that at first seemed familiar in relation to his kailyard stories but was, in reality, unlike any of his other writing:

> He was writing a story, by old and new methods. It began, as *Auld Licht Idylls* had once begun, in the first person, in bitter wintry weather, and in a glen [...] But it was to be eerie this time. There were to be more shivers in it than came from the frozen blasts. He was to be a minister, not a schoolmaster. He was to tell a love story that was also a ghost story. He was to make it as Scotch as any story could be made. It was to be a kind of parable, but he would neither seek nor press the interpretation [...] it was to be the essence of all strange legends of the glens, and of course, it was to be the essence of the author too. A cry for the unattainable. Nostalgia for the Scotland of his youth. And mystery, deep mystery, not only for the readers, but for him who would sometimes beckon to his own story and then let it wander off by itself.
>
> (Denis Mackail, *The Story of J.M.B.*, p. 645)

---

[20] Viola Meynell (ed.)*The Letters of J.M.B* (London: Peter Davis, 1942). Letters addressed to Bude and Katharine Asquith and dated 6 July 1931 and 4 February 1930 respectively (pp. 224 and 285).

[21] Denis Mackail, *The Story of J.M.B* (London: Peter Davies, 1941), p. 645.

[22] Ibid. p. 645.

There is clearly a darker aspect at play in *Farewell Miss Julie Logan* when compared to Barrie's lighter stories of kailyard style, and this bleaker tone indicates the hellish effect of Presbyterianism and the connected issues of repression and release on the individual. The Scottish Renaissance 'flushes out' Barrie's true attitudes to Calvinism, therefore.[23] The notions of repression and release are recurrent in the novella, specifically concerning sexuality, religion and private and public lives, and are evidently far-reaching in terms of Scotland. The deceptively simple style incorporated by Barrie allows the story to be read on these two levels: as an examination of the individual mentality of a minister and of the national mentality of Scotland. The first person style of narration is essential to the novella being read on these levels and to allow a deeper insight into the emotional turbulence of Adam, the protagonist, with the work being included in what Douglas Gifford calls 'the Scottish tradition of self-revealing, unintentionally self-satiric monologue.'[24] The opening appears familiar, with the 'locked' glen, where 'it may be so happit in snow that no one who is in can get out of it, and no one who is out can get in' (*Farewell Miss Julie Logan*, p. 7).[25] The significance of the glen being 'locked' is that a kailyard-type setting is established for the reader, with the movements of characters being restricted to the small remote village. The snowbound glen also embodies Adam's emotions as he is psychologically blocked off from these, as the glen is also blocked off from the outside world. Furthermore, the fact that the minister is isolated means that he reveals himself to a greater extent in his diary as he rarely has human contact with which to communicate.

---

[23] Previously Barrie failed to portray Calvinism as having a damaging effect on his characters. Instead, in his fictional communities, which were predominantly made up of the strictest Calvinist denomination, the Auld Lichts, every respectable citizen was God-fearing and they embraced the strict doctrines of the religion, apparently without any ill effects, and those who were not God-fearing were soon converted, as is shown in the following quotation which refers to the minister Gavin Dishart and one of his parishioners: " 'He's a fine man that. He didna ca' my father names. Na, he said, 'You're a brave fellow, Rob,' and he took my father's hand, he did. My father was shaking after his fecht wi' the drink, and, says he, 'Mr Dishart,' he says, 'if you'll let me break out nows and nans, I could bide straucht atween times, but I canna keep sober if I hinna a drink to look forrit to.' Ay, my father prigged sair to get one fou day in the month, and he said 'Syne if I die sudden, there's thirty chances to one that I gang to heaven, so it's worth risking.' But Mr Dishart wouldna hear o't, and he cries 'No, by God,' he cries, 'we'll wrestle wi' the devil till we throttle him,' and down him and my father gaed on their knees' " (*The Little Minister*, pp. 30 – 31).

[24] 'Stevenson and Scottish Fiction', Jenni Calder (ed.) *Stevenson and Victorian Scotland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1981), pp. 62 – 87, p. 79. Adam reveals more than he means to, much like the character the Reverend Micah Balwhidder, who records his annals in the same style as Adam in John Galt's *Annals of the Parish* (1821).

[25] The Scottish Classics edition of *Farewell Miss Julie Logan* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1989, 1932), with an afterword by Alistair McCleery. All subsequent page references relate to this edition.

Adam's revelations are primarily concerned with distinctly Scottish psychological 'hang-ups' and notions, namely a national schizophrenia, brought on by Anglicisation and by historical internal divisions; repression, that has Calvinism at its roots; a split in private and public lives, which is concerned with the all-seeing Calvinist God and outward appearances; the nostalgic, backward-looking national view, that is due to looking back to Scotland as being a distinct entity from England; the overtly masculine society of Scottish Presbyterianism that censors femininity. The young minister manifests all of these issues and if the first is addressed it is apparent that Adam is split between his duty as a minister and his own feelings and desires. The minister is acutely aware of his duty as a clergyman and the adherence to logical, religious thought that is expected of him. He has been informed of the folklore and legends of the small town that he has moved to and details the myth of the 'Strangers' who are meant to visit when the glen is blocked off and make you " 'go queer' yourself without knowing it" (*Farewell Miss Julie Logan*, p.8). The notion of ghosts and the supernatural existing is immediately dismissed by Adam as it obviously goes against his beliefs as a minister that such things can exist: 'It is all of course, superstitious havers, bred of folk who are used to the travail of out of doors, and take ill with having to squat by the saut-bucket' (*Farewell Miss Julie Logan*, p. 8). It becomes apparent, however, that Adam is intrigued by such entities and he continues to mention them in his diary and holds discourses with his companion Dr. John about them. He is especially interested in the legend of a mysterious maiden who supposedly helped Bonnie Prince Charlie in his escape, but he dismisses this outwardly and puts down the talk of folklore to the glensfolk being bored due to their isolation and, consequently, a looking back to the more romantic and mysterious time of the Jacobites:

> I am thinking that all the clash about folk of nowadays meeting 'Strangers' when the glen is locked comes out of that troubled past. In a white winter, as you have jaloused yourself, there is ower little darg for a hardy race, and they hark back by the heartstone to the forgotten, ay, and the forbidden. [26]

---

[26] *Farewell Miss Julie Logan*, p. 29. Barrie voices modernist tendencies in the novella, especially concerning Freud and the notion that the repressed will resurface, as is obvious with Adam. These notions are discussed by Henry Gleitman in *Basic Psychology* (W. W. Norton and Co., 1996; 1983): 'According to Freud, the taming process [of basic human instincts] is never fully complete. The forbidden impulses cannot be ruled out of existence. They can be denied for a while, but eventually they will reassert themselves, often through new and devious channels, leading to yet further repressive measures that will probably fail in their turn as well. As a result, there is constant conflict between the demands of instinct and of society, but this war goes on underground, within the individual and usually without his knowledge. As a result, the individual is divided against himself, and his unconscious conflicts express themselves in thoughts and deeds that appear irrational but that make sense if understood in terms of the underground drama' (p. 527).

Adam himself also 'harks' back repeatedly to this time, revealing a split in his personality. Adam's duality in this instance points to the idea of palimpsest, whereby his underlying emotions and feelings, that he is trying to suppress, are still evident and surfacing, and these feelings filter through and can be seen emerging from below the surface of his outwardly-shown and expressed emotions and beliefs. He is 'half a Highlander' (p. 9) and as Allen Wright comments in *J.M. Barrie – Glamour of Twilight* 'Barrie skilfully and discreetly drops clues to Adam's character, to show that this is no dull, orthodox Lowland preacher who might be impervious to the supernatural. Adam may be strait-laced but he has a hankering for romance and beauty.'[27] The minister is split between his Highlander side, associated with the heart and all things mysterious and feminine, and his Lowlander side, which is connected with his head and his logical, rational, masculine self that he exhibits in his role as minister of the parish. He is cursed with 'a poetic heart and a puritanical head' [28] and, as such, is divided within himself as an inner battle takes place between head and heart. This battle is also a universal battle such as could occur anywhere but it carries a distinctly Scottish weight in the instance of Adam, as he is cursed with the split between all three languages found in Scotland – Scots, English and Gaelic - and in his Highland and Lowland roots.

Adam's linguistic divisions are highlighted by Allen Wright in *J. M. Barrie: Glamour of Twilight*: the minister's narrative 'is couched in self-consciously correct English, as if Adam was acutely aware of being an educated Scotsman, but evocative words and phrases creep into it instinctively and sometimes deliberately, because he likes the sound of them.'[29] Adam is, then, split between Scots and English and also the dying Gaelic language, which he occasionally uses to conduct his services. The divisions between English and Scottish are accentuated in the novella; the English visitors ridicule the native townspeople, adorn kilts although the locals wear trousers and 'play with many old words that even our Highlandmen have forgotten' (*Farewell Miss Julie Logan*, p. 12). There is a very modern fragmented personality highlighted in the novella, then, where the kailyard terrain is made to be relevant and modern. It is the English who challenge Adam to write his diary in the first

---

[27] *J. M Barrie – Glamour of Twilight* (Edinburgh: The Ramsay Head Press, 1976), p. 38.

[28] Ibid. p. 39.

[29] Ibid. pp. 38 – 39.

place, no doubt to laugh at the results, so he self-consciously writes in English, whilst also pointing out the differences between the behaviour and language of the two races in his recordings. Adam favours Scottish words such as 'flourish' compared with 'blossom' which is 'a word with no gallantry intilt' (*Farewell Miss Julie Logan,* p. 9); he is aware of Scottish words having more feeling and expression about them than their Anglicised counterparts. The notion that Adam usually speaks and writes in proper English as becoming of his education but prefers the sound and seemingly deeper feeling communicated by the Scottish language points towards the preacher embodying Edwin Muir's model of Scotsmen – the minister feels in Scots and thinks in English. Adam is aware of his own awkwardness and displacement in terms of language, a point that is made evident when he mixes with the English visitors to the glen:

> That time I dined with them the talk might be on subjects I was better versed in than any of them, but they would away to another topic before I could steady myself and give utterance. My most pitiful posture was when I was unable to say anything at all, however superficial. Is man ever more lonely than in company when all language forsakes him and he would be thankful if he could cry out 'Agamemnon'? At that dinner I sometimes wished I could have had a dictionary on my knee so as to get hold of any word whatsoever.
>
> (*Farewell Miss Julie Logan*, p. 17)

Adam's awkwardness is concerned with his feelings of inferiority in the company of the English and the knowledge that they ridicule and look down on the Scots villagers to a certain extent, but it is significant that language is a key factor in his affectedness. He cannot find a vehicle of expression in the company of these men; he feels that he cannot speak Scots for fear of derision nor speak correct English as that is their language and he is different from them. Barrie makes sure that Adam is viewed as being different from the English by distancing his protagonist from them. In the 1932 version of the story Barrie makes alterations from the version that was published the previous year in *The Times*. Many Scottish words are substituted for originally used English ones, namely 'hallan' for 'passage', 'stramash' for 'distress', 'speel' for 'climb.' These Scottish phrases distance Adam from the English visitors and emphasise his language duality, which is less evident in *The Times* version where predominantly English words are used by the character.

Adam is typically Scottish, then, as he stands for the divisions within the country, between Highland and Lowland cultures, and between Scotland and England in terms of language and the effects of Anglicisation. The protagonist is affected by a further dualism in character, specifically concerning Adam the man and Adam the minister. The inner and outer man are at odds; his deep-seated feelings and desires often conflict with his duty as a minister. His public and private lives are divided more so than that of his parishioners as more is expected of him in his role as shepherd to his flock; all eyes are on him for guidance and he stands as a role model for the people of the glen. This point is made clear when he instructs and guides the townspeople over a strange occurrence concerning a ghostly stranger. A parishioner claims that an unknown woman helped her to give birth when she was stranded alone in her house. Adam knows what is expected of him and he attempts to put the talk of ghosts out of the mind of the townspeople:

> I was bolder than I felt, and told them in a short exposition that there had been no 'Stranger' in the affair; otherwise some of them would certainly have seen her. They all nodded their agreement and thanked me for making it so clear, but I knew in my bones that they did not accept one word of my redding up, though they regarded it as very proper for a minister, especially one who was new to the glen.
>
> (*Farewell Miss Julie Logan*, pp. 47 – 48)

Adam is aware of his own shortcomings and the fact that his inexperience and youth does not command as much respect from his parishioners as his older and more learned predecessors. He is a sensuous man with an awareness of beauty and so he is not the sort of preacher who speaks of hell-fire and the wrath of God. He is disappointed that the glensfolk do not adhere to what he is saying and considers preaching on the subject of 'Strangers' to dismiss the notion of them existing entirely. He cannot bring himself, however, to sternly preach to the congregation and instead makes excuses for not doing so:

> Fear did not enter into my reluctance, for I knew they would esteem me the more the harder I got at them, but I drew back from the ease of superiority toward men and women whose simple lives have been so often more grimly fought than my own. It relieves me, therefore, to have decided that I may get through their chinks more creditably in another manner.
>
> (*Farewell Miss Julie Logan*, p. 48)

The minister's repression of his emotions and of beauty is a key to his divided self; he feels that he has to conceal the sort of person that he is, with his love of beauty, music and everything

romantic, at the expense of providing an outward façade of a dignified, logical and learned minister. His repression affects his work due to the divisions within himself; the splits in his personality cause him to doubt his abilities and result in a sense of inferiority. Leonee Ormond in *J.M. Barrie* comments on these divisions within Adam:

> Yestreen's diary reveals how the young minister's struggles after spiritual perfection are constantly undermined from within. Like Gavin Dishart in *The Little Minister*,[30] Yestreen is an innately sensual man whose emotion is unnaturally blocked by the outward demands of his calling.
>
> (p. 138)

Adam has to forgo things that he would like to embrace, especially his love of music and playing the violin as he regards this as the proper course of action for a minister to take; he would not be respected if he were to continue with his fiddle-playing, most importantly because music was banned from churches at this time. His duty also means that he misses out on things that his parishioners take for granted, like the Friendlies that take place in the glen. These social gatherings are filled with music and laughter but Adam knows that as a minister he cannot whole-heartedly join in with the festivities:

> The second part of a Friendly is mostly musical with songs, and is provided by local talent, in which Posty takes too great a lead. There is an understanding that I remain for the first song or so, whether I am lecturing or in the Chair. This is to give a tone to the second part, and then I slip away, sometimes wishing I could bide to enjoy the mirth, but I know my presence casts a shadow on their ease.
>
> (*Farewell Miss Julie Logan*, p. 50)

Adam's suppressed response to beauty is made clear in that he is evidently alive to beauty and passion; he loves his garden and the wood near his manse, for example, but he cannot show this too much outwardly. To emphasise the part of his nature that craves loveliness Barrie added a segment to the 1932 publication of the story that shows Adam's regard for nature in his response to the trees in his garden, as shown in the following: 'My predecessor, Mr. Carluke, tore down the jargonelle tree, which used to cling to my gable-end, because he considered that, when in flourish (or as the English say, in blossom, a word with no gallantry intilt), it gave the appearance of a light woman' (*Farewell Miss Julie*

[30] The characters of Adam and Gavin are extremely similar in respect to their immaturity, their split between public and private lives, their love of women, Julie and Babbie, that are both wanton and surrounded in mystery and legend, and their sexual and emotional repression.

