Creative Evolution in the Novels of Nan Shepherd

HEATHER KATHARINE VINSON

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

Dissertation Abstract

This thesis examines the novels of Aberdeenshire author, Nan Shepherd: *The Quarry Wood* (1928), *The Weatherhouse* (1930), and *A Pass in the Grampians* (1933). Shepherd developed a vision of life as being characterised by a flow of change encompassing all things in relation. Rejecting determinism and fatalism, Shepherd exalts the human spiritual capacity for creative influence over what is essentially a chaotic universe. Hers is a philosophy of evolution, explicated through narrative. Literal and symbolic dramatisations of her vision explore individual and communal awakenings to the underlying nature of reality, and to the human creative capacity. Shepherd's optimistic vision is rooted in the power of perception, whereby individuals can exert creative influence over their experience of existence. In their search for a peaceful existence, her characters awaken to the importance of continual spiritual (inner) adaptation enabled by interaction with the changing physical (external) world.

Deeply rooted in her local region, Shepherd finds there an abundance of material that inspires her spiritual vision and lends tangible force to her modernist ideas. The natural world and human worlds are equally important to her vision. Her characters and communities articulate a specific temporal dimension to the landscapes that Shepherd loved.

Perpetual and unpredictable change underlies all of Shepherd's novels. In each, Shepherd seeks balance between the inherited traditions of the past and a bold, creative embrace of an open-ended and unformed future.

The first chapter seeks to set Shepherd in the context of her own time and place, and identify her work in relation to the wider cultural arena. The chapter also introduces critical approaches applied in this thesis. The following three chapters are dedicated to Shepherd's novels, treated in chronological order.

There is a consistent core to Shepherd's philosophical vision, though each novel shifts its angle and focus as Shepherd's own vision evolves. In each novel an isolated, self-contained entity -- a character, a community, or generations of families -- awakens to and reconciles its perception to unpredictable, uncontrollable events external to it, establishing close spiritual connections with people and landscape. The purpose of this reconciliation is to find a way in which to live a peaceful, balanced life of empathic compassion and wisdom.

In *The Quarry Wood*, Martha must adapt her inner vision of life to external (physical and social) realities. Failure to do so invites disaster. The novel describes

evolution toward wisdom, leading to her discovery that she is in need of others to create a whole and fulfilling life for herself.

In *The Weatherhouse*, each individual must adapt him or herself to complex, unsuspected realities. The novel describes communal evolution within a narrow space and time, toward profound understanding of the vast interconnections of being. The novel demonstrates the need we have for one another. Failure to integrate one's self within the human web has tragic consequences.

The horizons of space and time in *A Pass in the Grampians* are broader than any previous novel. Three generations adapt to the broad movements of social and cultural history -- specifically, the modern age. Failure to adapt one's spiritual tradition means spiritual death will accompany the inevitable physical death. The novel explores the threads of mutual need (embodied by tradition and memory) that link past, present and future generations together in a web of temporal and spatial dimensions.

The Irish poet, Eavan Boland, writes: 'Our present will become the past of other men and women. We depend on them to remember it with the complexity with which it was suffered. As others, once, depended on us.' Boland's words describe the evolving continuum of being that provides the raw material for Shepherd's work, even while she reminds us that the universal life cycle of being will continue creatively and irrepressibly beyond all particular human actions or events.

'O light amo' the hills
S'uld ye gang oot,
To whatna dark the warld'll fa'

- from *In the Cairngorms*

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Author's Declaration

This thesis is a work of my own composition. It has not been submitted in any previous application for a degree. All quotations have been distinguished by quotation marks or by identification in the text, and the source of my information specifically acknowledged.

Glasgow

Heather Katharine Vinson

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Abbreviations

*The Quarry Wood**	QW
*The Weatherhouse**	WH
*A Pass in the Grampians**	PG
*The Living Mountain**	LM
In the Cairngorms	IC
Aberdeen University Review	AUR
The Deeside Field	DF
Aberdeen University Special Collections and Archives	AUSCA
National Library of Scotland	NLS

* Page numbers in the text refer to the omnibus edition of these books published by Canongate Books (1996), ed. by Roderick Watson.

Introduction

This thesis is concerned with understanding the process of creative and spiritual adaptation as it is depicted in the novels of Nan Shepherd. I have borrowed Henri Bergson's term, creative evolution, for the title of my thesis, underlining the Bergsonian quality to Shepherd's vision. The words creative evolution are in their own right (apart from the philosophy associated with them) an apt description, in both a wider and a more intimate sense, of what is central to Shepherd's novels.

Nan Shepherd contributes to a philosophical tradition that believes life, in its rarely-seen essence, to be an all-encompassing, fluid and infinite web of change: chaotic and relativistic, but susceptible to human influence. Central to her vision is that one's perception defines one's experience of existence. Fear and habit blind us to the interconnectedness and flux that constitute life. We create comfortable, convenient surface 'realities' that lend order to everyday life. These surfaces are prone to dissolution, as Shepherd's work explores. Briefly, suddenly, one may awaken to an 'extra dimension of apprehension. . . of being'.[1] This is an experience both terrifying and liberating, both destructive and creative. The moment does not last, but it stimulates adaptation -- the ongoing recreation of new perceptions and new realities.

Shepherd lived in Aberdeenshire her entire life, but her vision was a product and reflection of the wider cultural climate. Her novels describe individuals' awakening to confusion -- like much of modernist literature. They are also, as Agnes Mure Mackenzie writes: 'a defiance of current literary convention'.[2] Current literary convention favoured pessimism. Shepherd's work is decidedly optimistic, beginning where many modernist novels begin and end -- with bewildered awakening. In Shepherd's view, fear and bewilderment do not result in wholesale apocalypse. Rather, individual by individual, with some gain and some loss, humanity adapts to the condition of change itself.

Shepherd's optimism stems from her belief that we have responsibility for our state of being. The nature, meaning and purpose of existence cannot be learned through reference to a superior, objective power. In a sketchbook (1911), Shepherd copied down a passage from G.K. Chesterton's *Orthodoxy* (1908): 'I could never conceive or tolerate any Utopia which did not leave to me the liberty for which I chiefly care, the liberty to bind myself'.[3] Shepherd was

interested not in anarchy, but in self-reliance and self-definition. She holds that individuals must open their eyes and determine for themselves what the world and their place in it means.

In Shepherd's view, the outer world is closely connected with the inner workings of the mind and spirit. Shepherd invests Scottish landscape and communities with a capacity for redemption and creation -- a departure from less generous portrayals of Scotland's land and communities. Everyday life divides individuals from spiritualised interaction with the physical and social landscape, but the processes of creative evolution rely upon such interaction. Boundary lines dividing the inner self from the external world are common to female identity development narratives, as Shepherd's first novel corroborates. Shepherd reveals that a divided experience of the world (into inner self and external reality) restricts not merely female development, but human spiritual development generally. She seeks means whereby men and women both may transcend such divisions and boundaries.

Altering one's perspective in various ways is a means of transcending these boundaries. In a world of relative realities, the notion of an absolute world ordered by a Creator's imposed will must be abandoned in favour of a subjective, flexible order created according to each individual's perception. By altering our perception we can adapt to, rather than escape, the realities of an ever-changing existence. Ultimately, we can escape our ego-bound selves, and glimpse, even join, the fluid connections that bind a changing world. We can, at least, create balance amidst chaos. In order for this relational, perceived balance to last, it must be rooted in close spiritualised experience of the social and physical world.

Shepherd's philosophy of spiritual evolution is founded upon her study and perception of the external world and its interconnectedness with the life of the spirit. Words applied to James Joyce's *Ulysses* in 1928 (the year *The Quarry Wood* was published) could be applied to Shepherd's work as well: 'the arguments between man and world [are] the spiritual core of all great novels... a great poetic-philosophical revelation about the inner and outer world, about subject and object, about matter, space, and time. They are the problems of the present philosophical and physical theories'.[4] In Shepherd's view, substance and spirit are inextricably linked. Intensely sceptical of what might, in a loose sense, be called mysticism, Shepherd's affinity for the scientific perspective is as strong as her affinity for spiritual exploration. She brings together philosophical and physical theories in narrative.

This thesis will explore various ways in which Shepherd's novels dramatise her particular philosophy of evolution through an examination of her characters's awakening and adaptation to the changing world around them. The thesis will also study Shepherd's vision of change more broadly. The first chapter seeks to place Shepherd in a wider context. Three chapters will then be devoted to each of Shepherd's novels. Her novels progress logically (in terms of her development as a writer, and in terms of subject material), applying her vision of change to various related subjects: individual, communal, and generational human existence, identifying what is universal in human existence.

The Quarry Wood provides an excellent introduction to Shepherd's vision through a young woman's identity development. While Shepherd is principally concerned with human experience beyond gender divisions, this novel demonstrates her awareness of the challenges that women (in life and fiction) face. An evolved *Bildungsroman*, the novel describes Martha Ironside's quest for the wisdom 'to be'. Wisdom involves a balance between seeking help from others and self-reliance, between past and present, between stability and adventure. *The Quarry Wood* introduces what will be central to *The Weatherhouse*: the need individuals have for one another. My reading of this novel will be informed by the romance and quest traditions, the *Bildungsroman* tradition, and by the epic poem, the *Odyssey*.

The Weatherhouse and *A Pass in the Grampians* are more concerned with communal adaptations to change. *The Weatherhouse* is Shepherd's most complex novel. Its community is the external manifestation of the juxtaposed, evolving inner lives of its members. The alteration of perception (beyond the self) is of central importance, enabling characters to discover amidst the confusion of being, the oneness of all things. This insight has various consequences ranging from bewilderment and annihilation, to creative adaptation and balance. The novel reveals the links that bind individuals to one another, the source of compassion. It is appropriate, if unprecedented, to offer an interpretation of this novel informed by Eastern philosophy, with which Shepherd was familiar to some degree.

A Pass in the Grampians turns to the more pragmatic question of how to achieve a peaceful, stable existence in everyday life; it considers how such an existence is perpetuated over generations. The balancing of stability and exploration, inheritance and innovation is central, but *A Pass in the Grampians* is concerned with balance on the communal (rather than individual) level. The novel ponders humanity's larger spiritual movements through time,

while demonstrating Shepherd's familiarity with contemporary events and intellectual trends. The community's changes occur, quite explicitly, within the context of early twentieth century events. My reading of *A Pass in the Grampians* will turn to the modernist philosophy of Henri Bergson. Bergson's ideas are related not only to those of other modernists, but also to Eastern philosophy.

Roderick Watson commends Shepherd for turning to the 'older and simpler verities of rural societies [to] offer a network of subtle and creative forces, still alive and still capable of revelation, beyond the broad accents and the mud-spattered garments'.[5] Underlying the surface narrative of Shepherd's novels are ideas common to weighty and ancient philosophies. Shepherd's readers, like her characters, must awaken and adapt to the profundies of life underlying the surface.

Each of Shepherd's novels describes the effects of change upon individual and communal life without losing sight of wider contemporary events. Each is optimistic in its view that humanity can and must adapt in order to persist. Shepherd's narratives also chronicle sorrow and pain with compassionate awareness that such things are indivisible from the sheer delight of being. This thesis seeks to explore what is at the spiritual centre of Shepherd's novels: how everyday men and women awaken to, engage with and adapt creatively to everyday physical and social life within the vast, all-encompassing flux of existence, illustrating the human capacity for generation and re-creation.

ENDNOTES

[1]National Library of Scotland (NLS), Single Letters of Neil Munro, Sir Compton Mackenzie and Neil Gunn, MSS 26900 (1940). Gunn describes a 'momentary apprehension of the primordial essence of life . . a curious half-consciousness of an extra dimension of apprehension, with its momentary thrill. . . I am not at all sure. . . that we have not here the beginnings to an extra dimension of being'.

[2]Aberdeen University Special Collections and Archives (AUSCA), Shepherd MSS 2750/13 (1925).

[3]NLS, Shepherd MSS 27440.

[4]Randall Stevenson, *Modernist Fiction: An Introduction*, 2nd edn., (London: Prentice Hall, 1998), p. 10.

[5]Roderick Watson, '"To Get Leave to Live", Patterns of Identity, Freedom, and Defeat in the Fiction of Nan Shepherd', *Studies in Scottish Fiction: Twentieth Century*, eds. Joachim Schwend and Horst W. Drescher, (Frankfurt/New York: Peter Lang, 1990), pp. 207-218 (p. 208).

CHAPTER ONE:

NAN SHEPHERD IN CONTEXT

I) BIOGRAPHY OF SHEPHERD

Home and Family

The Northeast landscape and community were central to Nan Shepherd's own quest for wisdom and balance. While her novels explore universal regions of experience, the material is drawn from personal life. Agnes Mure Mackenzie (Shepherd's peer and friend), comments:

> You . . . transcribe life about you and your own personal experience with enormous vigour. . . don't get too wound up; it doesn't look too much like personal experience--for one thing the most personal parts are fairly universal.[1]

Some knowledge of Shepherd's life contributes to an understanding of her vision and her fiction.

The balance between inherited identity and self-created identity is an underlying theme throughout Shepherd's work and life. Her novels (particularly *A Pass in the Grampians*) explore the process of spiritual inheritance and bequest: what individuals inherit from the previous generation, what they choose to do with their inheritance, and what they bequeath to the next generation. This can be seen in the evolution of Shepherd's family identity and her own intellectual and creative identity.

Little is known about Shepherd's mother or grandmothers, but Shepherd's bond with her mother was clearly strong. Shepherd kept two notebooks dated (1911 and 1914), full of excerpts of poetry and prose copied from a variety of sources.[2] Many entries are concerned with motherhood. Shepherd also wrote two poems for her mother in 1911. One reads:

The children, bringing butter-cups to their
mother:
Wide and far we rove,
Far over hills we've been;
Tired we return and cold,
Yet bearing treasure-trove
In cups of gold,
For our Queen.[3]

Shepherd's mother lived at Dunvegan, nursed by Shepherd, until her death.

The roots of Shepherd's philosophical vision are readily traced back through her male lineage. Shepherd's father was a civil engineer, a bridge-builder. Her mother's father was a tailor and 'substantial citizen' of Aberdeen.[4] Shepherd's uncle, Dr. William Kelly, was a well-regarded Aberdeen architect. Her brother (another civil engineer) survived the Great War, then died recuperating in South Africa. Shepherd's connection to rural life can be traced to her paternal grandparents- farmers from Drum and Strachan. It was a family tradition rich in rural and urban involvement. Not conventionally artistic, the family's professional tradition was one of practical artistry. The engineer, farmer, tailor, and architect possess values that Shepherd cherished: creativity combined with scientific precision, artistic endeavour characterised by tangible expression and useful purpose. Shepherd lived both within and outside her family tradition, evolving it to suit her needs, without letting herself be defined by it. Thus, in *The Quarry Wood*, Martha's father is not an engineer, but a ploughman. Shepherd 'knew country workers well, their way of life, their Doric tongue', writes Jessie Kesson (whom Shepherd befriended when Kesson was an anonymous cottar's wife).[5]

Shepherd was born February 11, 1893 in the village of Cults, three miles outside Aberdeen. When she was one month old, her family moved to West Cults into 'Dunvegan'. Though she traveled widely, 'Dunvegan' was Shepherd's home until she could no longer live independently.[6] While West Cults evolved from small farming village to affluent suburban community, 'Dunvegan' remained the same, providing Shepherd with a peaceful, still centre for most of the twentieth century.

Throughout Shepherd's work, the home is a physical representation of spiritual identity. 'Dunvegan' sits between town community and rural landscape. One aspect opens onto the main road , onto the bustle and life of West Cults. The garden on the other side of

the house, however, looks onto the Dee Valley and the river, carrying water from the Cairngorms. Shepherd's fiction emphasises the intersection between the human world and the physical world. Dunvegan occupies, literally, that space of intersection. As Kesson writes: 'Her habitat too, a kind of extension of herself'.[7] One can imagine Shepherd's work being derived from the effect these two views had upon her. But that would suggest too simplistic a foundation for such intricate work. Shepherd's writing reflects the spiritual travels she undertook, from a house in which she spent her entire life.

Shepherd and Aberdeen University

During the first world war Shepherd studied English Literature at King's College, University of Aberdeen (1911-1915). She voices gratitude to the university for teaching that knowledge is but a starting point for wisdom (a lesson central to *The Quarry Wood).* She came into close contact with scholars such as English professor, Herbert Grierson; natural historian, J. Arthur Thomson; philosopher, John MacMurray; and poet/biologist, Ronald Campbell MacFie.[8] Shepherd would also have known MacFie's poetry. Using imagery of stone and sea, and scientific metaphors, it grapples with the tension of change, balanced between chance and will: 'Creatures of Chance, we live and die,/ Chance is the Power we deify. . . //Yet was it chance whose fumblings brought/Life from the burning cloud, and wrought. . . /A living world with Beauty fraught?'.[9] Shepherd is explicit about the legendary Grierson's legacy to the next generation: 'No Aberdeen student could leave his care without having undergone the impact of Donne. . .we did not then realise .. . he was putting into the hands of a generation to follow the material for a new approach to poetry'.[10]

Shepherd was, however, 'taught by more than the words from [her] teachers' mouths'.[11] Daxter, the wily Sacrist of *The Quarry Wood* is modeled upon Dankester, the sacrist of King's College in Shepherd's day. Dankester used to guide the deaf Mackenzie to the front chairs, just as Daxter guides Martha in *The Quarry Wood.*[12]

The grafting of scientific, philosophical and literary thought and nonacademic influences upon Shepherd's vision is apparent. Neil Gunn pinpoints this branding in his response (dated 1945) to *The Living Mountain*: 'This is beautifully done. With restraint, the

fine precision of the artist or scientist or scholar; with an exactitude that is never pedantic, but always tribute'.[13]

As a student, Shepherd worked on the student literary magazine, *Alma Mater*, with Mackenzie (the magazine's first female editor). In 1919, Shepherd and Mackenzie edited *The Alma Mater Anthology* (1919). Ten of Shepherd's poems appear alongside the poetry of Mackenzie, Grierson, MacFie and, a poem by Thomas Hardy.

In 1905, Aberdeen University awarded Hardy an honorary degree.[14] Impressed by the city and its university, Hardy wrote 'Aberdeen'. Its introductory quote ('And wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times' from *Isaiah,* 33:6) suggests parallels between Hardy's impressions of Aberdeen and Shepherd's deep devotion. The poem itself suggests more profound kinship:

> I looked and thought, 'All is too gray and cold
> To wake my place-enthusiasms of old!'
> Till a voice passed: 'Behind that granite mien
> Lurks the imposing beauty of a Queen.'
> I looked anew; and saw the radiant form
> Of Her who soothes in stress, who steers in storm,
> On the grave influence of whose eyes sublime
> Men count for the stability of the time.[15]

It is easy to hear Shepherd's voice emerging as an obvious, perhaps conscious successor, to Hardy (the quintessential regional novelist) in this poem.

Shepherd's association with the *Aberdeen University Review* reveals her devotion to the contemporary intellectual climate, within and beyond Aberdeen. *The Review* also charts the course of the university's evolution. During Shepherd's student years, the *Review* abounds with contributions from Grierson, Thomson and MacFie -- Aberdeen University's inner circle of intellectual giants. Discussions of evolution, philosophy, poetry and literature convey broad appreciation for the 'wonder of life'.[16]

Shepherd graduated in 1915, and was appointed a lecturer of English at the Aberdeen Training College for Teachers. Echoing *The Quarry Wood*, she writes: 'I had had a delusion, before [1912], that a graduate was of necessity an educated person'.[17] Like Martha, Shepherd's education continued past her student years. As a lecturer, Shepherd began contributing her ideas, shaped by the previous generation's work. A review of Hugh MacDiarmid's poetry (1938) confirms Shepherd's familiarity and admiration.[18] Another

article celebrates the fiftieth anniversary of women's admission to Aberdeen University (1941).[19] Shepherd describes how the destruction of obsolete, patriarchal traditions resulted in 'unbounded and exciting possibilities', recalling the vision of cultural evolution that underlies her novels.[20]

Shepherd retired from teaching in 1956, and became editor of the *Review* in 1957. Book reviews (of works by Kesson, Peter Scott, MacDiarmid, Maribel Edwin, Lyne Irvine) and character portraits (of Grierson, Mackenzie, Elisabeth Christie Brown) comprise some of her contributions- wry, compassionate articles, devoid of self-promotion, intent on raising recognition for her peers. Retiring in 1964, Shepherd was given an honorary Doctorate of Laws.

Shepherd was reticent about her writing. Kesson knew Shepherd for three years before learning that she had written a novel. The morning after *The Quarry Wood* appeared, Shepherd entered her classroom:

> the students, who had both great affection and respect for Nan, stamped their feet in recognition of her achievement. She raised her hand for them to desist, sat down at her table and went straight into taking the class as if nothing had happened.[21]

The following novels and poetry collection came in quick succession and were well-received. Then there was nothing else until *The Living Mountain* in 1977 (written in the nineteen-forties). In 1959, Rachel Annand Taylor wrote to Shepherd: 'You are editing the review with originality and brilliance. . . Why, I wonder, did you give up literature so early?'.[22] Shepherd herself said that she only wrote when 'I feel that there's something that simply must be written'.[23]

While Shepherd is rarely remembered for her own work, she is remembered for her support of other writers. Dr. Cuthbert Graham writes: 'Nan Shepherd's most important work was her influence on generations of students, and her gifts of encouragement to many young writers'.[24] Her support for Jessie Kesson is well-known. She also gave encouragement to Aberdeenshire poet, Ken Morrice.[25] She helped Francis Russell Hart in his biographical work on Neil Gunn.[26] Shepherd always honoured her predecessors, editing *Poems* in 1963 (a collection of Milne's work) and *The Last Poems* (a collection of Murray's poetry) in 1969, with Alexander Keith. She also established a trust fund for Lewis Grassic Gibbon's wife and

children when he died.[27] Perhaps Shepherd's sense of connectedness and responsibility to past and future generations overwhelmed her desire for personal achievement and recognition.

Shepherd and Northeast Life: A Balance of Landscape and Society

Devoted though she was to the university milieu, Shepherd was equally devoted to the natural and social world of the Northeast. She was an 'avid mountaineer' in the Deeside Field Club, and gave talks about mountains and mountaineering.[28] Mackenzie ends one letter: 'good luck to you and don't fall off any cliffs'.[29] Shepherd never attempted to keep her love of the outdoors distinct from her intellectual and creative life. Her students learned in accordance with the lesson Shepherd had learned- that wisdom must be sought within and outside the university. On trips to the Cairngorms and the Hebrides, her students learned campcraft and navigation alongside grammar and literature.

Shepherd's contributions to the *Deeside Field Club* journal further reveal Shepherd's connection to landscape. One article, 'The Colour of Deeside' (1938) is a prelude to *The Living Mountain* in style and substance:

> Sometimes in a hill hollow [blue] would seem to have its own existence, apart from both earth and sky. The result is to give the landscape depth and at least the illusion of significance. The 'significance' may be reducible to latitude, the lines on which the country is built, and the amount of moisture in the atmosphere: but then we have it on good authority that three notes combined together to make a star.[30]

The natural world is central to both her novels, and her poetry. If Shepherd has received scant attention as a novelist, she has received less as a poet. Her earliest poems (from 1911 and 1918) explore ideas and imagery more fully (and daringly) developed in her novels. A poem written at age eighteen, for instance, hints at Shepherd's later vision:

> The simplest things change with my moods,
> And new names often borrow;
> Out on the road is a puddle today,
> And a mirror tomorrow.[31]

In the Cairngorms (1934) confirms Shepherd's affinity for natural landscapes, and her interest in change.

Sadly, Shepherd's poetry has fallen into obscurity. Mairi-Ann Cullen suggests this is because her poems do not challenge English poetic tradition.[32] While Shepherd's poetry uses

traditional metric constructions and unadventurous language, Marion Angus finds innovation in the 'spirit of place' that the poetry conceives:

> 'Loch Avon' is a burning jewel . . that thrill of passion and sincerity. . . 'Hill Burns' shows me what miracles can be attained by words. . . I am carried away by the beauty of the thing which your spirit and the spirit of place between you have conceived. . . it is something quite new. . . strange-lovely.[33]

Written during the years following World War II, *The Living Mountain* gives fuller expression to the vision hinted at in her articles and poetry. It is a poetic distillation of insights gleaned from long contact with the Northeast landscape. Some proclaimed it her best book.[34] Shepherd herself was 'radiant' about it.[35] *The Living Mountain* reveals the wellspring of Shepherd's philosophical vision.

Shepherd understood that people and landscape together embody the essence of the Northeast. She delighted in idiosyncratic personalities. In a characteristically austere essay, ('The Old Wives') published in an issue of *BEANO* (1936), Shepherd's individualistic feminism is revealed: '[Miss Abercrombie] is hard as a harrow. . . I smile when I read of all the Movements it has required to oust women from the domestic duties. Miss Abercrombie required only herself'.[36] The peasant Betsy perhaps inspired Bawbie Paterson: 'hoarse and black. Her nails are encrusted with earth. She dargs like a man'. 'Plain' Lintie resembles *The Weatherhouse's* John Gray: 'children want her often. They believe implicitly that there is nothing she cannot mend. . . And each new problem that comes to her she treats with the solemnity it deserves. Is not all a part of creation, and infinitely new?'

Shepherd admired courage and wisdom, wherever it was found. Agnes Mure Mackenzie overcame deafness to become a writer, critic, suffragette, and the first woman to receive a D.Litt from Aberdeen in 1924. In a *Review* article Shepherd describes Mackenzie's 'sheer pluck. . . [H]er mind was muscular, her judgement mature, she had the habit of hard work and fire in her bones'.[37] Jessie Kesson was a cottar's wife of limited means and education who (encouraged by Shepherd) succeeded on the strength of determination and talent. Charles Murray was the Northeast's self-made genius: engineer, egalitarian, and 'ploughman poet'. Shepherd admires the crofter James McGregor because he:

> drew in knowledge like breathing. . . Education and training might have made him a highly successful man: I do not think they would have made him a more interesting one. . . picking up knowledge where he needed it, with the acumen that refuses nothing that

> is to its purpose. . . He surprised the very thoughts out of your head . . . none stayed [in his house] but learned from him.[38]

Perhaps Shepherd never moved from Aberdeenshire because her vision saw subtleties that a duller eye would miss.

As in her intellectual life, Shepherd gave of herself abundantly. During World War Two, she organised the welfare of children from bomb-threatened cities.[39] Her letters were often accompanied by sprigs of jasmine or lavender. Kesson writes: 'She had imaginative kindness, not simply confined to the giving of seasonal gifts, but rather to gifts in season'.[40] In her old age, Shepherd expressed to Jessie Kesson a fear that she was being egotistical, for Shepherd had always stressed the importance of living beyond the self.

Shepherd's life reflects devotion to disparate concerns: the life of the Northeast, and the life of Aberdeen University. Linking these was Shepherd's devotion to people. Shepherd commends Murray for '[his] sheer simple interest in people, what they were, what they did, how they did it . . .The perennial freshness of his interest in folk, not only for their sterling qualities, but for their quirks and inadequacies, absurdities and sins.'[41] Kesson echoes Murray's words: '[Shepherd's] interest in her fellow human beings, their quirks and their qualities was avid, undiminished until the last weeks of her life. . . The uniqueness of the individual absorbed her'.[42] When Kesson asked Shepherd if she believed in an afterlife. Shepherd's reply is characteristic: 'I hope it is true for those who have had a lean life. For myself-- *this* has been so good, so fulfilling'.[43] Shepherd created her own good and fulfilling life, and probably would have regarded *'this'* a greater creative achievement than any of her written work.

II) SHEPHERD AND MODERNISM

In October 2000, the Makars' Court at the Edinburgh Writer's Museum commemorated Shepherd for her 'outstanding contribution to Modernist fiction'.[44] This recognition is long overdue. Shepherd has not been perceived as a modernist author for various reasons. She lived in Aberdeen, not London or Paris. In an age of self-promotion, she promoted her contemporaries.[45] She was not a political or cultural critic in Europe, though she was in Scotland, especially the Northeast. She did not subscribe to any of modernity's 'isms', though

no doubt she knew of them. Shepherd was a circumspect individualist, taking ideas as they appealed to her sceptical intelligence and her intuitive wisdom. Shepherd's work is modernist, if her personality was not.

Shepherd's novels combine subtle experimentation with accessibility, almost to the point of injury. Mackenzie warns Shepherd (regarding *The Quarry Wood*) that: 'in London the Kailyard School is now forgotten so you may escape some of the damning'.[46] Yet, as Gunn realised, readers expecting Kailyard fiction were put off by the underlying demands of Shepherd's novels, while readers seeking esoteric radicalism were put off by the accessibility of her writing.[47] Certainly, as Mackenzie continues: 'The fact of its fundamental originality will only strike the better people'.[48] This section considers Shepherd as a modernist author.

In 1959, Shepherd recalls her university years (1911-1915) for the *Review*, articulating the age's bewilderment: 'the very substance of the earth around us became new; our bodies and our brains were altered; time wasn't what it was; distance had new dimensions. . . thought had to rediscover its own bearings amid the welter of new information'.[49] The industrial machine age had fragmented and dehumanised society, reducing the individual to a mere component of something anonymous and inhuman. The tragedy of war intensified this. Across the disciplines, 'reality' was probed, and found to lack stability or order. Modernism is characterised by a disintegration of convention, stability and absolutes, and an awakening to a fluid and relative world. This caused what Vargish and Mook describe as 'epistemic trauma': 'a kind of primary or initial difficulty, strangeness, opacity; a violation of common sense, of our laboriously achieved intuitions of reality; an immediate, counterintuitive refusal to provide the reassuring conclusiveness of the past'.[50] As modernists sought for innovative ways to find and describe meaning in a changed world, the line dividing science from the arts blurred.[51] Science progressed and resembled philosophy. The arts world awoke to the relevance of scientific modes of perception and expression. Shepherd's novels are modernist insofar as they cross many of the same boundary lines.

In 1905, Einstein's Theory of Special Relativity proposed that Newton's rational system be dismissed in favour of a new system deprived of absolute ways of knowing. Einstein argued that one's continually-shifting physical context relative to objective reality inevitably distorts one's perception, creating various and conflicting realities. The impact of relativity theory upon modernist thought cannot be underestimated. As D.H. Lawrence

writes: 'Everybody catches fire at the word Relativity . . . [it] means. . . there is no single absolute central principle governing the world'.[52] The discrediting of established (patriarchal) norms, together with the notion that one can influence one's subjective reality, were particularly welcome developments for the feminist movement. But for men and women both, a relative world gave positive, creative counterforce to the dehumanised, mechanised world. Shepherd's characters similarly awaken both to trauma and a sense of liberation.

While physics studied the impact of subjective consciousness upon physical reality, Freudian psychology studied the workings of the subjective consciousness (and unconsciousness) itself. Virginia Woolf writes: 'The tendency of the moderns. . . is no doubt that they find their interest more and more in [the] dark region of psychology'.[53] Modernist fiction frequently appropriates Freud's theories about sleep, dream, and moments of awakening. These also figure in Shepherd's novels, blurring certainties.

But despite her interest in psychology, Shepherd argues that we (characters, readers, and authors) should avoid a purely inner-world existence, distinguishing her from some modernist authors who centred entire novels upon the inner-world experience (for example, Dorothy Richardson, Marcel Proust, and James Joyce). Shepherd never narrates directly through the consciousness (stream-of-consciousness technique) of a single character for any length. She is clear that the pursuit of wise self-reliance and peaceful existence depend upon transcending self-absorption. This requires a balanced perception of the relationship between the self and the circumambient universe.

Problems of Expression

A relativistic universe was problematical for artists claiming to have special insight into the nature of existence. Of what relevance was one artist's subjective vision? Moreover, the old tools and techniques of narrative seemed inadequate to the modern task. Randall Stevenson quotes from *A la recherche du temps perdu* (1913-27): the '"realist. . . form of perception which places everything in the object" is not so much "clumsy and erroneous" but simply impossible'.[54] Similarly, Woolf writes:

> So much of the enormous labour of proving the solidity, the likeness to life, of the story is not merely labour thrown away but labour misplaced to the extent of obscuring and blotting out the light of the conception.[55]

Modern writers sought new means of cutting to the quick of experience. An era of experimentation with language and narrative technique followed.