Logan, p. 9). In describing his garden it is clear that Adam has a love of landscape, although it is sparse around the glen:

> Round the manse, within a neat paling that encloses my demesne, there are grossart-bushes, rizers and rasps, a gean, bee-skeps and the like, that in former hands were called the yard, but I call it the garden, and have made other improvements. The gean is my only tree, but close by is a small wood of fir and birch with a path through it.
>
> (*Farewell Miss Julie Logan*, pp. 9 – 10)

These passages reveal the minister's awareness of nature and the landscape, whilst also showing Garden of Eden undertones. The description of landscape in general is lacking in the novella, however. The passages above are the only instances of landscape, and the scenery is only described in one other instance, for the reason of giving the image of remoteness and blankness that comes with the locking of the glen:

> White hillocks of the shape of eggs have arisen here and there, and dangerous too, for they wobble as though some great beasts beneath were trying to turn round. The mountains are so bellied out that they have ceased to be landmarks.
>
> (*Farewell Miss Julie Logan*, p. 33)

Barrie is successful in creating a feeling of being cut off and of having no notable landscape to distinguish the glen from a white sheet of snow through very little description. The quotation above also points towards the notion that there is something destructive lying beneath the surface, which is an indirect reference to Adam's troubled and repressed mind.

It is perhaps understandable that scenery and the landscape are not main features in the work since *Farewell Miss Julie Logan* is, in essence, a short story and so description in general will be limited; it is also more the psychological nature of the character that is of primary concern to Barrie rather than the surrounding glen. It is interesting, however, that landscape is bereft from all of Barrie's writing considering that he originated from a town that is 'surrounded by some of the most beautiful country in the whole of a notoriously beautiful land,' that is full of 'mountains, lochs, glens, forests, rivers, and ruins [...] Hauntingly beautiful, in summer greenery, in the purple and gold of autumn, or in

the whiteness of winter snow.'[31] This description does support, though, both the idea of purgatory, in the notion of the landscape being covered with snow and, therefore, grey and indistinguishable, and with the notion of an 'unmade Eden' in the beauty of the place, both being notions that Barrie highlights in *Farewell Miss Julie Logan*. Allen Wright comments on Barrie's lack of scenic description and offers a reason as to why this element is all but missing from the author's work:

> Woodlands and glens are matters of fact and not things of beauty. It would seem that, in addition to all her other powerful influences on his life, Margaret Ogilvy [32] was to blame for Barrie's lack of interest in the landscape. 'My mother did not care for scenery' he said, 'and that is why there is so little of it in my books.'
>
> (*J.M. Barrie – Glamour of Twilight*, p. 40)

We cannot perhaps believe Barrie's claims that his mother is the reason behind the lack of scenery in his novels since he is such a talented writer; his abilities as a writer are proven by the fact that although scenery is all but missing from *Farewell Miss Julie Logan*, landscape does provide a function other than an aesthetic one; Barrie's landscape reflects Adam's psyche in that his feelings are frozen to an extent and he is blocked off from them. The barren landscape also highlights his isolation and loneliness, which are key factors in understanding his repression and vulnerability. As Allen Wright points out 'without describing the terrain of Adam Yestreen's parish, Barrie succeeded in establishing an atmosphere of remoteness and desolation.' [33]

Instead of focusing on scenery to a great extent, then, Barrie concentrates on the landscapes of the past, of the time of the Jacobites, a period when a large element of folklore was established in Scottish culture. Denis Mackail records the time when Barrie became more aware of this past landscape when visiting Edgerston, near Jedburgh:

> He developed a deep and lasting feeling for what was to him a new part of Scotland. His mind turned naturally to the Young Pretender, to Robert Burns, and

[31] Denis Mackail, *The Story of J.M.B.*, p. 13.

[32] Barrie was deeply influenced by his mother and wrote a controversial biography about her, with the title of it taking her name. He was heavily criticised for seemingly cashing in on her memory and for including a number of tasteless remarks in the book.

[33] Allen Wright, *J.M. Barrie – Glamour of Twilight*, p. 40.

> still more loyally and lovingly to Mary Queen of Scots - every compatriot's first heroine – all of whom had been closely associated with the little border town. [34]

It is this landscape of the past that Julie Logan embodies. She is suddenly mentioned in Adam's diary after a period of two days since his previous entry and so we are told of her in retrospect, as she also stands for a past time. Adam is enchanted with the stories of folklore and with the mysticism of the past; he also appreciates and is alive to the beauty of Julie Logan and the Catholic, Jacobite, romantic and forbidden elements that she exemplifies, although he tries to unnaturally stifle these. She is a Mary Queen of Scots-type character balanced against Adam's Calvinism; she is 'conjured up by his romantic nature and rejected by his bigoted conscience.' [35]

Barrie makes the figure of Julie ambiguous, as it is unclear whether she is a spectre or whether Adam imagines her up due to his tormented mind being split and suppressed. The legend of the 'Strangers' visiting shows the possibility that she may be a ghost, as Adam's predecessor, Mr. H., was supposedly visited by an evil entity that killed him:

> The Spectrum first came chapping softly at the manse door, and afterwards blattering on it, in a wicked desire to drive the lawful possessor out of the house and take his place. But it was while the glen was locked. Sometimes one of the twain was inside the house and sometimes the other. Sounds were heard, they say, coming from the study, of voices in conflict and blows struck [...] 'When they found the minister, according to the stories,' Dr. John said, 'his face was in an awful mess.' What had caused that I asked, and he said shortly that he supposed Spectrums had teeth.
>
> (*Farewell Miss Julie Logan*, pp. 31 – 32)

In Adam's time in the glen he also experiences strange goings-on. He recounts in his diary that 'to write this account of the glen when it is locked has been an effort, for the reason that I have done it twice already and in the morning it was not there' (*Farewell Miss Julie Logan*, p.36). He discovers instead "just a few broken lines on otherwise blank pages. Some of them were repeated again and again like a cry, such as 'God help me,' as if I were caught in a trap" (*Farewell Miss Julie Logan,* p.37), with the minister also hearing his violin play when it is locked in a case in his room. He dismisses these events but it is clear that his mind is troubled; he is trapped, as he is emotionally blocked off and is clearly living out a type of hell by being so psychologically repressed and isolated. He wishes for a

[34] Denis Mackail, *The Story of J.M.B.*, p. 511.

release from this state: 'It is the stillness that is so terrible. If only something would crack the stillness' (*Farewell Miss Julie Logan*, p.38). The stranger who supposedly visits one of his parishioners is the first to penetrate the stillness in the glen, closely followed by the arrival of Julie Logan, whom Adam believes to be grandniece to his friend, Mistress Lindinnock. The first of these ghostly women originally helps Joanna, one of the glenspeople, to give birth but then seemingly turns evil on her baby, when 'a queer change came over her and I had a sinking feeling that she was going to bite it' (*Farewell Miss Julie Logan*, p.43). Julie, however, is not shown to be evil in any way when she is with Adam and neither was the stranger that, as legend had it, helped Bonnie Prince Charlie. These Manichean divisions highlight the notion that the ghost is good on the one hand because she is giving a release to Adam's emotions and his suppressed response to beauty but is also bad as it is possible that she is sent from hell, showing the Protestant/Hamlet problem of the ghost. Protestants do not believe in the existence of spectres, so Adam is faced with the realisation that Julie originated from hell and that she must, therefore, be evil.

Julie does provide an outlet for Adam; she is his Highlander side trying to break free and she also lets him release his pent-up emotions for women. He represses all feelings for women to such an extent that his mind plays tricks on him and produces the figure of Julie. She represents femininity and sexuality as well as a past, and a less stifled and stagnant Scotland. Barrie leaves the reader in no doubt that Adam is sexually repressed and that Julie is a release for him. His blocked-off feelings are evident in his stifled and awkward demeanor in the company of women, as can be seen in the following passage:

> The man on the other side of the lady I was in charge of made a flattering remark about her looking very pretty tonight [...] and said to me did I not agree with him [...] but to be approached in such a direct manner about a lady's looks before her face threw me off balance, and all I could reply was that I had not given the subject sufficient consideration to be able to make a definite statement.
>
> (*Farewell Miss Julie Logan*, p. 18)

His smothered sexuality is also expressed through his love of music and for the violin. The shape of his violin reminds him of the shape of a woman; he considers it improper to play it and gives it to Posty

---

[35] Allen Wright, *J.M. Barrie – Glamour of Twilight*, p. 39.

when he realises that 'it might be hard on a fiddle never to be let do the one thing it can do' (*Farewell Miss Julie Logan*, p.36), just as it is hard on Adam not being able to express his emotions fully or to develop a sexual relationship with someone. As Leonee Ormond points out in *J.M. Barrie*, this is 'an indirect reflection on what is happening to himself' (p. 141). Adam also admits that 'I have never once performed on the instrument here, though I may have taken it out of the case nows and nans to fondle the strings' (*Farewell Miss Julie Logan*, p.9). This sexual reference points towards Adam's suppressed feelings, as both the instrument and the man are unable to fulfil the duty for which they were intended. It is made clear that he blocks out passionate feelings by locking up his violin, although he has an appreciation of its beauty as can be seen from his longing for it, as he also locks up the image of women in his mind in an unreachable place but still longs for them. He finally has to release the instrument so that he can still hear the songs played in the distance just as Julie is eventually released as a projection from his mind so that he can experience the love and beauty of a young woman. His Calvinist mind rejects the feminine and the Catholic but his love of romance and the mysterious allows him to accept Julie, if only for a time.

The culmination of events takes place on Hogmanay, significantly a time renowned for ghostly occurances and strange events (and one also historically reviled by Presbyterians as representing 'the Daft-Days'). Adam thinks that Mistress Lindinnock has banished Julie back to Edinburgh, but she returns and the couple meet where Adam tells Julie of his friend's warnings about her: 'I could tell you things about her any one of which would make you drop her in the burn, though you were standing in the middle of it with the jade in your arms' (*Farewell Miss Julie Logan*, p. 76). In his diary Adam then reveals the outcome of the couple standing in the burn and Julie's consequent revelation: " 'Adam dear,' she said, 'it is this, I am a Papist.' At that awful word I dropped her in the burn. That she is still there I have no doubt" (*Farewell Miss Julie Logan*, p. 77). Adam is still convinced that Julie is real and it is not until the last chapter, supposedly written by Adam twenty-five years later, that he acknowledges that she was a ghost or a distortion from his troubled and disturbed mind and did not in fact necessarily exist as a real person. Barrie, then, in an unwinding of the story, cleverly limits the ability of the reader to see the whole picture before Adam reveals it; hints are dropped but the reader and Adam learn at the same time for certain that Julie does not exist. What adds to this limited sight is the fact that we are not allowed access to the thoughts or actions of the other characters. Adam records that it is his

housekeeper, Christily, who is ill, since she denies ever having met or spoken to Julie. Just before the revelation that she is unreal, however, Adam's tormented state outwardly manifests itself in his appearance, making it clearer that it is the minister who is in a strange state rather than Christily:

> Despite the darkness that encompassed Christily I was in an awful and sublime state of happiness. This may have got into my very appearance and made it unusual, for I met some of the smith's bairns, who generally run to me, but they hinted back, and when I asked what fleyed them one said 'Your face has come so queer.' I could have danced to them in the snow from sheer joy. I am not sure but what I did dance, though I never learned it.
>
> (*Farewell Miss Julie Logan*, p. 65)

His personality becomes more carefree and abandoned than the Adam who starts writing the diary and it is evident that he has altered in some way. Adam's sublime happiness makes him think that he is in his very own Garden of Eden, a paradisal state, showing that he has remade the Garden of Eden. The couple play out a contemporary version of Adam and Eve; Julie represents temptation for Adam as she is free, not bound by duty and the need to put on an outward appearance for others, and impetuous, the antithesis of Adam. She leads him astray by encouraging him to be the same, his mind's way of releasing his pent up emotions and feelings. He is uniquely happy but is, in reality, in a state of purgatory rather than in Eden or heaven; he is caught in a place of suffering and torment. Adam wants to accept and believe in Julie although she is forbidden in his eyes and exacerbates the inner battle that is tearing him apart. She represents liberty and femininity and a more carefree time in Scottish history that he finds irresistible and appealing. Because she stands for these things, however, she has to be repressed by Adam, as he stands for a Scotland that has the tendency to repress the impetuous, the illogical, the unknown, the feminine and the Catholic. He stifles his feelings for women as he is a minister living in a male-dominated Presbyterian society that distrusts, and so blocks out, the feminine; women are placed with the guilt of Original Sin and are not given any scope in society as they are also connected with the unconscious and are, therefore, dangerous.

Adam is placed under too much social and psychological weight in his duty as a minister; he is burdened with having to constantly keep up a façade and to mask the passionate man he really is. It is for this reason that God or the devil sends him Julie, if she is looked on as being a ghost rather than a figment of his imagination. Her arrival causes Adam even more despair, however, as she puts into

doubt everything that he believes in as a minister. As a Calvinist preacher he does not believe in spectres, or at any rate cannot condone the existence of them, and he has to acknowledge that the ghost has come from hell. He does not believe in a state of purgatory either, as this is a Catholic notion, although he finds himself in such a state of suffering. His experiences with the apparition plunge him into a tormented existence as his logical, rational and objective viewpoint as a Calvinist seems to be withdrawn from beneath him; his fundamental beliefs are undermined. Leonee Ormond points out, however, that Adam is generally unharmed by his experience: 'Yestreen has gained rather than lost through his brief release from repression. Because the protagonist is essentially good, the effect of the haunting has been benign' (*J.M. Barrie*, p. 144). Although Adam is essentially good, his narrow-minded views concerning religion lead to him remaining in a state of torment. Instead of praying for Julie to be released from a state of purgatory so that she can be sent to heaven, Adam drops her into the burn. His bigoted views prevail over helping Julie by praying for her so that she can be released. I would argue, therefore, that Adam has not gained from his experience as Ormond claims. He is still racked by guilt and uncertainty twenty-five years later, highlighting that he is still living in a type of purgatory, although it is not as pronounced as it was at the time of his encounter.

Julie is eventually forcefully rejected by Adam partly because she is a Catholic and partly due to her status as a woman. She inevitably carries with her negative connotations, such as the Scarlet Woman, the Whore of Babylon and, perhaps most importantly, Eve. Adam shows his bigotry in rejecting her due to her religion but it is also significant that she is rejected because she is connected with Eve the original sinner. Adam's state of purgatory appears to be over with when he recovers from a feverish state following his realisation that Julie is non-existent but, since the novella can be read on the level of the overall mentality of Scotland as well as the individual, such a state can be attributed to Scotland as a whole. Scotland is in a type of purgatory, ironically due to Calvinism. Due to guilt being passed down from the time of the Garden of Eden, Calvinists are stuck in a state of purgatory, which is voiced in the novella through the grey wasteland of the setting, which echoes the grey wilderness of purgatory.[36] The Protestant work ethic is a product of this, with people toiling away and gaining little

[36] Edwin Muir in *Scottish Journey* (1935) also shows Scotland to be grey and purgatorial, much like Barrie in the novella: 'When one comes to the end of a journey one feels the desire to turn back and cast a last glance over all the impressions that one has gathered, even though they should be as casual as a collection of shells picked up on the sea-shore [...] I took a chance cut through [Scotland], stopping

pleasure from life; if pleasure is taken then it has to be paid for ten-fold. All suffering is put down to the payment of sin and, as such, Scotland in general can be described as being in a state of purgatory. The Calvinist notion of the Elect also points towards a kind of Calvinist purgatory, or a sense of limbo, whereby the Elect believe that their sins are forgiven but they cannot be sure of this fact. As no one can be certain of whether they are included in the chosen people Calvinists regulate their behaviour and make sure that others do the same. Such uncertainty and the subsequent censoring of behaviour leads to a state of suffering whereby no Calvinist is allowed any individuality, freedom or deviation in any way from the status quo. Scottish Presbyterians suffer, then, to make amends for their own and other peoples' sins in case they are not included in the half of the Scottish population to be included in the Elect and are, therefore, automatically damned.

Such regulation of behaviour is responsible for Adam's state of repression and suffering. All of the people in the glen adhere to the censoring of behaviour, Adam included. The people are drawn to the legends of the Jacobites but it is forbidden to talk about such times and such Catholic legends: 'They were talked of with an intake of breath by the glen folk' who were "too mouse to call the fugitives the Jacobites. 'The Strangers,' they said. In one case they said 'Someone Who Was With Him', as if that was as far as it was canny to go" (*Farewell Miss Julie Logan*, p.25). The people cannot talk openly about such taboo subjects and so they censor their own and other peoples' behaviour by making only oblique references to forbidden things. A sense of looking and spying, that is associated with the omnipresent Calvinist God, is also prevalent. It is revealed that when the minister makes his first entry into the glen he is 'well aware, though I looked down, that I was being keeked at from every window' (*Farewell Miss Julie Logan*, p. 8). This can be put down to natural curiosity in the villagers wanting to see their new minister, but the notion of being spied upon and looked at is established. In describing the manse and the surrounding glen Adam reveals that 'on the other side of the burn, but so close that I can keep a vigilant eye on them, are the Five Houses in a Row' (*Farewell Miss Julie Logan*, p. 12), and when Adam's disturbed mind becomes apparent Dr. John, Christily and Mistress Lindinnock all watch him. Christily's brother is even drafted in to spy on Adam, although mistakenly Adam

---

here and there, picking up this or that object, gathering shells whose meaning was often obscure or illegible to me. I did not find anything which I could call Scotland [...] My deepest impression [...] was one of emptiness' (p. 243).

believes that he is there for Christily's benefit: 'I also agreed to a proposal from him that her brother [...] should pay a visit to the manse for a few days, ostensibly to brighten her, but really of course to watch her on the quiet' (*Farewell Miss Julie Logan*, p. 63). Adam also keeps 'an observant eye on her' (p. 63) and keeps an eye on the whole of his flock, as is evident in him catching Mistress Lindinnock playing cards and having to admonish her for 'a little coarseness in her language' (*Farewell Miss Julie Logan*, p. 13). The vigilance in some of these instances is due to looking out for a friend rather than spying for malicious purposes but the notion of being watched contributes to the effect of claustrophobia when the glen is locked, that no one can escape from prying eyes.

The idea of looking also applies to Adam's, and Scotland's, tendency to look back to the past and to be nostalgic. Adam's surname, Yestreen, is an indication of this, of Scotland looking back to yesterday evening, to a time when Scotland had a distinct identity and was not as divided by the onslaught of Anglicisation. The inclusion of the last chapter, supposedly written a quarter of a century after Adam's initial diary recordings, contributes to the notion of Scotland being unable to move on from her past. The locking of the glen, then, can also be read as the locking of Scotland. Adam still looks back to his meetings with Julie and, although he has moved on in terms of marrying and taking other ministerial charges, he continues to dwell on his time in the glen and he even suggests that the young Adam, the man he was at that time, 'will away back to the glen' when the old Adam dies (*Farewell Miss Julie Logan*, p. 88). Even then, Adam contradicts himself in terms of still having an element of doubt about whether Julie was real. It appears that he is attempting to convince himself as much as the reader of his diary that she did not exist: 'I am thankful to say that the Roman is to me as if she never had been (and of course she never was, that just being a slip of the pen)' [37](p. 80); 'I have been out in the old top-coat without remembering how pretty she looked in it; and this is natural, for she never was in it' (p. 80); 'I asked him, just to keep the conversation going, if any stranger woman had been seen, but he had heard of none, nor could he, for there never was one' (p. 83).

[37] There is phallic symbolism in this quotation, which highlights that Adam's sexual repression is still evident but it could be suggested that he is trying to express his natural urges and emotions through his writing rather than suppress them.

The suggestion at the end of the novella is that Scotland is preoccupied with the past at the expense of the present. The positive aspects of Scotland's past are trying to break through, although unsuccessfully, as the feminine side that was more apparent in the pre-Reformation period and in the Celtic twilight is still being blocked out of the Scottish psyche in present times. Julie, the feminine, tries to break through to the present but is abolished from Adam's mind as the feminine in general is denied in Scotland's masculine and Presbyterian culture. Scotland deals with the expulsion of traditionally female characteristics by harking back to a romanticised history, and Barrie seems to be saying a final farewell to Scotland's past in terms of making a critique of the nation's nostalgic outlook and, subsequently, encouraging a forward-looking vision. It is perhaps ironic, then, that Barrie sets *Farewell Miss Julie Logan* in the past if this is what he is imparting to the reader but by setting the novella in the 1860s he can make a damning critique of Calvinism, much like Brown, as he concentrates on a time 'when rigid and restricted religious beliefs provided a foil for the aesthetic and the passionate.' [38] The author can, then, focus on the stifling effects of Presbyterianism in Scottish society at this time, as Calvinism had lost its hold on Scottish society when Barrie was writing, although the effects were still felt, and also show up a limited, out-dated mode of writing in an attempt to break free of this and highlight a new direction for Scottish fiction. His subtle psychological case file critiques the lad o' pairts role and the aspiration of kailyard characters to become ministers. Barrie shows the end result of this hope – a repressed, divided man whose inner and outer lives are at odds and who is cut off almost entirely from his conflicting emotions.

Barrie was well aware of the damaging effects of Calvinism. As Denis Mackail notes, 'as with scores of other young Scotchmen if not all of them, his family's form of religion had been driven in so far and so firmly that questioning and experimenting were equally impossible. Church-going was as inevitable as Sunday itself.'[39] Mackail also points out, however, that Barrie was never an Auld Licht himself, as his mother originally was, and so he could distance himself from this group. Alexander Scott also claims in 'The Lost Boy: J.M. Barrie' that 'since they were the narrowest, most bigoted, most fanatical Calvinist sect [...] the Auld Lichts were far easier to poke fun at than any other element [of

[38] Leonee Ormond, *J.M. Barrie*, p. 143.

[39] Denis Mackail, *The Story of J.M.B.*, p. 56.

Scottish customs].' [40] The author, then, had an insider's knowledge of Calvinism, although he did not adhere to its preachings personally; in his kailyard writing he does hold the Auld Lichts up to ridicule but in *Farewell Miss Julie Logan* he instead concentrates on the profoundly harmful effects of the religion on the individual and on Scotland as a nation.

Barrie's last work poses the question of whether his ultimate agenda was so greatly different from other Scottish writers, such as George Douglas Brown. In his afterword to the novella, Alistair McCleery places the work in the category of the 'condition of Scotland' novel, whereby writers 'are concerned with Scotland as distinctly apart from the rest of the British Empire, Scotland as representing a separate entity',[41] novels that examine, then, the spiritual side of the country. Barrie was no doubt guilty of ignoring the state of Scotland in his earlier writing at the expense of the parochial but in *Farewell Miss Julie Logan* he adopts a national outlook, examining the Scottish character and environment, much as Brown does in *The House with the Green Shutters*. Beth Dickson in her chapter 'Foundations of the Modern Scottish Novel' makes an important point regarding Barrie's work in relation to other Scottish writers:

> George Douglas Brown, J. MacDougall Hay, Neil Munro and J.M. Barrie are at one in describing the social stagnation of Scottish communities. They deal continually with the way in which such a society rejects imaginative vitality and they display the consequences of that rejection in characters whose lives are devoid of imagination or whose imaginations return to childhood as the only arena in which it is acceptable. The novels display in their plots the author's struggle to maintain an imaginative vitality, which they feel to be on the verge of extinction. [42]

Dickson is obviously referring to Barrie's tendency to escape to childhood, as is most famously found in his play *Peter Pan* but Adam is also an 'immature' character; being only twenty-six, he realises that he lacks experience and admits that he 'looks maybe younger than is seemly in my sacred calling, being clean-shaven without any need to use an implement' (*Farewell Miss Julie Logan*, p. 8). The lack of imagination that Dickson also mentions can be applied to the mindset of the community in *Farewell*

---

[40] Alexander Scott, 'The Lost Boy: J. M. Barrie', *Scottish Review*, no. 18, May, 1980, p. 35.

[41] Alistair McCleery, afterword to *Farewell Miss Julie Logan*, p. 89.

[42] Beth Dickson, 'Foundations of the Modern Scottish Novel', *The History of Scottish Literature Volume 4*, p. 51.