Shepherd's techniques are not radical, but she experiments with language, and calls attention to the usefulness of such experiment. Lindsay, angry and bewildered by life, turns to improper language: 'Damned impudence. And I was a damned ass. . .'I've been brought up to use tidy language, haven't I? But life isn't tidy. . . that's what I'm discovering' (154). Lindsay finds (like modernist authors) that 'tidy' language is inadequate.

Shepherd experiments with language by using Scots in a largely English narrative (four years before Gibbon's *Sunset Song*). Unlike Joyce's intellectual and often abstruse experiments, Shepherd's language invites readers in. Much of Shepherd's wry humour and earthy texture is an effect of the language she uses, steeped (like Gibbon's and MacDiarmid's) in the often animalistic, and richly physical Northeast vernacular. Durno's language, when he encounters Bella for the first time, distinguishes between Bella's high-brow speech and his own: 'the wordies sounded grand. . . She fair made the adjectives fly' (3). Yet Durno's speech is the richer: 'a sair chase I had with that bla'guards o' sheep-- a sair weary trauchle' (2). Geordie and Emmeline are also mouthpieces for the coarse, rough speech of Shepherd's Northeast. As Margaret Elphinstone writes, the rich Doric makes 'other people's speech [sound] comparatively pale and wan'.[56] Shepherd's use of language demonstrates the message of her novels, that life is 'neither crass nor rare, but both in one' (WH, 176).

Modernist innovations in narrative technique mirrored innovations in the visual arts. As Einstein's relativity theories revolutionised the single-point perspective that had dominated scientific study, Cubism was revolutionising the single-point perspective that dominated Western art. Western art had learned to depict three dimensions on a two-dimensional space. Termed realist, single-point perspective is actually illusionist. Cubists' multiple-point perspective revealed the illusion: Picasso 'present[ed]. . . more than one perspective of [the human form] in a single image or representational "instant"'.[57] Production and appreciation of this art requires that one move outside one's usual self-centred perspective. Cubists caused 'visual trauma' by undermining the validity, stability and centrality of any individual perspective.[58]

In literature, the omniscient narrator, with his single-point perspective, was disappearing. Joseph Conrad and Henry James were among the first to abandon the omniscient narrator, instead narrating from the often unreliable perspectives of characters. Randall Stevenson writes of Conrad:

> [he] dramatize[s] the uncertainties of perception itself. Conflicting or uncertain visions leave no world-view secure, and the fiction necessarily focused on the subjective processes through which reality may be known by each individual.[59]

Considered as a whole, the paradoxical kaleidoscope series of unreliable perspectives communicates a wider truth (if only the inherently arbitrary nature of existence).

In *The Living Mountain*, shifts of perspective are enacted through physical movement (12). Of the Barns of Bynack Shepherd writes: 'One can walk up a sort of staircase within and look out by a cleft as though from a window' (12). The perspective, rather than the subject, interests Shepherd. From inside the 'enormous black cube of rock' she discovers a unique perspective: the mountain from within.

The Weatherhouse's social community (embodied by the house), may be read as a literary analogy to Cubist art. Like D. H. Lawrence, Shepherd applies Free Indirect Style (rather than stream-of-consciousness) to create narrative uncertainty and communicate multiple perspectives. We are not always certain whose thoughts are being recorded, but language and idiom betray a perspective other than the author's. The social fabric of *The Weatherhouse* comprises a series of divergent perspectives, and is convincing as a result.

As always, Shepherd emphasises a need for detached vision. She describes the Cairngorms from a distance: 'One is surprised by a new vision of the familiar range' (LM, 15). Her novels demand the same shift of perspective. Shifting her focus from within an individual character's consciousness, she gradually moves outwards, and finally reveals Fetter-Rothnie as the seat of a complex community. Shepherd refreshes our perspective. She was not emulating Cubism, but she clearly fits into the context of (scientific and cultural) modernist events. Shepherd, like Cubist artists, tries to reveal a larger truth through depicting more than one way of seeing.

A Pass in the Grampians announces Shepherd's awareness of modernist art trends. When Barney shows his painting of Bella: 'One looked in alarm to see if she was actually as ample as that' (38). Like *The Weatherhouse, A Pass in the Grampians* considers that there

may be several perceived versions of reality, many unfamiliar and unsettling. Jenny examines Barney's landscapes and 'sat a long time with puzzled brows over their unlikeness to the familiar world' (57). The novel asks to what degree modernist art should rebel against tradition as static and irrelevant. Barney denies artistic traditions just as Bella denies her ancestral tradition. Jenny must make her own choice. In one scene, however, Shepherd detaches from these questions altogether, revealing modernism's hubristic self-absorption, recalling us to the broader view:

> [Jenny] flung back her head and laughed. It was a hearty, resounding laugh, not in the least a laugh of mockery or irony. She was not laughing at him, nor at Bella, nor yet at Sammy who painted panels of his bus, but simply at life, that contained them all and was so absurd and so delightful' (39).

A Pass in the Grampians is a subtle debate (enacted through the intrusions of modernist art forms within a traditional community) about the nature of reality, and about the importance of innovation and tradition in creating new realities.

Unexpected Parallels

Shepherd demonstrates surprising parallels with the modernist school of Vorticism (expounded in the magazine BLAST), if only because Vorticism demonstrates surprising parallels with Eastern thought. Certainly, the actual manifestation of Ezra Pound's and Wyndham Lewis' Vorticism contradicts Shepherd's vision. Pound was one of several thinkers influenced by Eastern thought (through the work of American Orientalist, Ernest Fenollosa). Vorticist scholar, Reed Way Dasenbrock, writes that: 'elements in *The Pisan Cantos* that reveal them to be Taoist also reveal them to be Vorticist'.[60] The notion of a still centre amidst chaos is central to Eastern philosophy and Vorticism- otherwise divergent schools of thought. John Burns, discussing Zen, writes that enlightened man 'lives within [the] flux with no sense of alienation because it teaches him . . . to find a stable centre common to himself and to the world beyond'.[61] Lewis writes: 'You think at once of a whirlpool. . . at the heart of the whirlpool is a great silent place where all the energy is concentrated, and there at the point of concentration is the Vorticist'.[62] And Shepherd describes fording a stream: 'one's strongest sensation is of the pouring strength of the water against one's limbs; the effort to poise the

body against it gives significance to this simple act of walking through running water. . . the glow that releases one's entire cosmos' (LM, 81).

Vorticists, however, seemed blind to their debt to ancient thought and artistic tradition in pursuit of innovation. Lewis writes about the need: 'to destroy politeness, standardization and academic, that is civilized, vision'.[63] Shepherd gives attention to the debate, but she never advocates the wholesale rejection of what has come before. *A Pass in the Grampians,* especially, balances inherited tradition against the unhistoried innovations of modernism. Where Shepherd's contemporaries are extremist, Shepherd is cautious. Watson writes of Shepherd's novels that: 'None of them are entirely radical in their solutions'.[64] She believed in forward motion, but her modernist innovations are rooted in quiet, deliberate (and very un-modern) tribute to the past.

Bergsonian Ideas in Shepherd

Bergsonian philosophy had great influence throughout modernism. As Mary Ann Gillies, a Bergson scholar, writes: 'Bergson's theories are pervasive in this period. . . they are a common thread in modernism'.[65] In *Time and Western Man* (1927), Wyndham Lewis wrote of Bergson that he was: 'more than any other single figure. . . responsible for the main intellectual characteristics of the world we live in, and the implicit debt of almost all contemporary philosophy to him is immense.'[66]

There is brief evidence that Shepherd encountered Bergson at a young age. In her 1911 sketchbook, she notes the evolution of man, and records short definitions of Lamarckism, Neo-Lamarckism, Darwinism, Neo-Darwinism, Orthogenesis, and then 'Elan vital- Bergson- creative evolution'.[67] Almost undoubtedly Shepherd would have encountered Bergson's work during her years at Aberdeen University. She would have known the poet/biologist, Ronald Campbell MacFie, whose poetry indicates an appreciation of Bergson. J. Arthur Thomson and Patrick Geddes mention *élan vital* in *Biology* (1925). Geddes, in fact, met Bergson in Paris.[68] Thomson lists *Creative Evolution* in his 'References to Some Representative Books'.[69] Bergson is also mentioned in *The Outline of Science (1921)*, edited by Thomson.[70]

The parallels between Shepherd and Bergson are numerous, further helping to place Shepherd within a modernist context. Broadly, both believed that life consists of the movement between chance and human creative will. Shepherd, like Bergson, encouraged the alteration of habitual perspectives as essential to knowing and creating life. Shepherd, like Bergson, stresses the importance of intellect combined with intuitive experience. Shepherd, like Bergson, was interested in the individual's capacity for self-creation upon inherited foundations. Memory was central to both thinkers. A passage from *Creative Evolution* reads: 'he who perceives successive events one by one will allow himself to be led by them; he who grasps them as a whole will dominate them. In short the qualities of matter are so many stable views that we take of its instability'.[71] This captures much of what is common to Bergson's philosophy and Shepherd's vision. Bergson and Shepherd both were fundamentally optimistic and affirmative about what they agreed was a chaotic and uncertain existence.

In his 'Introduction' to *Matter and Memory*, Bergson writes: 'This book affirms the reality of spirit and the reality of matter, and tries to determine the relation of the one to the other.'[72] Shepherd similarly sought to reconcile the 'reality of spirit' and 'the reality of matter'. Her philosophy employs empirical observation and intellectual speculation, spiritual idealism and scientific materialism.

Bergson, however, was a philosopher, while Shepherd was a novelist. What Bergson explores in discourse, Shepherd shows us through narrative. In this she may be linked to the metaphysical poets, who applied philosophical systems to life, and applied art (through language and narrative) to describe the results. As T.S. Eliot writes, the metaphysical poets tried 'to draw within the orbit of feeling and sense what had existed only in thought'.[73] Bergson explores change and memory in discourse. Shepherd writes of weathers that are 'the very stuff of experience. . . a blizzard, a cloudburst, a hot sweet still day of summer, glanced from among the shifting clouds of memory' (PG, 23).

Bergson's philosophy revolutionised the way people in the early twentieth century thought of life. He argued that time was the prime reality, and that space/matter (habitually assumed to be absolute) is of subjective, secondary consideration. He believed, with Einstein, that what we accept as absolute, stable reality is but one relative, distorted version, subject to disintegration.

Durée réele (durée or real time*)* is the undifferentiated, non-spatialized, continually-flowing progression of time. A similar flow of change underlies Shepherd's work (often depicted through weather or water). Although we rarely live in contact with it, *durée* is the realm in which we experience and grow. Bergson and Shepherd both portray this flow as something that can be drawn upon, but never controlled or halted. To stop *durée* would be to stop life.

Knowing *durée* is an inner experience, reliant upon intuitive (unselfconscious, non-analytical) perception. Beyond self-bound fear and ego, we awaken to 'real time' where, as Kolakowski writes, 'there is a perfect continuity, and our self is at every moment . . . in a state of being born, absorbing its past and creating its future'.[74] Shepherd, like Bergson, believes that an 'uncoupling' of the intellectual self-consciousness is vital (LM, 71). She writes:

> The mind grows limpid; the body melts; perception alone remains. One neither thinks, nor desires, nor remembers, but dwells in pure intimacy with the tangible world. . . I do not ascribe sentience to the mountain, yet at no other moment am I sunk quite so deep into its life. I have let go my self. (LM, 70)

Such experiences appear mystical, but both Bergson and Shepherd consider such moments as veritable experience of the only 'real' world there is.

While *durée* is essential to human life, the capacity to detach from *durée* (where most animals are bound) has enabled humanity to prosper. We could not live in perpetual contact with *durée*. Human intellect- the companion to intuition- imposes a framework upon pandemonium (clock-time, calendars, moral and social traditions, science). This framework is artificial. It does not describe absolute truth, but it enables relative stability. Bergson calls this *l'étendu.*

The Living Mountain demonstrates the importance of intellect. Navigation through mist with map and compass is a 'matter of the mind' (33). Intellectual exercise imposes upon the wilderness a grid. Intellectual tools of analysis (map and compass) can save one from wandering lost, where intuition may lead one over a cliff. But intellectual understanding of map and compass are useless if one does not refer directly to the physical landscape. Left to abstract speculation, the intellect has a dangerous 'tendency. . . to fabrication', writes Bergson.[75]

Shepherd, like Bergson, believes that we cannot survive living purely in *l'étendu* or *durée*; evolution balances the two. Gillies writes: 'To remain always in *durée* would result in an isolated existence bordering on madness, for humans need the society of others. Yet to live always in external time is equally destructive, preventing genuine growth and self-knowledge' (13).

Bergson sees life as a free and creative process, neither mechanistic nor predetermined: 'We are free when our acts emanate from the whole of our personality, when they express it and when they have this kind of indefinable resemblance to it that we see sometimes between a work and the artist.[76] But what is the creative impulse that drives humanity's urge to freedom, to new expressions in art and in life? The central force behind Bergson's perception of change is *élan vital*. *Élan vital* drives human life, collectively, to continue evolving.

Bergson embraced the concept of evolution but reacted against various contemporary theories. He disliked mechanistic theories, wherein variation is the result of reaction to external stimuli. Shepherd, too, is against any mechanistic view of progress. Writing about the elation of mountain climbing (a metaphor for enlightenment), Shepherd says it 'cannot be captured by any mechanical mode of ascent' (LM, 6). In her novels, mechanised vehicles represent characters' decision to relinquish their own creative powers.

Élan vital is the source of humanity's creative drive, and is one with material creation. Bergson argued, like relativity theory, that energy and matter do not have separate identities. Sustained along lines of genetic inheritance, *élan vital* ('vital spirit') lends Bergson's theory of evolution its intentionality. We create, in Bergson's view, when we perceive inert matter as being permeated with *élan vital* when we see that the source of our individual being is the source of all being. This notion, of course, aligns with Eastern thought as well. Human perception is itself altered in the process of creation. As Shepherd writes: 'Place and mind may interpenetrate till the nature of both is altered' (LM, 6). All matter tends toward disintegration, but *élan vital* is eternal. Human life is a result and a manifestation of life's perpetual struggle to 'shape inert matter into ever newer forms', writes Kolakowski. God is 'not a thing, but the [creative] action itself' (53, 61). Evolution depends upon our capacity to create: to bridge our physical and spiritual experiences, our apprehension of *durée* and our daily existence in *l'étendu* driven by *élan vital*. Bergson writes: 'Thus defined, God has

nothing of the ready-made, he is uninterrupted life, action, freedom. And the creation, so conceived is not a mystery, we experience it in ourselves when we act freely'.[77]

III) SHEPHERD AND SCOTTISH RENAISSANCE WRITERS

The Scottish Literary Renaissance (beginning roughly at the turn of the century and continuing into the 1930s) could be described as Scotland's experience of modernism. Like modernism, the Renaissance resulted from the need for new perception and definition. Kurt Wittig credits MacDiarmid with trying to bring 'man and Scotland, face to face with the universe, with the mysteries of life, death, man, God, the past and the future', in pursuit of 'Scotland's essential instincts.'[78] The Renaissance was a cultural movement in search of a viable and unified Scottish identity (in the eyes of Scots and the rest of the world). But the search was conducted by a small group of Scotland's writers. MacDiarmid, Gunn, Gibbon and the Muirs dominated the movement, and the movement dominated Scottish culture, overwhelming the work of other contemporary Scottish authors.

There was more motivation to *create* Scotland's cultural identity than to describe it. Reliable, stable or secure descriptions of the identity and evolution of the movement as a whole are few, perhaps because the movement encompassed such contradiction. Hart writes that the Renaissance novel 'invited the creation of national epic or myth'.[79] While fascinating, epic and myth hardly provide reliable accounts of national identity. A more documentary-style, retrospective view of the Scottish Renaissance (and Scottish identity at the time) is developing. Examining the work of authors neglected at the time may help us to understand Scottish cultural identity as it actually was in the early twentieth century.

In his Ph.D. thesis, Alan Freeman writes that 'Shepherd is the likeliest intellectual candidate to help re-orientate Scots to face the demands of twentieth-century social organisation'.[80] Unlike some of her contemporaries, Shepherd was not an activist, a polemicist, or a self-promoter. She was neither flamboyant nor prolific. Her work does not serve a nation-centred agenda. Isobel Murray writes of Naomi Mitchison, Eric Linklater and Gibbon that their fiction was 'sometimes deliberately and self-consciously Scottish, and

sometimes something very different'.[81] Shepherd's fiction was very different, rarely deliberately or self-consciously Scottish- but always undeniably Scottish.

Like MacDiarmid and Gunn, Shepherd was proud of being Scottish. She stayed in Scotland (Gibbon and the Muirs left). She promoted Scottish writers, and was friends with both the lionised and the neglected writers of the age (Gunn, MacDiarmid and Charles Murray, as well as Agnes Mure Mackenzie, Rachel Annand Taylor, Marion Angus, and Helen Cruickshank).

Her writing demonstrates characteristics associated with the Renaissance. Renaissance authors sought, individually, to achieve some kind of unity and balance on the level of national identity and culture. Considered as a whole, however, the Renaissance contained deep, pessimistic schisms. Shepherd's life and work, rooted in optimism, sought to transcend divisiveness. One magazine profile reads: 'What is particularly interesting is that, almost alone among the younger Scottish writers, she goes beyond modern beliefs to those which have a timeless, since fundamental, significance'.[82] This may be her most valuable contribution to the Renaissance.

Scotland's Regional Tradition in the Renaissance

Scotland's cultural identity (previous to the Renaissance) displays one incontrovertible trait. The 'Scottish' experience has always been regional: Scotland itself being a region containing distinctive regions within it. Hart writes: 'The Scottish example evinces a capacity to remain vigorously identified with a small and homogeneous community and at the same time to flourish as a citizen of the world'.[83] The 'Scottish example' seems remarkably adept at translating the experience of home into relevant wisdom regarding universal concerns.

By the turn of the century, however, the Scottish regional novel had lost that capacity. MacDiarmid bemoans 'the absence of aesthetic thought of any such value as might realign Scotland with other Western European countries and induce aesthetic developments based on Scottish roots and yet able to withstand comparison with the contemporary aesthetic of other countries'.[84] The Kailyard novels left a lingering image of an isolated nation, stagnating in sentiment.[85] Twentieth-century authors sought to re-engage Scottish regional life with the world beyond. They sought something in the region (rural or urban) that could stand for an

illuminating microcosm of universal human experience. The twentieth-century Scottish regional novel again proved it could function as a space for real and symbolic engagement with the world beyond.

Craig calls Shepherd 'the consummate regional novelist'.[86] Her novels describe life in regions to which she was strongly attached. But Craig refers to more than surface setting and plot. Like Hardy, Shepherd knew that within the language and details of local life lay accessible and reassuring proof of universal human experience. Shepherd is the 'consummate regional novelist' in the acuity and force of her creative vision.

The Power of Creative Vision: Shepherd and MacDiarmid

MacDiarmid and Shepherd were both regional writers (Shepherd's region being the Scottish North-east, while Scotland was MacDiarmid's chosen region) with powerful creative, indeed transformative, vision. This, while perhaps not the most obvious characteristic of the Renaissance, enabled Scottish literature to move beyond the Kailyard toward literature of wider relevance. Shepherd 'commend[ed] MacDiarmid for being the only Scottish poet to win a European reputation'.[87]

It is difficult to say when they learned of one another. Gunn mentions Grieve in various letters to Shepherd dated 1931, and refers to an article she wrote about Grieve and Burns.[88] In an article of high praise (1938), Shepherd writes: 'I believe [MacDiarmid] has qualities which are those of a major poet'.[89] MacDiarmid gave Shepherd one of twenty copies of *Direadh*.[90] Shepherd writes of his work: 'What is relevant-- with a fierce relevancy that focuses everything he has written in a point of light-- is the vision behind his creed'.[91]

Virginia Woolf writes: 'Let us not take it for granted that life exists more fully in what is commonly thought big than in what is commonly thought small'.[92] MacDiarmid saw the bigness in small things. Like Shepherd, he relies upon natural world imagery (water, light, earth and fire), juxtaposing physical particulars with vast philosophical concepts. In 'The Eemis Stane', a stone becomes Earth. Snow conceals the tombstone's inscription signifying how easily human history can be obliterated. Like Shepherd, he unsettles conventional views with fresh perspectives, and captures the essential nature of life. Shepherd praises this quality

in Charles Murray. His is also 'a poetry of externals, yet at its best his selection of externals is so vital that his portrayal not only portrays, but illuminates'.[93]

As Shepherd writes: '[MacDiarmid] has moments of vision that penetrate like X-rays'. Of 'On a Raised Beach', she writes that he 'evok[es] one of those moments of recognition in which we see something familiar as though for the first time and know it with a sort of primordial knowledge'.[94] This echoes Gunn's 'atom of delight', or the Zen Buddhist's *satori*. Such moments come from recognising that the smallest physical thing shares its material and spiritual being with the stars.

One stanza from MacDiarmid's poem, 'Plaited Like the Generations of Men' (1955) reads:

> Now you understand how stars and hearts are one with another
> And how there can nowhere be an end, nowhere a hindrance;
> How the boundless dwells perfect and undivided in the spirit,
> How each part can be at once infinitely great and infinitely small,
> How the utmost extension is but a point, and how
> Light, harmony, movement, power
> All identical, all separate, and all united are life.[95]

The poem refers to Eastern (Indian) and Greek ancient thought. These influenced both MacDiarmid's and Shepherd's thinking, but the connection is deeper still. Frequent reference to illumination and primordial experience in both authors' work recall the first chapter of the book of 'Genesis'. References to ancient worlds are juxtaposed against references to contemporary life (such as Shepherd's X-ray simile). Shepherd, like MacDiarmid and Gunn, perceives that contemporary creative instincts are linked to the distant past in an interconnected web of being that spans time, as well as space. Just as Scotland's stories may carry significance for Europe, so the distant past may carry significance for the present. This notion is the fount of both MacDiarmid's and Shepherd's creative vision.

Shepherd admired MacDiarmid, but she was not uncritical. She thought MacDiarmid's creative vision was clouded by politics: 'His political verse is doggerel', she writes.[96] She questions his mingling of politics with art, calling his later poetry 'propagandist'.[97] Politically indifferent, Shepherd wanted social change, but did not want to have to join a league or party to effect it. MacDiarmid wrote loudly about social inequality. Shepherd never wrote explicitly about social inequality, but her life and work reveal deep compassionate egalitarianism. Despite their similar visions, Shepherd might have agreed with Naomi

Mitchison's statement that: 'I just can't do with drunk men looking at thistles. I want to see it unaided by any drug'.[98]

In their experimentation with language, MacDiarmid and Shepherd demonstrate similarity and difference. Craig comments that Shepherd's 'experiments in dialect speech. . . are as radical as anything you will find anywhere in modern Scottish writing'.[99] London publishers turned down *The Quarry Wood* because it was 'too Scotch for English readers'.[100] But Shepherd's linguistic experiments were not intended to effect radical cultural statement. She writes: 'Let's have new words therefore, to give our stark clean exact meaning, words not yet saturated with other people's meanings'.[101] She criticises MacDiarmid:

> I would give his whole phalanx of words for one of his swift illuminating metaphors. For, putting aside philosophy and philology, what matters in poetry is neither meaning nor vocabulary, but the fusion of both in utterance that is itself an experience. . . The over-charged word falsifies-- but does the esoteric word communicate?[102]

Shepherd's sparse interjection of Doric words within a largely English text does not alienate readers, but gently encourages them to enter into an unfamiliar experience of life. In her use of language, therefore, Shepherd departed from MacDiarmid and must be compared with another author of the Scottish Renaissance.

Philosophies of Change: Shepherd and Lewis Grassic Gibbon

The Scottish Renaissance was enacting its own creative evolution toward an identity of wider cultural relevance, asking the question of what to keep and what to reject from Scotland's past. Susanne Hagemann writes: 'The quest is for a new Scottish identity in keeping both with tradition and with the modern world'.[103] Shepherd and Gibbon both used Scots to represent the tension that underlies their novels- tension between the traditions of the past, the innovations of the present, and the unknown future. This tension determines the formal structure of Gibbon's trilogy and (perhaps less deliberately) Shepherd's omnibus. Both authors see life in terms of a ceaseless process of becoming and decaying. Both acknowledge the ambivalent impact of change: at once 'a wide and shimmering peace' and a 'brute stampede'.[104] *A Scots Quair* 'points the way forward from the pain of the past to the promise of the future', as William Malcolm writes.[105] Shepherd arrives at a similar conclusion, though she sees it through a different lens.

Gibbon accepts the sweep of change that dwarfs individuals but nonetheless concerns himself first and foremost with the individual. As a result, Gibbon sometimes sees the human and natural worlds as having a symbiotic, but combative relationship. In one instance, he writes:

> We Scots have little interest in the wild, and its world. . . I am concerned so much more deeply with men and women, with their nights and days, the things they believe, the things that move them to pain and anger and the callous, idle cruelties that are yet undead.[106]

Shepherd's fiction, however, gradually moves away from concern centred upon the individual toward a philosophical acceptance of change that transcends individual concerns. She sees humanity's living past, present and future as indivisible from its environment.

Gibbon was undoubtedly influenced by his subscription to Diffusionism, and race identity. Malcolm points out that Gibbon often transcends the reductive theories he adopts, and his views are no more straightforward than Shepherd's.[107] When detached from the close focus of an individual's narrative, Gibbon demonstrates an undeniable sense of oneness with the changing landscape: 'how interwoven with the fibre of my body and personality is this land and its queer, scarce harvests, its hours of reeking sunshine and stifling rain'.[108] At the end Gibbon describes, through Chris's perception:

> Change who ruled the earth and the sky and the waters underneath the earth. Change whose face she'd once feared to see, whose right hand was Death and whose left hand Life, might be stayed by none of the dreams of men, love, hate, compassion, anger or pity, gods or devils or wild crying to the sky. He passed and repassed in the ways of the wind, Deliverer, Destroyer and Friend in one.[109]

In such moments, Gibbon and Shepherd were looking through the same lens, aware of the swinging balance of life in an ever-changing world. But there is also Ewan, who travels to London on a hunger march (recalling Garry's return to war at the end of *The Weatherhouse).* This acknowledges the validity of individualistic idealism, whilst suggesting a development cycle that each generation must undergo.[110]

For Gibbon, a valid choice remains: to succumb anonymously to change, or to assert one's individualism, however vainly. It rests with the individual- reader or character- to choose. *The Weatherhouse* might imply the same, but *A Pass in the Grampians* must be considered Shepherd's final word on the matter. Her final novel contains elegiac notes acknowledging the individual cost of change, but it clearly reveals the author's view that

change is something that encompasses, but also overwhelms any and all individual players. Shepherd never, however, questions the vital human need for individual effort. While she might advocate recognition of change as an overwhelming force, she would never suggest allowing one's self to be overwhelmed into inaction. Shepherd manages to reconcile the ambivalent flow of change with the worth of individual intention and action. Gibbon ends with a choice, while Shepherd ends with a reconciliation.

Creating Identity and Balance: Shepherd and Willa Muir

Kirsty Allen writes that: '[Muir] emphatically and exuberantly inhabited the world and "belong[ed] to the universe"'.[111] The passage pinpoints what Muir and Shepherd share: an embrace of physical life, and an awareness of spiritual life. The word 'belonging' highlights a capacity for creative, spiritual interaction with the surrounding world. It signals Muir's fundamental concern for the common lot of humanity, also shared by Shepherd. Shepherd's metaphorical expression that 'islands are united by the bottom of the sea' is parallel to the opinion expressed by Muir's character, Elizabeth Shand, that 'we're only separate like waves rising out of the one sea'.[112]

Perhaps because they were marginalised from Scotland's cultural centre, both Muir and Shepherd seemed to relate more to modernism than to the Scottish Renaissance. Both authors explored the processes of identity development, of the human (and especially female) capacity for self-creation. Allen writes in her 'Introduction' to Muir's omnibus that: 'Muir's commitment to the feminist cause exerts a particularly profound influence upon her writing'.[113] Certainly, this is true of Shepherd's work as well. Both were aware of the restrictions that threatened a woman's claim to a peaceful, fulfilled space in the world.

Both authors were intellectuals, as is evident in their creative work. Margery Palmer McCulloch writes of *Imagined Corners* (1931): it 'impresses by the intellectual variety of its discourses'.[114] The same can be said of Shepherd's novels, although Shepherd never digresses from the narrative into philosophical discourse the way Muir occasionally does. Shepherd rarely tells readers anything outright, instead, she quietly, inventively invites them to look. Both writers were modernist in their affinity for the scientific perspective. *Imagined Corners* takes the precipitation of a crystal in solution as its structuring metaphor. Garry, of

The Weatherhouse, describes his war experience in terms of a 'fourth dimension' by which experience must be multiplied. He calls this dimension 'depth' or 'dissolution' (114). Shepherd writes explicitly in *The Living Mountain*: 'I find I have a naive faith in my scientist friends. . . their stories make the world so interesting' (44-5).

Both authors were modernist, too, in their interest in the psychological and philosophical relationship between the conscious and the unconscious mind, and the popular scientific-cum-cultural space-time theory. They combine these interests with an unflappable joy in life which comes from knowing that one does 'belong to the universe', despite confusion and suffering. It is unsurprising that Bergsonian thinking influenced Muir's writing, as it appears to have influenced Shepherd's. The younger Elisabeth 'was able to sit down to a book by a philosopher called Bergson, whom she had discovered just before leaving the University and who excited her' (115). Elisabeth describes 'the "earth-life", that power. . .coming out of the earth and spreading to the stars. . . this power, whatever its source, inspire all poetry, all love, all religion' (244). This is surely a reference to Bergson's concept of *élan vital*, but Muir's own opinion of Bergson is not entirely clear. Elisabeth is a naïve character, with much to learn. The more mature character, Elise, is sceptical of Elisabeth's notions. Simply this display of scepticism and ambiguity, however, demonstrate how similar Shepherd and Muir were.

Muir and Shepherd both, however, openly embrace the Bergsonian notion that individuals can influence their existence through perception. The capacity to imagine the world from another angle, and thus create a new reality, is important to both authors. Elise, in her imagination, strips the landscape of its marks of (male) civilisation. This active self-expression in the face of an oppressive past characterises Muir's vision of self-determination. It resembles Martha's realisation that 'I can be my own creator' (QW, 184).

Eastern ideas are present in Muir's writing as well. In *Imagined Corners* William Murray dreams of:

> turbulent water yellow with fine mud; and he careering down the middle of the stream on something resembling a large wooden tea-tray, perfectly round, with a hollow in the middle on which he had to balance himself. . . One false step and he knew he would be lost in one of the dimpling whirlpools around. And all he had to steady himself by was a straight, short pole. (271-2)

Eastern writings frequently make reference to the yellow river. Indeed, Murray 'had an idea that the river was in China, but that, at the same time, it was the river of the will of god. . . An Oriental philosophy, no doubt' (272). The notion of letting yourself be carried by a current is central to Eastern thought, and to Shepherd's vision. The image of balancing on a circle surrounded by a whirlpool, with a still pole at the centre parallels the Chinese ideogram *chung*.

Before his death, the minister hurries to the sea (representing change), and imagines it is the Pacific that draws him, 'almost smiling' (273). Perhaps the Pacific Ocean represents a spiritual peace in contrast to Scotland's North Sea religion (Presbyterianism) wherein death is anything but pacific. Muir's characters pursue peace, but often end in rough seas. Shepherd's narratives all move in pursuit of the same thing, but her concluding vision is more optimistic.

Change in the Scottish Renaissance

Change is something central to the creative consciousness of the Scottish Renaissance. Through her own exploration of change, Shepherd's context and influence may be perceived. The notion of life as a perpetual process of becoming was an effective antidote to the previous era's cultural stagnation. Mitchison writes about the 'gale of change [that] swept away the old stalks in the Scottish kailyard'.[115] She praised Charles Murray for his contribution to the continual adaptation of Scotland's literature: he 'cared deeply for Scottish literature as a living tradition renewing itself as life changed'.[116] And yet, Murray's was a relatively conservative view of change. MacDiarmid stands at the other pole- a radical seeking radical change. Shepherd, characteristically, stood somewhere between these two thinkers, providing a balanced middle ground. She had a profound appreciation for the physical and metaphysical implications of a perpetually-changing Scotland within a perpetually-changing universe.