Miss Julie Logan, whereby all imagination is repressed, as is evident in Adam, and stagnancy prevails. This critic also mentions Barrie's novels *Sentimental Tommy* and *Tommy and Grizel*, written towards the end of his career, as both highlight the malignancy of gossip in small towns and the affect that this has, namely the impossibility of a private life; Brown illustrates the same topic in his infamous novel. In *Farewell Miss Julie Logan* a limited social commentary is given but gossip is shown to flourish, with the parishioners knowing what is happening with everyone else, highlighting that a private life is hard to maintain. Dickson also comments that Barrie treats these issues 'in a more humorous way than either Hay or Brown although his pungent satire does not lessen the horror of the moral emptiness he describes.' [43]

There is also something of Hogg, Stevenson and more recent Scottish writers, such as Lewis Grassic Gibbon, John Buchan and Margaret Oliphant, in Barrie's work, particularly *Farewell Miss Julie Logan* with its element of fantasy and the supernatural. [44] Colin Manlove's *Anthology of Scottish Fantasy Literature* looks at fantasy fiction written by Scottish authors as distinct from that of their English counterparts, as these authors, he suggests, represent characteristically Scottish notions:

> The use of doubles and of the dream structure is pervasive, far beyond the repressive nineteenth century where such things had a certain international currency. Scotland is inherently double, in the division between Lowland and Highland, or between Scottish and Gaelic cultures. And Scottish Calvinism has for centuries sought to abolish half of Scottish human nature. In fantasy, which is the genre for imaginative release, the repressed sides of the Scottish character make themselves peculiarly known. (p.11)

---

[43] Beth Dickson, 'Foundations of the Modern Scottish Novel', *The History of Scottish Literature Volume 4*, p. 55.

[44] In one of Margaret Oliphant's most well-known tales of the supernatural, for example, the story deals with a young girl who becomes entranced by a man she sees at a library window, although no-one else claims to see him. He is a spirit who is earthbound and it is suggested that he was murdered by the men who used to reside in the girl's aunt's house. The young girl is removed from the house by her aunt when she realises that she has fallen under his spell but the ghost remains with her when she has grown up: 'There was one time when I came home a widow from India, very sad, with my little children: I am certain I saw him there among all the people coming to welcome their friends [...] My heart leaped up again: I had forgotten who he was, but only that it was a face I knew, and I landed almost cheerfully, thinking here was some one who would help me. But he had disappeared, as he did from the window, with that one wave of the hand.' 'The Library Window' (1896) in Jenni Calder (ed.) *Selected Short Stories of the Supernatural* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1985, p. 248). A further example of fantasy and the supernatural being main elements in the novels by Scottish writers is found in James Hogg's *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824), where Gil-Martin, the devil in human form, taunts the Calvinist sinner, Robert Wringhim, to his death.

It at first seems strange that Barrie should incorporate fantasy in *Farewell Miss Julie Logan* when it is considered that he moved away from fantasy and the supernatural in his later prose, but the incorporation of fantasy allows Barrie to move away from his kailyard sketches, with the medium being clearly very appropriate to the expression of the Scottish psyche as shown from the quotation above. Adam's duality and repression are communicated through the entity of Julie, and his isolation is also apparent in the bareness of landscape and the fact that he is a solitary protagonist, both of which are common to Scottish fantasy literature (Colin Manlove, *Scottish Fantasy Literature*, p. 5, p. 10). Perhaps the most important feature of fantasy fiction written by Scots, in relation to *Farewell Miss Julie Logan*, is the notion of the self. It is a recurring motif in the genre, with the self being placed under attack of some kind. This assault, according to Manlove, can be interpreted in the context of Scotland as well as the individual being attacked:

> It can be construed as a version of Scotland under threat – either through its own cultural self-divisions or in relation to the perceived rapacity of England [...] What Scottish fantasy seems to register is a fundamental lack of confidence in the conscious or civil self. And this distrust is often peculiarly expressed in a journey away from that self, into the innermost or unconscious areas of the mind.
>
> (*Scottish Fantasy Literature*, p. 246)

Adam's attacked self certainly has implications for Scotland as a whole, with his conscious self lacking confidence due to his repression and the fact that he has to hide and ignore who he really is to an extent because of Calvinism. The innermost areas of his mind provide a release in the shape of Julie to combat his sick and repressed state, as Scotland has to let in the feminine to deal with her repressed and stagnant condition.

When an overview is made of Barrie's short story it is evident that he accomplishes a great deal in terms of 'taking the lid off the sewing basket'[45]; the novella highlights that the author is capable of a much wider scope than just his kailyard stories. R.D.S Jack points towards this notion in *The Road to the Never Land: A Reassessment of J. M. Barrie's Dramatic Art:*

[45] This was the original charge laid against Barrie by Hugh MacDiarmid and the critic A.T. Cunninghame as cited at the beginning of the chapter.

> If there is a tendency to group the Kailyard authors more closely together than the variety of their work warrants, so there is a tendency to oversimplify the nature of Kailyard writing. One of the most sentimental tale collections, Ian Maclaren's *Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush*, is taken not only as the worst extreme of the Kailyard but as a shorthand method of referring to ALL Kailyard composition [...] It is easy to ridicule [the Kailyard] if you use one of the most poorly written books as your 'type'. Of Barrie's prose works only the early 'Thrums' stories are anything like *The Bonnie Brier Bush* and they are rescued from excesses of sentimentality by his wry and, at times, chilling wit. The major novels, ranging as they do from the overt fantasy of *The Little White Bird* to the pessimistic view of life and art presented in *Sentimental Tommy*, deserve, like the plays, to be examined without reference to the blanket term of Kailyardism.
>
> (p. 22)

Many critics still do not look as closely as they ought to at Barrie's later writing following his kailyard stories in a discussion of his ability as an author. He is still largely associated with sentimentality and nostalgia and with the notion that he did not deal with issues pertaining to the time that he was writing, such as the condition of Scotland. *Farewell Miss Julie Logan*, however, is free of sentimentalism, and nostalgia is only incorporated to make a critique of Scotland's tendency to look backwards at the expense of the present; the novella also points to the fact that Barrie's writing agenda towards the end of his life is similar to that of other Scottish writers in respect to illustrating the psychological hang-ups and sickness of Scotland, issues that were very relevant to the Scottish Renaissance at the time that Barrie was writing, showing that it is a very modern text. As Andrew Nash comments, "there is a pressing need for Scottish literature to look beyond the perameters of the critical construct 'Kailyard' when discussing Barrie's fiction. Until that happens he will continue to be misinterpreted as a backward-looking author out of touch with the tenor of his times." [46]

[46] Andrew Nash, 'From Realism to Romance: Gender and Narrative Technique in J.M. Barrie's *The Little Minister*,' in *Scottish Literary Journal*, no. 49, 1999, pp. 77 – 92, p. 91.

CHAPTER 6

ROBIN JENKINS

The Regeneration of Good and Evil: The Garden of Eden Stripped Bare

> A man kens in his heart that this is an unfinished sort of a place, not perfect like heaven; and when he sees something that he thinks is complete he looks roond, without meaning to, for the disappointment.[1]

The extract above, taken from *So Gaily Sings the Lark* (1950), is a good example of what the reader may expect to find in one of Robin Jenkins's novels; a distinctly Scottish element, shown here in terms of language, combined with notions of how far we are from Eden and the way that we deal with the imperfect state of things. There are two dimensions to the author's work as he simultaneously works on both of these levels; Jenkins is primarily a Scottish author writing about Scottish themes, such as the restrictive, Calvinist-tainted and stilted aspects of the country, whilst also being a stringent moralist concentrating on mankind's condition in general. Recurrent themes in his work are man's fall from grace, the problematic notions of good and evil and man's idealism in terms of longing for an always elusive Eden and state of grace. Although an accomplished novelist, publishing nearly thirty novels, Jenkins is still relatively unknown to readers but not to literary critics who acknowledge him as one of Scotland's most skilled and ablest writers of recent times.

The cause of such neglect of his work is partly concerned with Jenkins's fiction being an unsettling experience for readers in terms of the grotesque nature of some of his characters and the incidents depicted,[2] with his writing being full of ambiguities and ironies. The reader also feels uneasy and unsettled by the uncompromising moral questions that the author puts to the reader but fails to answer. Marshall Walker puts down the neglect of Jenkins's novels to the fact that 'he bottles up his feelings in elusive symbolism and complex philosophy.'[3] Edwin Morgan has commented on Jenkins's

---

[1] Robin Jenkins, *So Gaily Sings the Lark* (Glasgow: MacLellan, 1950), p. 98.

[2] Francis Russell Hart in *The Scottish Novel: A Critical Survey* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1978) discusses Jenkins's use of the grotesque: 'We find in Jenkins several states of life that call for the term grotesque. There are innocents who by some mystery are monstrous [...] There are the physically battered or gross figures of middle age in whom, almost hidden, the innocent child still lingers. There is poisoned love breaking out of repression into perverse violence. All these tests of love and compassion, trials of humility; to those who cannot pass the tests but cling fanatically to a vision of Edenic innocence and loveliness, they seem grotesque' (p. 284). It is the strange grotesque nature of some of Jenkins's work that appears unsettling to the reader, as Jenkins is ultimately testing the readers' humility and capacity for love and acceptance of characters like Calum in *The Cone-Gatherers* (1955).

[3] Marshall Walker, 'Tangents: Robin Jenkins and Muriel Spark' in the chapter 'Post-War Fiction: Realism, Violence and Magic', *Scottish Literature Since 1707* (Harlow, Essex: Longman, 1996), p. 321.

emotionally strained fictional world, claiming that it is Jenkins's preoccupations with religion and with 'the flavour of ordinariness, and the sudden very marked irruptions of violence and melodrama, which gives his books their characteristically odd and often enigmatic sort of resonance.'[4] This, Morgan suggests, may be what puts readers off. Morgan goes on to explain Jenkins's unique outlook in relation to the content of some of his novels:

> The ordinariness is children at school, football matches, holidays on the coast. The melodrama is a hunchback shot in a tree by a neurotic gamekeeper, a schoolboy hanging himself in a hut, a boy watching his mild father murder his faithless mother with a hatchet, an orphan boy eaten by crows, a lay preacher taking his hatchet to an American sailor who he thinks has seduced his daughter and jumping to his death from a bridge. [5]

It is not solely the strange occurrences in Jenkins's novels that may have led to neglect by readers and publishers but also his handling of the fundamental contradictions that make up a sense of Scottish identity:

> In that league of despair it has to be admitted that Scotland and the Scots temperament stand high in Jenkins's obloquy. For those interested in the matter of Scotland, reading a Jenkins novel can frequently be a disquieting experience. [6] That disapproval may also explain why his stock stands at such a ludicrously low level in Scotland today. [7]

Jenkins's fiction is at times difficult to comprehend as much of what he is trying to say may be missed by the reader; his use of irony, his metaphysical points, the way that he presents good and evil as being problematic and not clear-cut, the cramming in of vague symbolism and the way that he changes focus on his central characters who are, at one point, primarily centred on, and then, suddenly, pulled out of focus allowing the reader to have no insight into their thoughts or actions, are all confusing. Moira

---

[4] Edwin Morgan, 'The Novels of Robin Jenkins' (originally appearing in *The Listener*, 12 July 1973), reprinted in *Essays by Edwin Morgan* (Cheadle: Carcanet Press, 1974), pp. 242 – 243.

[5] Ibid. p.243.

[6] Jenkins highlights the duality of the Scottish mentality in his writing; he is brutally honest about the effects of Calvinism and of the Scots apparent lack of confidence in their own country.

[7] Trevor Royle, 'What we need is more of Robin Jenkins, in *The Glasgow Herald*, 19 November 1985.

Burgess in 'Robin Jenkins: A Novelist of Scotland'[8] claims, however, that it is not the confusing or disturbing nature of Jenkins's novels that is the problem in terms of his apparent unpopularity as a novelist but that it lies with the Scottish readers' yearning for sentimentalism:

> Perhaps we may return to George Blake for a possible explanation. In *Barrie and the Kailyard School* he calls the Scots 'inveterately backward in literary culture – bewildered and sentimental children bleating for the old securities of the parochial life.' These are harsh words but one hesitates to call them unjustified: what about the reception given by succeeding generations to *The House with the Green Shutters, Sunset Song, A Green Tree in Gedde*? And the security of the well-fenced kailyard is definitely not found in Jenkins.
>
> (p. 409)

All of these reasons for poor sales hold some weight, but I would argue that Jenkins's idiosyncratic style of writing is what is so appealing about his novels, with his writing focusing on the condition of Scotland and highlighting the often bleak outlook of his characters and examining what has caused this state of depression. The author's protagonists can be innocents on the one hand, perhaps 'holy fools' and idealists who believe that they can attain a level of grace that transcends the human, or deeply disturbed individuals who seem to be unable to accept the imperfect condition of society and of mankind in general. The former type of character embodies one of the extreme polar stances of Calvinism: absolute goodness, with the latter type, that appears unable to fit into society, tending to encompass the opposite extreme in that they tend to be evil. His characters try to see the world too clearly in terms of black and white while wanting to be sharply defined themselves. Jenkins uses his characters ironically, however, by highlighting their ambiguous and contradictory natures and by showing that their outlook on the world is flawed.

Jenkins, like George Douglas Brown, has a profound disliking of cruelty, inhumanity and hatred but he realises that an element of cruelty is perhaps inherent in us all since he presents innocence and true goodness and happiness as dependent 'on a less than 20/20 adult vision of the world.' [9] In relation to his best-known and possibly most highly-praised novel, *The Cone-Gatherers* (1955), there is a more fundamental reason for evil and other basic human emotions as 'here, guilt and cruelty and

---

[8] Moira Burgess, 'Robin Jenkins: A Novelist of Scotland', *Library Review*, vol. 22, no. 8, 1970, pp. 409 – 412.