Gunn and Shepherd exchanged advice and criticism for over thirty years. Gunn's admiration of Shepherd seems boundless. 'As it happens, I think you have one of the finest, subtlest minds in Scotland'.[117] Insofar as their philosophy of change impacted Scotland's changing cultural identity, Gunn and Shepherd may be compared in the context of the Scottish Renaissance. In *The Living Mountain*, Shepherd mentions the Silver Bough of Celtic mythology, a rare reference to Scotland's ancient cultures (34). Gunn has an Anna in his

book, *The Silver Bough* (1948), and insists too vehemently that: 'No, I didn't name the girl Nan because of you; at least I don't know why I called her the only name I could call her, because she herself knew it like a cry. Things are mysterious'.[118] The strongest link between Gunn and Shepherd is not Scotland, but something much less tangible.

IV) SHEPHERD AND EASTERN SPIRITUAL THOUGHT

Eastern Thought in Western Culture

Chung-yuan, a contemporary Taoist scholar, writes: 'since the beginning of the nineteenth century, Taoist ideas have flown like an invisible stream into the mind of the West'.[119] In 1816, F. Hegel was lecturing on Taoism, Confucianism and the *I Ching*.[120] Scientists (especially physicists) found that Eastern philosophy confirmed their 'new' discoveries. Carl Jung (who influenced Gunn), argued that Eastern ideas could rejuvenate Western culture.[121] In 1929, Richard Wilhelm published the Taoist text, *The Secret of the Golden Flower,* with an introduction by Jung about the psychological relevance of Taoism. An English translation appeared in 1931. The appropriation of Eastern ideas into Western culture in American Transcendentalism and modernist American poetry is explored in *Orientalism, Modernism, and the American Poem*, by Robert Kern.[122]

Eastern thought had special appeal for modernists (such as Pound, influenced by the work of turn-of-the-century American Orientalist, Ernest Fenollosa). Kern writes that modernist writers found 'an imagined site of serene, even sublime, transcendence of time and conflict' in Chinese poetry.[123]

Many Scottish modernist writers turned instead to Scotland's ancient cultures, but Gunn, MacDiarmid, and Shepherd were all influenced by Eastern thought: their Scotland was a place of far-reaching and far-looking significance.

I do not pretend to offer a thorough-going study of Eastern philosophy. I am interested merely in identifying parallels and correspondences that exist between it and Shepherd's thinking. In Shepherd's 1911 sketchbook, she dedicates several pages to Lafcadio Hearn. Hearn was a novelist, poet, critic and a dedicated English lecturer at the University of

Tokyo. Strongly influenced by Spencer, Hearn's writing brought Japanese culture and literature to the West.[124] Shepherd copied out a long passage in which Hearn (himself quoting or paraphrasing Spencer) recounts the eight stages that lead to Nirvana, and the Buddha's progression through these stages.[125] It is unclear whether Shepherd is quoting Hearn, Spencer, or commenting herself in one paragraph, which reads:

> In this Oriental philosophy, act and thoughts are forces integrating themselves into material and mental phenomena-- into what we call objective and subjective appearances. The very earth we tread upon-- the mountains and forests, the rivers and seas, the world and its moon, the visible universe in short-- is the integration of acts and thoughts, is Karma, or at least, Being conditioned by Karma.[126]

This sketchbook also includes Shepherd's brief notes on Eastern mystics, and on quietism. She copied a passage from Tao: 'When armies are raised and the issues joined, it is he who does not delight in war who wins'. Shepherd also copied a long section from *The Snow Leopard,* Peter Matthiessen's spiritual journey narrative through Nepal.[127] From a young age, Shepherd seemed drawn toward an Eastern perception of being.

In *The Living Mountain* (written in the 1940s), Shepherd describes 'the "still centre" of being. In some such way I suppose the controlled breathing of the Yogi must operate' (83). On the final page she writes: 'I believe I now understand in some small measure why the Buddhist goes on pilgrimage to a mountain. The journey is itself part of the technique by which the god is sought' (LM, 84). The contemporary Scottish poet, Kenneth White, comments: 'I find that it's often minds with a Celtic background that get closest to the Far East'.[128] This is certainly the case with Shepherd, as with other writers of a 'Celtic background'.

Gunn's affinity for Eastern thought is well-known. In 1953, J.B. Pick sent Gunn a copy of Eugen Herrigel's book, *Zen and the Art of Archery.* This was after *The Living Mountain* was written, suggesting that Shepherd's exposure to Eastern thought cannot be credited solely to correspondence with Gunn. Burns quotes Gunn's reaction: 'I can say this, that when I began reading about Zen, I seemed to know a lot about it and to have used it in my writings from the beginning!' (4-6). Eastern ideas are explicit in Gunn's later books: *The Well at the World's End* (1951) and *The Atom of Delight* (1956), both similar to *The Living Mountain* in many ways.

Shepherd and Gunn shared a relationship of mutual influence and admiration. Gunn was the only person to have read *The Living Mountain* when it was first written. In 1942, he praised the book for qualities that are distinctly Eastern: 'All surfaces are seen as surfaces, with the kind of understanding that apprehends completely, without conscious magnanimity. . . insight here is profound, essential'.[129] Shepherd writes: 'that he should like it was not strange, because our minds met in just such experiences as I was striving to describe'.[130] It must be emphasised that while it can be proven that Shepherd knew of Eastern philosophy, she did not study it. Like Gunn, she shared an appreciation for a spiritual landscape distinguished by characteristically Eastern images and ideas. In a 1940 letter, Gunn articulates this shared landscape in specific terms:

> To invoke life in its moment of transition, to arrest for an instant the movement and glance of its body and eye, to do something of what we call animate nature. . . A momentary apprehension of the primordial essence of life, alert, quick-eyed, arrested in a grey rock face rather than in a gem. . . and at the same time a curious half-consciousness of an extra dimension of apprehension, with its momentary thrill. I am not at all sure (quite sensibly) that we have not here the beginnings of an extra dimension of being. . .[131]

John Burns' book, *A Celebration of the Light: Zen in the Novels of Neil Gunn* (1988), provides a precedent for reading Shepherd's work through the light of Eastern thought. In his foreword, Francis Hart writes: 'Zen and Taoist psychology provides the best "philosophical model" for understanding the essentials of experience in all of Neil's books'.[132] Similarly, Eastern thought provides an excellent model for understanding the 'essentials of experience' in Shepherd. I often use the term Eastern philosophy or thought in collective reference to distinct traditions, not because they are the same thing (though there is overlap), but because I am concerned with the concepts they share in common.

'Knowing Being' and the Importance of Balance'

The Living Mountain announces its purpose immediately: 'it is to know its essential nature that I am seeking here. To know, that is, with the knowledge that is a process of living' (1). To 'know being', and achieve the liberating, creative balance that results, is central to Shepherd and Eastern thinkers. Eastern philosophers calls this enlightenment; Shepherd calls it wisdom. Watson writes: 'the final focus of [Shepherd's] work goes beyond the social to

discover a wider. . . realm of absolute being. . . the puzzle of being'.[133] Shepherd was not a mystic, and certainly 'Zen has no patience with "mysticism"'.[134] White comments that 'Buddhism is to my mind first and foremost a logic'.[135] And John Burns describes Zen as 'a purely practical search for that which gives meaning and significance to life' (39). Shepherd's search is both practical and logical. But life's meaning is not found in a catalogue of facts. One Zen master, Nan-ch'uan, writes: 'The Tao is not a matter of knowing, nor a matter of not knowing. To know is a delusory way of thinking, and not to know is a matter of insensibility'.[136] 'Knowing being' involves balancing different ways of knowing: intellectual and intuitive, abstract and experiential.

In the *Review*, Shepherd describes the 'social upheaval that destroyed old securities and forced us to take new bearings on what we wanted from education'.[137] Much of Shepherd's writing (notably *The Quarry Wood*) questions the adequacy of conventional education, and explores the nature and pursuit of wisdom. Her conclusions seem best illustrated by a memoir from *The Living Mountain*: Her father taught her to trace roots through the soil: 'It was a good art to teach a child. Though I did not know it then, I was learning my way in, through my own fingers, to the secret of growth' (44). This balancing of physical experience, abstract factual knowledge and intuitive insight illustrates Shepherd's Eastern approach to 'knowing being'.

The Living Mountain describes the geology, geography, botany and history of the Cairngorm mountains, but Shepherd is always receptive to an intuitive, spiritualised perception of the physical world. When an optical illusion distorts her perception of height, she writes: 'A simple diagram explains the "trick", but no diagram can explain the serene sublimity these high panoramas convey to the human mind' (LM, 14). She acknowledges the objective explanation, but her non-analytical, intuitive perception reveals something about the mountain that no diagram could capture. Altered ways of seeing reveal an altered reality. This is true throughout *The Living Mountain*. As she explains:

> I have written of inanimate things, rock and water, frost and sun; and it might seem as though this were not a living world. But I have wanted to come to the living things through the forces that create them, for the mountain is one and indivisible, and rock, soil, water and air are no more integral to it than what grows from the soil and breathes the air. All are aspects of one entity, the living mountain. (36)

How does one come to see the 'forces that create' life? Shepherd engineers spiritual shifts of perspective through physical movement: 'Lay the head down, or better still, face away from what you look at, and bend with straddled legs till you see your world upside down. How new it has become!' (LM, 8). In this way, 'static things may be caught in the very act of becoming'. This change in perspective marks the first step on the path toward wisdom, awakening the 'looker' to a vision of life beyond himself. Sokei-an Saski, a modern Zen master, writes:

> One day I wiped out all the notions from my mind. I gave up all desire. . . I felt a little queer-- as if I were being carried into something, or as if I were touching some power unknown to me. . . and Ztt! I entered. I lost the boundary of my physical body. I had my skin, of course, but I felt I was standing in the centre of the cosmos. . . I saw people coming towards me, but all were the same man. All were myself![138]

Similarly, Shepherd describes the experience of transcending her distinct self: 'details are no longer part of a grouping in a picture of which I am the focal point, the focal point is everywhere. Nothing has reference to me, the looker. This is how the earth must see itself' (8). Zen Buddhists call this experience *satori*. Gunn calls it the 'atom of delight'.[139] Culminating in destruction, or in enlightenment, these flashes of insight are vital to Shepherd's work, in particular to *The Weatherhouse.*

P'o, Ming and Te in Shepherd 's Writing

The concepts of *P'o*, *Ming* and *Te* are central to Taoism, and to a Taoist interpretation of Shepherd's work. They are related terms, overlapping one another in definition and manifestation. They are all central to the notion of a world in fluid and perpetual change.

P'o is distinguished by intuitive acceptance of elemental formlessness, the antithesis of artificial, constructed order. In the context of art, *P'o* suggests the opposition between art whose form is intuitively free-flowing (like Shepherd's) and art whose form is architectonic: fragmented and rebuilt through self-conscious intellectual exercise (like much of modernist art).

Embodied by the 'uncarved block', *P'o* is associated with the natural world, bringing one nearer to the essence of life, offering liberation from abstractions. Natural cycles evidence the unflappable cycle of life, offering reason for hope despite chaos. Shepherd, Eastern

thinkers (and modernists) were attracted to the natural world because it seemed to offer a means of knowing (and communicating) experience in itself: an arena where signifier and signified are one. Taoist artists and poets, like Shepherd, 'dive directly into the center of things and establish an inner relation between nature and man,' as Chung-yuan writes (171).

Contact with elemental sources is important to Shepherd and to Eastern philosophy. *The Living Mountain* describes the 'elemental mystery' of water, (17). Seeking sources, Shepherd visits a mountain-top spring; she finds rational explanation inadequate: 'any child in school can understand it-- water rises in the hills, it flows and finds its own level. . . But I don't understand it' (LM, 21). Abandoning intellect, she succumbs to the childlike urge to try to stop the spring with her finger. The flow of water (change) defeats her, but the physical contact has awakened her to primitive, inexorable forces as no intellectual understanding could. Chung-yuan describes the 'the man of *P'o*' as almost childlike: '[he] makes no artificial efforts toward morality and intellectual distinction' (36, 38). *P'o* bespeaks quiescent calm. Shepherd wonders: 'Why some blocks of stone, hacked into violent and tortured shapes, should so profoundly tranquillise the mind I do not know' (LM, 79). It is because of the force of *P'o.*

Embodied by light, *Ming* is perception free of self-consciousness, illuminated by intuition. It is central to Taoism, which asks 'Can you cleanse your inner vision until you see nothing but the light?'[140] Chung-yuan writes: 'Seeing things through the light means seeing past all distinctions and divides into the unity of all things. In this unity everything breaks through the shell of itself and interfuses with every other thing. . . Each individual merges into every other individual' (36).

Light is an important image throughout Shepherd's work. Gunn writes to Shepherd: 'I'm left with that impression of light: sunlight, icelight, clear water.'[141] *The Living Mountain* demonstrates the capacity of light to alter perception. Wading into a loch, Shepherd writes: 'at my feet there opened a gulf of brightness so profound that the mind stopped. . . My spirit was as naked as my body. It was one of the most defenceless moments of my life. . . I know [the loch's] depth, though not in feet' (LM, 9-10). Her knowledge of the loch is more profound than any depth sounder could measure, and is characterised by *Ming.*

P'o and *Ming* take one beyond self, beyond the familiar world into new realms of perception. Shepherd, like Eastern thinkers, never neglects the 'initial sense of fear and panic

induced by the experience of going beyond the self' (14). *The Living Mountain* acknowledges this panic-fear as a literal and symbolic awakening: 'abruptly I awoke and found myself staring down black walls of rock to a bottom incredibly remote. . . to that first horrified stare, dissociated from all thought and all memory, sensation purely, the drop seemed inordinate. . . I had looked into the abyss' (72). In her 1914 sketchbook, Shepherd quotes Spencer describing life's essential impermanence:

> Every feeling and thought being but transitory;-- an entire life made up of such feelings and thoughts being also but transitory;-- nay, the objects amid which life is passed, though less transitory, being severally in the course of losing their individualities, whether quickly or slowly-- we learn that the one thing permanent is the Unknowable Reality hidden under all these changing shapes.[143]

Similar 'panic-fear' (of insignificance and impermanence) inspired many of modernism's developments. Modernist novels, however, often end in nightmarish bewilderment. Shepherd resolves panic-fear with optimistic, quiescent embrace of the 'Unknowable Reality'. In one poem, Shepherd describes a man who sees 'images of beauty and destruction' in a mountain loch. At the end, the man finds he has 'escaped the futile sense of safety'- the habitual perceptions of everyday life. He 'knows again the sharpness of life, its balance'.[144] He has seen the essence of things, and also life's 'balance', implying his acceptance that life contains both beauty and destruction.

Such acceptance signals *Te*, defined by Chung-yuan as 'the power or virtue inherent in the Tao' (125). *Te* is the power that enables one to achieve balance and peace, despite fear. Integral to *Te* is *wu-wei* (meaning nonaction), signaling a state of quiescence. *Te* is not, however, a state of inactivity, but a state of release and flexible interfusion with the living world. It describes stillness amidst eternal motion. It is best achieved through activity, as Herrigel sought enlightenment through archery. Shepherd might say that *Te* can be sought through climbing: 'What [the climber] values is a task that, demanding of him all he has and is, absorbs and so releases him entirely' (LM, 4).

All of Shepherd's work pursues this state of balanced, quiescent awareness. It is a creative state, for balance is not something inherent, but something imposed upon a chaotic world from within one's self. Shepherd's poem, 'Embodiment' articulates her view of the human creative capacity:

There is no substance but light.
The visible worlds
Are light
Undergoing process of creation. . .
But if, being ourselves light,
Having in us the principle of making,
We create ourselves in a form
Imagined in no god's mind,
Will that also in consummate being
Shine as pure light?[145]

Underlying all of Shepherd's novels is a quest to creatively determine a balanced place amidst the chaos of existence.

There is much evidence that Shepherd was influenced by Eastern thought. But, she explores Eastern ideas without ever explicitly identifying her explorations (in her fiction). It would be typical of Shepherd (and of the tenets of Eastern philosophy) that the link was only there for those readers who perceived it independent of guidance. Her reticence may be seen as an extension of Eastern principles: 'the *tao* that can be expressed in words is not the eternal *tao*'.[146] The elegant triumph of her work is that we do not need to perceive the link in order to enjoy her novels. But it should be clear to anyone that, as Gunn writes, Shepherd 'come[s] uncannily at the heart of the matter'.[147]

ENDNOTES

[1]AUSCA, Shepherd MSS 2750/26.
[2]NLS, Shepherd MSS 27439-40.
[3]NLS, Shepherd MSS 27442.
[4]Biographical information found in Vivienne Forrest's article 'In Search of Nan Shepherd', in *Leopard Magazine* (Dec 1986-Jan 1987), 17-9.
[5]Jessie Kesson, 'Nan Shepherd: A Recollection', *Aberdeen University Review* (AUR), Vol. LIII (1990), 187-191 (p. 190).
[6]NLS, Shepherd MSS 27443. An article by Dunnett, entitled 'Nan Shepherd: One of the Scottish 'Moderns' mentions her travels to Greece and Africa (to visit her brother's grave, and her friends John and Betty MacMurray). Forrest writes of her travels to Africa and Switzerland, p. 17.
[7]Kesson, p, 188.
[8]See Louise Donald, 'Nan Shepherd', *Leopard Magazine*, (October, 1977), 20-2. See also Roderick Watson, 'Introduction' to *LM*, pp. vii-xi (p. vii).
[9]Ronald Campbell MacFie, 'Chance' (dedicated to Grierson) in *Collected Poems*, (London: Grant Richards & Humphrey Toulmin, 1929), p. 53-57.
[10]Shepherd, 'Sir Herbert Grierson', *AUR* (1959-1960), 241-42.
[11]Shepherd, 'Professors and Students', *AUR* (1959-60), 308-13, (p. 308).
[12]Shepherd, 'Agnes Mure Mackenzie', *AUR XXXVI*, (1955-56), 132-40 (p. 133).
[13]NLS, MSS 26900.
[14]Herbert Grierson was closely involved with the event, according to letters exchanged between the two in 1904-5, in *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy, Vol. 3, 1902-1908*, Richard Little Purdy and others, eds., (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), pp. 161, 165.
[15]Thomas Hardy, 'Aberdeen', in *The Complete Poems of Thomas Hardy*, ed. by James Gibson, (London: Macmillan, 1976).
[16]J. Arthur Thomson; this quote is taken from the title of an article by Thomson, 'Of the Wonder of Life', *AUR, I (1913-1914)*, 67-72.
[17]Shepherd, 'Women in the University: Fifty Years: 1892-1942', *AUR XXIX (1941-2)*, 171-81 (p. 180).
[18]See Shepherd, 'The Poetry of Hugh MacDiarmid', *AUR*, Vol XXVI, (1938-39) 49-61.
[19]See Shepherd, 'Women in the University'.
[20]Ibid. p. 172.
[21]Kesson, p. 190.
[22]AUSCA, Shepherd MSS 3036/1-8.
[23]NLS, Shepherd MSS 27443. Shepherd told Dunnett, 'I don't like writing. In fact, I rarely write. . . I only write when I feel that there's something that simply must be written'.
[24]Forrest, p. 19.
[25]Alan MacColl, 'Being in an Uncertain World', in *Northern Visions: Essays on the Literary Identity of Northern Scotland in the Twentieth Century*, ed. by David Hewitt (East Lothian: Tuckwell, 1995), p. 146.
[26]NLS, Shepherd MSS 27438 (1979).
[27]Forrest, p. 19.

[28]From a conversation (04-00) with Roy Howard, a Cults local historian who knew Shepherd.

[29]AUSCA, Shepherd MSS 2750/23 (1927).

[30]Shepherd, 'The Colour of Deeside', *The Deeside Field (DF)*, 8 (1938), 8-12 (p. 8).

[31]NLS, Shepherd MSS 27442.

[32]Mairi-Ann Cullen, 'Creating Ourselves: The Poetry of Nan Shepherd' *Chapman 74* (Autumn/Winter 1993), 115-8 (p.115). 'Nan Shepherd the poet has fallen into obscurity because she was a Scottish woman trying to write poetry in the English tradition,'

[33]AUSCA, Shepherd MSS 3036/2-8.

[34]Forrest, p. 19. The author writes that *The Living Mountain* is Shepherd's 'best' book. And Shepherd's obituary notice in AUR (1981-2), (p.126), reads: 'this is widely considered to be her finest achievement'.

[35]Kesson, p. 190.

[36]Shepherd, 'Old Wives', *BEANO* (1936) 42-3. This seems a surprising place to find Shepherd but, in fact, her connection with the magazine (published by the National Association of Local Government Officers for the Benevolent and Orphan Fund) reflects her compassionate nature and interest in local affairs.

[37]Shepherd, 'Agnes Mure Mackenzie', p. 138.

[38]Shepherd, 'James McGregor and the Downies of Braemar', *DF 4 (1962)*, 45-9 (p.46).

[39]Howard conversation.

[40]Kesson, p. 191.

[41]Shepherd, 'An Appreciation', in *The Last Poems* (a collection of Charles Murray's poetry), ed. Alexander Keith and Shepherd, (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1969), p. xi.

[42]Kesson, p. 189.

[43]Forrest, p. 19.

[44]In October, 2000, the Makar's Court lay a commemorative paving stone for Shepherd, inscribed: 'It's a grand thing to get leave to live'.

[45]NLS, MSS 26900, Gunn teases her in a letter about her lack of commercial ambition, her devotion to the high ideals of art. (May, 1931).

[46]AUSCA, Shepherd MSS 2750/1-42 (1925).

[47]NLS, MSS 26900. 'Perhaps indeed the book [PG], for the undeserving [?], will have an air of slightness, of insufficient weight for the general man who wants meat and not vision and poetry'.

[48]See *Chambers Scottish Biographical Dictionary*, ed. by Rosemary Goring (Edinburgh: Chambers, 1992). Shepherd's entry confirms what is clear, that '[Shepherd's] creative work has been largely ignored by critics'. (p. 389)

[49]Shepherd, 'Professors and Students', pp. 310, 311.

[50]Thomas Vargish and Delos E. Mook, *Inside Modernism: Relativity Theory, Cubism, Narrative*, (London: Yale University Press, 1999), p. 14.

[51]John Alcorn, *The Nature Novel From Hardy to Lawrence*, (Plymouth: Bowering Press Ltd., 1977), p.32. The author names several modernist writers who were also scientists W.H. Hudson, Tomlinson, H.G. Wells, Aldous Huxley, D.H. Lawrence, Norman Douglas.

[52]D.H. Lawrence, *Fantasia of the Unconscious*, (1923) quoted in Stevenson, p. 75.
[53]Virginia Woolf, 'Modern Novels' (1919), in *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*, II, ed. by Andrew McNeillie, (London: Hogarth, 1988), pp. 30-36 (p. 35).
[54]Stevenson, p. 75.
[55]Woolf, 'Modern Novels', p. 33.
[56]Margaret Elphinstone, 'Four Pioneering Novels' in *Chapman, No. 74-5* (Autumn/Winter 1993), 23-39 (p. 31).
[57]Vargish and Mook, p. 32.
[58]Ibid., p. 34.
[59]Stevenson, p. 26.
[60]Reed Way Dasenbrock, *The Literary Vorticism of Ezra Pound and Wyndham Lewis: Towards the Condition of Painting*, (London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1985) p. 226.
[61]John Burns, *A Celebration of the Light: Zen in the Novels of Neil Gunn*, (Edinburgh: Canongate,1988) p. 20. Further references will be to the same edition and page numbers will be given in brackets in the text.
[62]Douglas Goldring, *South Lodge* (1943), quoted in Dasenbrock, p.17.
[63]Wyndham Lewis, 'Long Live the Vortex' from BLAST, 1 (1914), in *A Modernist Reader: Modernism in England 1910-1930,* ed. by Peter Faulkner, (London: B.T.Batsford, 1986), pp. 42-46 (p. 43).
[64]Watson, '"To Know Being": Substance and Spirit in the Work of Nan Shepherd', in *A History of Scottish Women's Writing,* Dorothy Macmillan and Douglas Gifford, eds., (Edinburgh:Edinburgh University Press, 1997), pp. 416-27 (p. 416).
[65]Mary Ann Gillies, *Henri Bergson and British Modernism*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996) p. 41. Further references will be to the same edition and page numbers will be given in brackets in the text.
[66]Wyndham Lewis, *Time and Western Man*, ed., by Paul Edwards, (Santa Rosa, CA: Black Sparrow Press, [1927] 1993), p. 158.
[67]NLS, Shepherd MS 27440.
[68]Duncan MacMillan, *Scottish Art in the Twentieth Century*, (Edinburgh: Mainstream, 1994), p. 37.
[69]J. Arthur Thomson and Patrick Geddes, *Biology*, (London: Williams & Norgate, Ltd., 1925) Bergson receives mention on p. 41. *Élan vital* is mentioned on pp. 10, 223.
[70]*The Outline of Science: A Plain Story Simply Told,* Vol I-II, ed. by J. Arthur Thomson (London: George Newnes Ltd., 1921), p. 417.
[71]Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, trans. by Arthur Mitchell, (London: Macmillan, 1911; repr. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 1998), p. 302.
[72]Bergson, *Matter and Memory,* tr. by Nancy Margaret Paul and others, (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1911) p. 1.
[73]T.S. Eliot, 'Introduction on the Definition of Metaphysical Poetry' from Clarke Lectures (1926) in *The Varieties of Metaphysical Poetry,* (London: Faber, 1932), p. 51 and 55. The link between Shepherd and the metaphysical poets makes sense as Shepherd was deeply influenced by Grierson, another scholar of metaphysical poetry.
[74]Leszek Kolakowski, *Bergson*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 21. Further references will be to the same edition and page numbers will be given in brackets.
[75]*Creative Evolution*, pp. 165, 174.

[125]NLS, Shepherd MSS 27440. 'In the first of these eight stages the Buddhist seeker after truth still retains his ideas of form-- subjective and objective. In the second stage he loses the idea of form, and views forms as external phenomena only. In the third stage the sense of the approaching perception of larger truth comes to him. In the fourth stage he passes beyond all ideas of form, ideas of resistance and ideas of distinction; and there remains to him only the idea of infinite space. In the fifth stage, the idea of infinite space vanishes, and the thought comes: it is all infinite reason. In the sixth stage, the thought comes: 'Nothing at all exists'. In the seventh stage, the idea of nothingness itself vanishes. In the eight stage all sensations and ideas cease to exist. And after this comes Nirvana.' It is unclear whether Shepherd is paraphrasing Spencer, or quoting directly.

[126]Ibid.

[127]Ibid. The passage from Peter Matthiesson's *The Snow Leopard* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1978; repr. London: Vintage, 1998) that Shepherd copied out is found on pp. 141-142.

[128]Kenneth White, *On Scottish Ground: Selected Essays*, (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1998), p. 73.

[129]NLS, MSS 26900.

[130]Shepherd, 'Author's foreword', LM, pp. iii-iv (p. iv).

[131]NLS, MSS 26900.

[132]Hart, 'Foreword' to *A Celebration of the Light*, pp. xi-xii (p.xii).

[133]Watson, 'To Know Being', pp. 416, 421.

[134]Matthiessen, p. 63.

[135]White, p. 82.

[136]Chang Chen-chi, *The Practice of Zen* (1960), quoted in Burns, p. 43.

[137]Shepherd, 'Aberdonian Salt', *AUR 1963-4*, pp. 102-105 (p. 102).

[138]A. W. Watts, from *The Way of Zen* (1957), quoted in Burns, p. 35.

[139]Neil Gunn, 'The Flash' in *The Saltire Review* (1958), quoted in Burns, p. 15.

[140]*Tao Te Ching*, trans. by Stephen Mitchell, (New York: Harper Collins, 1988), Ch. 10, Lao-Tzu is assumed to be the author of this text which dates from approximately the fourth century BC.

[141]NLS, MSS 26900. Referring to *IC*.

[142]NLS, Shepherd MSS 27440.

[143]Shepherd, Untitled, from *IC*.

[144]Shepherd, 'Embodiment' from *IC*.

[145]*Tao*, Ch. 1.

[146]NLS, MSS 26900 (1942 and 1940).

Chapter Two

The Quarry Wood: The Quest 'To Be'

Crusoe

The spirit roves through vastness of its own,
In turmoil or dead waters; oft alone
It founders where the hungry reefs are strown.

There may it chance upon a quiet isle,
The dew of thought unbrushed from mile on mile,
Thought that had known the primal dusk awhile.

How shall it run rejoicing to explore
Woodland and coire echoing to the roar
Of streams that from their mountain gorges pour!

Up to the blue escarpment of the hills,
In intimate league with the elusive rills,
How shall it climb through every way it wills!

Yet shall there come a sail: impatient years
Recall us to forgotten toil and tears.
Our thought strays thither as the low wind veers.[1]

I) INTRODUCTION

Crusoe and The Quarry Wood

This poem illuminates my interpretation of *The Quarry Wood (1928).* Like the journey described in 'Crusoe', Martha's spiritual journey across unfamiliar horizons teaches her how to create a life of wisdom and happiness for herself, engaged with the surrounding social and physical landscapes. Francis Russell Hart describes a Scottish tradition marked by contradictory desires: 'The exhilaration of the fugitive, the adventurer, the imperial Don Juan mingles strangely with the strong nostalgia of the homing instinct'.[2] Adventure awakens the hero to the value of a peaceful life, and the means of achieving it. *The Quarry Wood* and 'Crusoe' can both be located within this tradition.

Nan Shepherd's Crusoe wanders alone through a fantastic world ('the quiet isle') of self-absorbed discovery. Martha similarly perceives the world of the university as access to an 'immortal and happy isle' where 'some fabulous tongue' is spoken (52). Time ceases to have meaning. The natural world is important in both poem and novel as a place of revelation. The danger of the 'hungry reefs' beyond the isle's shore and the seductions of the fantasy isle itself conspire to prevent Crusoe from leaving. But the island paradise is not his home. Martha similarly spends much of the novel in an idealised and fantasy-bound inner world where she does not belong. Crusoe is reminded of the connections of time and space to which he is bound by his humanity ('impatient years recall us') when 'a sail' appears from the human world. This 'sail' is embodied in *The Quarry Wood* by Geordie, Josephine and Sally. Wind (a sign of change) disrupts the timeless fantasy world, recalling the hero to the need for adaptation. Crusoe, like Martha, ultimately chooses to return to the real world 'of forgotten toil and tears'. There, the process of reintegration and adaptation begins.

The Quarry Wood in Context

Like Shepherd's later novels, *The Quarry Wood* explores human spiritual development within the physical and social landscape of Aberdeenshire. Agnes Mure Mackenzie warned Shepherd: 'in London the Kailyard School is now forgotten so you may escape some of the damning', but it took years to find a publisher.[3] *The Quarry Wood* is not Kailyard fiction. It is a novel of surprisingly modernist characteristics: 'a big thing, finely conceived and finely achieved', as Mackenzie describes it.[4]

The Quarry Wood introduces Shepherd's vision of creative evolution on an individual level. Martha embarks upon a quest 'to be', to evolve a peaceful, self-reliant life. Her quest teaches her the nature of wisdom. The novel is not a quest to 'know being' like *The Weatherhouse*. There is no pursuit of a transcendent understanding of the nature of reality, although the quality of 'being' is inferred. Nor is it concerned with a wider vision of social evolution as *A Pass in the Grampians* is. Minor characters and subplots are essential to Martha's development, however, undermining the notion that *The Quarry Wood* is about a single character. Craig comments:

> In Shepherd's novels the role of protagonist is constantly displaced from the individual to the community, and the story of the characters whom we take to be 'central' to the plot are suspended to allow the stories of other characters to intrude, and thereby to emphasise that it is only in relation to the many narratives of the whole community that an individual's story makes any sense.[5]

Referring to the numerous subplots in the novel, Mackenzie jokes to Shepherd: 'I wonder what the summaries of the plot will be like???' (punctuation hers).[6] No less than her other novels, however, *The Quarry Wood* communicates Shepherd's vision that life is founded upon a world of change to which human life must adapt both spiritually and physically.