[9] Isobel Murray, 'Robin Jenkins' Fiction', *Laverock*, no. 2, 1996, pp. 33 – 36, p. 34.

suffering are shown, not as social or personal, but as written into the world of nature of which man can only be a part.'[10] It is against the background of a mythical Garden of Eden setting that *The Cone-Gatherers* plays out a contemporary and distinctly Scottish version of the Fall, incorporating elements of allegory and fable. The reader may be forgiven for thinking that due to the idyllic setting the novel will be a sentimental, tender rural story but Jenkins soon puts this thought out of the mind of his readers. Duplicitous symbolism is evident in the title; the reader expects a positive depiction of nature whereas the novel voices the Calvinist view of the world, namely that it cannot be trusted, with nature and fertility being shown as negative in certain instances. The inclusion of Scottish landscape, of notions of Eden and hell, good and evil and the in-depth examination of the mentality of Scotland makes the deceptively simple novel extremely diverse and worthy of critical attention and it is for these reasons that *The Cone-Gatherers* will be the novel that is concentrated on in the following chapter. The only critique that can be justifiably made of the novel is that, as Edwin Morgan points out, it is 'marred only by novelettish touches,' as 'great ladies and their gamekeepers are not Jenkins's forte.'[11] Jenkins is most realistic in portraying working-class characters and is not convincing when centring on aristocracy.[12] He admits that he is best at writing about the people with whom he grew up, predominantly working-class people, and finds it difficult to write credibly about characters who are not working-class Scots.[13]

The undercurrent of the Second World War in the novel highlights the idea that a smaller scale version of the battle is occurring in the woods of the Runcie-Campbell estate where two brothers,

---

[10] Edwin Morgan, 'The Novels of Robin Jenkins', *Essays by Edwin Morgan*, p. 244.

[11] Ibid. p. 244.

[12] This failure in portraying aristocracy realistically is evident in the following description of Lady Runcie-Campbell, which rings false: 'Let me tell you, Roderick, your sister has a far more intelligent and mature attitude towards people below us in the social scale. I agree we ought never to be arrogant and overbearing; common decency itself, apart from any higher consideration would forbid that. But that is not to say we must regard everybody as our equal. Such hypocrisy seems to me as abhorrent as arrogance [...] These cone-gatherers, for instance. Obviously, in any way you look at them, they are our inferiors; they would be the first to admit that themselves; it is self-evident. It is our duty to find an attitude to them, and to all like them, which recognises that inferiority, but not offensively. The maintenance of society on a civilised basis depends upon us' (*The Cone-Gatherers*, p. 141). The main flaw, as can be seen from this quotation, lies in the fact that whenever Jenkins depicts aristocracy or the middle-classes he always resorts to criticising them and is, therefore, biased and unrealistic.

[13] Jenkins discusses this in an interview for the *Glasgow Herald*, 'Why I decided Scotland must be seen through fresh and truthful eyes', 12 October 1982.

Calum and Neil, are collecting cones for the war effort. Paradoxically, at the same time, what goes on in the woods is, in a sense, the bigger version of the struggle in terms of the universal battle between good versus evil. The forest appears Edenic, 'but Eden also contains the serpent and the apple by which human innocence will be tested',[14] so there is also a hint of evil and death in the Garden of Eden with the war being carried on in the backdrop; a suggestion is made from the outset that even in the forest the few people who work there cannot escape the battle surrounding them. The universal themes of light and darkness can be attributed to the woods; Christian images of woods as dark, sinister and sinful places are balanced against the beauty and goodness of nature, of regeneration and of innocence. Calum, the deformed, simple-minded hunchback personifies the innocent, beautiful nature of the wood. He is described as being half animal-like himself and it is made clear that he has an affinity with nature and animals, as can be seen in the following quotation:

> Listening, as if he was an owl himself, he saw in imagination the birds huddled on branches far lower than this one on which he sat. He became an owl himself, he rose and fanned his wings, flew close to the ground, and then swooped, to rise again with vole or shrew in his talons.[15]

It is significant that Calum is described as being animal-like since the natural state of things is shown to be contaminated by man. Calum is not associated with this destruction; he is described as having a face 'beautiful with trust' (*The Cone-Gatherers*, p. 1) and when he rescues an animal from a trap 'he had not decided in terms of right or wrong, humanity and cruelty; he had merely yielded to instinct' (*The Cone-Gatherers*, p. 6). He possesses a mystical and spiritual insight with nature and specifically with animals, which associates him with St. Francis of Assissi. Calum, then, is portrayed as being inherently innocent and good; he is superior in the world of nature, as he does not possess basic human emotions such as anger, jealousy, lust or selfishness. Ironically, however, it is through his entering into the woods to gather cones that corrupts the forest and leads to evil, through Duror's eyes. Duror, the gamekeeper, becomes obsessed with Calum, leading him to hatch up a number of machinations in a destructive effort to drive Calum and his brother from the woods. It is Duror who

---

[14] Terry Gifford, *Pastoral* (London: Routledge, 1999), p.33.

[15] *The Cone-Gatherers* (Harlow, Essex: Longman, 1996; 1955), with an introduction by Barry Pateman. All subsequent page references relate to this edition.

epitomises the dark, evil side of the woods. He is a type of green man who, as folklore has it, lives in the forest looking to ruin human lives.[16]

Landscape is of significance, then, in *The Cone-Gatherers*. The woods are a perfect setting for metaphysical, moral comment in respect to the symbolism that can be used. The trees work as part of a Garden of Eden symbolism. Myths of the Fall and of transcendence add to this symbolism, bringing notions of ascent and descent. Humans are interwoven with nature, with the woods highlighting the uncorrupted natural state of things compared with the corruption of mankind that taints and destroys them. Jenkins contrasts the fallen state of mankind, and its capacity for evil and destruction, with the natural world, which would be untainted and near perfect if it were not for man intruding on it and interfering with the natural state of things. It is significant that the trees are to be cut down for the war effort and replanted in the future; this shows man's corruption of nature, while voicing the fact that the same notion can also be applied to the men that are killed in the war, although they are more difficult to replace. Regeneration and death are illustrated in nature and in terms of the human element in the novel, showing that nature is ongoing as the battle between good and evil is also. Northrop Frye comments on the myth of nature in respect to the gulf between the natural world, where man would like to live in perfection, and the world as it is, and also the similarities between man and nature, namely, that they are both involved in a continuous cycle of birth, death and rebirth:

> The two great conceptual principles which myth uses in assimilating nature and the human form are analogy and identity. Analogy establishes the parallels between human life and the natural phenomena [...] Myth seizes on the fundamental element of design offered by the nature – the cycle, as we have it daily in the sun and yearly in the seasons – and assimilates it to the human cycle of life, death, and (analogy again) rebirth. At the same time the discrepancy between the world man lives in and the world he would like to live in develops a dialectic in myth which, as in the New Testament, separates reality into two contrasting states, a heaven and a hell. [17]

For Jenkins, the natural world is a state of heaven or Eden, but the hellish state of man spoiling nature and of man bringing evil and corruption into the natural world is the reality of the world in which

[16] The green man is a well-known figure in Scottish folklore. The origins of this mythical figure are vague but he is commonly associated with destruction and with trying to ruin human lives.

[17] Northrop Frye, *Fables of Identity: Studies in Poetic Mythology* (New York: Harcourt Inc., Brace and World, 1963), p. 32.

we live. Francis Russell Hart in *The Scottish Novel: A Critical Survey* points out that 'the Scottish situation as Jenkins portrays it is desperately polarized between natural beauty and human ugliness' (p. 272). Jenkins's love of nature is evident in many of his novels, with Bernard Sellin commenting that for the author 'the countryside seemed more and more to offer a retreat from the evil that permeated society.'[18] This is obviously not the case in *The Cone-Gatherers* but, as Isobel Murray points out in 'Robin Jenkins' Fiction' the author possesses 'a passionate appreciation of natural beauty in general,' with many of his books concentrating on 'the forestry setting and experience in particular' (p. 33) that stemmed from his time working for the forestry department during the war. Jenkins uses myth to project the idea that there was a time when man and nature complimented each other without corruption or defilement. Cairns Craig in *The Modern Scottish Novel* comments on Jenkins's ideas about human nature in connection with myth:

> For Jenkins the return to the region of myth is always ambiguous – poised between the recovery of an authentic truth about human nature and the appalled revelation of the 'solid layer of savagery beneath the surface of society' (56). The empty world of modern history is confronted by the enduring forms of the ancient myths which are, however, equally empty, bereft of the magical significance that once justified them.
>
> (pp. 148-149)

Jenkins returns to a time when innocence and goodness were prevalent, in the landscape of the mythical Garden of Eden. This time is contrasted with the modern condition concerning mankind's ugliness and savagery; these latter traits are evident to such an extent in contemporary times that myths of a type of golden age appear so out of reach as to appear ridiculous. *The Cone-Gatherers*, then, can be read in terms of 'empty myth.' Jenkins plays with the idea of the Garden of Eden by pointing out that mankind can never recover the innocence of that time and is instead caught up in a fallen state.

Although Jenkins incorporates a large degree of landscape and myth in *The Cone-Gatherers* and in his other novels he does not resort to a nostalgia-tainted view of the Scottish landscape of the past, as Scott and the kailyarders have, as a way of avoiding the Scottish condition of urbanisation and industrialisation. In *Books in Scotland* Douglas Gifford comments that Jenkins can be seen to have

---

[18] Bernard Sellin, 'Robin Jenkins: The Making of the Novelist', *Cencrastus*, no. 24, Autumn, 1986, pp. 7 – 9, p. 8.

begun 'that anti-romantic and grimly urban movement in modern Scottish fiction that refused to find consolation in landscape and history' (p. 8).[19] Jenkins centres on the Scottish condition and incorporates the landscape of the past to illustrate how the beauty of nature and landscape are wiped out by ugliness and hatred; this point is made explicit in the novel. The beauty and serenity of the woods causes one to forget, temporarily, man's corruption: 'It was a morning that seemed to beguile the mind with recollections of a time of innocence before evil and unhappiness were born' (*The Cone-Gatherers*, p. 30). Ironically, it is the same morning that is described in which Duror surrenders himself to evil; he falsely accuses Calum of indecently exposing himself so that Lady Runcie-Campbell, the estate's owner, will banish him from the forest. For Jenkins, as Isobel Murray rightly points out, 'innocence and community are presented as belonging to a lost pastoral age.'[20] Calum is presented in such a way as to emphasise this lost innocence, with Duror showing that such innocence only has a place in an elusive pastoral history.

The landscape and nature also serves the purpose of personifying Duror's state of endurance, as can be seen in the following quotation:

> A large elm tree stood outside his house. Many times, just staring at it, in winter even, his mind had been soothed, his faith in his ability to endure to the end sustained. Here was a work of nature, living in the way ordained, resisting the buffets of tempests and repairing with its own silent strength the damage suffered: at all times simple, adequate, pre-eminently in its proper place. It had become a habit with him, leaving the house in the morning, returning to it at night, to touch the tree [...] Now the bond was broken. He could not bear to look at the tall tree: he was betraying it; he no longer was willing to share with it the burden of endurance.
>
> (*The Cone-Gatherers*, pp. 18-19)

Strangely Duror has an affinity with nature; he is not a part of it, as Calum seems to be, but it provides him with an outlet from the horrors of his home life, where his wife is immobile due to her obesity. The Calvinist allegory of nature is found in Duror as he only appreciates nature when it is perfect; he is a twisted perfectionist as he can turn to nature in its sublime state but he is unable to accept Calum or his

---

[19] Douglas Gifford, 'Review of Lunderston Tales by Robin Jenkins', *Books in Scotland*, no. 62, Summer, 1997, p.8.

[20] Isobel Murray, 'One Toe in Eden Still: Robin Jenkins' Fiction', *The Scottish Review*, 37 - 38, February - May 1985, pp. 88 – 95, p. 89.

own wife because they are less than perfect. As Hart points out 'because he has no compassion for his invalid wife, nature has no grace to offer him.'[21]

When Duror discovers that he can no longer live in his state of torment, nature, when associated specifically with him, takes on a different significance. Nature has become defiled and infected; Duror's state is outwardly manifested in the diseased trees in the wood. When he moves 'it was as if the rotting tree itself had moved' *(The Cone-Gatherers*, p. 175); the transformation in Duror is described in terms of 'the straight immaculate ash tree turning to squat warty bush swarming with worms' (p. 146); Duror 'had felt his sap, poisoned, flowing out of him into the dark earth' (p. 95); when Duror visits his doctor he asks himself 'Do you really [...] see this tree growing and spreading in my mind? And is its fruit madness?' (p. 26). When his madness takes over and he kills Calum and takes his own life nature is shown to be indifferent; as Marshall Walker points out there remains the notion of 'the implied power of the natural world to withstand the hostile spirit that he represents.'[22] Nature, then, carries on in its cycles of regeneration and death regardless of the human lives and deaths that take place in the midst of it.

Although it is Duror who defiles the Garden of Eden, his evil nature is not straightforward, as at first we can relate to him. His wife has turned into a grotesque, bed-ridden creature who is not the woman that he married. His bitter mother-in-law plies him with guilt and blames him for his wife's condition, claiming that it is as a result of his sins that her daughter is suffering. His name implies that he endures; he lives out a type of hell, not really 'living' but just enduring his lot. He is a version of Hogg's justified sinner in that he feels that he can do what he likes without consequence due to his Calvinist mentality.[23] He thinks that he can sin without effect, as he will be saved by God. His arrogance concerning his evil actions echoes that of Robert Wringhim; both are fully aware of the sins that they commit but show no remorse for their actions. He feels justified in hating and plotting against

---

[21] Francis Russell Hart, *The Scottish Novel: A Critical Survey*, p. 283.

[22] Marshall Walker, *Scottish Literature Since 1707*, p. 321.

[23] Reference is made here to James Hogg's *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824) which details the life of a Calvinist who believes that he is one of the Elect; he commits murder and other crimes believing that his sins will not prevent him from going to heaven.

Calum and in killing him and is fully aware of the evil inside of him as is shown in the quotation below in relation to the two brothers:

> He had waited for over an hour there to see them pass. Every minute had been a purgatory of humiliation; it was as if he was in their service, forced to wait upon them as upon his masters [...] While waiting, he had imagined them in the darkness missing their footing in the tall tree and coming crashing down through the sea of branches to lie dead on the ground.
>
> (*The Cone-Gatherers*, p. 9)

Duror is a repressed Calvinist; he suffers from sexual repression due to his wife's condition and is unable to retreat into the woods away from his problems as he used to due to the hunchback who constantly reminds him of his wife's deformity. His capacity for evil culminates and he eventually becomes diabolical so that he cannot be related to or sympathised with.

The realisation of evil in the character of Duror illustrates a recurring technique used by Jenkins; there is a gulf between the outward appearance and behaviour of his characters and what they are really thinking. The inner reality and external appearance, or the inner and outer man being at odds, may be attributed to Calvinism. It can be claimed that Calvinists are more concerned with outward appearance, with seeming to be good and, hence, one of the Elect. [24] The inner reality, in the case of Duror, on the other hand, is nothing like the outward façade: 'For a moment he almost gave way and shouted with fists outstretched towards those stars, that in his heart and brain were thorns bitterer than those that bled the brow of Christ. Instead, he merely nodded' (*The Cone-Gatherers*, p. 27). Duror has

[24] This notion is made manifest in Nathaniel Hawthorne's 'Young Goodman Brown' (1835), where the protagonist finds himself in the midst of a witches' gathering, which consists of the religious members of his town and the known sinners; outward appearance is shown to be deceiving: 'Among them, quivering to and fro between gloom and splendour, appeared faces that would be seen next day at the council board of the province, and others which, Sabbath after Sabbath, looked devoutly heavenward, and benignantly over the crowded pews, from the holiest pulpits in the land. Some affirm that the lady of the governor was there. At least there were high dames well known to her, and wives of honored husbands, and widows, a great multitude, and ancient maidens, all of excellent repute, and fair young girls, who trembled lest their mothers should espy them. Either the sudden gleams of light flashing over the obscure field bedazzled Goodman Brown, or he recognized a score of the church members of Salem village famous for their especial sanctity. Good old Deacon Gookin had arrived, and waited at the skirts of that venerable saint, the revered pastor. But, irreverently consorting with these grave, reputable, and pious people, these elders of the church, these chaste dames and dewy virgins, there were men of dissolute lives and women of spotted fame, wretches given over to the mean and filthy vice, and suspected even of horrid crimes. It was strange to see that the good shrank not from the wicked, nor were the sinners abashed by the saints' (James McIntosh (ed.) *Nathaniel Hawthorne's Tales* (London: W. W. Norton, 1987; 1986), p. 72).

to restrain every evil thought and action and has to hide his suffering to others. It is only his mother-in-law, Mrs Lochie, that occasionally glimpses his torment and his doctor who realises that Duror has been celibate for years and that he is deeply affected by repressing his natural urges and emotions: 'The human mind [...] ranges from heaven to hell; and usually stays a long time in the latter place' (*The Cone-Gatherers*, p. 102). He knows that Duror has been fighting his own war and carries deep wounds from it: 'God knew how many inhibitions, repressions and complexes were twisting and coiling there, like the snakes of damnation' (*The Cone-Gatherers*, p. 16).

Between these two extremes of good and evil lies the remainder of the characters. Tulloch, Neil and Calum's forestry boss, is essentially good, as he looks out for the brothers and is sympathetic to their situation. He does his best to ensure that they are treated fairly and that no one takes advantage of them. The brothers depend on him as he is their only ally, excepting Roderick, Lady Runcie-Campbell's son. Tulloch's goodness is revealed in his acceptance of Calum; he does not find him grotesque and abnormal like the majority of the other characters, but sees him as someone who works hard in spite of his disabilities and who possesses a loving nature. Neil, Calum's brother, is a further character who is essentially good but he possesses deep felt bitterness due to the cruelty of war and the treatment of him and his brother. There is a human element to his resentment and hostility, however, unlike Duror. Neil hopes that the war will bring equality and that everything will be better when it is over: 'he had read often in the newspapers and had heard on the wireless that the war was being fought so that ordinary humble people could live in peace without being bullied and enslaved by brutal men with power' (*The Cone-Gatherers*, p. 82); 'It's war-time isn't it? Didn't somebody say [...] that in war-time everybody's equal?' (*The Cone-Gatherers*, p. 127). The myth that is frequently adhered to in war, that the Nazis represent evil and that good will conquer when they are defeated, is dismissed in the novel, however. The war will not bring democracy; there will always be different classes and inequalities, with the inclusion of aristocracy in the character of Lady Runcie-Campbell in the novel highlighting this fact. She is a divided character, split between her Christian faith and her social status as a member of the aristocracies; she has to compromise herself due to her situation, as 'to obey Christ by being humble must mean to betray her husband and also perhaps, to amuse her equals' (*The Cone-Gatherers*, p. 111). It is her social duty that prevails in her treatment of Calum and Neil; she orders them to take part in a deer hunt knowing that the idea horrifies Calum and threatens to expel them from

her woods when she finds the brothers sheltering in her summer house from a thunder storm. It is only the intervention of her son Roderick, another innocent, that persuades her to let the men stay.

Jenkins highlights the fact that the war will not banish evil either as it will always exist; we live in a world where there is a universal battle between good and evil that is ongoing. The myth of war solving fundamental problems is disregarded primarily for the reason that Jenkins realises the widening gulf between Eden and the society in which we live. He recognises the fallen state of man and addresses this in the majority of his novels. War does not resolve anything and instead accentuates the fact that mankind is in a fallen state and resorts to cruelty and brutality. Glenda Norquay comments that Jenkins's preoccupation with the Fall takes on a distinctly Scottish dimension in relation to Calvinism, as is shown in the following quotation:

> From the Reformation onwards one of the dominant factors in Scottish thought is that of Calvinism, with its stress on both the fallen world (the inevitably flawed character of humanity), and the 'Elect' individual's potential for transcendence through the grace of God. And this double stress becomes an important contributory element in any idea of a Scottish psyche.[25]

It is this dichotomy that Jenkins brings to light in *The Cone-Gatherers*; as a moralist he concentrates on the corruption of innocence, which he sees as the ultimate sin, and on the other faults of his characters, whilst also stressing that certain characters believe themselves to be predestined and, therefore, above their own actions. Calvinists aspire to live in a Kingdom of God in this world which is impossible to implement with humanity's fallen nature. The fallen state of man is one of the legacies of Presbyterianism as Calvinists believe in the doctrine of Original Sin; they believe that everyone suffers due to the Fall and it is only the Elect that are forgiven their share of Original Sin. The fallen state, which is associated with corruption and evil, and which Duror represents, overshadows and strikes down the innocence and good of Calum, with Duror feeling justified in his actions. He believes that he is one of the Elect but is tormented by the fact that his wife may be suffering for his sins, which would suggest that he is not one of the chosen. His suffering, torment and dissatisfaction with his life appear to confirm his doubts that he is not to be saved, leading to his tainted view of the world as purely evil and hellish. He seeks any means of escape possible from his infernal state but has no outlet; darkness

encompasses him as his wood, his haven, is intruded upon, and most importantly, by a deformed creature.

His irrational hatred of Calum is a product of this hellish view. He thinks that everything should be straightforward, which excludes Calum and his own wife who are both beautiful but deformed. Duror considers Calum to be evil as he is not clear-cut; he is abnormal and has a ghastly hunchback but he also has a beautiful face making him not one thing or another. Duror seeks to destroy him, as his view of the world constitutes of seeing evil all around him, with his irrational hatred having to be masked at all times:

> He had read that the Germans were putting idiots and cripples to death in gas chambers. Outwardly, as everybody expected, he condemned such barbarity; inwardly, thinking of idiocy and crippledness not as abstractions but as embodied in the crouchbacked cone-gatherer, he had profoundly approved.
>
> (*The Cone-Gatherers*, p. 13)

Again, the myth of war, that the British represent good and the Nazis evil is quashed; Duror represents evil and callousness, highlighting the fact that these boundaries are not clear-cut and simple. Duror attempts to escape from the hell in which he is living but is unable to; his Calvinist mentality allows him to justify his actions but also limits his avenues of escape as he is repressed and stifled as Calvinist society is as a whole.

Calvinist fatalism is also evident in the novel, with a sense of inevitability being a strong undercurrent throughout. The narrative is structured to emphasise the inevitability of events, with the outcome of Calum being killed by Duror and of him taking his own life being the only possible result for the close of the novel. From the outset death and destruction are foreshadowed: Neil senses the fact that there is 'death in the air' (*The Cone-Gatherers*, p. 4); the hunchback's removal from the wood 'must be a destruction, an agony, a crucifixion' (*The Cone-Gatherers*, p. 78). The notion of Presbyterian fatalism highlights the outcome of events in relation to Calum; the characters are aware that they are participating in a moral scheme but are powerless to intervene – they have to let fate run its

---

[25] Glenda Norquay, 'Four Novelists of the 1950s and 1960s', Cairns Craig (ed.) *The History of Scottish Literature Volume 4* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1987), pp. 259 – 275, p. 260.

course. The notion of characters being powerless in the chain of events is made evident in the allusions to Christ's crucifixion. Tulloch recognises Duror's hatred of Calum and attempts to protect the brothers, from both Duror and from Lady Runcie-Campbell's unfair treatment. He is an inverted version of Pontius Pilate when he says in defence of the brothers that 'I have questioned them [...] and I saw what happened; and I find no fault in them' (*The Cone-Gatherers*, p. 77). He does more than the original Biblical character by standing up for the brothers when he sees an injustice being done but, like the other characters, he is helpless in the action that unfolds although he is aware of his part in it. He represents kindness in the face of suffering; he is not bitter like Duror but takes a moral stance for goodness. Calum is described as a Christ-like figure in that he lives 'as if under God's protection' (*The Cone-Gatherers*, p. 13) and is innocent and empty of evil and cruelty. Calum's destiny is to be crucified by Duror since he is an innocent and a Christ-like figure; he has to die for the sins of others, especially Duror, who are not as innocent as he is. Evil is temporarily defeated in Duror's suicide following Calum's murder but at a great price. The religious symbolism is prevalent throughout; Duror's disturbed state and his fixation with destroying Calum is described in terms of him taking a religious sacrifice: 'Anyone seeing him there, so silent and intent, might have thought he was praying, or at any rate making some kind of preparation in his mind for the taking of life' (*The Cone-Gatherers*, p. 11). References are made to praying, kneeling, crucifixions, divine retribution and God's will, illustrating that a Christian battle is being re-enacted in the woods and is set out in universal terms.

Isobel Murray, in 'Robin Jenkins' Fiction', points out that Jenkins 'usurps the traditional functions of God' (p. 33) in his writing. The author plays the part of the Calvinist God; he decides the fate of his characters in respect to whether they are saved or not. The characters get what they are destined for, much like the Calvinist God deciding who are included in the Elect. He schemes out the fate of his characters and they are powerless to intervene or change the direction of their fates. Jenkins also provides us with a sense of morality, in that his characters are aware of their own morality and in their place in the action. Duror is aware of his total lack of morality and is conscious of the fact that he involves other characters, and, unwittingly to them, enlists their help in his evil-doing. Lady Runcie-Campbell is also aware of her morality in that she knows that her Christianity is limited and compromised and that she could have been more charitable to the brothers, with Calum having a sense of instinctive morality in that he has a profound revulsion of cruelty and malignancy. Jenkins also

questions the readers' own values concerning right or wrong, good and evil and all the grey areas in between by setting up unsettling moral questions without giving clear resolutions or answers. Glenda Norquay discusses this morality in 'Against Compromise: The Fiction of Robin Jenkins':

> In fiction, he sets out to show more than the 'surface' of reality: in morality, he appears to believe that humankind should – but fails to – display a potential for absolute goodness; ideally, Scotland should be able to convince itself of its validity in its own terms. Yet, while Jenkins posits such ideals, he simultaneously condemns himself for this impracticality, for the absurdity of hankering after the impossible. His aims, it would seem, are doomed to failure: he therefore wishes to be the first to recognise and acknowledge this. [26]

Jenkins plays out a type of God role to communicate his notions of morality, which is ironic considering that he is a fervent atheist. This is perhaps why myth, including the Christian myth, is ironised in the novel; Jenkins plays around with the notion of myth for his own ends. He shows how far we are from Eden by setting his novel in an apparently Edenic setting, of how flawed humanity is with the crucifixion of Calum and of how damaging religion can be. In an article for *The Glasgow Herald* he states that 'I am left today wondering if religion does more harm than good'.[27] Jenkins realises the effect that religion, specifically Calvinism, has on Scottish society; he acknowledges the grey, stilted, backward-looking condition of Scotland and realises that this stagnant state leads to the rejection of creativity and, consequently, the emigration of many Scottish writers.[28] He admits in an interview in *The Scotsman* that 'there's a certain mystic longing in me which is in no way satisfied here where Scottish Presbyterianism blights it completely.'[29] He faces up to Scotland's bleak, parochial outlook in his writing and concentrates on Calvinist-tainted protagonists, like Duror, to highlight the damaging effects of the religion, namely repression, a fundamental duality and apparent justification in the actions of those who believe they are included in the Elect.