Natural world description (seasonal cycles and weather) evokes the stream of change underlying the novel. The novel's human community fluctuates too, both mirroring and adapting to changes around them. Emmeline's orphans come and go to the frustration of Martha and Geordie. Throughout the book babies are born, old people die, individuals move away and return. The heroine's very name implies the world of change and relative perceptions to which she must adapt. She is called Matty, Marty and Martha. This might indicate, positively, the flexibility of her identity. Or it might indicate that she is too easily defined by others' perceptions. The surname 'Ironside' is also ambiguous. Iron is also a strong metal, raising a pun on the word mettle (defined as 'courage, spirit' or 'inherent character'). But it is also impenetrable, without life or warmth. 'Irons' are fetters, intimating the danger of repression. 'Ironside' itself is defined as 'a person with great stamina or resistance'. Again, 'resistance' can be positive or negative.[7] 'Ironsides' may also indicate a stronghold: a fortress of strength and power, or a prison. Finally, an 'ironsides' is also a ship, indicating Martha's journey. Probably Shepherd built this ambiguity into the text to further emphasise that Martha must define her own stable identity in an unstable world.

Critical Approach: A Novel of (Female) Identity Development

The Quarry Wood is a unique *Bildungsroman,* contrasting with the typical male development pattern, and contributing to a growing tradition of female development novels. Male *Bildungsromane* are often linear journeys through childhood, education, and sexual awakening, concluding with independence and maturity (established career, family, world view). The nineteenth century saw female authors beginning to explore female development,

but the male development pattern offers little space for female independence. Female protagonists in novels of the period (from the Brontë novels and George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss* through to Catherine Carswell's *Open the Door*, Willa Muir's *Imagined Corners*) develop inner lives to compensate for thwarted ambitions. Elizabeth Abel describes the 'clash between outer laws and inner imperatives [resulting in] the lack of harmony between inner and outer life'.[8] Abel writes that the female *Bildungsroman* describes 'movement from the world within to the world without: from introspection to activity', but this is no easy progression.[9] Awkward marriages, madness, or death were common conclusions to female *Bildungsromane* in the nineteenth (and even early twentieth) century.[10]

Shepherd was sensitive to the challenges of female development (in fiction and in life). It is a significant reversal of the traditional pattern that Luke's *Bildungsroman* is conspicuously subordinate to Martha's. Martha does retreat into an inner-world existence in response to threats from a patriarchal society. She must develop a life purposefully engaged with the world around her. Shepherd's fundamental concern, however, is with identity development (male or female). Her solutions to the challenges of identity development in a changing world are-- while especially pertinent to women-- applicable to either sex. As Alison Smith writes: '[Nan Shepherd] explores. . . the notion that women need not follow conventional patterns to fulfil responsibilities that are nothing to do with gender anyway'.[11] Shepherd herself writes: 'with the rare and finer types of learning sex is an irrelevance'.[12]

As a *Bildungsroman*, *The Quarry Wood* is concerned with Martha's education and development. But Martha's quest encompasses much more. The novel is a treatise on 'the getting of wisdom', as Smith writes.[13] Martha's education must be considered in the broadest sense, as wisdom, defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as 'the ability. . . to think and act utilising knowledge, experience, understanding, common-sense, and insight'. Wisdom is a way of seeing and living that offers the capacity to create one's self independently, free of fear, shame and self-absorption. Wisdom means asserting a degree of mastery over self and others, rather than being mastered.

Circular journeys are important to Martha's quest for wisdom. Jean Radford writes: 'in the linear model, the destination is a fixed and recognisable point which completes the journey, whereas in circular models, from the *Odyssey* onwards, where the destination is rejuvenative or restorative, the end of one cycle is the beginning of another'.[14] The circle provides a

particularly appropriate structuring device for spiritual journeys. Lacking a concrete destination, the circular quest demands intuitive wandering. Lack of physical progress emphasises spiritual movement. Radford writes: 'In this new usage, the emphasis shifts from a physical to a mental landscape . . . the turning points and cross-roads take place in a psychic terrain'.[15]

Martha's physical progress is circular (beginning and ending in her family home), indicating that her real progress must be measured in spiritual terms. Houses frequently represent spiritual identity in Shepherd's novels, and Martha-at-home at the beginning of the novel is not the Martha-at-home at the end of the novel. Wisdom is apparent in the way she evolves the family home to suit her needs. The conclusion indicates a positive departure from many nineteenth-century female *Bildungsromane*. As with many spiritual journeys, its conclusion is positive and life-affirming because it is not an ending at all, but rather suggests ongoing spiritual discovery. In the tradition of spiritual quests, Martha's achievement of wisdom is not marked by any climactic final vision, but by recognition that the process itself has been revelatory.

Critical Approach: Odyssean Parallels

Radford's reference to the *Odyssey* above perhaps seems out of place in a discussion of modern female development, but the *Odyssey* may be read as a spiritual journey toward peaceful self-reliance, making it a useful model for female development narratives. Homer's *Odyssey* has such a hold upon our imagination that we have appropriated its title into everyday usage to describe a specific type of journey, defined by the *OED* as 'a long series of wanderings to and fro; a long adventurous journey'.

Shepherd's familiarity with epic poetry (ancient and modern) is indisputable. In a letter to Shepherd (1923), Mackenzie writes: 'I didn't realise how much of Tennyson's *Ulysses* is undiluted Dante'.[16] In *The Quarry Wood*, Shepherd characteristically brings past and present together, juxtaposing ancient traditions with contemporary issues. The novel refers explicitly to epic and classical traditions. In Chapter Four, Martha studies Latin. Luke compares her with Dante's Beatrice. Josephine has: 'the quality of life in her that the antagonists in ballad and in saga must have had'. Her struggle with cancer is an 'epic' (207). Most tellingly, the

university sacrist, Daxter, is 'like Odysseus full of wiles' (51). And Martha's mother is determined 'to see the girl through her Odyssey' (59). These references announce the Odyssean themes underlying the novel.

Shepherd does, however, ironise her use of the *Odyssey*, probably to emphasise that her novel is a specifically-tailored, modernised usage of a classical narrative. Martha is not simply an imitation-Odysseus (or Beatrice, or Diana). Simple imitation would contradict the purpose of her quest: to define herself on her own terms. The *Odyssey* does usefully illuminate Shepherd's narrative. Eustathius wrote that 'The *Odyssey* is "more pungent" or "sharper" than the *Iliad* because of the depths of its thoughts in an appearance of surface simplicity'.[17] Through reference to an epic of profound influence and meaning, Shepherd hints that similar depths lie below the 'surface simplicity' of her own novel. T.S.Eliot writes of Joyce's use of the *Odyssey*, that he was 'manipulating a continuous parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity. . . as a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and a significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history.'[18] Certainly such a motivation is consistent with Shepherd's desire to transcend conventional divisions of time, to perceive order and continuity over generations.

The *Odyssey* is marked by themes of 'expansiveness and exploration'- themes which characterise Martha's quest.[19] Of course, Odysseus' expansive explorations are characterised by physical battles against tangible, if fantastic, foes. By contrast, Martha's few physical journeys are uneventful compared with her spiritual travels. They do, however, have an element of the fantastic. She visits Luke, but 'her fortnight in the hills had no reality' (94). Roy's promise of an exotic, physical journey (as his *fiancée*), would be a journey of submission, rather than self-discovery.

But both narratives blur the distinction between physical and spiritual journeys. Gregory Nagy writes: 'To be the hero of the *Odyssey* is to become a hero of a different kind of epic, an odyssey-- in the mystical sense of a vision quest, a journey of a soul, a search for self.'[20] Sheila Murnaghan notes that Odysseus frequently journeys alone; his physical adventures are not without a spiritual dimension.[21] Inversely, Martha's quest leads her to the revelation that spiritual journeys are linked to physical experience. The reconciliation and balance of spiritual and physical experience (a matter of perception) is central to both Martha's and Odysseus' quests.

The power of perspective to alter one's reality is central to *The Quarry Wood*, as it is to all of Shepherd's work. Interestingly, Segal comments: '[the *Odyssey*] gives us multiple perspectives on the same setting. . . both from a distance and within'.[22] Physical boundary crossings frequently signal transformations of spiritual perspective. The most significant boundary crossing (literal in the *Odyssey*, metaphorical in *The Quarry Wood*) is from life at sea (representing disorder, uncertainty and delusion) to life on land (representing peace, stability and wisdom). Uncertainty (embodied by the sea god Poseidon) 'buffets [Odysseus] away from home.'[23] Martha's first uncertain days at the university are described in terms of flood (51). And of Martha's climactic revelation, the narrator writes: 'The waters were loosened and not to be gathered back' (123).

Finally, Segal writes that Homer 'shapes an implicit definition of what it means to be human in this world of abrupt change and multiple identities'.[24] 'To be human', in Homer's and Shepherd's sense, is the capacity to take responsibility for one's self. Odysseus could, like Martha, relinquish responsibility for self and others, and accept a fantastic identity detached from external realities. But Odysseus must reject temptations of immortality, and rejoin the social world of Ithaca. Similarly, Martha must reject idealised versions of her self and re-create a place for herself within the physical and social world. *The Quarry Wood*, like the *Odyssey*, describes a journey toward the 'waning of the imaginary and the return of reality,. . . the demands of life in a human setting of city [community] and family'.[25]

Critical Approach: Romance and Myth

The Quarry Wood also contains elements associated with the romance tradition. Shepherd's view of romance and fantasy was a complicated blend of affinity and scepticism. She was familiar with Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, and with her Northeast predecessor in other-world narratives, George Macdonald (with whose work Mackenzie compares Shepherd's).[26] Shepherd wrote an article entitled, 'Faerie Land Forlorn' for the *Alma Mater* in 1914, bemoaning a general contempt for fairy tales. An undated article written by Shepherd for the Aberdeen High School Magazine, 'Pixies and Or'nary Peoples', describes 'the two allurements':

> Both are necessary-- both mystery and certitude. I love a broom-stick, and also a walking-stick. I want the moon and the Pleiades and buttons to fasten my coat. . . Are the supreme moments of human experience very strange or very simple, the best tales wild or plain? I think, both. We classify, but there is no real dividing line. . . There is a pixie element in the plainest life.[27]

There is 'a pixie element' in Shepherd's first novel, modified and integrated into Martha's Odyssean journey of (female) development.

In the romance tradition, the ascendency of good (represented by a virtuous heroine, often with divine traits) is threatened by evil (a villain, or dragon).[28] Martha's development is threatened by delusions of virtue and idealised identity. *The Quarry Wood* can be interpreted as an evolved romance quest, told from the perspective of the traditionally-anonymous heroine who awakens to her physical nature and her capacity for self-reliance. The conflict of absolutes between good and evil is subjectivised, and becomes a conflict between Martha's inner, fantasy-ideal world and the everyday, external world. The danger is not that Martha will succumb to absolute evil, but that she will succumb to an inner life. It is not absolute good that must prevail, but Martha herself. She must reconcile her inner world with external realities, without sacrificing too much of herself.

Hart comments that the 'incessant striving for identity is a delicate process of demythologising, of discovering what one represents without sentimentality'.[29] Martha must resist the temptation to let herself be 'mythologised' by those who want to define her to suit their own needs. Combining classical and romance traditions, Shepherd makes ironic use of the Diana/Artemis figure to describe Martha's 'demythologising'. J.G. Frazer's *The Golden Bough* (1907-1915), includes his research into the nature of Diana/Artemis, shedding light upon Shepherd's references. Frazer places Diana alongside elements of the romance tradition: allegory, ritual, fantasy, magic. Shepherd probably knew his work, given the Scottish connection and the influence he had on many contemporary authors, such as Yeats, Eliot, Lawrence, Joyce and Naomi Mitchison.

Self-knowledge and self-responsibility figure importantly in the Odyssean quest, the romance quest, and to the female *Bildungsroman.* Jenni Calder writes: 'Most women in the European fiction of [the nineteenth century] were contained within the role of hero-maker'.[30] Martha must redefine the role of 'hero', and make a heroine of herself.

II) MARTHA'S EARLY DEVELOPMENT

Martha's journeys are circular, implying both their spiritual relevance and Shepherd's philosophy of re-creation through change. The first paragraph contains a circle describing (in microcosm) the developments Martha will undergo through the novel in terms of her relationship with Aunt Josephine. The first sentence describes how nine year-old Martha kicks Josephine for taking her from school. Instinctually, Martha reacts against others controlling her life. Next, Martha is a passive nineteen year-old. Her spiritual horizons are limitless, but her field of vision is narrowly self-centred: 'she loved the old lady, idly perhaps. . . as she loved the sky and space' (1). The third sentence describes a wiser Martha (age twenty-four) mourning the death of her aunt, while celebrating her newly-discovered life. This brief paragraph foreshadows the stages of Martha's development.

The first three chapters complete another circle in which nine year-old Martha journeys to and from Josephine's home. This journey is important because, again, it anticipates, in symbolic microcosm, the stages of the spiritual journey to come.

In the first chapter, Martha is a self-absorbed nine year-old, 'serenely unaware' that others might exercise control over her life. She 'dwell[s] on a planet of her own', building expansive desires with only symbolic foundation in physical realities (playing with 'stones that summed up existence'). She displays Odyssean attributes: a bold, adventuring instinct 'thirled to a purpose' in life, in contrast with her mother who acts with 'no purpose whatsoever' (2-3).

Josephine is also introduced in Chapter One. The novel's Zen-like sage, she demonstrates a purpose and energy of her own that derives from her belief that the world is a wondrously inexplicable place in which individuals may claim some responsibility for their lives. Without formal education, Josephine has intuitive wisdom: 'Reasoning to Miss Leggatt was so much moonshine' (2). She is indifferent to the rules that order everyday life, manifest in her haphazard approach to housework. Her sister, Leebie, by contrast, follows a 'subtly deranged' regime of chores, slave to the only environment in which she has any power (9). Josephine never hurries, never speaks an unnecessary word, and is adequately indifferent to anything that threatens her freedom (moral codes, conventions, even doctor's predictions). But she never detaches from the everyday world altogether. Her behavior is marked by selective conformity-- 'gentle anarchy', Watson calls it.[31] She offers meaningless token

gestures to propriety: 'We should put a fencie up' (4). But she will never fence anything in; she too much enjoys 'the lively interest of shooing a hen' (4). Josephine's spiritual peace stems from her close interaction with her physical and social environment.

Josephine's identity is linked with her love for card games. Games are important throughout *The Quarry Wood*, as in the classical epics. Semple's dambrod helps him rejoin society. Geordie can 'rattle the dice with the best' (26). Like life, a game's course cannot be controlled, but it can be influenced through a combination of luck, skill, experience and will. The best players manipulate chance to their favour through skill and intuitive understanding of other players. Martha's education could be described as the ultimate game, the purpose being to achieve balance, peace, and influence over life (her own and the lives of others). At the end of the novel, the narrator describes the continuation of Martha's life as a 'game for the gods' (207). This is not an expression of fatalism, but an expression of Shepherd's belief that we can play against chaotic forces with some hope of influencing the outcome. Josephine is a master of this game, and takes Martha as her apprentice.

In Chapter One, Josephine notes an exigency in young Martha's bookworm life: 'She's just a skin' (3). Josephine takes responsibility for filling the 'skin' with rich, material life. 'The inside'll clear o'itsel, but the ootside wunna', she says, expressing her belief that one's spiritual life is dependent upon a healthy physical life. She goes to work on the 'ootside', washing and dressing Martha anew. Significantly, this quest for wisdom begins with Josephine taking Martha out of school, depriving her of 'escape into a magic world' (3-5).

On the journey to Crannochie, Martha 'ignored everything else in the world but her own indignation' (6). Wind suggests change, and she gradually awakens to the spiritual reverberations of the 'visible and tangible world' (6). In a wood, Martha's 'spirit' is 'liberated'; she achieves a 'perception of the world's beauty' (6). This spiritualised awakening to the natural world (specifically, the wood) indicates an important first link between Martha's inner world and her surroundings.

Segal writes of the *Odyssey* that 'the connection between an individual's spiritual life and physical life is very close.. . both are felt and poetically formulated as directly related to the rhythms and cycles of nature'.[32] The wood itself is important in epic poetry from *Gilgamesh* to *The Divine Comedy.* Throughout romance literature and Frazer's works, spiritual awakenings occur in woods. Fairy tales and ballads from Shepherd's Northeast are

also rich with fantastic awakenings in fairy woods. The wood's fairy-world associations are clear in Scottish fiction. In George Macdonald's *Phantastes*, for instance, a room melts into a fairy forest, and the narrator must reevaluate his mundane perceptions.[33]

Shepherd's ironic vision gives new depth to a meaning-laden symbol. Shepherd is wary of fantasy as a source of escape from everyday life. She writes that 'I do not like *glamourie*. It interposes something artificial between the world, which is one reality, and the self, which is another reality' (LM, 72). Yet in Shepherd's novel, a wood alters Martha's perception. Martha's altered spiritual vision, however, is not the result of a fairyland experience. Martha's awakening indicates a link (not a divide) between her physical and spiritual selves. Thus, the practical-minded Josephine says: 'trees is awfu' gweed for ye' (42). Shepherd's complex use of the wood will be further considered.

When a rainstorm strikes, Josephine teaches Martha Odyssean self-control, to stay calm even in the teeth of uncontrollable elements. Once home, Josephine attends to Martha's material human needs (warmth, food and sleep), in the way that epic heroes turn to food, drink and leisure when they land safely. In *The Quarry Wood*, basic physical needs (food, sleep, shelter) confirm characters' place in the human landscape. Satisfaction of these needs provides comfort and stability.

At Crannochie, Martha also meets a new social world. Josephine shuns 'proper' company, choosing instead the livelier company of her earthier neighbours (Mary-Annie, Pete, and Clem). These characters reappear when Martha returns to Crannochie in adulthood.

Martha feels 'a sense of security . . . [and] proceeded to be happy in her own way' (8). This identifies her quest: for the security and liberty to enjoy life. Martha's spontaneous dance is a physical expression of awakened spiritual awareness: 'the force that urged the child to dance was the same that moved the sun in heaven and all the stars' (9).[34] Shepherd's novels all reveal her (very modernist) interest in dance. Communion with the forces that motivate life, however, is not enough. Martha has 'too much spirit for all its mastery of form' (9). She lacks knowledge and the capacity for influence. Without some degree of mastery, one is vulnerable to being mastered. Martha learns this when Josephine unexpectedly leaves to play cards. Life, she realises, is full of 'incomprehensible transactions' and 'queer disappointment' (13).

Journeying alone between her aunt's home and her parents' home, Martha is out of contact with both worlds, belonging nowhere. She must make her own way through an uncertain limbo world. This second journey may be interpreted to represent, symbolically, the first half of the novel. Halfway home, Martha falls asleep in the woods. Like many romance heroes, she awakens to an 'altered' world, where time and space are uncertain (13). When the hero of *Phantastes* awakens in an unfamiliar wood, he leaves the well-trod path, despite 'a vague feeling that I ought to have followed its course'.[35] Choosing one's own path is vital to Martha's quest. Her awakening recalls Dante's awakening 'within a dark wood where the straight way was lost'.[36] Similarly, Martha's path toward wisdom is unclear and not without obstacle.

Returning home from Crannochie, Martha must gain reentry to her home (as she must do at the end of the novel). Like epic heroes, she finds guardians barring her path. One (Emmeline's latest adoptee) wears her mother's cloak (13). Martha's impetuous attack is a symbolic attempt to reclaim her home and her mother's wayward attentions. Dussie's unexpected kiss (foreshadowing the climactic kiss) pierces Martha's self-absorption, transcending the divide between daughter and orphan. The girls fall asleep with their arms wrapped round each other (18). Dussie's kiss has helped bring Martha back into the family circle.

Physical contact emphasises spiritual connections throughout the novel. Martha's love for her father is expressed with a nudge. Geordie responds with 'the tenderest, most tranquil, subjovial little kick' (16). Later, Martha's alienation is indicated by her refusal to share physical contact: she 'drew aside from [Geordie's] elbow. Gentle or not, she wanted no liberties taken with her person' (167). Martha engineers physical contact with the illegitimate orphan, Robin, signalling her masterful handling of human spiritual relations.

When nine year-old Martha arrives home, she notices the decrepit state of the family cottage. Her journey has awakened her to external realities and the spiritual truths they imply. She is also hungry. Throughout this novel, food and hunger recalls characters to physical life. Shared meals have always been an important ritual, emphasising social connections. Echoing the hospitality rites of the classical epics (exchange of food and gifts), Geordie accepts his daughter into his home by serving her -- 'as became a banquet' -- in the guise of Ganymede (16). In return, Martha bears a gift (mince), easing her return home (18).

Geordie is a ploughman in the Burns tradition. His 'logic of a strictly informal variety' combines with Josephine's wisdom to counterbalance Martha's formal schooling (17). Like Odysseus' father, Laërtes, Geordie is simple, wise, and closely connected with the natural world. Laërtes has 'a good eye for growing things. . . there's not a nurseling. . . uncared for on his farm'.[37] Geordie similarly showers tenderness upon the random children in his cottage. He instils in Martha a subconscious awareness that wisdom is not merely a collection of facts, but a way of seeing. He relishes the interconnections between people and landscape: 'sane man, seeing always in relation such things as he did see' (34). He teaches Martha that even narrow, physical spaces have immeasurable dimensions: 'In the cramped kitchen prodigious horizons lengthened out', for there were 'vast unenclosed tracts within [Geordie]' (34).

Martha's journey ends with a lesson from Geordie- his means of preparing her for her spiritual journey. Beyond the domestic enclosure, he shows Martha the Northern Lights -- representing the vital but overwhelming powers she will encounter in the world beyond home. He teaches her that meaningful order can be perceived in chaos, that scientific and magical realities may be one. His description of Scotland's boundaries both accepts and defies accepted logic, broadening the horizons of spiritual possibility in the world. Reference to dance, fire, storm and light are significant, implying the flow of change (both tumultuous and ecstatic) that perpetuates life: 'The Merry Dancers danced in storm' (20). Geordie's lesson stays with Martha 'up to her university days' (20).

Martha's childhood circular journey (to Josephine's home and back to her own) introduces ideas and experiences relevant to her continuing development. Martha's journey is valuable in itself, and in terms of establishing a framework for the wider circle of development to come.

III) JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY AND DELUSION

This section will look at the early stages of Martha's quest in terms of the spiritual discoveries and delusions that mark her path. Martha's formal education broadens the horizons of her world. She has 'a sense of vistas opening insecurely on a foreign country' (48). This 'foreign country' is exciting, but threatening as well. In a pamphlet for teachers, Thomson writes: 'to cultivate the mode of inquiry is a greater gain than much knowledge'.[38] Wisdom is more than

a collection of facts; it is a state of mind and a way of seeing. Thomson's words speak to the circular nature of wisdom: one needs wisdom in order to understand the nature of wisdom and the means of attaining it. To inquire (rather than to merely study) is to seek understanding from a world beyond one's self. It cannot be achieved on one's own, but must be given and received through human relationships. Martha, however, encounters ingrained prejudice (in the social and intellectual worlds) and expectations regarding the definition of a 'proper' woman. This encourages her movement away from interaction and inquiry, toward isolation.

Shepherd's poem, 'The Summit of Etchacan', illuminates the paradoxical nature of Martha's early development:

> No vision of the blue world, far, unattainable,
> But this grey plateau, rock-strewn, vast, silent,
> The dark loch, the toiling crags, the snow;
> A mountain shut within itself, yet a world,
> Immensity . . .[39]

Education broadens her abstract understanding of the world. But Martha's vision (and experience) 'of the blue world' narrows in response to the threat that world poses. She withdraws into an inner world, self-absorbed. Her horizons of possibility are limitless, but her capacity to explore those horizons is greatly limited.

Confusing Knowledge and Wisdom

Martha longs for the stability that Odysseus, too, sought. She senses that wisdom is essential to that stability. But she mistakes intellectual knowledge for wisdom, and wants to 'know everything in the universe' (4). Her passion for knowledge is motivated by longing for the peace granted by wisdom: 'She studied now to dwell in peace' (79). But the quest for wisdom is a far weightier undertaking than the quest for knowledge. Martha has 'no idea of the spaciousness of her. . . desires' (4).

Studying Latin, Martha feels 'triumphant mastery, forcing on the chaos order and a purpose' (28). But Geordie has already demonstrated that an ordering of existence is not dependent upon knowing Latin. Martha sees the highly-knowledgeable Lucy Warrander as 'master of her purposes' (56). But Lucy-- searching for identity in a environment created by a patriarchal society-- is as uncertain as Martha. Thus Shepherd writes: 'Knowledge is heady

stuff, and the women may not always have known how to use it'.[40] This is not to deny women a place in the intellectual world, but to suggest that wisdom is first required. As Shepherd writes: 'Knowledge alters-- wisdom is stable' (50).

Martha's bold, inquiring spirit, and the threat of delusion are evident in the first journey (rich with meaning) that she undertakes on her own initiative. Martha bicycles home through a storm, saving her train fare to buy candles. She displays Odyssean characteristics: cunning, resolve, and willingness to endure hardship. Her 'fleet-footed' (an epithet common to classical epics) passion is admirable (60). The candles represent enlightenment, but they are also a very real means of attaining knowledge (letting her study in the attic, away from her family). Martha's quest for candles is hampered by the ironic predicament of having a bike lamp, 'but no means of lighting it' (24). This intimates the circular nature of wisdom: one needs light to gain light. Martha's passion for wisdom is ineffective unless she appeals to something or someone beyond herself. Her family seems an obvious source of support-- demonstrated when Geordie and her adopted siblings clean Martha's bicycle (the vehicle for her journey toward wisdom) (38). But Martha is oblivious. She perceives her journey toward wisdom as linear and finite: 'There isn't *time*!' she thinks (27). Martha never buys the candles, but discovers that Madge has her own, suggesting wisdom should be sought out in unexpected places. The lesson goes unheeded at the time, but establishes a kinship important later in the novel.

Spiritual Discoveries in a New World

Martha discovers vast horizons and creative energy at the university: 'she had seen new countries, seen- and it was this that elated her, gave her the sense of newness in life itself that makes our past by moments apocryphal- the magnitude of undiscovered country that awaited her conquest' (52). She responds with ecstatic energy reminiscent of her dance for Josephine as a child. Again, she cannot master the energy: 'There was no time to build a cosmos. Her world was in confusion, a sublime disordered plenty' (50).

Walking to lectures is a fantastic adventure, representing Martha's tumultuous inner state. She is caught in an 'impetuous rioting throng' of students, like a boat pitching and tossing wildly on unfamiliar seas: 'she. . . jostled a throng that pushed and laughed and

shouted. . . Martha felt herself carried violently on by the pressure from behind. At the top of the stair, separated from the girls she knew, she was flung suddenly forward. She lost her balance and her breath. . . ' (51). But Josephine and Geordie have given Martha a foundation in physical being that helps her hold her ground amidst the torrent of abstract knowledge. She learns to adapt, to perceive living spirit and substance behind abstract ideas: 'While her universe was. . . widening both in time and space, Scotland grew wider too' (54). Her friends come from around Scotland, lending geography a human dimension: 'The North came alive' (54). The Sociolog demonstrates the living relevance of knowledge (56).

There are those at the university who help guide her quest. The university sacrist, Daxter, helps hold Martha fast (quite literally) in the sea of knowledge (51). Significantly, this Odyssean character is not a member of the intellectual establishment. He teaches Martha that history has a physical dimension beyond what books can recount: 'He told Martha tales, such as appear in no official record. . . making her world alive for her in new directions' (53). Giving her a snip from a battle flag, he tells her: 'That's history, that is, miss' (53). Martha touches the silk and feels that she is touching the past.

In a *Review* article, Shepherd writes gratefully of 'a professor of mathematics who realised that those who adventure into unknown countries. . . have to run as fast as they can even to remain in the same place'.[41] Professor Gregory and 'The Professor' (modelled upon Grierson and Thomson) are similarly beloved for their capacity to teach their students that knowledge is more than an infinite store of dead concepts. Professor Gregory's lecturing is creative in that his 'volatile, live spirit' brings the inert, 'dessicated powder' of ideas to life (50).

> The confines of [Martha's] world raced out beyond her grasp. . . an unimaginable present surged in on one, humming with a life one had not seen before, nor even suspected. So full the world was, and so clamorous! And placidly, without haste or emphasis, he conjured up its press and clangour, its multitudinous anxieties' (52, 62).

Gregory reminds Martha of Josephine, and 'her own temerity frightened her' (62). She has bridged the divide separating intellectual males from domestic aunts. She has perceived Gregory as a man, rather than a god. In a *Review* article, Shepherd writes: 'The conception of professor and student as fellow-seekers after a truth not yet established was alien and difficult'.[42] Gregory has taught Martha more than literature; he has taught her about human interconnectedness: '[S]he was right. He had the same luminous unhurrying serenity as Aunt

Josephine, the same sure capable grasp of life' (63). This is an important adaptation of Martha's vision; she is 'beginning to think' (65).

In a pamphlet for teachers, Thomson quotes Sir Patrick Geddes' view that the natural world helps promote 'the habit of observing and thinking for one's self . . . without books or helps, in presence of the facts, and in the open air'.[43] Martha's progress toward wisdom through education reaches a climax when, studying history outside, she suddenly perceives that all things, including herself, belong to an ever-changing web of being. The 'slow accumulation of facts and dates' melts into a transcendental vision of 'the riotous pageant of history peopled with folk who were like herself' (80). She detaches from self-concern long enough to perceive her own inextricably interwoven place in the much broader flow of time and space (80-1). Contact with the natural landscape has taken Martha beyond the narrow conventions of formal education toward an enlightened vision of existence that anticipates moments of *The Weatherhouse*: 'the walls that shut people from people all generation from generation collapsed about her ears; and all that had ever been done on the earth-- all she had read and heard and seen-- swung together to a knot of life so blinding' (81).

These experiences at the university bespeak progress in Martha's quest for wisdom. By situating her quest for wisdom within the academy, Martha exposes herself to a vast tradition of knowledge. She discovers, under guidance from others, that she can evolve a place for herself in the vast world. She discovers the living energy of knowledge that can be released by an injection of spirit.

Delusion and Isolation

Inevitably, however, Martha encounters prejudiced views regarding female identity -- pervasive in the wider social and intellectual world she has entered. The university was founded by men in a patriarchal age. There are professors who embrace female contribution, but the university is not without lingering prejudice. Vestiges of prejudice in the intellectual world are readily mirrored by the social community, even within Martha's family. Awakening to prejudice, Martha gradually withdraws from physical experience, purpose and social contact into isolation and delusion.

Initially, Martha's quest is hindered by her economic background. Martha proves her Odyssean mettle by winning a bursary. But the line distinguishing rich, respectable, and educated from poor, shameful and ignorant has been etched upon her mind. Emmeline grudgingly supports Martha's bid for knowledge in her own bid for respectability, reinforcing Martha's misperception that the university and wisdom are one with affluence and respectability. Martha first journey to Muckle Arlo broadens Martha's horizons of experience: 'Here she was a traveller, at last. . . So new the world was!' (66). But, the journey also damages Martha's self-perception, and strengthens her sense of a divide between her rough, peasant life and the genteel life of the upper classes. She must realise that peace and order have nothing to do with class.

The opposition between inherited and created identity (what to keep and what to reject from one's past) is central to Shepherd's novels. Martha herself must decide what aspects of her family identity should be accepted or altered to suit her needs. Martha's aunts seek influence over Martha's developing individualism, and invite her to Muckle Arlo. They offer the Leggatt legacy of 'solidity and order' effected through a long-established tradition of female propriety moulded to patriarchal demands (70). This legacy is symbolised by the gifted lustre frock, whereby Martha's aunts attempt to shape Martha's appearance and identity. 'Canna ye wear stays, like a Christian body?' the aunts ask, implying their view that a woman must 'stay' (physically and symbolically restrict) her natural identity in order to be moral and respectable (68).

Other members of Martha's family also demonstrate ingrained prejudice. Even Josephine -- Martha' most important guide -- has lingering old-fashioned ideas about what constitutes a decent, complete woman. Emmeline pressures her daughter to become a 'respectable' woman. She has no use for intellect for its own sake: Emmeline regarded the time she spent on books as leisure, her recreation' (55). Geordie and Emmeline both 'talk of Martha's University classes as "school" and of the hours she spent in study as her "lessons"' (72). Geordie, though a source of wisdom, is also blind to what women might accomplish in the world. At Martha's graduation, he is proud of her so long as 'her power or willingness to wash his sweaty socks and clear away the remnants of a meal' is not altered (91). Meanwhile, he perceives the woman next to him as 'the mother of sons who were to make an illustrious name yet more illustrious in government and law and literature' (92).

The community holds threat as well. The equivalent of the romance's evil force is embodied in Stoddart Semple. Representing the ever-present threat of gender prejudice, this 'henchman of darkness' seeks to prevent Martha succeeding where he failed (31). Bitter over society's rejection of him, he has succumbed 'to a black and brooding madness on this one subject of himself' (29-31). Semple was destroyed by public opinion, and public opinion is his weapon against Martha. The only weapon against this threat is indifference.

Prejudice exists within the university as well, promoting the view (later expressed by Roy Foubister) that 'knowing women . . . are the devil' (149). Early in her university career, Martha has a vision of 'dead men, storming and battering at the citadel of her identity, subtly pervading her till they had stolen her very self' (51). Martha encounters individuals less wise than her professors who threaten her quest. The 'bovine' Macallister, for instance, explicitly challenges Martha's intellect, while his 'continually roving eyes' stare just below her waistline (73). Macallister sees women as objects for male pleasure and procreation, not as intellectual colleagues. As Mary-Anne Cullen writes: 'Intellectual prowess was not an easy burden for women to bear'.[44] Martha has learned to enliven dead ideas, but not how to defend against living prejudice.

Luke -- a bastion of the academic, cultural and social patriarchy -- poses a powerful threat to Martha's quest. Unwilling to integrate intellectual, physical women into his perception of the world, Luke instead shapes women to suit his needs. As Martha later realises: 'Men's creeds are conditioned by their desires' (159). Luke transforms the sharp-tongued, ragged Dussie into a 'costly-looking . . . absurdly finished and mature' wife (42). Dussie traded her orphan identity for a secure identity as 'Wife of the Above' (86). She waits passively like a princess in her tower, 'four stairs up' (55). Significantly, their marriage is barren of creative output until the end of the novel.

Lucy Warrander allows Luke (representing the male intellectual world) to define her as a de-sexed, de-souled intellectual. Luke absorbs her intellectual offerings, while disparaging her as a 'living-mine-of-information-and-perfect-pit-of-knowledge' (106). His intellectual passion thinly disguises physical passion. Having allowed the male intellectual world to disguise her womanhood, it is no wonder that Lucy's attempt to express her sexuality fails. Significantly, she disguises herself as a gypsy -- associating herself with those who seek to live outside the conventional order. Disguise is important in *The Quarry Wood*, as it is to the

Odyssey. It indicates the hero's capacity to control how others see him. But Lucy has relinquished this control, having yielded up her right to self-definition. She cannot live outside the order which she has allowed to define her. Luke is revolted by the new Lucy, perceiving her as 'lascivious', having a 'barbaric inconstancy' (although if anyone has been inconstant it is he) (106). Her refuses to acknowledge her as an intellectual and as a woman: 'Her knowledge is merely hers, not her. It makes no sort of alteration in the essential man' (75).

Martha perceives Dussie and Lucy as representing the epitome of social polish and scholarly achievement. In fact, these two characters represent what Martha must avoid.

Luke offers Martha a spiritualised, pseudo-intellectual identity: a pleasing alternative to her rough, peasant identity. Luke's influence is opposite to that of Josephine. Josephine encourages Martha to embrace self-reliance and spiritual discovery through physical experience. Luke encourages Martha to embrace a hollow, idealised identity (comparing her to Beatrice and Mary). He 'forgot that she was alive' (84). Luke's perception of Martha could not be realised by any human being, but Martha tries. She has weak grounds for self-defense: 'She did not know what she was, never having analysed herself' (75).

Withdrawal from Physical and Social Life

Luke describes Martha as 'A crystal of flame, perfectly rigid in its own shape. . . So still and self-contained' (49). Luke's simile is accurate as a description of his effect upon Martha. She allows Luke to crystallise the fiery passion of her nature; she withdraws into herself. Martha, who once loved the soft biscuits her father gave her, grows indifferent to food, representing her withdrawal from physical life. Segal writes that 'the essence of the self lies. . . in the vital energies sustained by food, drink, breathing and sleep'.[45] Eating also brings the hero of *Phantastes* into a 'more complete relationship with things around' him.[46] Martha rejects both self and the world around her. With hollow cheeks and thin frame, she increasingly resembles the 'Phantom' of Luke's perception (75). He encourages her. 'Flame is fairly indiscriminate as to what it takes for fuel' he says, when Dussie attempts a Josephine-like restoration of Martha's physical life: 'Marty has a stomach like the rest of us. . . she should be made to know about it' (63).

Segal writes: 'as [Odysseus] enters deeper into the fantasy world . . . his links with his Trojan past weaken and with it his relation with his men'.[47] Similarly, as Martha's fantasy relationship with Luke intensifies, her connections to her family and social community disintegrate. They could help her, but Martha seeks wisdom from the university, and 'from the company she kept in the flesh she took less consciously material for her building' (51).

Martha rejects Geordie's devotion, fearful that contact with his roughhewn ways might shatter her crystalline identity. There are deep links between them, but Martha does not see this. Her insensitivity to her father is one of the novel's most poignant aspects. Martha also divides herself from her mother in an attempt to distance herself from her disordered home. Again, there are underlying links between the two women. Both seek fantastic escape from mundane life. Martha escapes into textbooks, Emmeline escapes into novelettes (62). But Emmeline, despite her apparent discontent, has evolved a good and independent life. She married Geordie for love, with admirable disregard for public opinion. She chooses her family independent of male participation, as Martha will eventually do. Margaret Elphinstone claims that '[Emmeline's] house imprisons her'.[48] But Emmeline enjoys freedom and control. Her life is one of continuous renewal through contact with the world *beyond* her marital home. She is perpetually '"awa' oot" . . . in search of more family' (15). This is an improvement upon the life of house-bound isolation, pregnancy succeeding pregnancy, that many Scottish wives succumbed to.

Nor is Madge entirely different from Martha. Madge 'require[s] . . . a wider life than the cottage allowed' (78). She seeks wider horizons through physical experience, working in a bakery and eating constantly. Her story could be Bella Cassie's *Bildungsroman.* Madge uses gaudy physical adornments to explore a carnal world, just as Martha adorns herself with impossible, idealised notions in her exploration of a fantastic, spiritual world. Martha could learn much from Madge, who is indifferent to general opinion and 'would go her own way though the heavens fell upon her' (78). In distancing herself from her family, Martha divides herself from those who would guide and sustain her in her quest: 'She had never had a sense for the complex interrelationship of life: now it was completely gone' (116).

The inherited lustre frock represents the foundational family identity upon which Martha might build her identity. The frock should recall her to her family ties. Instead, it reveals how near Martha is to wholesale capitulation of her independence. Martha gives the

frock to Dussie for alteration. Insofar as the frock is symbolic of Martha's identity this is a symbolic gesture, though with ambiguous meaning. On one hand, one's human relationships do help shape one's identity. However, it could be interpreted that Martha has relinquished self-responsibility to Dussie. Dussie divests the frock of its familial origins, altering it to resemble a wedding gown. She thus encourages Martha's dependence, rather than celebrating self-reliance. Wearing the fantastically-altered gown lends a tangible dimension to Martha's spiritual delusion and isolation:

> The mere wearing of the gown could not have changed her: but. . . it served to make her aware of alteration. . . Wearing the lustre frock, she had no Ironside instincts. She did not belong to the Leggatts . . .Relations. . . but what relation had they to her soul? (93-4)

Rejecting family relations, Martha imagines a fantastic relationship with the man who encourages her escape from everyday life. Luke provides Martha with a fantastic alternative to her home: 'in Luke's dower was her peace' (77). The word 'dower' resembles 'tower', where the isolated romance maiden waits to be claimed. The *OED* defines 'dower' as the 'money or property which the wife brings to her husband', referring to the suggestion that women should relinquish independence in exchange for a secure, 'decent' life. Martha is tempted to give up her self to Luke in exchange for a life absolved of self-responsibility: 'She could give herself to him forever by the mere outpouring of herself. She put herself at his disposal' (104). Just as Odysseus' quest is stalled as long as he remains on Calypso's island, so Martha's quest for wisdom is stalled as long as she remains 'in Luke's dower'. But her infatuation sends her deeper into delusion.

Human love has a physical component, evident in Martha's dance through Emmeline's kitchen (103). But Martha is haunted by the patriarchal insistence that female desire is immoral (particularly when directed at a married man). She associates love with filth: 'Dirty weather [is] in the offing' (101). A grimy stain awakens her to her love. Martha tries to disguise her desires with Christian morality. Her lovesick jealousy of Lucy's relationship with Luke is expressed as pious rage: 'His walking with Miss Warrender was so hateful to herself that she saw it as a dishonour. . . This breaking of the third commandment!' (97). She transforms her desire into adoration (reflecting Luke's perception of her):

> She was undergoing the awe and rapture of annunciation. Humbly she cried, 'I am not worthy,' . . her whole being was caught up in passionate prayer that she might be able for her destiny. The place was holy. . . [Luke] made her great by believing her so. (77)

Repression of her sexual desire moves her, literally, outside her parent's home. Sleeping outdoors, she shifts the symbolic seat of her taboo desire onto the more forgiving natural landscape. Venting her passion there, she listens to the river 'as one hears the breathing of another' (114). Ironically, however, this experience of the natural world is so self-absorbed that it merely divides her farther from physical realities.

Martha is utterly lost in her inner life: 'So strong and bright was this interior life that the things she touched and saw no longer wore their own significance. Their nature was subjugated to her nature' (77). Her willingness and ability to relate to her family disintegrates: 'The cottage did not reabsorb her afternoon by afternoon: it received her back. She was in its life but not of it. Its concerns did not concern her nearly. . . She had no point of contact with these: or thought so' (56-7). But the narrator tells readers: 'in this she was mistaken. The contact was there, though she did not feel it' (57). Intrusions from the omniscient narrator's perspective are rare and significant. The narrator intimates that Martha is not immune to the influence of her community, despite that 'she live[s] her real life apart from them, within herself' (79).

IV) AWAKENING AND ADAPTATION

Smith comments that *The Quarry Wood* is about 'freeing yourself from self-deception, and from the power of the deceived or received views that others might have of you'.[49] This section describes how Martha frees herself from delusions and expectations, to evolve a wise and peaceful existence.

The notion that one *can* 'free oneself' is central to *The Quarry Wood.* Murnaghan describes *ephemeros* and *polutropos.* Both describe someone who 'represents the extreme of susceptibility to fortune and change'.[50] *Polutropos* describes someone 'distinguished by the control he possesses: subtle and shifting, he is always master of himself and is only unstable in appearance'.[51] Odysseus demonstrates *polutropos,* being masterfully versatile and adaptable. Segal writes that his 'declaration of himself comes, as in all his identifications, in his own

terms'.[52] Martha must learn *polutropos*. *Polutropos* is, as Odysseus demonstrates, dependent upon wisdom. And wisdom, in Shepherd's view, is a way of seeing, characterised by detached and flexible perception.

Paradox underlies Shepherd's fiction, stemming from her belief that one's relative perceptions (often conflicting) define one's experience of reality. The central paradox besetting Martha's quest is that she needs wisdom in order to transcend what she perceives as the threats to her quest for wisdom. The paradox can only be resolved when Martha is distracted from self-absorption by genuine interaction and concern for others. As with many quest narratives, the quest itself is its own end. Smith writes: 'The balance of outer and inner existences is the most valuable thing that Martha can learn' (35). Martha achieves that balance as she circles back to the people, places and ideas of childhood, the foundation upon which she must build her life.

Awakening to Physical Life

The narrator warns that 'some crystals founder in some fires' (102). Martha's 'crystal' identity begins to founder in the second half of the novel. The process is illuminated by the Diana/Artemis identification, supplanting Luke's Beatrice/Mary comparison. In *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings* (1913), Frazer writes that the Roman goddess Diana and her Greek counterpart, Artemis, were popularly perceived as 'straight-laced maiden lad[ies]'.[53] This is another example of distorted female identity. Frazer notes that we translate the Greek word 'Parthenos' as 'virgin', though its actual meaning is 'unmarried woman'.[54] Diana was unmarried, but certainly not virginal, being 'specially concerned with the loss of virginity and with childbearing. [She] . . . not only assisted but encouraged women to be fruitful and multiply'.[55] This model of female sexuality threatens the conventional Christian view. The (patriarchal) Christian Church converted Diana's festival day into the festival of the Assumption of the Virgin, transforming the dangerously physical Diana into the saintly Virgin Mary, just as Luke transforms Dussie, Lucy, and Martha.

Diana, like Martha, is connected to the physical world: 'the ideal and embodiment of the wild life of nature-- the life of plants, of animals, and of men-- in all its exuberant fertility and profusion. . . [She represented] the healthful vigour of all living things on earth'.[56]

Diana's was not an escapist or symbolic connection with landscape: 'no empty personification, like the earth conceived as goddess', writes Frazer. Diana was one with the natural world.

Shepherd believes that contact with the natural world has, as J. Arthur Thomson writes, 'subtle influence. . . on human life'.[57] Martha's relationship with the natural world fluctuates from escapism, to symbolic connection, to Diana-like interconnectedness. At the height of Martha's delusions, natural world descriptions anticipate the disintegration of her fantasy-world: 'The hills trembled. . . they seemed a point of dissolution'; the world is 'insubstantial. . . hazed upon its edges, unstable' (114). Weather echoes the 'toppling transient magnificence' of Martha's inner tumult (127).

Feminist literary critic, Annis Pratt, writes: 'the persistent drive for Eros in women's lives and literature undoubtedly derives from its primacy in the development of the human personality'.[58] Shepherd is aware, too, that 'the human personality' cannot be complete without genuine emotional and physical love. Acted upon by the irresistible energy of the physical world, Martha's 'crystalline' identity 'founders'. Her sexual desires are stirred and depicted by storm:

> The rain began, hesitant at first, then powerful as from an opened sluice. Martha pulled off her gloves, and throwing her face and palms upwards, let the water rush upon her naked flesh. She felt light, as though her body were sea-wrack floating in the deluge of waters; or as though an energy too exorbitant for her frame, coursing through her, had whipped her into foam. (102)

Martha ostensibly 'rejoices' in her 'virginity' in the natural landscape, while in truth her 'wild abandon' betrays a vibrant energy that, like Diana's energy, is 'hardly virginal':

> . . . feeling splendidly alive. . . Artemis was very happy on the heather. . . she clambered upon the boulders and plunged among the heather-tufts. . . wind-blown, mazed with distance, drunken with height and space, [she] danced fiercely under a bare sky. (112-3)

Martha's active vigour contrasts with her habitual passivity. Martha, in fact, celebrates her physical being: 'Life coursed through her veins, and she was glad, in a way she had hardly known before, of the possession of her body. . . upon the mountains' (112).

Comparison with Diana also marks Martha's transition from victim to huntress, feminising the traditional romance quest where the hero pursued the maiden. Martha's awakening to her physical desire occurs not in the natural world (she had placed her bed out in the field), but later, after she has returned her bed to the family cottage. This might indicate

that sexual desire is nothing fantastic or spiritual, but quite common to everyday, domestic life. Furthermore, she awakens to her sexual nature by her own hand, indicating that her physical and spiritual selves have at last connected:

> She was so sunk in her absorption that for a moment she did not realize it was her own hand she had closed upon. She felt the firm impact of the grip. . . then, with the suddenness of light when a match is struck, she knew what it was she wanted. . . She wanted Luke. All of him. . . And the torrent of her passion, sweeping headlong, bore her on in imagination past every obstacle between her and her desire. (115)

Martha's physical identity surfaces despite herself, betraying her idealised fantasies. Her passion is described in terms of flood (115, 123).

Having yielded to passion, Martha awakens to a 'savage imperious urge' to have her passion satisfied. A 'sense of her own power rushed over her with a wild black sweetness she could not resist' (115). This Martha echoes Frazer's Diana. Bound by Christian moral views, however, Martha cannot embrace Diana's alternative morality. Moreover, Martha's de-physicalised existence offers no arena for power or action. As Craig writes, the 'all-too-physical passion. . . can never receive expression because it can have no meaning within the world of symbolic significances generated by their imaginations'.[59] Again, 'Summit of Etchacan' captures Martha's conundrum:

> . . . So may the mind achieve,
> Toiling, no vision of the infinite,
> But a vast, dark and inscrutable sense
> Of its own terror, its own glory and power.[60]

Martha can only exert 'glory and power' over an unsatisfying dream world. She has 'no vision of the infinite' world beyond herself, and thus no influence in that world. Her natural urges build within her, dammed by moral repression and idealised perceptions. The dam, however, is without foundation, built of flimsy materials.

Glamourie and Changing Perceptions: The Kiss

The quarry wood kiss represents the novel's crisis point, revealing how distorted Martha's perception is. The word 'quarry' emphasises the shifting roles of hunter and hunted. Nowhere are Martha's inner experience and external appearance more divided:

> The boiling fermentation of her passion was all within; and her habit of self-control and silence was too strong . . . [Martha] stole in an exquisite quietude to shatter and plunder and riot. In her heart was havoc, in face and movement a profundity of peace. (117)

As an expression of passion the scene is trivial and non-romantic. As an awakening to the nature of life, it is indeed the cataclysmic 'crux' of the novel, initiating Martha's reintegration to a life engaged with externals.

Shepherd returns to the wood and its association with magical awakenings: 'The wood was bathed in [light]; a wood from another world; as though someone had enclosed it long ago in a volatile spirit, through which as through a subtly-altering medium one saw its boughs and boles' (116). Warwick Gould writes that Frazer's 'stories and knowledge [can be used] to show our involvement in myth and ritual and in some way both to show their necessity, indeed inevitability, and to release us from them'.[61] This precisely describes Shepherd's use of the wood. Shepherd is adamant that fantasy-world does not exist in its own right. She does, however, recognise that our own perceptions can be fantastic enough to both bewilder and liberate us. The kiss scene describes Shepherd's version of *glamourie,* whereby psychological (mis)perception beguiles individuals into susceptibility to mythical/magical experience. The psychological force involved in such events is powerful enough to alter one's perceptions. Thus, a plain wood appears fantastic in Martha's eyes, thus awakening Martha from her fantasies.

The quarry wood kiss awakens both Martha and Luke from their respective delusions. Luke goes 'through one of those moments that are like eternity, so full it was of revelation' (120). Martha, too, sees 'the insanity of her suppositions . . . something cracked within her, the new self inside, that in the wood had not yet worked out to the surface, had issue' (121-2). Realising how much of herself she sacrificed to Luke, she wants to 'kick out at the whole world to prove how free she was' (recalling an early scene from childhood) (138).

The kiss and its aftermath may be compared with Odysseus' landing on Ithaca: a transition between land and sea, between fantastic and real worlds of experience. Odysseus (the man of *polutropos*) does not immediately reveal himself. Stripped of her delusions, Martha (in pursuit of *polutropos)* does not immediately recognise herself. Having allowed others to define her identity for so long, 'she did not know what she was' beneath (122). The

next series of adventures describes Martha's attempt to regain her footing on land, and accustom herself to physical and social realities. Her identity (in her own eyes, and the eyes of others) remains, for some time, obscure. But the kiss scene marks the beginning of Martha's transition from *ephemeros* to *polutropos*, from hunted to huntress.

The 'Good Apothecary': Return to Aunt Josephine

In the everyday landscape, Martha feels uncomfortable and ashamed. She needs regenerative human companionship, but would rather be alone. Her friendship with Harrie falls away (124). Her state is again expressed in terms of flood: 'the thought of Dussie was like a straw tumbled in a cataract' (115). She 'tossed herself away from her father's reach and strode up the brae towards Crannochie', trying to escape through the natural world (111). Instead, the natural world leads her toward the place where she first glimpsed the interconnections that lend peace and order to life.

Josephine and Martha are both near total destruction when Martha moves into Josephine's home for the second time. Josephine is 'a ghost of herself', as is Martha (129). Josephine is threatened by physical disease, Martha by spiritual; she 'felt that there was evil in the disruption her self had undergone in her dealings with Luke. . . she felt it in her like the degradation of disease' (181). Josephine needs spiritual rejuvenation; Martha needs contact with physical life. Both women require healing and redemption. Josephine is called 'the good apothecary' (130). She demonstrates, by example, the regenerative powers of the natural and human world. Four chapters describe Josephine's reluctant journey toward death and Martha's reluctant journey toward life.

Martha embraces her labours at Crannochie: 'the more hard work she had to perform, plain and ordinary tasks that would use her up, the freer she would become' (129). But Martha is not seeking freedom, but escape from spiritual turmoil (as she once sought escape from physical realities). In fact, Martha is imprisoned by her repressed physical 'passion that seeks self very abundantly, [leaving] her at times a poor leisure for the concerns of other folk' (131). Martha sees her 'exultant clutching' (a daring account of masturbation) as a 'shameful and beloved vice . . . gluttonous debauchery' (126). Shepherd does not condemn

masturbation on moral ground, but on the ground that it cannot substitute for real interaction. Shepherd's poem, 'Blackbird in Snow', describes similarly isolated frustration:

> The blackbird's song with love is shaken
> And madness of approaching doom,
> Delirious to capture
> All passion in a little room.[62]

Social contact helps Josephine in her illness. Talking to Roy Foubister 'she was a girl again' (144). Social contact also prevents Martha's total self-absorption. Her new occupations (teaching and nursing) demand everyday interaction and caring for others. Crannochie's social company acts as an 'antiseptic to draw out [the poison]' (130). Clem -- who rules Peter's household while refusing his marriage proposals -- represents the mastery that results from interacting with the social world without giving up one's self to definition by others. She knows about everyone's private lives, but uses the knowledge in kindness. Josephine calls Clem 'a cure' (132), implying that kindness can cure a diseased body. Might it not cure a diseased soul as well? Martha, however, sees only 'interference', refusing Clem's scones in symbolic rejection of human interconnectedness. (140).

Peter is another of Crannochie's regular visitors, and a source of unexpected wisdom. He tells her to bury a plate of rancid meat, for 'the earth's grand at cleanin' (128). The scene intimates Josephine's imminent death from cancer, and the notion that death contributes to the continuation of life. As Freeman writes: 'The terrible force of life is inextricably bound up with its mortality'.[63] Josephine desperately wants to perpetuate life -- and not merely her own. Thus does Josephine ask Martha to plant the kail, despite that she cannot hope to see it harvested. Martha asks herself whether it was 'kind to let Josephine. . . build false hopes that could have no foundation' (131). But unlike Martha's delusional hopes, Josephine's are founded in the natural world cycles of life she sees around her. Most importantly, Josephine's manner of living and dying gives new life to Martha.

The tragedy of Mary-Annie is an important aside, a warning that one's life can be stolen by another's views. A simple soul with no pretension to knowledge or gentility, Mary-Annie eats when she is hungry. She finds deep spiritual meaning in a few 'bit[s] of materialised experience' (133). Her husband's false teeth 'symbolised for her the tragedy of life's waste' (45). Her daughter's power-wielding religious rectitude strips Mary-Annie to a

'ghost of herself' as well. Objects symbolising her life's happiest moments (a crimson sateen bodice, her wedding ring) are taken from her by her daughter. Mary-Annie is afraid to protest at this appropriation of her life and identity. She should be read as a warning to Martha, preceding Roy Foubister's arrival.

Temptation, Trial and Evolving Perceptions

Roy Foubister interrupts Martha's stay at Crannochie. He represents the trial through temptation that most heroes undergo, testing Martha's progress toward wisdom and self-assurance. Associated with 'evil omen', Roy is a 'duplicitous' villain, with a veneer of politeness (142, 151). He tempts Martha (who is physically engaged, but spiritually isolated in the everyday world) with the old allure of a fantasy existence. He promises stability, but is associated with the turmoil of the sea. The house becomes 'a ship tossed on billows', in which Roy takes 'top berth' (146). The narrative voice communicating Martha's perspective grows confused and unreliable: 'Her world spun giddily round. . . "It was the cake. . . no, the bottle. Alice in Wonderland"' (146).

Riding in his motor-cycle side-car, 'the swift motion whipped her blood and paralysed her mind. Better, far better, never to think! If one could rush like this forever, too fast for contemplation, too merrily for desire, without a goal! She belonged neither to her past nor to her future' (148). Afterward, she tells her aunt she hadn't meant to be away so long. But in giving up her past, her future and her goals, Martha briefly gave up the authority to determine her own course: 'she had surrendered her will and knew it' (148). The lustre frock reappears, an echo from Martha's old fantastic life. Just as Josephine could give up and die, Martha could give up her quest and marry Roy. The frock is paired with a black cloak (borrowed from the dying Josephine), prophesying that Martha would undergo a kind of death were she to accept Roy's offer.

Martha must resist the temptation to let Roy define her, but the greater trial is yet to come. Martha's first romantic adventure was enacted in her imagination; Roy's offer is real. This second romantic adventure is enacted on the physical and social stage, in the midst of what Hart describes as the 'menacing interconnectedness of things'.[64] Martha cannot

'withdraw. . . herself' from the public eye, and the public eye is 'agitated by the rabble' (156, 150).

Semple, himself wounded by public opinion, awakens Martha to how others see her: 'Focused. . . through the consciousness of others, she saw [her adventure] as common and tawdry' (153). In a revelation familiar to Shepherd's novels, Martha detaches from self-centred perspective into an appreciation of perspectives beyond her own:

> a fierce clarity came in her thoughts. She saw all that had chanced in the last two years sort itself out in patterns. The patterns shifted; no two were quite alike, yet all were recognisably the same; and it seemed to her that she was looking in succession at the events of her life through the eyes of all the different actors in them. (158)

Roy's courtship signals a milestone in Martha's quest, awakening Martha to the infinite variety of perceptions -- all of them merely versions of reality 'overlaid with a good many crusts of falseness and convention' (LM, 72). Martha's own understanding of morality undergoes evolution: '[Her] ideas of right and wrong were altering' (159). She realises that truth can be influenced, even created. 'All things are lawful' she realises: 'what madness there was in the world's morality!' (159-60). Martha's sin has been against herself, not against any conventional moral standards. The most effective morality is not codified or anarchical, but individually self-determined.

Martha refuses Roy's offer, and goes against public (even familial) opinion by doing so. She is 'counted wanton', though she has done nothing against conventional morality (158). Having entered life in the social world, she now faces ostracism from it. Martha must either succumb to the misperceptions of society, or she must transcend public opinion and live, without apology, according to her self-defined perception of right and wrong. She is learning that 'the importance of things lies not in themselves but in their relations' (149). Her fantasy world and its false peace has disintegrated. She must look beyond herself for a source of peace in the world of human relations.

'Quhat Say They; Lat Them Say'

Martha begins to consider what happens to others 'who come under the pressure of society's "version" of them'.[65] Feeling 'unclean', she would previously have escaped into solitude. Now, she recognises that the 'consolation of activity' may provide the 'purgation' she

longs for (180-1). She embarks upon a hunt for Aunt Sally and Madge (women also wronged by men, and ostracised by society). It is interesting that in her search to transcend (not escape) the 'ugliness of life', Martha must leave the countryside (conventionally associated with pastoral peace) for Glasgow (a city associated with the coarsest physical life imaginable) (174).

Much like Geordie, Aunt Sally (of the Salvation Army) finds spiritual fulfilment in the physical world. The women share a meal and tell stories. S. Douglas Olson writes that the function of storytelling in the *Odyssey* is to lend 'temporary coherence to a world which does not otherwise make sense'.[66] Odysseus tells stories throughout. Like disguise, storytelling enables him to master how others perceive him. Segal calls it: 'one of humankind's most valuable resources for understanding our own and other's selves'.[67] Storytelling strengthens social connections, by communicating one person's perception to others. Storytelling also requires empathy, in order to master and communicate a specific telling of events such that one's audience accepts it. Martha once asked herself: 'Did one ever order one's life as one desired?' (169). She is accepting that the world is too complex to be ordered, but one's perceptions of the world can be ordered.

The physical journey itself and the social contact rejuvenate Martha. Feeling that she's 'done something about Madge', she has actually done something about herself (182). She has awakened to the oneness of human existence despite the variety of perceptions, much the way characters in *The Weatherhouse* will do. Most importantly, Sally has taught her the importance of indifference to perceptions that would define her as less than she is: 'I'm sure they may say what they like if I can be as independent of their tongues as she was' (193).

Wisdom and Creation Through Death

Josephine takes life from the physical world, from social companionship, and teaches Martha to do the same. Both move closer to life by learning to defy the restrictions and definitions others would impose upon them. Josephine is compared to the 'antagonists in ballad and saga' -- those who threaten the established order (207). She demonstrates that it is possible to withstand the 'repeated hack and shock' that comes of living in defiance of social

expectations and codes. Martha, too, has mastered a life of defiance: 'her old diffidence was gone. The current of her life was running strong and sure' (197).

Josephine's physical death is inevitable. But, her death may certainly be perceived as an allegorical end through which she gives new life to Martha, and thus attains infinite life herself.

> [I]t seemed to [Martha] that the heavens were opened and the spirit of God descended and brooded on the frail and wasted frame of the old woman. She had taken upon herself what she conceived to be the young girl's sorrow and was carrying it. . . The strong serenity of life that dwelt in the old woman seemed to possess and inhabit the girl, purchased for her. . . by the love and suffering she had divined. (198)

The scene reiterates Shepherd's philosophy that life and death are integral aspects of a single cycle. This is no hollow or ironic 'Incarnation', but a real spiritual transformation that acknowledges real pain and suffering. While Josephine's struggle to live confirms the importance of defiant spirit, Josephine's death awakens Martha to the worth of physical life.

Sleep frequently represents a transition between fantasy world and reality; the *Odyssey* describes 'slumber, soft and deep like the still sleep of death'.[68] Josephine's final sleep enacts Martha's return to everyday human and physical life. As Craig writes, Josephine takes with her 'all the false power of the imagination and returned Martha to the reality which she had been denied' (199). And, perhaps in choosing to live alone, Martha reassures her aunt that her own long life alone has nonetheless been a good one. Perhaps the knowledge that she has created an heir in Martha despite having no husband or children, has resolved any self-doubt persisting in Josephine's wise and capable spirit.

Josephine leaves Martha a great spiritual and physical legacy, symbolised by the bequest of her home to Martha. But Martha chooses to return to her family home. Her final adventure (like Odysseus') is to master her own identity, in her home, 'in relation to the institutions of human society'.[69] As Segal writes:

> This rediscovery is nothing less than. . . the re-creation of [Odysseus'] entire mortal life, the whole range of his human ties. . . He needs to bring the inner world into the external world of human converse. . . He gradually rebuilds around himself the close circle of relations he left behind. . . They must meet and know him as he has found and won them.[70]

Martha pursues this reintegration to her physical and social world through storytelling, food and eating, and through physical contact.

The illegitimate orphan, Robin, challenges Martha to live up to Sally's example of indifference to social opinion. She has always hated her mother's illegitimate adoptees, fearing the contagion of social stigma. When the community decides that Robin is Martha's child, it seems that her fears have been realised. Martha is attracted to the child, but associates even this brand of love with filth. A 'dirty waif', she thinks of Robin . . . or of herself (187).

Murnaghan writes: '[Odysseus'] success . . . is only meaningful if he is acknowledged by others, and it can only be acknowledged if. . . he is recognised as his mortal self by other mortal characters'.[71] By determining to win Robin's affection and by embracing Robin as her own, Martha accomplishes both social engagement and social indifference: equally necessary to her quest. Martha masters Robin's perception of her through her highly strategical storytelling, literally and symbolically imposing an order of her own making upon events, rather than accepting society's views. Her deliberate pursuit of Robin's affection is evidence of her growing wisdom, and capacity for self-definition. As Shepherd writes: 'love pursued with fervour is one of the roads to knowledge' (LM, iv).