---

[26] Glenda Norquay, 'Against Compromise: The Fiction of Robin Jenkins', *Cencrastus*, no. 24, Autumn, 1986, pp. 3 – 6, p. 3.

[27] 'Why I Decided Scotland Must Be Seen Through Fresh and Truthful Eyes' in *The Glasgow Herald*, 12 October 1982.

[28] Jenkins discusses this in his essay 'Novelist in Scotland', *Saltire Review*, Autumn, 1955, pp. 8 – 9, p. 8.

[29] 'The Wanderer in Search of Scotland', by Douglas Eadie, *The Scotsman*, June 12, 1971.

Duror's repressed and tortured condition escalates to such an extent that he can only find a release in the death of Calum and in the taking of his own life.[30] The story has been building up to this point. Moira Burgess points out that the conclusion is 'as inescapable as that of [John] Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*.' [31] The ending of the novel is ironic, as all of Jenkins's closings are. The grisly ending reveals Calum's crucifixion-style death as he hangs from a tree; death and regeneration, in the form of the pine cones, are shown to be interwoven in the surrounding world of nature:

> She forced herself to go over to the tree. It was the strap of his bag which had caught on a branch. He hung therefore in twisted fashion, and kept swinging. His arms were loose and dangling in macabre gestures of supplication. Though he smiled, he was dead. From his bag dropped a cone, and then another. There might have been more, but other drops, also singly, but faster and faster, distracted her: they were of blood.
>
> (*The Cone-Gatherers*, pp. 180-181)

Lady Runcie-Campbell's reaction to finding Calum in this way is ironic considering her unchristian attitude to the brothers and her repulsion of Calum:

> First she said: 'Help him, Baird.' Then she went down on her knees, near the blood and the spilt cones. She could not pray, but she could weep; and as she wept pity, and purified hope, and joy, welled up in her heart.
>
> (*The Cone-Gatherers*, p. 181)

The close is open-ended and is false to an extent. Irony is necessary for Jenkins in the conclusion as he highlights the gap between ideals and reality. [32] Ideally the ending can be read as Calum being

---

[30] The fate of Duror is the same as that of Robert Wringhim in Hogg's *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*; both are so tormented with their Calvinist-tainted lives that the only way that they can escape is by committing suicide.

[31] Moira Burgess, 'Robin Jenkins: A Novelist of Scotland', *Library Review*, vol. 22, no. 8, 1970, pp. 409 – 412, p. 410.

[32] Northrop Frye in *Fables of Identity: Studies in Poetic Mythology* comments on the falling notion in myth which is connected with death and sacrifice, and with a gulf between a hell and heaven which is bridged in literature by way of irony: 'The absorption of the natural cycle into mythology provides myth with two [...] structures; the rising movement that we find in myths of spring or the dawn, of birth, marriage and resurrection, and the falling movement in myths of death, metamorphosis, or sacrifice. These movements reappear as the structural principles of comedy and tragedy in literature. Again, the dialectic in myth that projects a paradise or heaven above our world and a hell or place of shades below it reappears in literature as the idealized world of the pastoral and romance and the absurd, suffering, or frustrated world of irony and satire' (pp. 33 – 34).

sacrificed to save mankind so that hope, innocence and goodness can live on, in this case with Roderick who is the seed for the future. He can be viewed as a type of martyr who has brought down evil and cleansed the wood of cruelty and depravity. Realistically though, Calum has not wiped out evil and good has not conquered. He is persecuted for his deformity and for being an innocent. Lady Runcie-Campbell, therefore, views him as a symbol so that the reality of the situation does not have to be comprehended; she cannot view his death and Duror's suicide realistically because she wanted Calum removed from her woods due to her repulsion from him and because he made her face up to her lax attitude to her faith. On the other hand, she may be genuinely overcome by a sense of overpowering Christian feeling. She perhaps realises that she is seeing good sacrificed but, considering the irony used by Jenkins, this seems unlikely. Edwin Morgan claims that 'the grimness of the ending [...] is only relieved by the implausible catharsis of Lady Runcie-Campbell' (*Essays by Edwin Morgan*, p.244). The cathartic act is deliberately implausible and the novel closes without clear resolution; Lady Runcie-Campbell is led 'at best to temporary self-knowledge and a greater capacity for love.'[33] This is not much considering Calum's fate but serves to emphasise the flawed nature of humanity, which is Jenkins's aim. Alexander Reid in 'The Limits of Charity' goes so far as to blame Lady Runcie-Campbell over Duror for the atrocities: 'If anyone is to be accused of guilt it is my lady, who though good, is not good enough.' [34] This is to miss the point, however, that although she does not intervene to help Calum against Duror's plans she cannot overturn the inevitable outcome; like the other characters she is powerless to intervene in terms of Calum's fate. Her own limitations also have to be measured against Calum for her to realise her fallen state and the imperfect nature of things.

Francis Russell Hart points out that 'innocence is always the lovely menace, the source of renewal and hope, but also the temptation to forget how far one is from Eden, how limited is one's humanity, how flawed one's love' (*The Scottish Novel*, p. 280). Ironically it takes Calum, the innocent, to die to highlight man's imperfections and limitations in terms of love and charity; his death serves as a reminder to the remaining characters of how tainted their outlook is in viewing him as a mere deformed hunchback and of how far they have fallen compared to the purity and absolute goodness found in him.

---

[33] Isobel Murray, 'One Toe in Eden Still: Robin Jenkins' Fiction' in *The Scottish Review*, 37/38, Feb/May, 1985, p. 90.

[34] Alexander Reid, 'The Limits of Charity', *Scotland's Magazine*, September, 1958, pp. 43 – 44, p. 44.

Their Calvinist mentality is responsible for their limitations in terms of love and charity: 'in attempting to create a national identity by clinging to a fierce and unforgiving Calvinist morality, Scotland annihilates its own capacity to love, to forgive, to grow.' [35] It is the self-destructiveness of the Scottish mentality that leads to the flawed nature of the characters and at the end they are left with a partial realisation of their faults and limitations. Jenkins, then, succeeds in producing 'a clear vision of the patched stuff of life and an acceptance of it, which gives strength and serenity to his conclusions.' [36] The author illustrates that we live in a fallen world; he asserts an element of dissatisfaction with things as he sees it but the fallen nature of humankind has to be accepted, however unwillingly, as a state of Eden is always elusive and is an impossible dream. Ironically, then, as Glenda Norquay points out, Jenkins's "polarisation of an elusive Eden and a petty, sordid or restrictive 'reality,' creates a dichotomy not dissimilar to the 'fallen world' and promised 'heaven' of Calvinism."[37]

---

[35] Glenda Norquay, 'Disruptions: The Later Fiction of Robin Jenkins', Randall Stevenson and Gavin Wallace (eds.) *The Scottish Novel Since the Seventies* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994), pp. 11 – 24, p.17.

[36] Moira Burgess, 'Robin Jenkins: A Novelist of Scotland', p. 410.

[37] Glenda Norquay, 'Four Novelists of the 1950s and 1960s', *The History of Scottish Literature Volume 4*, p. 261.

CONCLUSION

It can be argued with real force that the modern Scottish novels under discussion all highlight Scotland as being a wasteland, suffering from a type of purgatory, because of and in spite of Calvinism. The country is a dystopia, in respect to its fragmentary landscape lacking a wholeness and imaginative centre, and the negative aspects of Calvinism accumulating to engulf it. This notion of Scotland is discussed by Edwin Muir in *Scott and Scotland* (1936), with the following quotation relating to the novelist Walter Scott:

> He spent most of his days in a hiatus, in a country, that is to say, which was neither a nation nor a province, and had, instead of a centre, a blank, an Edinburgh, in the middle of it. But this Nothing in which Scott wrote was not merely a spatial one; it was a temporal Nothing as well, dotted by a few disconnected figures arranged at abrupt intervals [...] Scott, in other words, lived in a community which was not a community, and set himself to carry on a tradition; and the result was that his work was an exact reflection of his predicament. His picture of life had no centre, because the environment in which he lived had no centre.
>
> (pp. 112 – 113)

This divided and nullified landscape is reflected in the different environments, which are microcosms of Scotland as a whole. It is depicted in the novels focused on in this thesis and in the fragmentary aspects of the Scottish psyche which are made manifest in the writings of Brown, Barrie, Carswell, Muir and Jenkins. The small towns of Barbie and Calderwick are overrun with malignancy, constant scrutiny and petty-mindedness, creating a hellish nightmare for the inhabitants, especially as no imagination or originality is tolerated. Barrie's glen epitomises the barren greyness of Scotland overall as it is cut off from beauty, creative thought and the feminine. Jenkins's and Carswell's potentially Edenic environments are shown to be only temporary retreats from the harsh realities of Calvinism and the resulting symptoms of repression and claustrophobia which stems from religion. The protagonists of the novels discussed are all divided and isolated individuals; divided by religion, language, Scottish and Anglicised identity and inner and outer selves, and isolated by an all-seeing community and Calvinist God and by an unwillingness in some to adhere to the stifling and repressive landscapes of Scotland.

The writers in question all focus on this lack of imagination in Scottish culture and can themselves be seen as isolated individuals trying to come to terms with the fact that the country in

which they are writing rejects creativity. Cairns Craig points towards this lack of imagination and fragmented cultural structure in *The Modern Scottish Novel: Narrative and the National Imagination*:

> The 'predicament' of the imagination in Scotland is that it is neither a real imagination – having been maimed by Calvinism – nor is it effectively national – since Scotland has failed to maintain a continuous identity as a nation of the modern kind. If the novel is indeed the index of national consciousness and the national imagination, then the regularly asserted failure of the Scottish novel (as opposed to the success of individual Scottish novelists) can be seen simply as a reflection of the ongoing failure of Scottish culture as a whole – or, rather, the failure of Scottish culture to *be* whole.
>
> (pp. 21 – 22)

The Calvinist inheritance is a primary factor in the rejection of imaginative vitality and in the powerful divisions within the country as is evident in the five novels discussed. All of the novelists, to varying extents, assert that the religion produces a dystopian landscape, in which they illustrate that creativity and deviation from the norm of a patriarchal, Presbyterian society are outlawed and that a number of the fundamental doctrines of Calvinism, namely the notions of the Elect and of Original Sin, along with the different denominations of the religion itself, are fundamentally divisive. It is significant that the only instance of an Edenic environment being sustained at a novel's close, in the case of *Open the Door!*, comes about when this fundamental component of Scotland – institutional religion – is rejected. The other instances of Edenic existences – the Garden of Eden in *The Cone-Gatherers*, Adam's deliriously happy time with Julie in *Farewell Miss Julie Logan*, Joanna's happiness with her Italian husband and English lover – are all short-lived and essentially false. Unlike the predominantly Edenic landscapes of the kailyard, then, Brown, Carswell, Barrie, Muir and Jenkins explore a diseased Scotland and examine the strains of the Scottish mentality which maintains this inimical environment and cultural wasteland. These authors all suggest that at the time in which they were writing Scotland was plagued by internal divisions, Calvinism's inheritance and a lack of an imaginative centre, all of which produced a sick state.

One hundred years have passed since the publication of Brown's novel, which influenced so many other writers throughout the last century. *The House with the Green Shutters* signalled the fact that the equilibrium of Scottish writing had finally swung from the idyllic falsehoods of kailyard writing to the truer depictions of Scotland. A sharper sense of Scotland as being encompassed by evil and

good, and the negative elements that could be elucidated from the nation's culture, such as Calvinism and inherent dualities, emerged. Although, with the exception of *Open the Door!*, all of the novels discussed tend to lean to the darker, more hellish side of existence, elements of light are also apparent, perhaps bringing glimpses of a hope in the authors that Scotland will in time break free from the factors that produce the dystopian landscapes that they describe.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES:

Barrie, J. M., *Auld Licht Idylls (*6th edition). London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1891; 1888.

---------- *A Window in Thrums*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1934; 1889.

---------- *Farewell Miss Julie Logan*. Supplement with *The Times*, 24 December 1931.

---------- *Farewell Miss Julie Logan*. Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1989; 1932.

---------- *The Little Minister*. London: Cassell and Co. Ltd., 1891.

---------- Letters to Bude and Katherine Asquith, Viola Meynell (ed.) *The Letters of J. M. Barrie*. London: Peter Davies, 1942.

Brown, George Douglas, *The House with the Green Shutters*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985; 1901.

---------- Notebook, document MS8171 in The National Library of Scotland.

Carswell, Catherine, *Lying Awake: An Unfinished Autobiography and Other Posthumous Papers*. Edinburgh: Canongate, 1997; 1950.

---------- *Open the Door!*. Edinburgh: Canongate, 1996; 1920.

---------- Letter to J. De Lancey Ferguson, document MS5311, p. 1, in The Mitchell Library, Glasgow.

Crockett, S. R., *The Lilac Sunbonnet*. Glasgow: Collins, 1954; 1894.

---------- *The Stickit Minister*. London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1893.

Hawthorne, Nathaniel, 'Young Goodman Brown' (1835), McIntosh, James (ed.) *Nathaniel Hawthorne's Tales.* London: W. W. Norton and Co., 1987; 1986.

Jenkins, Robin, 'Novelist in Scotland', *Saltire Review*, Autumn, 1955.

---------- *So Gaily Sings the Lark.* Glasgow: MacLellan, 1950.

---------- *The Cone-Gatherers.* Harlow, Essex: Longman, 1996; 1955.