With Robin, she embraces the domestic, physical chores she once eschewed precisely because they were domestic and physical: 'How clean this scrubbing made one feel! She could scrub to all eternity. A jolly kind of heaven, an eternity of this vehement physical action, that cleared the head and set the body glowing!' (195). She recognises the spiritual value of the action. As Odysseus reclaimed his home from those who threatened his order and mastery, Martha has begun the process of creating her old home anew: to 'redeem the house from its bondage to Emmeline' (194). Martha's passionate housecleaning is evidence of her capacity to impose a peace and order of her own making upon her (physical and spiritual) life. Emmeline comes home and tosses her boots on Martha's clean floor, demonstrating that physical realities cannot be rigidly controlled. Martha's reaction signals the change in her. Like Josephine, she accepts that some realities are beyond control. Peace is not in control of events, but in controlled perception. Perceiving peace in the house, there is peace. She has made the house 'wholesome' in the sense of transcending the divides that severed her from her family.

A final divide remains, as in the *Odyssey*: the divide between hero(ine) and father. Martha's newly-created identity is incomplete until the rift between Martha and her father (representing acceptance of her inherited identity) is healed. In Book Twenty-four, Odysseus,

disguised, watches Laërtes in his orchard. In an equally important scene, Martha stands outside the kitchen- symbolising the position she has chosen regarding her family (191). Martha's position, however, can also be interpreted as lending Martha the kind of anonymous detachment that Odysseus' disguise gives him. Watching her father and Robin Martha recognises the desirability of family love. 'A passion of ruth' overwhelms Martha, just as Odysseus feels 'a twinge prickling up through his nostrils' before revealing his identity to his father.[72] Martha's reconciliation with Geordie (like Odysseus' with Laërtes) is distinguished by physical contact and embrace (192-3). The choice of words ('passion' and 'ruth') imply Martha's realisation that true love is rooted in compassion, and that love may be other than romantic. Martha sings and dances again: 'it was so long since she had been *fey*', recalling her childhood dance (193). This time, however, she has mastered the circumstances that make her *fey*, and she does not repress her passionate exuberance. A final scene demonstrates that Martha has accepted not merely the man who is her father, but the spiritual legacy he represents: 'her father and his team were blotted out, one with the earth. She thought, "I've come from him." She too was at one with the earth. . . [she] shook herself and hastened home' (204).

Conclusion

Some critics argue that Martha's conclusion signals defeat. Elphinstone writes that 'Martha never does reconcile the elements that make her who she is. . . [she] is forced to sacrifice part of herself'.[73] But Gillian Carter writes that: *'The Quarry Wood* is a text which invites multiple readings from various positions, it . . . cannot be fixed to a single, essential meaning'.[74] Read from one perspective there is basis for Elphinstone's interpretation; read from a different perspective, her interpretation is invalid. T. S. Eliot writes 'when one's subject matter is literature, clarity beyond a certain point becomes falsification'.[75] Shepherd extends her belief in the importance of perception to readers, demanding that they define their own view.

Martha's preparation of the meal may be read as her submission to an easy domestic life, as Elphinstone argues.[76] Or it may be interpreted that Martha has taken charge of ordering the household's affairs, and by symbolic extension, taken charge of her place in the

world. Her ordering of the familial home is 'wholesome and strong-- a cosmic harmony' (195). Martha has freed herself of fantasy, and reconciled her inner vision to external realities. As Hart writes (of *Imagined Corners*): 'only in balance and integrity can body and mind become a self, but. . . even the achievement of a self does not lift one above this provincial world'.[77] That Martha chooses to remain in her 'provincial world' is not, of itself, proof of her defeat.

Josephine taught Martha the importance of being 'happy in your own way', of not being ruled by society's expectations. It could be argued that Martha has given up intellectual aspirations, or it could be argued that literary critics are themselves subject to the view that intellectual achievement is the highest sign of success. Martha's return home may have been, like Andrew of *Pass in the Grampians*, a conscious, if unorthodox choice to devote her life to landscape and community (a choice Shepherd herself made). Certainly, Martha has achieved what Freeman calls a 'zestful orientation to the otherness of persons and soil'.[78] Should Martha's life be considered incomplete because she rejects self-fulfilment through marriage and sexual passion? As Smith writes (of A.L. Kennedy's *Looking for the Possible Dance*): 'community responsibility replaces marriage as the binding force between the man and the woman'.[79]

Aileen Christianson writes: 'This ending, as all the best endings, shimmers with the possibilities of openness'.[80] Certainly, Shepherd's conclusion is ambiguous, but Martha has accomplished a spiritual reconstruction of home and identity on her own terms. Her decisions have been 'freely and consciously made'.[81] By the end of the novel Martha makes her own choices, and orders her life as far as possible. It is less important what her choices are.

At the end of the *Odyssey*, Zeus tells Athene to let 'peace and plenty prevail', whereupon Odysseus lays down his sword, turns away from the fight, and turns toward the ordering of his kingdom (at least for a while).[82] Does Homer's conclusion detract from Odysseus' previous adventures, or illuminate them with purpose and honour? We must ask the same of Shepherd's conclusion. Martha's quest, like Odysseus', was for a peaceful and ordered life. Like adventurers before her, Martha wins home and finds herself having won wisdom and peace along the way. As Geordie remarks at the end of the novel: 'It's a grand thing to get leave to live' (208). Martha has not merely 'got leave' to live, she has won her life, and 'delivered herself from the insecurity of the adventurer' (210).

ENDNOTES

[1]Nan Shepherd, 'Crusoe' from *IC*.
[2]Hart, p. 42.
[3]AUSCA, Shepherd MSS 2750/12 (1925).
[4]AUSCA, Shepherd MSS 2750/13 (1925).
[5]Cairns Craig, 'Scotland and the Regional Novel', in *The Regional Novel in Britain and Ireland: 1800-1990*, ed. by K.D.M. Snell, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp.221-256 (p. 235).
[6]Mackenzie, MSS 2750/13 (1925).
[7]*The Collins Dictionary of the English Language,* ed. by Patrick Hanks, (Glasgow: Collins, 1986).
[8]Elizabeth Abel, *The Voyage In: Fictions of Female Development,* ed. by. Elizabeth Abel and others, (London: University Press of New England, 1983), p. 24.
[9]Abel, p. 13.
[10]See Abel (above), and *Writing Beyond the Ending: Narrative Strategies of Twentieth-Century Women Writers*, by Rachel Blau DuPlessis, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985). Both describe the pattern of nineteenth-century female development novels ending in death or marriage.
[11]Smith, 'And Woman Created Woman: Carswell, Shepherd and Muir, and the Self-made Woman', in *Gendering the Nation*, ed. by Christopher Whyte, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995), pp. 25-47 (p. 26).
[12]Shepherd, 'Women in the University', p. 181.
[13]Smith, p. 31-2.
[14]Jean Radford, *Dorothy Richardson*, (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), p. 33.
[15]Radford, p. 26.
[16]AUSCA, Shepherd MSS 2750/6 (1923).
[17]Charles Segal, *Singers, Heroes, and Gods in the Odyssey*, (London: Cornell University Press, 1992), p. 12.
[18]T.S.Eliot, 'Ulysses: Order and Myth' (1923) in *A Modernist Reader*, pp. 100-104 (p. 103).
[19]Segal, p. 4.
[20]Gregory Nagy, Foreword to *Singers, Heroes, and Gods in The Odyssey*, p. x.
[21]Sheila Murnaghan, *Disguise and Recognition in the Odyssey*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), p. 10.
[22]Segal, p.3.
[23]Homer, *Odyssey*, I, (tr. Robert Fitzgerald), (London: Collins Harvill, 1988), p. 16.
[24]Segal, p.14.
[25]Segal, p.14.
[26]NLS, Shepherd MSS 27439. Shepherd copied phrases from Spenser and Macdonald in her sketchbook (1904). In 1927, Mackenzie writes: 'You have George Macdonald's virtues. . . he's got a permanent place in at least Scots literature and I see no great reason why you shouldn't have a better' (AUSCA, Shepherd MSS 2750/26).
[27]NLS, Shepherd MSS 27443.

[28]Northrop Frye, 'Third Essay: Archetypal Criticism: Theory of Myths', in *The Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), p. 186.
[29]Hart, p.385.
[30]Jenni Calder, 'Heroes and Hero-makers: Women in Nineteenth-Century Scottish Fiction' in *The History of Scottish Literature: Nineteenth Century*, Vol. 3, ed. by Douglas Gifford, (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1988), pp. 261-274 (p. 262).
[31]Watson, '"To Get Leave to Live"', p. 209.
[32]Segal, p. 40 and 12.
[33]See George MacDonald, *Phantastes: A Faerie Romance for Men and Women,* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1858; repr. Whitehorn, CA: Johannesen, 1994).
[34]This scene recalls much of MacDiarmid's poetry. As George Bruce writes of MacDiarmid: 'he presents the images of stone, the interstellar spaces and the moon as wonders, as the astonishing conditions which create and in which is created life'. Interestingly, Shepherd herself quotes Bruce's words for a book review of *MacDiarmid: A Festschrift, AUR,* 40 (1963-64), p. 39.
[35]Macdonald, p. 8-9.
[36]Dante, *The Inferno*, Canto I, trans. by John D. Sinclair, (London: Bodley Head, 1958), p. 23.
[37]*Odyssey*, 24, p. 465.
[38]Thomson, 'Some Suggestions to Teachers for Seasonal Nature Study in Schools', in *Pamphlets Herald Vol. III, Edinburgh: Catalogue of the Valuable Library of Books,* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1908), pp. 5-32 (p. 5).
[39]Shepherd, 'Summit of Etchacan' in *IC.*
[40]Shepherd, 'Women in the University', p. 181.
[41]Shepherd, 'Professors and Students', p. 311.
[42]Ibid., p. 311
[43]Thomson, 'Some Suggestions to Teachers', p. 32.
[44]Cullen, p. 117.
[45]Segal, p. 17.
[46]Macdonald, p. 39.
[47]Segal, p.34.
[48]Elphinstone, p. 33.
[49]Smith, pp. 33-4.
[50]Murnaghan, p. 10.
[51]Murnaghan, p.10.
[52]Segal, p. 25.
[53]Sir James Frazer, *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings, Part I, Volume III* of *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion*, 3rd ed. (London: MacMillan, [1890] 1913).
[54]Frazer, p. 36.
[55]Frazer, p. 37.
[56]Frazer, p. 35.
[57]Thomson, p.5.
[58]Annis Pratt, *Archetypal Patterns in Women's Fiction* (Brighton: Harvest Press, 1982) p. 74.

[59]Craig, *The Modern Scottish Novel: Narrative and the National Imagination,* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999) p. 220.
[60]Shepherd, from 'The Summit of Etchacan', in *IC.*

[61]Warwick Gould, 'Frazer, Yeats, and the Reconsecration of Folklore', in *Sir James Frazer and the Literary Imagination*, ed. by Robert Fraser, (London: MacMillan, 1990), p. 299.
[62]Shepherd, lines from 'Blackbird in Snow' from *IC.*
[63]Freeman, p. 222.
[64]Hart, p. 387.
[65]Smith, p. 37.
[66]S. Douglas Olson, *Blood and Iron: Stories and Storytelling in Homer's Odyssey* (New York: EJ Brill, 1995), p. x.
[67]Segal, p. 5.
[68]*Odyssey*, 13, p. 244.
[69]Murnaghan, p.19.
[70]Segal, p. 48.
[71]Murnaghan, p. 8.
[72]*Odyssey*, 24, p. 464.
[73]Elphinstone, p.31.
[74]Gillian Carter, 'Boundaries and Transgression in Nan Shepherd's *The Quarry Wood'*, in *Scottish Women's Fiction: 1920s to 1960s: Journeys Into Being*, eds. Carol Anderson and others, (East Lothian: Tuckwell Press, 2000), pp. 47-58 (p. 56).
[75]Eliot, *Varieties of Metaphysical Poetry*, p. 59.
[76]Elphinstone, p. 34. 'Quite explicitly, the possibility of wider horizons, the theme that has led [Martha] forward throughout the book, is denied'.
[77]Hart, p. 208.
[78]Freeman, p. 223.
[79]Smith, p. 26.
[80]Aileen Christianson, 'Imagined Corners to Debatable Land: Passable Boundaries', in *Scottish Affairs*, 17 (1996), 230-134 (p. 133).
[81]Watson, '"To Know Being"', p. 418.
[82]*Odyssey*, 24, p. 474.

Chapter Three:

The Weatherhouse: 'To Know Being'

Fires

Firelight: the quiet heart of a little room
Where the lamp burns low and the shadows hover.
Out of the night are we come, where the gathered gloom
Hangs softly now that the wild hill rain is over,
And all that moves- a star or two- moves slowly;
Great clouds plod to the slouch of the wind their drover.

In from the great processional of space,
From the tramp of stars in their careless crossing
Of gulf on infinite gulf, from the foaming race
Where the wind caught at the corries, and the old tossing
Of the fire-tormented rock in the ridge of mountains
Seemed to awake anew in the clouds' new tossing--

In from the cold blown dark: from flame to flame--
From the hidden flame of cosmic motion
That roars through all the worlds and will not tame,
Driving the stars on the crest of its own commotion,
To the little leaping flame that our own hands kindled:
In, as the boats come in from the width of ocean.

Narrow the room is, shut from infinities.
Only the new-lit fire is keeping
Hint of the ancient fire ere the first of days.
And we three talk awhile to the spell of its leaping,
And are silent awhile and talk again and are silent;
And an older fire than the hearth-fire wakes from sleeping--

The fire that smouldering deep in the heart of man
Lies unfelt and forgotten under
Our surface ways, till a swift wind rise and fan
The covered heat to a blaze that snaps asunder
The strange restraints of life for a soaring moment;
And we lift unquiet eyes and stare in wonder

At the infinite reaches the tottering flames reveal,
Watching the high defences crumble
And the walls of our self-seclusion gape and reel,
Till with heart-beat loud as a toppling rampart's grumble
Out from our comforting selves to the ungirt spaces
One with we know not what of desire, we stumble.

I) INTRODUCTION

Shepherd and 'Fires'

Shepherd's poem provides an apt introduction to her second novel, *The Weatherhouse.* All of Shepherd's novels accept the notion that there is what Roderick Watson calls a 'realm of absolute being' underlying everyday reality.[1] Watson is suggesting we are divided from a deeper, more essential reality by our habit-deadened routines of daily life. Like 'Fires', *The Weatherhouse* focuses creative attention on the spiritual journey that transports individuals from one realm to another.

'Fires', like *The Weatherhouse*, describes how people transcend the boundaries of everyday life (our 'narrow. . . surface ways' and 'self-seclusion') toward awareness of a wider, interconnected realm. These boundaries (which include social convention, moral law, analytical thought, and the ego) are not inherent, but constructed. They are a manifestation of our creative capacity (the 'flame that our own hands kindled')- an idea explored in *A Pass in the Grampians.* These boundaries lend some order and dimension to what is infinitely vast. 'Fires', like *The Weatherhouse,* describes escape from our 'comforting selves', so that we might experience the 'unfelt and forgotten' life.

In 'Fires', an abandonment of self to a spiritualised experience of the natural world dissolves everyday boundaries, revealing another dimension. Fire, wind and light are literal and symbolic forces for the destruction that precedes creation. We harness these forces in our everyday life, but it is egotism to believe that we can control forces that have the weight of the cosmos behind them.

Social interaction and contact with elemental forces ('we three talk awhile to the spell of its leaping'), can awaken human individuals to the space they occupy in another dimension of being ('hint of the ancient fire' that 'smoulder[s] deep in the heart of man'). The awakening is full of 'wonder' but also 'unquiet'. Often through social interaction, characters in *The Weatherhouse* awaken to the hollowness of their surface realities. Once-stable worlds are revealed to be a series of subjective perceptions, or worse, pure delusion. *The Weatherhouse* shows how characters 'stumble' across the line dividing the comfortable self from the 'ungirt spaces', to discover a world of interconnected being they had never imagined.

The Weatherhouse in Context

The Weatherhouse could be mistaken for an insignificant tale. The novel demonstrates that there are no trivial lives, only trivial perceptions. As Cairns Craig writes: 'The drive of art towards the extraordinary and the powerful has to be countermanded by a commitment to the ordinary and the powerless'.[2] Shepherd perceives the extraordinary in ordinary life. An *Evening Express* review (December 1976) reads: 'behind the surface charm there are depths that aren't even hinted at'.[3] Readers and characters both must look past surface reflections. The spiritual scope of the novel is vast. Events have prodigious and catastrophic consequences, though the energy of change within the novel is generated almost entirely by the chain of events within the community. Built out of the evolving relationships individuals have with one another, and with the surrounding physical world, this novel describes characters' struggle 'to get past the appearance of things to their real nature' (115). *The Weatherhouse* characters seek out the essence of life, as the novel explores the nature of appearances and reality.

The Weatherhouse is driven by characters' journey to know (not merely understand) being. It is Shepherd's most intricate work. Watson writes: 'the novel evokes the unknowability of things- how much we need one another, and yet how little we know each other and even ourselves'.[4] *The Weatherhouse* is, in microcosm, the story of humanity's evolution toward a more profound relationship with the substance and spirit of existence. And indeed, the house from which the novel takes its name provides physical representation of this central theme.

Shepherd again embraces the notion that reality is defined by perceived appearances. She writes in *The Living Mountain*: 'every reality that matters ultimately to human beings, is a reality of the mind' (1). This is the driving force behind *The Weatherhouse*. For the sake of convenience, comfort, and stability we create (through ego and rational perception) a stable surface reality that divides us from the deeper, unpredictable reality. *A Pass in the Grampians* examines how this surface reality evolves over generations in reaction to the fluid, underlying reality. *The Weatherhouse* probes the human capacity to perceive the underlying essence of being, the raw material from which individuals and communities evolve everyday life.

When individuals realise that their familiar stabilities are at best, relative, and at worst, delusion, everyday life is deeply affected. This is historically demonstrated by the impact of Relativity Theory upon early twentieth-century society; Vargish and Mook write that:

> such liberation, the elimination of conventional techniques and concerns, is . . . felt as a difficulty at first and the characteristic reaction to the new phenomena may be a feeling of bereavement and outrage.[5]

Similar awakenings in *The Weatherhouse* plunge characters into tragedy, insanity, and eventual acceptance. Shepherd supports the argument that destruction is essential to creation. In a rare and significant interjection, the narrator describes the arrival of spring: 'Life that comes again is hard: a jubilation and an agony' (49). Shepherd never simplifies this most basic of life's paradoxes (as other writers have done), but allows it its full richness.

Neil Gunn writes that 'truth is not of words, but of vision'.[6] Shepherd believes that spiritual health is not dependent upon an outside, authoritative source, but upon how one sees and experiences the world. In communion with the life of things external to one's self (particularly elemental things of the natural world), one can transcend the limits of ego and rational thought, and briefly experience the interconnectedness inherent to life. The raw power of the natural world conspires with human influence to dissolve the constructs of humanity. A poem by Robert Frost describes a man staring down into the reflected surface of a well. Others 'taunt' him for his 'wrong', eccentric behaviour, but:

> I discerned, as I thought, beyond the picture,
> Through the picture, a something white, uncertain,
> Something more of the depths-- and then I lost it. . .
> Truth? A pebble of quartz? For once, then, some-
> thing.[7]

Frost momentarily gleans something indefinable reflected in the well (very like the narrator in Gunn's *The Well at the World's End*). 'Something' (truth?) beyond the everyday is also glimpsed in *The Weatherhouse*- a result of looking from a new angle in unfamiliar light. The 'something' is the interconnectedness between people and landscape- the source of all human compassion.

Critical Approach

Shepherd's vision is individualistic, but it bears parallels with other philosophical and cultural trends, either by coincidence or direct influence. The parallels between Shepherd and Eastern philosophy (discussed in Chapter One) seem most apparent in *The Weatherhouse*. Chung-yuan, a Taoist scholar, pinpoints the essential parallel: 'Tao is the inner reality of all things. It depends upon neither external God, nor concrete substance, nor abstract principle' (48). *The Weatherhouse* characters seek this 'inner reality': a reconciliation of substance and spirit, purged of abstract imaginings and externally-imposed conventions. Eastern scholar, Alfred N. Whitehead identifies two layers of reality: 'There is the deep underlying Harmony of Nature, as it were a fluid, flexible support; and on its surface the ripples of social efforts, harmonising and clashing in their aims at ways of satisfaction'.[8] *The Weatherhouse* characters attempt to look past the surface, to see and partake in the 'deep underlying Harmony of Nature'.

Shepherd's narrative technique mirrors the philosophical message of her novel. The novel is told from an ironic perspective in dry style (a voice embodied by her character, Lang Leeb). In modernist style, Shepherd's voice is rarely heard. She relinquishes her self-conscious, author-centred perspective, merging her identity with her characters using Indirect Free Expression (a narrative form of empathy). She shifts between various perspectives and magnifications, offering views into individual's inner lives that elucidate the overall character of the community. The variety of interacting perspectives (seemingly without any authoritative, objective centre) communicate, by metaphorical extension, the universal interconnectedness of human existence.

Modernist critic, Robert Kern, writes: '[I]t is only the eye of the poet that can "compose" the landscape, or integrate all its parts, and in thus seeing it as it exists "in system, in relation," he or she gains access to its deeper truth, its "divine significance"'.[9] Shepherd proves she is a poet in this sense, able to communicate a mosaic through the individual components. Similarly, Chung-yuan describes the experience of 'unobstructed complete interfusion . . . suggest[ing] the infinitely complicated interplay among all particularities in the world of events. . . Such a process represents the great creativity' (70). The perspectival shifts that comprise *The Weatherhouse* (and are described by it) constitute philosophical statement

and creative achievement. Similarly, the Weatherhouse itself contains all of these things under its roof.

It seems a shame that, to understand Shepherd's vision, we must break apart the close links that Shepherd forged in order to communicate her vision. Both Bergsonian and Eastern philosophy argue against intellectualising experience that is ontological and spontaneous. But criticism attempts to show the complex movements beneath a deceptively simple surface, an act faithful to the novel's philosophy. Hopefully, in dividing this novel, we will come to a better understanding of the totality: Shepherd's vision of being.

Transformation in *The Weatherhouse* begins when Lindsay and Garry experience respective shifts in their perception, suggesting that their worlds are not as stable as they thought. Both Garry and Lindsay seem ironically mundane characters, without any distinctive characteristics. Readers are urged to perceive that there are no mundane characters, in life or fiction. The following section will consider the initial awakenings that spark off the novel's chain reaction of awakenings and dissolutions.

II) INITIAL AWAKENINGS

Lindsay's Journey to Knapperly

Lindsay seems the least complicated character in the novel. A well-bred young woman from an affluent home, she is trained in social proprieties and distinctions, but falls in love with a soldier whose class is beneath her. She expects a concrete world where good and evil, beauty and ugliness are distinct. She believes in romantic love: 'Her young untried enthusiasms delighted in the noble. Above all, she wanted her lover to be good. These splendid generalities were like the fulfilment of all her own vague adolescent aspirations' (84).

This novel is concerned with more than the usual disillusions about life and love failing to meet youthful expectations. Lindsay's love story is the pivot around which the rest of the novel spins. The hub provides the spinning action by which the wheel itself moves forward. The hub itself moves little in relation to the spokes and rim, but it is carried along by the movement of the wheel as a whole. Lindsay has grown up at the still centre of life, never

looking beyond her fairly easy and happy world. When this predictable and uncomplicated character opens her eyes to the chaos of the spinning universe around her, she must readjust her balance to the unpredictable and complex nature of existence.

A Christmas party (in January) initiates the novel's first dissolution. There are intimations that world is about to go awry. The narrator informs us that 'when Lindsay Lorimer came to Fetter-Rothnie [Ellen's] fairyland would vanish into smoke' (11). Lindsay's world is also at risk. Bawbie Paterson (a less refined cousin of *The Quarry Wood's* Aunt Josephine) breaks inexplicably into the novel and into the Weatherhouse, threatening the decent order of things. There was 'an antagonism in the room, the fine self-respecting solidity of generations of Lorimers and Craigmyles, won at some cost through centuries from their rude surroundings, resented this intrusion into their midst of an undisciplined and primitive force' (28). Bawbie ravages the genteel Christmas party as she will ravage the genteel life of Fetter-Rothnie. Scorning all but the most sardonic gestures to civility, Bawbie simply lives--without conceit, vanity or delusion, without pretense. Her hat is a parody of fashion and propriety, and she wants the highbred Lindsay to be her kitchen maid (26). She lives beyond conventional boundaries, embodying the spiritual chaos that 'civilised' society tries to deny.

There is, however, substance to Bawbie's chaos. She orders the spiritual anarchy she represents simply by *being*. Her being is closely associated with the physical world. She is a 'huge elemental mass. . . rock and earth, earthen smelling' (27) Her clothes are earthy, her hands 'black from wet wood and earth' (27). Bawbie embodies qualities that characterise *P'o:* raw, unshaped substance, enlivened by spirit. *P'o* contributes to the dissolution of conventional ways of seeing. Chung-yuan writes:

> [The] world of the uncarved block is a world of free interfusion between men and among men and all things. . . This we cannot expect in a merely moral and intellectual world, full of distinctions and differentiations. Only in the world of absolutely free identity does the great sympathy exist. (38)

Propriety banishes the 'great sympathy' from the Weatherhouse, seeing in Bawbie the threat of 'crass earth without perceptions' (162). Irrational instinct, however, impels Lindsay to pursue Bawbie beyond everyday boundaries. A Shepherd poem about creation is relevant: 'An influence takes her from the blind/Dark worlds that round her roll'.[10] Bawbie 'influenced' Lindsay, taking her from the 'blind, dark worlds' of comfortable realities into the light of new perception.

Outside the Weatherhouse, Lindsay is surrounded by light and irrational laughter (29). *Ming*, embodied by light, is the term for intuitive vision undistorted by everyday concerns. Chung-yuan writes that 'to see things through the light is not only to blend opposites into one but it is to enter into the unity of all things' (36). Lindsay's perceptions echo this: 'It seemed to her that she was among the days of creation. . . light had been called into being, but neither the divisions of time nor substance, nor any endeavours nor disturbances of man' (36). Symbolically representing spirit and substance, *Ming* and *P'o* 'flow mutually to one another. . .The uncarved block and the light, though separate to human sight, are one in reality', writes Chung-yuan (36, 40). With Bawbie, Lindsay glimpses this:

> She had the sense of escaping from the lit room into light itself. Light was everywhere. . . The matted snow and grass were solid enough beneath her feet, but when she looked beyond she felt that she must topple over into that reverberation of light. Her identity vanished. She was lost in light and space. (29)

This is Lindsay's *satori*: the interfusion of her inner being with externals, of the familiar landscape with unfamiliar spiritualised vision.

Shepherd's novels are replete with unobtrusive symbolism. Doors, windows, gates exist in the novel as just that, and only that if the reader so desires. Shepherd's symbols never intrude upon story. But doors, windows and gates are also symbolic portals to what Gunn called 'the other landscape'.[11] Along their journey, Lindsay finds that she is divided from Bawbie by a dyke. Fifth-century Buddhist scholar, Hsieh Ling-yun, compares sudden enlightenment to 'leaping across a chasm or a gulf'.[12] Bawbie 'vaulted across [the dyke] with an impatient snort'. Stopping short, 'there was nothing Lindsay could find to say' (29). The experience transcends intellectual process, and as a Buddhist master warns: 'Where the intellect is at its end, beware of uttering a word'.[13] Having abandoned intellect and reason, Lindsay must otherwise indicate her desire to get over the boundary. She asks to be shown Knapperly: communicating her otherwise inexpressible request for spiritual guidance. Normally distinct social identities are blurred. Bawbie breached conduct by asking a solicitor's daughter to be her maid. Lindsay breaches conduct in seeking spiritual help from a social eccentric: Lindsay's 'safe and habitual life was leagues away'. The pair continue through woodland and then 'out by a gap', crossing further boundary lines (29-30). Beyond speech, they have briefly transcended the divides of everyday life.

Bawbie's house (like many Shepherd houses) represents the identity of its mistress. Knapperly is beyond borders, past a cross-roads in open country, (25). As World War I rages, Bawbie wages a defiant war against petty, anonymous authority. Her house is bedecked with light in defiance against black-out regulations, in symbolic defiance against Fetter-Rothnie's constriction of the free enjoyment of life. Light, of course, represents enlightened vision (*ming*), as Gunn describes: 'Thought itself gets choked and the mind becomes a void. . . the void itself, gets lit up: the light spreads, burgeons; it is suffused with wonder, delight, a miraculous sense of freedom'.[14]

Bawbie's life of light and freedom is not without cost or risk. Her rebelliously lit house represents the joys and dangers of the enlightened life. Her house may be actually be bombed. More definitely, however, she suffers alienation from a community that resents and fears her for daring to enjoy light while they sit in (literal and symbolic) darkness.

Having transcended rational self-consciousness, Lindsay has also transcended the usual human fears. She is 'possessed instead by a strange exhilaration', until her sense of self returns, and Bawbie suddenly becomes a 'menacing figure' (27, 30). Everyday fears (of Zeppelins, the law) flood back. Class distinctions return; Bawbie is no longer a guide, but a 'kidnapper' who might 'make [Lindsay] her servant girl'. Gunn describes the panic-fear induced by *satori*: 'All at once you realise that you are in this strange place. . . Your heart comes into your throat. Quietly, very quietly, you get back onto the path, then take to your toes for all you are worth'.[15] Awakened to herself and her situation, 'the insecurity of [Lindsay's] adventure rushed upon her' (recalling *The Quarry Wood)*, and she runs home (30). A shift in perception, however, sparked by contact with Bawbie and with the natural world, carried Lindsay beyond herself, giving her a brief glimpse of a strange, elemental reality running beneath her once stable surface reality.

Garry's "Delusions" of War

Like Lindsay, Garry seems a conventional character: an engineer turned soldier who believes in the stability of life as proven by the stability of his bridges. He, too, awakens to an unexpected reality that undermines his world. His awakening occurs in the midst of war, but it is neither more nor less significant than Lindsay's awakening.

Garry's shift in perception is mirrored by the narrative voice. The story begins in detached, omniscient style: 'The letters ceased when Garry took influenza, after a day and a night's exposure in a shell hole, where, up to the thighs in filthy water, he had tried to suck the poison from another man's festering arm' (53). The next sentences bring the narrative perspective nearer through simple past tense. By the fourth sentence, events are described through Garry's perspective: 'Poor beggar, he must have had another wound. . . He must get out of sight of that. . . Now he had detached the other man's feet. . . Rain fell' (54). We begin to see the external world through Garry's inner vision, just as his perception of externals merges with his inner self. Garry tries to keep externals distinct by pushing the man under, dissociating himself from another's life and death. Then, 'delirium' recalls deep, inner memories of childhood interfuse with the reality of his situation: 'A wind roared hideously. He knew it was an advancing shell, but shouted aloud as he used to do when a boy in the hurricanes that swept the woods at Knapperly. . . He knew he must escape. "Can't leave you here, old man"' (54). Wind always indicates the climactic moment when individuals struggle between resisting and yielding to the interfusion of their identities with the perpetual, often violent motion of life.

Garry yields up his distinct, rational self in the shell-hole and finds that 'in some queer way he was identified with this other fellow' (54). The word 'fellow' implies we are hearing Garry's thoughts. Would a delirious man note to himself how ridiculous it is to identify with an unknown dead soldier? Not for the first time, this novel questions conventional definitions of truth and delusion, lucidity and insanity, reality and imagination. General opinion is that Garry was 'delirious'. But Garry says: 'They laugh at you as foolish or pity you as not quite sane if you try to get past the appearances of things to their real nature. That's what they said about me: beside himself, cracked. . . I'm convinced I saw clearer then than in my right mind' (115).

Garry, delirious or not, perceived the oneness of all things. The dead man was not external to Garry, but part of a larger existence containing them both. Inner and outer realities dissolved into one; the solid physical world dissolved into mud; civilised humanity dissolved into war; and individuals dissolve into one another: 'Come out, you there. Myself. That's me. . . I am rescuing myself' (54). This soldier's death has led to Garry's being alive,

giving him a new perception of life. Later, Garry still insists that the body was himself, even taking the man's wound upon himself:

> Queer business that. . . about my wound. I was convinced I had a wound. I saw myself. . . And I knew it was myself and the other man too. . . Queer, isn't it, about oneself? Losing oneself like that, I mean, and being someone else. (55)

Garry helped the other man because he imagined he was helping himself. This is compassion devoid of any self-conscious moral posturing. It was not a question of 'should I?' but 'I must'. They were momentarily one. Garry could not help himself without helping the other man. Later, Garry wonders at the 'hugeness of life', and realises that 'it wasn't the war that was big, it was being alive in a world where wars happened'. He is awe-struck that, despite the oneness of life he has perceived, the world is still rent by violence and destruction.

Garry's experience can be interpreted through the Taoist concept of sympathy, *Tz'u*, which Chung-yuan describes as 'the primordial, immediate source of love . . .Through *Tz'u* subject and object are totally and immediately interfused and the self is transformed into selflessness'(24). Garry's discovery of *Tz'u* through war seems paradoxical, but Gunn describes how Eugen Herrigel (author of *Zen in the Art of Archery*) discovered *Tz'u* through the incongruous process of learning to shoot. Herrigel could not hit the target because 'he could not overcome the distinction between "It" and "I"'.[16] He was successful when he became 'more deeply involved in the "It" and the "I" than ever, until at last, the arrow and the target seemed so complex a system of interdependencies that in shooting at the target he was also shooting at himself' (109). Chuang Tzu describes a similar event: a man dreamt he was a butterfly, then woke up as a man. He came so close to the life of the butterfly that any distinction between himself and it dissolved. He could not tell which he was. The dissolutions of war resulted in the same kind of sympathetic interfusion for Garry: the subject-object distinction is eliminated. Unfortunately, Garry spends much of the novel trying to regain solid ground before accepting that his experience was not entirely horrific or deluded.

Garry's and Lindsay's awakenings launch the novel on its path. As Chung-yuan writes:

> At a certain moment, in those minds which are prepared for it, the forces of the personality bring themselves together and throw aside the veil that has encircled them, to look out upon a new world about them. The entire make-up of one's life is thereafter altered. (46)

Both return to their everyday selves, but their everyday reality has altered. As Ellen says (of the effects of war), things will never again be 'as they were' (12).

Garry and Lindsay are at the centre of the novel's action, but they are not the novel's central characters. Their experiences of dissolution serve as the initial explosions sparking a chain reaction in the community that might be called spiritual anarchy, a phenomenon characterised by both panic-fear and exhilaration.

Messenger of Change to Fetter-Rothnie

Fetter-Rothnie experiences a collective awakening to uncertainty as change sweeps through the community. Change is hinted at, in a description of spring, usually a season of new life and growth. Anticipating Garry's springtime return, the narrator reveals spring's darker aspects:

> the smooth security of seed and egg was gone. . . Season most terrible in all the cycle of the year, time of the dread spring deities, Dionysus and Osiris and the risen Christ, gods of growth and resurrection, whose worship has flowered in tragedy, superb and dark, in Prometheus and Oedipus, massacre and the stake. (49)

Garry brings the particularly turbulent changes of the early twentieth century to Fetter-Rothnie. He returns yearning to reconstruct the universe, to remedy the destruction of war in a very physical way: 'I want to make something now. . . The world [is]. . . going to be jolly much in need of engineers and carpenters. . .Even if I could make one table to stand fast on its feet, I'd be happy' (12). In fact, Garry seeks to repair the shaken foundations of his world.

Until his experience in the trenches, life had seemed simple: 'One worked hard, making boilers and bridges as stable as one could, and played equally hard and sure; and men were good fellows (118). In the shell-hole, he realised that war was not the clean fight against evil he had imagined, but a muddy, painful struggle against anonymous forces. Garry blames the war for his dissolution, telling Ellen:

> we've a fourth dimension over there. We've depth . . . It's down in -- hollowness and mud and foul water and bad smells and holes and more mud. Not common mud. It's dissolution-- a dimension that won't remain stable- and you've got to multiply everything by it to get any result at all. People who live in a three-dimensional world don't know. (114)

He denies the possibility that his war experience might be indicative of a wider truth. But his awakening to the nature of war becomes a metaphor for his awakening to life. In fact, the 'fourth dimension' is not inherently a characteristic of trench warfare; the 'fourth dimension' is inherent in his altered perception. He tries to reconstruct his view of war as a clean fight for truth and honour, thereby reconstructing the straightforwardness of life. These are impossible fantasies stemming from self-importance and fear.

Garry's fantasies can only survive in a place isolated from reality. Garry, like the minister, 'come[s] to this country parish to escape the impact of life' (96). In Fetter-Rothnie, life may be trivial, but it is predictable. Garry blinds himself to Fetter-Rothnie's energy and life, simultaneously glossing over his war experience:

> Strange, stagnant world-- he hated its complacency. . . Garry felt a sort of scorn for its quietude: earth, and men made from earth, dumb, graceless, burdened as itself. 'This place is dead,' he thought. . . Over there one felt oneself part of something big. One was making the earth. Here there were men, no doubt, leading their hapless, misdirected, individual lives; but they were a people unaware, out of it. (56)

But the 'impact of life' (like the impact of war) cannot be erased. To Garry's dismay, he discovers that Fetter-Rothnie is as vast and changeable as the war landscape. His second vision of dissolution is incurred not by shell shock, but by Fetter-Rothnie's quiet landscape.

The word 'quietude' in the passage above is interesting. Chung-yuan writes that, according to Taoist thought, *t'ien* (quietude) describes the quiescent non-action (linked to an experience of elementals) integral to enlightenment: 'Through quietude one strives to return to the deep root of his being and become aware thereby of the deep root of all things. It is the process of seeing and delving into the maternal depths of nature' (48). Shepherd writes in *The Living Mountain*: 'I can teach my body many skills by which to learn the nature of the mountain. The most compelling is quiescence' (70). She argues that to truly know the mountain, one must sleep (lose consciousness) upon it. Similarly, Garry has a new perception of his native region in quiescent vision. He is astounded 'at the vastness which this familiar country had assumed' (56-7). He hears the 'eternal mystery of roving water', representing fluidity and the early moments of creation, at odds with the stagnant backwater he first perceived.[17] Repeated use of the words 'primal' and 'primordial' implies both elemental contact and new beginning. He sees beyond external appearances to inner essences: darkness is 'no longer a covering, but a quality of what he looked upon . . . hinting at a sublimer truth

than the eye could distinguish' (57). This second dissolution of Garry's once-familiar surroundings is incurred by the effects of light and landscape.

Garry, however, is unsettled by this perception of the Fetter-Rothnie landscape in dissolution. He wants concrete absolutes; he would rather Fetter-Rothnie be a stagnant, dead world than a changing, living world. He expected that its smallness would not trouble him; instead its vast dimensions threaten his self-importance.

Arriving at Knapperly, Garry finds his aunt Bawbie dancing. Throughout Shepherd's writing, dance is a spontaneous expression of joy at belonging to the infinite flow of life. Her dance communicates that Fetter-Rothnie's dissolution extends to its human population. Garry is confused, unable to 'reconcile his aunt's vivid enjoyment of the moment' with a world where 'time and the individual had ceased to matter' (58). He seeks reassurance that 'not a mortal thing is changed. The war just hasn't touched you, has it, aunt?' (58). The war has not changed Bawbie because she accepts uncertainty as the way of things. Garry, however, is deceived in his view that nothing has changed. Already, the distant war 'has much to answer for', something more subtle than war deaths (96).

For all he seeks stability, Garry himself initiates the community's awakening to change, the communal dissolution of old ways of seeing and thinking. Garry awakens 'change and change enough', as Bawbie proclaims, (58). Her words hint that while destructive, change is essential to the continuation of life. Fetter-Rothnie's explosive upheavals and violent uncertainties resemble European modernism on a local scale. The parallel is reinforced by Garry's mention of jazz- a modernist genre marked by chaotic, intermingled musical conventions encouraging performer and audience to lose themselves to a musical *satori.*

Fetter-Rothnie soon engages in its own microcosmic war (Garry first fights on the side of convention and submission to anonymous authority, then joins Bawbie's forces *against* ossified convention). Despite the violence and uncertainty, the community as a whole will survive and benefit from the awakenings, dissolutions and re-creations that follow.

III) 'FRONTIERS AND COMFORTS'

John Burns writes (discussing Zen in Gunn's fiction): 'Man truly belongs on the other landscape, but is tied to the mundane world by habit and fear' (7). Fearful of a fluid and relative world, people create social boundaries, moral codes, scientific systems. These divisions mask the underlying connections between all things, but lend reassuring order to everyday life. In an untitled poem, Shepherd describes:

> the futile sense of safety,
> The busy and cheerful acts that invade the soul.[18]

One grows accustomed to a 'sense of safety', to detachment from others. One feels frightened and angry if that comfortable stability is threatened.

Divisions in the Community

Shepherd reveals that the community is riven by innumerable divisions. Rarely resulting from genuine dislike or cruelty, these divisions stem from characters' need to defend against the essential commonality of human experience. Characters blinker their perception, suppressing empathy and compassion, in order to protect the fragile integrity of their stable lives. As the German philosopher, Immanuel Kant, wrote: 'To have a conception of myself, I have to have a conception of a frontier between myself and the rest of the world. This conception is central to self-consciousness'.[19] Willa Muir's *Imagined Corners* writes about the same phenomenon (though Muir is not without a little sceptical irony, distinguishing her vision from Shepherd's). Muir describes

> a sort of family feeling for mankind. . . that runs strong and full beneath many Scots characters. . . If people didn't hold each other off who knows what might happen? [This is] the sentiment underlying [Calderwick's] jealous distinctions, its acrimonious criticisms, and its awkward silences. . . The whole of Calderwick is bound together by invisible links of sympathy.[20]

Instead of merely describing the divides, *The Weatherhouse* demonstrates how and why such frontiers exist, and seeks to dissolve them.

Garry's name for this defence is 'comforts': the convenient, if hollow ways in which individuals protect themselves from the interconnectedness, and the lack of absolutes inherent to life (62). It was for his own 'comfort' that Garry pushed the soldier under. Moral systems are comforting because they help one believe in goodness and God, even if there is no evidence for such things. Theresa is haunted by the fear that 'she was in the wrong by being born [female]' (9). She 'pounces triumphantly on Miss Patersons's aberration as a shelter from her own', finding 'comfort' in other people's faults, and in dictatorial meanness (129). Louie's made-up engagement brings the 'comfort' of the community's pity.

Physical divides may signal spiritual rifts: '[Lindsay] did not know that through the wall, knelling upon the floor, Mrs Falconer endured an agony of prayer' (117). Other divisions are purely abstract. Ellen's fancies 'hedge her about from reality', although they threaten to 'crash at the touch of the actual' (8, 13). Both characters must learn to perceive the depth and interconnections between physical and spiritual life.

Most of the novel's divisions result from self-centred perspective, from an inability to imagine how others see things. Lindsay is 'unaware of [Kate's] devotion', and tells herself that Kate is callous (41). Blind to Kate's inner view, Lindsay asks, 'Do you never feel about anything, Kate? You should fall in love. Then you would understand' (154). Lindsay does not see that Kate is in love (with Lindsay's fiancé). Lindsay similarly fails to see that her aunts have their own inner dramas, yet accuses them of lacking empathy: 'Old people don't see' (83).

The novel makes it increasingly obvious that these divisions are superficial, providing ample evidence for the underlying commonality of human experience. Theresa and Louie (though divided from one another in many ways) share a propensity to steal whatever they want. Lindsay shares this instinct when she, quite irrationally, steals a pail (128). The relationship between Ellen and Lindsay similarly encompasses both divide and concordance, revealed when Ellen thinks of Lindsay, 'A poor young thing', and Lindsay thinks of Ellen, 'A poor old thing' (20).

There are many such links, but characters are so wrapped up in their private perceptions that they miss them. A rare intrusion by the narrator uses an illuminating metaphor to describe Ellen's life and Lindsay's limited perception of it: 'a glancing embroidery now, pleasant to sight. But Lindsay saw only a tarnished and tangled thread or two that had no

connection with herself, and thus a scanty interest' (40). This metaphor could describe any individual's perception of existence beyond themselves. Zen scholar, David Suzuki describes *prajna* with a similar metaphor. *Prajna* is the intuitive awareness of the oneness of all things attained through a sudden shift in perspective:

> It is like appreciating a fine piece of brocade. On the surface there is an almost bewildering confusion of beauty, and the connoisseur fails to trace the intricacies of the threads. But as soon as it is turned over all the intricate beauty and skill is revealed. *Prajna* consists in this turning over. . . by this interruption, or rather disruption, the whole scheme of life is suddenly grasped.[21]

Characters within the novel must transcend self and fear, and accomplish this 'turning over'.

Garry's Reconstructive Efforts

Garry's first reconstructive projects attempt to re-create his 'comfort': his once-stable world and his self-importance. He tries to deny his visions of dissolution, not realising they are the first stage of creative endeavour. His initial reconstructions are flimsy, hollow attempts (both literal and symbolic) to disguise underlying realities. Instead of rebuilding Knapperly's warped door and windows (representing portals to the inner life), he paints them. Garry is concerned with restoring surfaces stabilities, and is disinclined to confront the possibility of alternate realities. His reconstructive efforts take on an insidious tone, however, when they come at the cost of another's peace.

The antagonistic relationship between Louie Morgan and Garry represents an extreme example of the paradoxical divides looked at above. Alter-egos of each other, their enmity derives from similarity. Louie is victimised by Garry's attempt to defend against the dissolution of his desired identity and existence.

Louie has always been an easily-targeted scapegoat for the community, being particularly vulnerable to public opinion. Characters satisfy their private needs through exploitation of her peace without consideration for her suffering. Theresa even discourages Lindsay's natural urge to help and sympathise: 'You needn't be in such a taking over Louie, bairn. . . She was born with a want. . .But *you* needn't turn your head about it' (80). Louie's own mother proves incapable of empathy, fearful that a lunatic daughter will threaten her social position (166). Garry's attack on Louie is particularly venomous.

Garry believes he is embarked upon a moral quest: to reveal the truth about Louie's claim that she was engaged to David Grey. The underlying reality, however, is complicated. Garry has glimpsed a realm without a centre (least of all himself), and without distinct lines between individuals. Like Louie, Garry is vulnerable to public opinion. His identity is ambiguous both to readers and to himself: one moment he is noble and decent, the next he is clowning and crude. In Louie, Garry recognises what he cannot face in himself: a fear of life and public humiliation, personal insignificance, questionable moral standards, superficial spiritual vision.

He also lusts after Louie: 'He wanted to have Louie in the tower, wanted to have her alone, wanted simply to have her. And apology was not the need. . . suddenly he realised that he wanted to seize her, to give her what she hankered after, make her taste to the dregs the cup she wantoned with' (166). Garry's lust further undermines the moral, heroic identity he cherishes. When Jonathan Bannochie finds them together, Garry is uncomfortable about appearances (despite the innocent truth): 'To have one's reputation on the souter's tongue did not make for comfort' (90). He translates his unease into a crusade against the source of his discomfort: Louie.

Louie becomes 'someone he must despise if his convictions were to go unchanged' (98). Garry blinds himself to their similarities, to Louie's very humanity: 'It was not as a person that [Garry] wanted Louie punished, but as the embodiment of a disgrace' (72). His violence is disproportionate: 'she's false as hell. It must be killed' (69). Like a soldier, Garry justifies his actions through conventional morality, claiming 'a small but definite engagement in the war against evil' (66). The *Tao* warns against such justifications: 'Try to make people moral, and you lay the groundwork for vice'.[22]

In Chapter Seven, Louie makes a half-genuine attempt to reveal her inner self to Garry. The meeting takes place in a school with an inner and outer room (87). The Session (once responsible for keeping moral order) always met here rather than the Church, implying that the town's morality has traditionally been dictated less by religion than by 'parochial purposes'. Louie invites Garry into the inner room (representing her inner self) through a locked door, saying: 'I have a key. I am in charge, you see. . . there are so few hereabouts that understand these things' (87). Her 'emotional abandon'- at first for show- becomes sincere. She is, however, too distracted by appearances to confess fully, and Garry

(bewildered by an enemy who requests him 'to be my keeper') is too concerned about moral dictates to look past appearances. When the Session men return, Louie returns to the outer room:

> ruthlessly thrust back from her attempt at truth to the service of appearances. To these men she was still Miss Morgan, daughter of their late minister. . . in a minute speech came freely to her and with it relief: she had escaped from the terror of her attempted encounter with her naked self. (89).

When Garry accuses Louie before the Session, his speech is motivated by a need to defend against his own inner turmoil: 'once it was the duty of the Session to regulate the morals of the community. . . tell me what I am to do now' (94). Garry begs the Session to reinstate absolute morality, to absolve him of moral responsibility.

The novel explores the nature of morality. Louie later tells Garry: 'Only truth is clear and one. But we never see it. That's why we must live by morality' (101). Louie is only partly right. There is a 'clear and one' truth: the fluid unity of being underlying everyday experience. This truth is not inaccessible, however. It can be glimpsed, and our moral decisions should be based upon these glimpses. Compassion cannot be dictated, but should stem from a perception that other people are, in some way, part of one's self. This morality is, as D.H. Lawrence writes, a 'delicate, forever trembling and changing balance between me and my circumambient universe, which precedes and accompanies a true relatedness'.[23] Garry, however, is afraid of change and relatedness, preferring a codified morality.

Louie's inner-room confession does touch Garry in some way. Accusing Louie, Garry sees himself accused: '[the] oppression of watching eyes. . . the sardonic semi-grin of Jonathan Bannochie,. . . haunted him like an echo of all that grinned within himself,. . . his fear of the humiliation of failure' (92). Garry's glimpse of the web-like relations between people, between himself and Louie, is not welcome. He sees only 'nets of spider-web. . . dark, stinging noxious weed' (86).

An Empathic and Fantastic Life: Ellen's Imagination

Garry (having experienced two dissolutions of his stable world) informs Ellen that 'we can get off every imaginable plane that the old realities yielded', initiating a discussion of imagination (114). He claims that 'imagination has to save the world', but also warns Ellen

away from imagination: 'You shouldn't [want imagination.] It's too cruel, too austere. You should pray your God of Comforts to keep you from imagination. Lead us not into imagination, but deliver us from understanding' (115). Shepherd's view of imagination is not simple.

Imagination enables us to create the codes and categories that stabilise our everyday lives. Thus, a Zen Buddhist would take Garry at face value, perceiving imagination as the source of all the illusions, fears, and multiplicities that divide humanity. Zen scholar, Suzuki, writes that imagination is 'the creating agency of all kinds of . . . misery'.[24] It distracts us from the underlying reality, from enlightenment.

Cairns Craig makes a similar point: 'for Shepherd, the imagination operates by revealing a transcendent spirituality which can only be sustained through the exclusion of the material reality in which life is grounded'.[25] Craig identifies the danger that imagination may provide escape into a 'tower of refuge', detached from contact with the material world (11).

On the other hand, Craig acknowledges that imagination can reveal a 'transcendent spirituality'. Shepherd clearly believes that imagination is integral to empathy. One cannot know, but one can *imagine* how others see the world. This requires the exclusion of one's own material reality (the self), but toward a positive end. Empathic vision can be 'cruel and austere', disruptive of inner comfort. But it can also lead to compassion, which can 'save the world'. Garry's paradoxical views are all proven true. In any case, imagination blurs the accepted divide between lucidity and delirium (as was seen in Garry's experience, and will be further explored). It takes a strong individual to accept the blurring of old, familiar lines.

Through Ellen, *The Weatherhouse* explores the ambiguous role of imagination. Her sheltered life led her to cultivate an imagination that brings about her downfall and her redemption. Ellen has a hesitant but willing capacity for empathy. She realises that 'We must seem unreal to [Garry]', because she can imagine what war was like (114-5). Ellen's imagination runs away with her, however, dividing her from the material world. She withdraws in fear from the world beyond herself, inhabiting an increasingly fantastic inner world: 'The world was all her own, she its centre and interpretation' (10). She is 'completely unaware' of the 'profounder revolutions' of the world beyond herself (11). The architecture of the Weatherhouse itself, and Ellen's space within it, is deeply symbolic. The contradictions within Ellen are symbolised by her room: an isolated 'tower' where she feels safe, 'shut . . . out

from the rest of the house'. In the same space, however, she describes feeling that 'through its protruding windows [the room] became part of the infinite world' (8). She does not realise that while her room may be part of the infinite world, it is most definitely part of the rest of the house (just as her life is inextricably tied with its other inhabitants). While Ellen glimpses the underlying oneness of things, she is denied a place in that oneness, cast out by the very thing that enables her to perceive it: imagination.

Ellen is like young Martha, divided from external realities by inner-world dreams: 'She had the look of the dreamer who has not yet tried to shape his dream from intractable matter' (80). Ellen's desires are like Martha's: 'It was life she wanted, strong current and fresh wind' (127). But Ellen is sixty-one instead of nine, set in her habits and her fear. She has 'no plain path out from her dreams' (40).

Balancing Substance and Spirit: Knowing Birds

Buddhist master, Ch'ing-yuan, suggests that to truly know something is to know its objective reality as well as its fluid inner reality:

> Before I had studied Zen for thirty years, I saw mountains as mountains, and waters as waters. When I arrived at a more intimate knowledge, I came to the point where I saw that mountains are not mountains and waters are not waters But now that I have got its substance I am again at rest. For it's just that I see mountains once again as mountains, and waters once again as waters.[26]

The interfusion of one's inner self with external reality signals profound knowledge of being.

Ellen's divide from the external, tangible world is ambivalent. Her distaste for material possessions is admirable in one sense, but also demonstrative of her spirit-based life. Ellen gives a box to Stella not to appear generous, but because she is aware that 'possessions mean a lot to [Stella]' (48). John Burns writes, discussing Zen, that 'love, unlike intellect, cannot be forced. It must happen spontaneously, and can only emerge when one is open and receptive' (103). In Eastern fashion, Ellen's greatest act occurs when she is not consciously labouring to do something great.

Ellen's distaste for material possessions, however, also implies an unhealthy division from external life. Where houses symbolically represent identity, Ellen is the only sister who 'brought nothing to the household gear' (7). Shepherd uses touch to suggest spiritual contact.

When Lindsay walks around the Weatherhouse parlour touching each aunt in turn, Ellen is the only aunt Lindsay does not touch (85). Ellen has no clear perception of, or place within the physical world. The space she occupies in the Weatherhouse seems not a part of the rest of the house.

Throughout Shepherd's work, but most especially in *The Weatherhouse*, birds represent the essence of life: insignificant substance ('a fluff of air and feathers') enlivened by soaring spirit (177). They provide a metaphor for humanity's interaction with the forces of change and life. Birds use wind to fly, but are vulnerable to its force. Characters' flawed understanding of birds reveals their flawed understanding of life. This is particularly true of Ellen and Lindsay (another pair of alter-egos). Both must learn (like Martha of *The Quarry Wood*) to reconcile inner-world ideals with outer world realities. Both must learn that to experience the full force of life, they must embrace life's physical being and its spiritual essence, along with the accompanying exhilaration and risk.

The name 'Falconer' (someone who uses birds for hunting) reiterates the hunt theme of *The Quarry Wood.* Ellen's hunt for the essence of life is given particular expression through her perception of birds. Ellen's imagination determines her perception of birds, as of life, with positive and negative results. Ellen believes she knows birds' inner spirit- just as she believes she has tested and mastered life (10). '[Birds] are a part of myself', Ellen tells Lindsay, 'You are a part of me, too' (47). Ellen senses 'the strange secret of life-- how all things were one and there was no estrangement except for those who did not understand'. But Lindsay challenges Ellen's factual knowledge of birds, thereby challenging the depth of Ellen's spiritual mastery. Ellen knows nothing about the objective life of birds; she cannot truly know or participate in their essential being. She finds herself aware, but estranged from life.

Lindsay was first to experience a dissolution of her familiar reality, but she is not immune to subsequent delusion. Lindsay's vision of life is inversely related to Ellen's. Ellen perceives spirit, but neglects substance. Lindsay, however, is like Garry; she sees only surfaces and misses the spiritualised, inner life of things. Until she recognises that the reality of things is both within *and* beyond their physical existence, she will remain blind to any extra dimension.

Lindsay also resembles Martha in her desire to know all there is to know (about birds), but there is no interfusion between her inner self and the life of birds. Chuang-Tzu would say that she sees birds from the point of view of their differences, rather than their shared being, and thus misses their essential nature.[27] She divides their life essence into words and facts. As Tao-sheng said: 'Words convey ideas. When ideas have been absorbed words cease' [28] Lindsay has not absorbed into herself any idea of a bird's inner reality. In *The Living Mountain,* Shepherd lists birds, then asks 'but why should I make a list? It serves no purpose, and they are all in the books. But they are not in the books for me-- they are in living encounters, moments of their life that have crossed moments of mine' (52). Lindsay has not yet experienced such a 'living encounter' or shared moment. Ellen and Lindsay must both achieve a balance between objective, intellectual knowledge of external things and subjective, intuitive perception.

IV) DISSOLUTION AND QUIESCENCE

As the novel progresses, old distinctions blur; boundaries are crossed; surfaces are revealed to contain unexpected depths; rare spirit is identified within crass substance; ego is dissolved. The seemingly disparate inhabits of the Weatherhouse-- itself an apparently disjointed series of rooms cobbled together-- are revealed to be tied by intricate bonds under a single roof. As the narrative progresses, real and imagined, lucid and delirious blur into one. Perceptions of truth and falsehood, right and wrong disintegrate. What appears impossible and irrational is frequently just the opposite. Shepherd's vision parallels Eastern and modernist convictions that we cannot know anything absolutely in a world of relative perceptions. Chung-yuan describes life's ultimate ambiguity (the 'unknowability of things'):

> While he is dreaming he does not know it is a dream . . . Only after he wakes does he know it was a dream. And someday there will be a great awakening when we know that this is all a great dream. Yet the stupid believe they are awake, busily and brightly assuming they understand things. (43)

The Weatherhouse describes this 'great awakening' in local, particular terms.

Following the dissolution of familiar realities, some characters yield to the flow of life and change. Their worlds are transformed. This transformation is a form of creation: through changed perception, one re-creates one's world. This is a notion central to Eastern thought, as John Burns writes: 'Zen. . . is clear in its insistence that the "real" world is simply this world seen with renewed vision. The "other landscape" is not another place: it is another way of seeing' (171). Other characters, however, find dissolution overwhelming and are destroyed. Even this destruction, Shepherd demonstrates, is integral to creation.

Awakening and acceptance of interconnectedness occurs on two levels, which are merely two manifestations of an all-encompassing unity. Characters awaken to the links binding individuals to one another. No individual acts upon another without being changed. And secondly, characters awaken to the links they share with the physical world. Natural elements (wind, fire, and light especially) are strong forces for dissolution and quiescence. Natural world cycles perpetually demonstrate these very things. Thus characters (and readers) gradually awaken to the constantly changing web of interfused being that characterises Fetter-Rothnie.

Awakening to Spaces Beyond the Self

J. Krishnamurti says: 'The source of violence is the "me", the ego, the self, which expresses itself in so many ways- in division, in trying to become or be somebody- which divides itself as the 'me' and the 'not me'.[29] Garry's battle against Louie is rooted in his fearful, self-centred perspective. Louie gradually confesses her inner self to Garry, showing him her own self-delusions, forcing him to see perspectives beyond his own. She is partly responsible for arousing his latent capacity for empathy and compassion.

Conversation with John Grey also helps awaken Garry to 'a sense of deeper hurt than that of his own vanity' (95-6). Grey's role in the novel is to mend others' vision through compassionate gesture (he repairs a doll's eyes) (97). It is paradoxical that he inspects shells for a munitions factory. But Grey demonstrates many Eastern characteristics, paradox not least among them. John Burns writes: 'Love, being spontaneous, does not conform to any pattern and is infinitely flexible and so able to defuse violence' (136).

Grey's role in the novel is akin to Bawbie's. Elemental and earth-centred, Grey seems another embodiment of *P'o*: 'his old garments that had turned the colour of earth itself, with his hands earth-encrusted, he seemed older than human-- some antique embodiment of earth' (45). Grey accepted his son's death quietly, as a man of *Te* would do: 'One felt him a man of peace' (44). He has a 'singularly lofty appearance' but he is not prideful. He finds serenity in labour, free of self: 'Steady and happy. . .Absorbed. Like a part of what he worked in, and yet beyond it. The immanent presence' (45). He falls asleep at odd moments, moving easily between dream and reality. His actions communicate quiescent non-action (*wu-wei*). Chuang-Tzu describes 'The Great and Venerable Teacher', and seems to describe Grey:

> [He] knew nothing of loving life, knew nothing of hating death. He emerged without delight; he went back in without a fuss . . . He didn't forget where he began; he didn't try to find out where he would end. He received something and took pleasure in it; he forgot about it and handed it back again. . . his bearing was lofty and did not crumble; he appeared to lack but accepted nothing; he was dignified in his correctness but not insistent; he was vast in his emptiness, but not ostentatious. Mild and cheerful, he seemed to be happy; reluctant, he could not help doing certain things. . . Tolerant, he seemed to be part of the world.[30]

By demonstrating detached quietude regarding his son's engagement, Grey encourages Garry to transcend his self-centred passions (98).

Following his discussion with Grey, Garry fights a battle of inner wills with Louie (symbolised by his breaking into Louie's garden). Louie demonstrates to Garry how unstable appearances are: 'I see other people's point of view too quickly. . .Because you had moved me and I was seeing with your eyes. Don't you understand? . . . You tell me how my conduct looks to you, and I see it. . . But that vision isn't me' (100). Garry must confront perceptions other than his own: 'More of David-- and more of Miss Morgan-- than he had known became apparent'.

The theft of a ring, however, is a tangible breach of indisputable moral convection. Louie must make Garry see this action as something deserving of sympathy. In the climactic confession scene, she exposes her inner self, admitting to things more serious than a false engagement: 'I had to save my self-respect. Confess no man had ever wanted me?. . . You needn't tell a lie, you see. A hint is all. But it saves you from humiliation- from yourself' (107).

Garry realises that his moral constructs are as hollow as her romantic inventions. Seeing that the difference between truth and falsehood is so ambiguous, 'he felt as though a roof had blown away and he was looking in amazement at a hive of populous rooms where things were done that he had never imagined' (106). He perceives that both their actions stem from fear of insignificance and humiliation: 'I live all the time. . . in what I want other people to be thinking about me, until often I don't know. . . what I really am and what I have thought they are thinking I am. I understand myself, you see. But I can't give it up, I can't. I've nothing to put in its place' (105). Fear of public opinion is rooted in fear of an infinite world where human significance is unbearably trivial. Louie's perhaps deepest confession communicates this: 'I wanted to be at the heart of life instead of on its margins', she tells him. Every character shares this fear, Garry especially: 'Yes, yes, I can see that' he replies (106). Both Louie and Garry are deluded in their desire to be at the centre of life. An impossible aspiration, one has more chance of success when one strives simply to be *part* of life.

Louie's confession reshapes Garry's vision as dramatically as war: 'in unmasking [Louie] he had done something to himself regarding which he was not quite sure' (116). For the second time, he awakens to *Tz'u* (compassion that comes of interfused being). The *Tao* reads: 'See the world as your self. . . Love the world as yourself; then you can care for all things' (Ch. 59). Garry sees Louie as himself, as he saw the soldier in the trenches as himself. Compassion inevitably follows:'he felt surges of pity where he had thought to feel only disgust; but it was a pity that it hurt him to give, as though some portion of himself had been rent to make the pity possible; and he was profoundly uncomfortable' (111). Garry's 'comfort' has dissolved; his self-centred isolation has been 'rent'. His decision to spare Louie is not an act of self-conscious mercy, but reluctant identification with her plight. Putting Louie on the public stage would be to pillory himself as well.