---------- 'Why I decided Scotland must be seen through fresh and truthful eyes', *Glasgow Herald*, 12 October 1982.

Maclaren, Ian, (John Watson) *Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush* (9th edition). London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1895; 1894.

Muir, Edwin, *An Autobiography.* London: Hogarth Press, 1964; 1954.

---------- *Scott and Scotland: The Predicament of the Scottish Writer.* Edinburgh: Polygon Books, 1982; 1936.

---------- *Scottish Journey.* Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing, 1996; 1935.

Muir, Willa, *Belonging: A Memoir.* London: Hogarth Press, 1968.

---------- *Imagined Corners* in Kirsty Allen (ed.) *Imagined Selves.* Edinburgh: Canongate, 1996; 1931.

---------- 'Women: An Inquiry' in Kirsty Allen (ed.) *Imagined Selves.* Edinburgh: Canongate, 1996; 1925.

Oliphant, Margaret, 'The Library Window' (1896) in Margaret K. Gray (ed.) *Selected Short Stories of the Supernatural.* Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1985.

----------, 'The Open Door' (1882) in Jenni Calder (ed.) *A Beleaguered City and Other Tales of the Seen and Unseen.* Edinburgh: Canongate, 2000.

SECONDARY SOURCES:

Allen, Kirsty, Introduction to *Imagined Selves.* Edinburgh: Canongate, 1996.

Anderson, Carol, 'Behold I make all things new: Catherine Carswell and the visual arts', Carol Anderson and Aileen Christianson (eds.) *Scottish Women's Fiction 1920s - 1960s: Journeys Into Being.* East Lothian: Tuckwell Press, 2000.

Anderson, Carol and Christianson, Aileen (eds.), Introduction to *Scottish Women's Fiction 1920s - 1960s: Journeys Into Being.* East Lothian: Tuckwell Press, 2000.

Anderson, Eric, 'The Kailyard Revisited', Ian Campbell (ed.) *Nineteenth-Century Scottish Fiction: Critical Essays.* Manchester: Carnet New Press, 1979.

Blake, George, *Barrie and the Kailyard School.* London: Arthur Baker, 1951.

Brown, Callum G., *Religion and Society in Scotland Since 1707.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997.

Burgess, Moira, 'Robin Jenkins: A Novelist of Scotland', *Library Review*, vol. 22, no. 8, 1970.

Caird, J. B., 'A Scotsman on the Make: A Note on Barrie's Novels', *Brunton's Miscellany*, 1977 – 78.

Caird, Janet, 'Cakes Not Turned', *Chapman*, 71, Winter, 1992 – 93.

Campbell, Ian, 'George Douglas Brown: A Study in Objectivity', Ian Campbell (ed.) *Nineteenth-Century Scottish Fiction: Critical Essays.* Manchester: Carcanet Press, 1979.

---------- 'George Douglas Brown's Kailyard Novel', *Studies in Scottish Literature*, vol. 12, 1974 – 5.

---------- *Kailyard.* Edinburgh: The Ramsay Head Press, 1981.

Campbell, Ian and Vogel, Brian, 'The House with the Green Shutters and the Seeing Eye', *Studies in Scottish Literature*, vol. 27, 1992.

Campbell, Ian, 'The House with the Green Shutters: Some Second Thoughts', *The Bibliotheck*, 10, 1980 – 81.

Carswell, John, Introduction to *Open the Door!*. Edinburgh: Canongate, 1996.

Checkland, Olive and Sydney, *Industry and Ethos: Scotland 1832 – 1914.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997; 1984.

Christianson, Aileen, 'Dreaming Realities: Willa Muir's Imagined Corners', Carol Anderson and Aileen Christianson (eds.) *Scottish Women's Fiction 1920s – 1960s: Journeys Into Being.* East Lothian: Tuckwell Press, 2000.

Civardi, Christian, 'The House with the Green Shutters: A Chapter of the Moral History of Scotland', *Recherches Anglaises et Americaines*, no. 5, 1972.

Craig, Cairns, *The Modern Scottish Novel: Narrative and the National Imagination.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999.

Crichton Smith, Ian, 'The House with the Green Shutters', *Studies in Scottish Literature*, vol. 7, no.s 1 and 2, July – October, 1969.

Cunninghame, A. T., 'Sir J. M. Barrie', *The Modern Scot*, April, 1933.

Daiches, David, *Literature and Gentility in Scotland: the Alexander lectures at the University of Toronto 1980.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1982.

---------- *The Paradox of Scottish Culture: The eighteenth-century experience.* London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1964.

Dickson, Beth, 'Foundations of the Modern Scottish Novel', Cairns Craig (ed.) *The History of Scottish Literature Volume 4.* Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1989; 1987.

Dunnigan, Sarah, 'The hawk and the dove: religion, desire and aesthetics in Open the Door!', Carol Anderson (ed.) *Opening the Doors: The Achievement of Catherine Carswell.* Edinburgh: The Ramsay Head Press, 2001.

Eadie, Douglas, 'The Wanderer in Search of Scotland', *The Scotsman*, 12 June, 1971.

Elliott, Walter, Introduction to James Veitch (ed.) *George Douglas Brown.* London: Herbert Jenkins Ltd., 1952.

Elphinstone, Margaret, 'Four Pioneering Novels', *Chapman*, 74 – 75, Autumn/ Winter, 1993.

---------- 'Willa Muir: Crossing the Genres', Douglas Gifford and Dorothy McMillan (eds.) *A History of Scottish Women's Writing*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996.

Ettin, Andrew V., *Literature and the Pastoral.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984.

Frye, Northrop, *Fables of Identity: Studies in Poetic Mythology.* New York: Harcourt Inc., Brace and World, 1963.

---------- *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature.* London: Routledge and Keegan Paul Ltd., 1982.

Gifford, Douglas, 'Chapter 25 – George Douglas Brown: The House with the Green Shutters', Sarah Dunnigan, Douglas Gifford, Alan Macgillivray (eds.) *A Guide to Scottish Literature* (forthcoming). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2002.

Gifford, Douglas and McMillan Dorothy (eds.), Introduction to *A History of Scottish Women's Writing*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996.

Gifford, Douglas, 'Modern Scottish Fiction', *Studies in Scottish Literature*, vol. 13, 1978.

---------- 'Review of Lunderston Tales by Robin Jenkins', *Books in Scotland*, no. 62, Summer, 1997.

---------- 'Stevenson and Scottish Fiction', Jenni Calder (ed.) *Stevenson and Victorian Scotland.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1981.

Gifford, Terry, *Pastoral.* London: Routledge, 1999.

Gleitman, Henry, *Basic Psychology* (4th edition). London: W. W. Norton and Co., 1996; 1983.

Hagemann, Susanne, 'Women and Nation', Douglas Gifford and Dorothy McMillan (eds.) *A History of Scottish Women's Writing*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996. (Originally discussed in 'Die Schottische Renaissance: Literatur und Nation im 20 Jahrhundert', *Scottish Studies*, no. 13, 1992).

Hart, Francis Russell, *The Scottish Novel: A Critical Survey.* Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1978.

Hendry, Joy, 'A Double Knot on the Peeny', Gail Chester and Sigrid Nielsen (eds.) *In Other Words: Writing as a Feminist.* London: Hutchinson, 1987.

Hunter, Lynette, 'J. M. Barrie: The Rejection of Fantasy', *Scottish Literary Journal*, no. 5, May, 1978.

Jack, R. D. S., *The Road to the Never Land: A Reassessment of J. M. Barrie's Dramatic Art.* Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1991.

Lennox, Cuthbert, *George Douglas Brown.* London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1903.

McCleery, Alistair, Afterword to *Farewell Miss Julie Logan.* Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1989.

---------- 'The Devil Damn Thee Black: A Note on The House with the Green Shutters', *Scottish Literary Journal*, vol. 16, no. 1, May, 1989.

MacDiarmid, Hugh, (Christopher Murray Grieve) 'Newer Scottish Fiction II', *The Scottish Educational Journal*, 2 July, 1926, reprinted in Alan Riach (ed.) *Contemporary Scottish Studies.* Northumberland: Carcanet Press Ltd., 1995.

Mackail, Denis, *The Story of J. M. B.* London: Peter Davies, 1941.

Manlove, Colin (ed.), *An Anthology of Scottish Fantasy Literature.* Edinburgh: Polygon, 1996.

---------- *Scottish Fantasy Literature: A Critical Survey.* Edinburgh: Canongate Academic, 1994.

Mansfield, Katherine, 'Reviews: A Prize Novel', "Wanted a New World: the '*Athenaeum*' 1919 – 1920", reprinted in Clare Hanson (ed) *The Critical Writings of Katherine Mansfield.* London: MacMillan Press, 1987.

Maxwell, Cheryl, " 'I'd rather be a girl...because I like boys best': Building the sexual self in Open the Door!", Carol Anderson (ed.) *Opening the Doors: The Achievement of Catherine Carswell.* Edinburgh: The Ramsay Head Press, 2001.

Melrose, Andrew, 'Reminiscences', Cuthbert Lennox (ed.) *George Douglas Brown.* London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1903.

Millar, J. H., 'The Literature of the Kailyard', *The New Review,* vol. 12, January – June, 1895.

Morgan, Edwin, 'The Beatnik in the Kailyaird', *New Saltire*, no. 3, Spring, 1962.

---------- 'The Novels of Robin Jenkins', *The Listener*, 12 July, 1973, reprinted in *Essays by Edwin Morgan.* Cheadle: Carcanet Press, 1974.

---------- 'The Pursuit of Peter Pan', *T. L. S.*, 13 October 1978.

Muir, Edwin, 'George Douglas', in *Latitudes*, 1924.

Murray, Isobel, 'One Toe in Eden Still: Robin Jenkins' Fiction', *The Scottish Review*, no.s 37 - 38, February - May, 1985.

---------- 'Robin Jenkins' Fiction', *Laverock*, no. 2, 1996.

Nash, Andrew, 'From Realism to Romance: Gender and Narrative Technique in J. M. Barrie's The Little Minister', *Scottish Literary Journal,* no. 49, 1999.

Norquay, Glenda, 'Against Compromise: The Fiction of Robin Jenkins', *Cencrastus*, no. 24, Autumn, 1986.

---------- 'Catherine Carswell: Open the Door!', Douglas Gifford and Dorothy McMillan (eds.) *A History of Scottish Women's Writing.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996.

---------- 'Disruptions: The Later Fiction of Robin Jenkins', Randall Stevenson and Gavin Wallace (eds.) *The Scottish Novel Since the Seventies.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994.

---------- 'Four Novelists of the 1950s and 1960s', Cairns Craig (ed.) *The History of Scottish Literature Volume 4.* Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1987.

Ormond, Leonee, *J. M. Barrie.* Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1987.

Palmer McCulloch, Margery, 'Fictions of Development 1920 – 1970', Douglas Gifford and Dorothy McMillan (eds.) *A History of Scottish Women's Writing.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996.

Pick, J. B., Introduction to *Imagined Corners.* Edinburgh: Canongate, 1987.

Pilditch, Jan, " 'And so my days are full': The letters of Catherine Carswell", Carol Anderson (ed.) *Opening the Doors: The Achievement of Catherine Carswell.* Edinburgh: The Ramsay Head Press, 2001.

---------- 'Opening the Door on Catherine Carswell', *Scotlands*, no. 2, 1994.

Porter, Dorothy, Introduction to *The House with the Green Shutters.* Harmondworth: Penguin, 1985.

Reid, Alexander, 'The Limits of Charity', *Scotland's Magazine*, September, 1958.

Rosie, George, 'Poisoned Pastoral', *Radio Times*, 29 November – 5 December, 1980.

Rowland Mudge, Patricia, 'A Quorum of Willas', *Chapman*, 71, Winter, 1992 – 93.

Royle, Trevor, 'What we need is more of Robin Jenkins', *Glasgow Herald*, 19 November 1985.

Scott, Alexander, 'The Lost Boy: J. M. Barrie', *Scottish Review*, no. 18, May, 1980.

Sellin, Bernard, 'Robin Jenkins: The Making of the Novelist', *Cencrastus*, no. 24, Autumn, 1986.

Shepherd, Gillian, 'The Kailyard', Douglas Gifford (ed.) *The History of Scottish Literature Volume 3*. Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1988.

Smith, Alison, 'And Woman Created Woman: Carswell, Shepherd and Muir, and the Self-Made Woman', Christopher Whyte (ed.) *Gendering the Nation: Studies in Modern Scottish Literature*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995.

Smith, G. Gregory, *Scottish Literature: Character and Influence*. London: MacMillan and Co. Ltd., 1919.

Sommers, Jeffery, 'Review of The House with the Green Shutters', *Studies in Scottish Literature*, vol. 19, 1984.

Soukup, Catriona, 'Willa in Wartime', *Chapman*, 71, Winter, 1992 – 93.

Speirs, John, 'Nineteenth Century Scotland in Allegory', *Scrutiny*, vol. 7, no. 4, March, 1939.

Veitch, James, *George Douglas Brown*. London: Herbert Jenkins Ltd., 1952.

Walker, Marshall, 'Tangents: Robin Jenkins and Muriel Spark' in the chapter 'Post-War Fiction: Realism, Violence and Magic' in *Scottish Literature Since 1707*. Essex: Longman, 1996.

Wright, Allen, *J. M. Barrie – Glamour of Twilight*. Edinburgh: The Ramsay Head Press, 1976.

---------- 'Kelvinside, Kirriemuir and the Kailyard', *Chapman*, no. 11, Spring, 1989.