Human contact (with Louie) changes Garry's vision; his transformation finds expression in landscape, touched by light:

> It was incredible that there could be a world as fresh and unashamed as that he saw around him. . . space encompassed him. Space sang again its primal song, before man was, before the tangle of his shames began.. . the man standing there alone was rapt up into the infinitudes around, lost for awhile the limitations of himself. He came back slowly. . . This dour and thankless country. . .could look. . . by some rare miracle of light or moisture, essentialised. (112)

Garry's new compassionate vision stretches back to the origins of existence, cleansing him of shame the way no Session judgement could do. The *Tao* reads: 'Throw away morality and justice, and people will do the right thing.' (Ch. 19). It is only when Garry abandons conventional notions of morality and justice that he does the right thing.

When Ellen denounces Louie, Garry proves he has learned compassion by keeping the audience distracted. Garry initially imagined he could prove himself by destroying Louie. Instead, he proved himself by trying to save her.

Awakening to Ambiguity: Ellen's Dissolution

Ellen, like Garry, does not perceive the world as comprised of subjective, relative truths. Like Garry, she longs to be important and influential. She labours bravely to transcend her fantasies, but simply does not know where to begin and becomes more enmeshed in delusion. Unaware that Garry's ideals are another fantasy, Ellen enlists in Garry's quest to expose Louie's lie: 'the dreamy innocence habitual to her face had changed to a high and rapt enthusiasm . . . this young man had brought her suddenly back into [life's] throng and business. She who had been content to dream must now do' (117 and 78). She mistakes literal truth for humane truth, and the world of 'men's enterprises' for a world of significance (84). This new fantasy is dangerous, because it undermines Ellen's native capacity for empathy.

Ellen and Louie (like Garry and Louie) are alter-egos of each other. When Ellen exposes Louie at the concert, Ellen accomplishes a self-exposure, though it takes Lindsay, Garry and Theresa to bring this to light. 'She's a horrid old woman, thrusting herself into the limelight, that's what she is', says Lindsay (158). Ellen awakens to perspectives beyond herself that she had not imagined because her imagination was trapped within herself. (158-9).

Reflecting on events, Ellen's reaction resembles Garry's reflections during his convalescence: 'Life was past belief, complicated, huge' (185). Her awakening is given literal and symbolic expression in her changing perception of birds:

> she saw all at once that it was not only the bird's name of which she was ignorant: it was the whole world outside herself. . . living things. . . were around her in myriads; but she did not know them. They had their own nature. Even the number of spots upon an egg,

> the sheen on wing or tail, was part of their identity. And that, she saw, was holy. They were themselves. She could not enter into their life save by respecting their real nature. . . And so with men (182).

As links between characters are revealed, Ellen's isolation increases in inverse proportion: 'She felt miserably small, imprisoned wholly in herself' (182).

Ellen embarks upon self-conscious attempts at goodness through occupations that are conventionally defined as compassionate: ('a successful social worker') (183). Her 'new life' has begun, but she is 'entering upon her quest too late' (187). Ellen's most compassionate gestures is simply, unself-consciously sharing her sincere view of God with Stella. 'Well, you're a straight one. I like you for that', Stella tells her (184).

Ironically, while others believe Ellen is going mad, she is actually nearing truth: 'she's not so dottled as you would make out', Kate says (191). Ironically, too, while Ellen's imagination prompted her fantastic attack on Louie, her imagination subsequently helps her relate to Louie: 'On a foundation of her own imaginings', Ellen sees that Louie 'was like herself' (185). Thus, Ellen loses herself to her first genuine experience of human closeness: 'I know how it had all seemed to her. . . She dwelt on the resemblance till she could hardly distinguish between herself and Louie'.

Louie experiences a wholesale dissolution of her stable reality following Garry's and Ellen's attacks. In *The Atom of Delight*, Gunn describes the fear and shame of a dissolution experience similar to Louie's:

> The realisation that disintegration is happening, that the will may not be able to stop it, that it is getting the better of the will, that one is being driven back and beaten down, the inmost fibres of the mind being taken apart, the inmost core of the self being smothered, the last cry of hope or aspiration being choked like an animal cry, this is horror, and horror tainted with a horrible shame, for it is happening within, happening to oneself, and one cannot stop it.[31]

Motivated by genuine compassion (*Tz'u*), Ellen visits Louie in an attempt to awaken her to their essential oneness (as Louie did for Garry). Ellen's attempt to save Louie may also be compared to Garry's attempt to save the dead soldier. 'We must help each other to find the truth', Ellen tells Louie (188). Indeed, reality has gone awry. The scene in the Morgan home is as bizarre as many in modernist fiction. Louie's physical appearance suggests the spiritual wounding: 'the lace at her throat was torn and her fingernails were dirty' (188). All reliable points of reference that might ground a reader's (or a character's) interpretation are blurred.

Imagined perception seems the only reality. Speech is fragmented and only vaguely relevant. A servant and even Louie's mother seem part of the madness. Are we delirious, or are the characters? Louie calls Ellen a fool, but, as Ellen said earlier, 'to be a fool may be the highest wisdom' (137). It is too late to save either of them, but their disintegrations enable new creations.

Lindsay's Awakening to Spirit

Lindsay is at the physical centre of the novel, but she is not its central character. It is appropriate, therefore, that Lindsay's vision is mostly altered by tangential impact with the events going on around her.

While Garry's hubristic ideals regarding war and the significance of men dissolve, Lindsay's ideals regarding love and the nature of human relations dissolve. Surface realities (like bridges and love) are not as simple or stable as they once appeared, and are undermined by powerful forces flowing beneath them. While romantic convention gave definition to Lindsay's love, she was certain. When events in Fetter-Rothnie encourage her to look beyond conventional definitions, however, she becomes uncertain: 'He's not what I thought quite. . . and I'm not what I thought. . . I don't know what I want' (132).

The dissolution of Lindsay's ideals regarding romantic love extends to her faith in human love in general. She once thought that evil was 'always in the next street' (118). But she soon sees the petty cruelties all around her. She tells Garry: 'I'm all afraid of life. I thought I wasn't, but I am. We're so cruel to one another, aren't we?. . . I don't suppose we mean it, but we are' (163). The cruelty she perceives within the world, within herself, is terrifying. Her fear is a product of perception. The world in itself is not terrifying. As Suzuki writes: 'The feeling of fear is your own creation; the stone itself is indeed devoid both of merit and demerit'.[32] Similarly Garry tells her that his aunt (like life) is not 'fearsome' in herself (70). But Lindsay fears life and Bawbie both, because they threaten her comfortable world. Lindsay (like Garry) wants to believe in simple, absolute truths. She cannot reconcile the beauty of the world with the bewildering chaos of death, insanity and petty cruelty that she perceives. Her awakening is expressed through natural world imagery: 'The child tossed upon dark and lashing waters, and was afraid. It had been safe and beautiful on shore' (125).

Lindsay's vision, like Ellen's, finds expression in her perception of birds. She once saw birds as she saw life: clean, beautiful, incorruptible. When she finds a bird killed by the windstorm, she asks: 'But can't they fly clear? Can't they see where they are going?' (177). Bird life provides a metaphor for humanity: the unlucky death of one bird caught helpless in the storm is the price for the height and freedom of flight. Chuang-Tzu writes that the wind must be 'piled up deep enough, [or] it won't have the strength to bear up great wings. . . *P'eng* [bird] must have the wind under him'. But, individually, the birds 'sometimes. . . don't make it and just fall down on the ground'.[33] The bird's beauty is not diminished either by its insignificance or its death. In fact, in death a hidden aspect of its inner beauty (literal and symbolic) is revealed in the 'russet pool' beneath its wing. The bird's death opens Lindsay's eyes to what lies hidden beneath external appearances. Lindsay realises, like Ellen, that she does not know life's full dimension. Her new vision acknowledges deeper forces than she had imagined: 'like horses new let out to grass; brutal and beautiful; unbridled energies' (117). She is realising that life (and death) is quite other than what she expected

Untameable Being: Elementality and Bawbie Paterson

In one of her early sketchbooks (1911), Shepherd copied a phrase from Kierkegaard: 'If a person does not become what he understands, he does not really understand it'.[34] This (very Eastern) concept is incorporated into the core of her vision. The following three subsections look at the ways in which characters merge their being with the same forces that have dissolved their once-stable realities, with the world they seek to know.

By Chapter Ten, the complexity of the world has 'come home' (to Fetter-Rothnie) to Garry (118). His morals and ideals- the scaffolding of his spiritual life- have collapsed, as his self did in the shell-hole:

> Limits had shifted, boundaries been dissolved. Nothing ended in itself, but flowed over into something else; and the obsession of his delirium, that he was himself the dead man whose body he had lugged out of the slime, came back now and haunted him like the key note of a tune. . . His mind sounded the note again and again. . .but always the tune itself eluded him. (118)

Under the influence of his new perception, the physical and social world dissolve as well: the houses and the people of Fetter-Rothnie 'melt and float and change [their] nature'.

Garry suddenly fears his aunt, as Lindsay does. Bawbie reminds him of his 'troubled impotence . . . [of] a world that would not let him keep his straight and clean-cut standards' (119). Bawbie is indeed the central force around which change spins, encompassing substance and spirit in ever-renewing creation:

> he perceived a boulder, earthy and enormous, a giant block of the unbridled crag, and behold! as he looked the boulder was his aunt. 'You won't touch me,' she seemed to say, 'I won't be cut and shaped and civilised.' But in an instant she began to move, treading ever more quickly and lightly, until he saw that she was dancing as he had caught her dancing on the night of his return. Faster and faster she spun, lighter of foot and more ethereal, and the rhythm of her dance was a phrase in the tune that eluded him. And now she seemed to spurn the earth and float, and in the swiftness of her motion he could see no form or substance, only a shining light, and he knew that what he watched was a dancing star. (119)

His fear is transformed into vision: no merely metaphorical or mystical vision of transfiguration, but a lucid vision of 'life essentialised.' Garry's vision is grounded in scientific truth, 'for indeed we are all made from the stuff of stars' writes Watson.[35] As Garry says earlier of his aunt, 'She'll never alter, except to get more herself' (71). She hasn't altered, but Garry's perception of her has. Shepherd's poem, 'Blackbird in Snow' describes a similarly altered vision:

> From some keen order of existence
> Whereof we are but rarely sure;
> Unseen, unheard, yet all beside us,
> And co-existent with our own,
> That shines through ours at quickened moments
> Like light through lovely forms of stone.[36]

Shepherd's emphasis on stone and light reiterates the Eastern parallel with *P'o* and *Ming:* the elemental, uncarved block reflecting the light of creation.

To truly create his world, Garry must merge his own self with this force; he must take a 'plunge into the cold water of a mountain pool [which] seems for a brief moment to disintegrate the very self; it is not to be born: one is lost: stricken: annihilated. Then life pours back' (LM, 81). It is significant that Garry finds peace when he loses self-consciousness to sleep (119).

Defiant Being: Light, Fire, and Johnny Rogie

Like Bawbie breaking into the Weatherhouse party in Chapter One, Johnny Rogie (a powerful outside force) breaks unexpectedly into Knapperly. He comes and goes without explanation, but not without influence (133). He counteracts that other invader of Fetter-Rothnie's peace: the spectre of war (bringing violence, fear and uncertainty).

Shaman-like, Johnny offers soldiers the hope that their physical dissolutions might not be as painful as they imagine. The world seems to be moving toward tragic disintegration, but Johnny offers an alternative view of dissolution. He embodies the spirit of defiance that burns in Bawbie's candles. He enacts a bacchanalian levelling of rigid, obsolete boundaries (spiritual and physical), suggesting that life may rise anew from the ashes: 'Johnnie seemed a ministrant of life, bringing for a moment its golden energies within one's grasp' (121).

In this spirit, Johnny joins Knapperly's soldiers (a veteran, an inept farmer, and Bawbie), and encourages their defiant war against fear and convention. 'Live, laddie, live?' Johnny both encourages and challenges Garry. Garry must choose whether to put out his aunt's candles, whether to defy or submit to the anonymous rules that constrain life. 'It's only your common bodies that need your laws and regulations, to be hauden in about. . . But go your ways' Bawbie warns Garry (123). She will not dictate action. Garry puts out the candles but realises he is fighting for the wrong side by doing so, for 'the war was putting this out too -- this impetuous leap of exhilaration, this symbol of joy'. Just as the war causes mutilation and death, so all the petty rules of Fetter-Rothnie life cause spiritual mutilation.

Johnny exerts deep influence upon Garry. The night becomes a worship of defiance-against law and order, against all restrictions of the free enjoyment of life. The night suggests how rich life would be if only 'all the world would turn audacious!' (124). Johnny demonstrates that loss of self need not be painful and threatening, but liberating. Instead of fearing ridicule, Garry sees the worth of human companionship. When Johnnie asks for money, Garry gives it. The gesture is not motivated by self-conscious altruism, it is a confirmation of humanity's shared lot: '[Garry] had seen life essentialised. Its pure essence had been in Johnnie' (124).

The next morning, Johnny has disappeared leaving devastation in his wake, having somehow ignited a fire that left Knapperly's roof ruined. This destruction, however, is an

extension of Johnny's preparations for a creative era in Fetter-Rothnie. But Garry must learn how to create. He compassionately hires inept workers, subjecting himself to further mockery: 'His folly on the housetop was a generosity, a gesture of faith in mankind' (171). But he has no practical idea how to re-create anything, even a roof. Ellen encountered similar difficulty when she wanted to be a social worker: 'you have no training' (183). Knapperly is a part of Bawbie herself; her spirit 'won't be cut and shaped and civilised'. When Garry nails a piece of rigid old iron to the hole (symbolic of his old views), the wind (an embodiment of Bawbie herself) tears the iron off the roof.

Substance, Shepherd has always insisted, is as important as spirit; one perceives inner spirit through a knowledge of things in themselves. Enlightenment in Eastern religions is achieved through teaching of some tangible art: archery, for instance. Garry must seek a means of creation that does not involve cutting and shaping the world, but blending himself with its inherent forms. Compassion toward others is not enough, Garry must humble himself to seek and accept compassion himself.

Quiescent Being: Wind and Laughter

The weather is an omnispresent feature of this novel, most obviously in its very title. The perpetual shifting of weather patterns, its occasional violence, its unpredictability are as strong a symbolic undercurrent in this novel as change itself.. Wind is particularly important, representing the change and energy of life: a perpetually-blasting breath from the void that is life, a reminder (sometimes violent, sometimes gentle) that the world is a vast place where things happen inexplicably. It cannot be defeated or outrun, but it does pass on:

> The Great Clod [P'o] belches out breath and its name is wind. So long as it doesn't come forth, nothing happens. But when it does, then ten thousand hollows begin crying wildly. Can't you hear them, long drawn out? . . .They roar like waves, whistle like arrows, screech, gasp, cry, wail, moan, and howl. . . And when the fierce wind has passed on, then all the hollows are empty again.[37]

Wind terrifies those who are reluctant to give up their old vision, their distinct identities. Many Eastern philosophers have described the terror inspired by visions of the void. The emptiness of the outer world seems to mirror the emptiness within one's self, an experience causing deep trauma to the security of the subjective ego. This emptiness, however, is the

creative source itself. In *The Weatherhouse*, characters may be seen to run with the wind, merging their ego with the 'void'; eventually, their panic-fear subsides into joyful integration with the creative source.

The 'wind of sunrise' in Chapter Eleven (a tempest by Chapter Thirteen) begins the final transformation of Garry's vision. Garry visits Louie and confronts the destruction that his actions have wrought upon her (167). His ears are haunted both by the town's mocking laughter and Louie's anguished screaming: 'All that tormented-- the whining shell, the destructive sea, lust, folly and derision, brute and insensate nature's roar-- was in the cataract that crashed about his ears'. He must yield to the roaring: 'Nothing lived in the steady pouring noise but its own insistence. Even thought went numb' (167). Garry feels ashamed, still wanting to be an agent of change, rather than subject to it.

Near the end of the novel, Garry embraces the town's mockery. He laughs with the townsmen having learned to accept humiliation; he confesses to loving Francie's spirit: 'his guests felt its invitation to laugh and joined in his mirth'. By embracing mockery (of all things, including himself), by yielding self-conscious, defensive pride, Garry escapes shame and fear of ridicule. He accomplishes the equivalent of letting himself go before the wind. His 'reckless gaiety' has a 'harsh wholesome savour', like Johnny Rogie's, or Bawbie's. He laughs at human self-importance, at the strangeness of life; he laughs for glee because he sees and partakes of life. He embraces the town's perception of him as a fool. Interestingly, the *Tao* states: 'When a foolish man hears of the Tao, he laughs out loud. If he didn't laugh, it wouldn't be the Tao' (Ch. 41).

Lindsay, like Garry, must embrace the forces of life that she fears and resists. Having awoken from her ideals, she '[has] no sense of light in the world' (160). She perceives that the wind has destroyed all those things that gave her life meaning: flowers, buds, birds. 'A wind of death' she thinks. But she is mistaken, for the perpetual blasting of the wind is life itself. When Lindsay tries to escape the wind, she cannot breathe (161). She, too, joins the wind, unable to resist it: 'Nothing could have pleased her better than to fly thus upon the wings of the wind. . . riding the gale like a leaf. She was glad to merge her will in the larger will of the tempest' (161). In the wind she finds release from self, and from fear. She accepts life, and 'she accepted Miss Barbara. What a child she had been to fear her!' (161). Lindsay

suddenly feels 'free and glad. . . Running thus before the wind, she had entered into the peace that is beyond understanding: she was at one with the motion of her universe' (161).

Lindsay is very like Ellen. But Lindsay awakens to the limitations of the physical and adapts (as Garry does), while Ellen awakens to the limitations of the spiritual and cannot survive. Lindsay and Garry are the next generation; their capacity to adapt means that they will re-create a new stable lives for themselves, based upon the foundations of the old.

V) DESTRUCTION AND RE-CREATION

Shepherd shares Gunn's view of the course of spiritual evolution: '[i]n between the extremes, the opposites, there are all kinds of tenable conditions from optimism through irony to nihilism. That may be understood, just as it may be understood that the extremes tend towards either transcendence or annihilation'.[38] There are two kinds of destruction and re-creation in this novel: human and physical.

Human Destruction and Re-creation

Ellen and Louie undergo gradual demise ending in death (in Ellen's case) and insanity (in Louie's). These fates are tragic, but as with Aunt Josephine of *The Quarry Wood*, their destruction brings new life to others. Watson writes of these two women: 'if *The Weatherhouse* is a *Bildungsroman* at all, then it is their story it tells'.[39] Other characters owe their continuing development to the tragedies of Ellen and Louie. Alan Freeman writes that: 'Life is a slow decline into the earth from whence we rose, but we can find validation by our common connection with it'.[40] In their 'slow declines', Ellen and Louie fail to find new life themselves, but through having embraced life's 'common connections' in their last moments, they enable new life for those around them.

Louie's 'essays in sincerity' leave her stripped of defence against fear. She is redeemed, however, by the very things that have destroyed her. She had dreamt of effecting a turning point in someone's life: 'I am hoping that I am saving your soul. . . I am saying, years after, he will look back on this hour and say, 'My life was changed-- that was a crucial hour for me. I had a new revelation of life given to me,'. . . But you won't, will you?' (107). Her confessions

to Garry *have*, in fact, given Garry a 'new revelation of life'. The public denouncement at the concert gave Garry an opportunity to do something truly good. Louie awakened Garry to the fact that: 'we are all needful to one another. Even I to you' (150). Louie thus vocalises a revelation at the heart of the novel. Louie is the 'rare miracle' that awakened Garry to the essence of her own humanity, and thus to the essential unity of all humanity: 'A measure of her life this morning had gone up in sacrifice. Her substance had become spirit' (113). In Shepherd's view, the amalgamation of substance and spirit constitutes the creative act. In destroying herself, Louie has re-created herself.

Ellen's tragedy is similar. She mourns that 'she would never open the door of her dwelling to youth and arrogant active life' (134). In fact, she has opened the door to youth and arrogant active life by opening herself to the common connections of being, despite habit and fear. Her last days had their influence upon Garry, Stella, Lindsay, Lang Leeb, even upon the girls of the Women's Guild.

Ellen's death encourages others to re-evaluate their own perspectives, inspiring a chapter full of memories. Through memory, humanity, in a sense, overcomes death. Lindsay (awakened to her lack of sympathy) finds 'comfort' from shame by remembering how she offered to show Ellen the dead bird. Similarly, Ellen's death awakens Lang Leeb from detachedness verging on cruelty into a new love for her daughter.

Ellen voices two further revelations central to *The Weatherhouse*, representing her legacy to the next generation. 'Things as they are. People as they are', she tells Louie (188). To 'know being', one must know things in themselves, unclouded by self-centred perception. When Ellen tells Garry 'they too are men', she recalls him to the interconnections of humanity and to compassion: 'It seemed to him the wisest saying he had heard' (174-5).

It is mostly Stella for whom Ellen opened the door to 'youth and arrogant active life'. Appropriately, this next, unshaped and uncivilised generation in the evolving line of Fetter-Rothnie gives tribute to Ellen's martyred life on the last page of the novel.

Physical Destruction and Re-creation

The Knapperly fire is the physical aspect of the spiritual dissolution enacted during the party. The 'shouting and confusion' that follow testify to the widespread trauma of

dissolution throughout the novel (137). Destructive though it is, the fire provides opportunity for creation (179). Bawbie raises a memorial cairn not to the war that caused needless death (as would be conventional), but to the fire that promises new life. In a sketchbook, Shepherd copied down a chapter of the *Tao* that advocates this very idea of victory through pacifism: 'When armies are raised and the issues joined, it is he who does not delight in war who wins'.[41]

Shepherd writes in *The Living Mountain* that 'Having disciplined mind and body to quiescence, I must discipline them also to activity' (75). Garry has accepted the nature of being, he must now learn how to create. When Garry can't fix the roof, he feels he has failed the tests of manhood: 'He could not mend a roof, nor choose a workman, nor love a woman. He could not now even vindicate his friend' (151). He only finds peace when he 'swallows his pride' and seeks guidance from John Grey (151). Thus, he learns the practical art of slate roofing, with all its spiritual significance. The result is a slate-shingled roof ('each [slate] overlapping other two'), literally and symbolically demonstrating Garry's new perception and interaction with life's interconnectedness (178).

In Chapter Fourteen, Garry looks upon the same quiet land that he earlier scorned: 'There was no sound at all, no motion in the house or wood' (172). It has not changed in itself, but Garry's perception of it changes. 'Life recommenced' before his eyes. Watching Francie sow, Garry perceives the man in himself: this usually 'clumsy, ridiculous' man tosses seed with a 'free ample movement' that has a 'grandeur more than natural' (172-3). Garry has never seen Francie's grandeur before, because he has never seen 'the spirit of the man', without which Francie is merely a 'seed-casting machine' (174). Garry perceives that Francie occupies a place in the continuum of being: 'The dead reached through him to the soil. Continuity was in his gait' (173). As Chuang-tzu writes: 'he may be merely ignorant, blunt, and obscure. . .[But] when one is transformed . . . he is living with the moving forces of the universe and he is himself a part of it'.[42]

Garry's perception of Francie's interfused substance and spirit (inherited from Ellen's and Louie's final revelations) extends to his perception of earth:

> He saw everything he looked at not as substance, but as energy. All was life. Life pulsed in the clods of earth that the ploughshares were breaking, in the shares, the men. Substance, no matter what its form was rare and fine' (175).

This vision of the amalgamation of substance and spirit resembles Ch'ing-yuan's final vision (referred to on page twenty-two): 'The trees, not now by accident of light but in themselves, were again etherealised. . . Mere vegetable matter they are not. . . this very principle of life declared itself in the boughs'.[43] In a chapter of *The Living Mountain* called 'Being', Shepherd writes about this vision is achieved:

> the body must be said to think. . . Flesh is not annihilated but fulfilled. . . One is not bodiless, but essential body. It is therefore when the body is keyed to its highest potential and controlled to a profound harmony deepening into something that resembles trance, that I discover most nearly what it is *to be*. (83)

Garry's final vision in Chapter Fourteen describes the real conclusion of Shepherd's novel, insofar as it is a philosophical exploration of her vision of being. But Shepherd's philosophy is concerned with placing the individual in the larger context of events. Thus, Ellen's disintegration follows, and then 'The Epilogue', to encapsulate the process of disintegration and re-creation that eventually will overwhelm all individuals.

Creating New Life in Balance

The conclusion of the novel hints that life cannot continue in perpetual contact with the true nature of being on an everyday basis. Traditions, appearances, systems of everyday knowing must be established. Some flexible balance must be reached between utter delusion and absolute truth. This is where the human creative capacity comes in, constructing satisfactory traditions that make life liveable. This is where *A Pass in the Grampians* takes over from *The Weatherhouse*. The Epilogue links the concerns of these two novels. It shows Garry and Lindsay beginning to lend new substance to the spiritual changes they have undergone, informed by the fluid forces of life they have seen, but intent on creating lives of relative stability and order. One of Shepherd's more well-known poems can be interpreted to describe the trial and transformation Garry and Lindsay have undergone. 'Above Loch Avon' reads:

> So on we marched. That awful loneliness
> Received our souls as air receives the smoke.
> Then larger breath we drew, felt years gone by,
> And in a new dimension turned and spoke.[44]

They have struggled against fear, and awakened to a new dimension. The conclusion of the novel, like the final line of the poem, shows them continuing on.

It is tempting to read Lindsay and Garry as symbolic embodiments of *yin* (the female, passive, yielding force) and *yang* (the male, active, constructive force). This is not to ascribe gender roles, but rather to demonstrate that both quiescence (rest) and activity (purpose) are equally essential to life. Shepherd demonstrates the importance of such opposing forces frequently, especially in *The Living Mountain* through observation of the natural world. Of freezing water she writes: 'at the point of fluctuation between the motion in water and the immobility of frost, strange and beautiful forms are evolved' (22). Taoism states that the Oneness of being divides into these forces of *yin* and *yang*, and between them these forces (separate and one) create life.

Lindsay, in the end, yields herself to Garry. She has perceived the Oneness of being, the most elemental truths (represented by Bawbie), but in the end she closes her eyes to them. It is not surprising, therefore, that (married and happy) she 'can't stay in [Knapperly]' anymore (194). When confronted by evidence of the unknowable forces of life (for instance, the imagined dog, Demon), she turns her back, not wishing her world to be threatened by dissolution again: 'she was unreasonably angry' (199).

Garry, too, returns to his own familiar perceptions and everyday aspirations in a manner that seems to contradict his visions of dissolution. 'The moment of perception passed', but perhaps the impact will not be suppressed by fear or habit (175). But rather than yield to passivity, he re-engages on an active life, determined upon creation and reconstruction. He commits himself again to his ideals about honour and duty. He returns to war, illustrating that a moment of enlightenment does not make the fact of daily living any easier- but perhaps there are fewer self-delusions.

Characteristically, Shepherd leaves readers with an open-ended conclusion. Lindsay and Garry have embraced a brief perception of the underlying nature of existence, and that vision will inform the course of their lives. Mundane vision returns in the blink of an eye, and daily life continues. As John Burns writes:

> The end of Zen, as of Taoism, is just to be simply and naturally human, not to experience some wondrous vision, nor to acquire superhuman powers. It is rather the surprised wonder that one has possessed the object of the search all along. (10)

To some degree, the creation of a new existence involves closing one's eyes to the eternal reality that runs beneath every version of existence that ever was and ever will be.

The community of Fetter-Rothnie will continue on past the final page. The place and its people have undergone change, and will continue to change in a fictional space that Shepherd accepts will be forever subject to continuing life and evolution. This shifting, interconnected fictional space is given physical representation in the home itself, the aptly named Weatherhouse. This very process of human spiritual evolution over generations is precisely what Shepherd chooses to explore in her final novel.

ENDNOTES

[1]'"To Know Being"', p. 416.
[2]Craig, *The Modern Scottish Novel*, p. 218.
[3]NLS, Shepherd MSS 27443. 'There is an elusive quality to Miss Shepherd. You know that behind the surface charm there are depths that aren't even hinted at'.
[4]'"To Know Being"', p. 422.
[5]Vargish and Mook, p. 15.
[6]Gunn, *Morning Tide*, (London: Souvenir Press, 1930; repr. New York: Walker & Co., 1976), p. 243.
[7]Robert Frost, 'For Once, Then, Something' in *The Poems of Robert Frost*, (New York: Random House [1930] 1946), p. 239.
[8]Chung-yuan, p. 105. The author is quoting Alfred N. Whitehead from *Adventure of Ideas* (1933). No other details of this book are provided.
[9]Kern, p. 32.
[10]Shepherd, untitled poem from IC.
[11]Gunn, *The Other Landscape*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1954).
[12]Chung-yuan, p. 43 (no source given for quotation).
[13]Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, *The Zen Doctrine of No-Mind*, (London: Rider and Company, 1949), p. 99.
[14]Gunn, 'Light' in *Point*, quoted by John Burns, p. 8.
[15]Gunn, article in *The Saltire Review* (1958-9), quoted by John Burns, p. 14.
[16]Gunn, *The Atom of Delight*, (Edinburgh: Polygon, [1956] 1986), p. 109.
[17]*The Holy Bible*, 'Genesis' 1:6; immediately following God's first act (the division of light from dark), God created the firmaments of Heaven, the Earth and the seas by separating waters:'Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters'.
[18]Shepherd, untitled poem from *IC*.
[19]Cheryl Maxwell, 'Formation and Development of Personal Identities in the Scottish Novel 1926-1937', (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Aberdeen University, 1997), p. 257. The author quotes Kant in the same context.
[20]Muir, *Imagined Corners* in *Imagined Selves*, p. 263-4.
[21]Suzuki, p. 55.
[22]*Tao*, Ch. 58.
[23]D.H. Lawrence, 'Morality in the Novel' (1925) in *A Modernist Reader*, pp. 138-143 (p. 139).
[24]Suzuki, p. 114.
[25]Craig, p. 219.
[26]A.W. Watts, *The Way of Zen* (1957), quoted by John Burns, p. 126.
[27]Chuang-Tzu, *Basic Writings*, trans. by Burton Watson, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964): 'If we see things from the point of view of their differences, then even our inner organs are as far apart as the states of Ch'u and Yueh. But if we see things from the point of view of their identity, then all things are one',
[28]Chung-yuan quotes these Taoist scholars, p. 13.
[29]Burns, p. 135, quote from *Beyond Violence*, (1973).
[30]Chuang-Tzu, p. 74-5.

[31]*Atom of Delight*, p. 210.
[32]Suzuki, p. 114.
[33]Chuang-Tzu, p. 24.
[34]NLS, Shepherd MSS 27440.
[35]'"To Know Being"', p. 424.
[36]Shepherd, from 'Blackbird in Snow' from *IC.*
[37]Chuang-Tzu, p. 32.
[38]*Atom of Delight*, p. 211.
[39]'"To Know Being"', p. 422.
[40]Freeman, p.222.
[41]NLS, Shepherd MSS 27440.
[42]Chuang-Tzu, p. 40.
[43]Burns, p. 176, quoting *Way of Zen.*
[44]Shepherd, 'Above Loch Avon', in *Scottish Verse: 1851-1951*, ed. by Douglas Young, (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson, 1952), p. 217.

Chapter Four:
A Pass in the Grampians and the Continuum of Being

Song of the Barley by Night

I am brown, and the travail of earth is in me,
Of my brown mother the mould,
For I sway to the rhythmic pulse of her bosom
As the breath she dare not hold
Falls and rises in long recurrence:
For my mother is old, old,

Half-tamed by the working of men and their turmoil;
But at night she forgets, at night,
And dances there with the thousand dancing,
In primal rude delight,
Wild with the lust for rhythm and movement,
And the brutal urge to flight.

I dance with my mother; but in the daytime
The great sun wiles from me
The flicker of wayward and glancing laughter,
The wanton grace of the sea.
Only, at night I dance with my mother
In stately solemn glee.

This is our work and this our travail:
There is no circumstance,
We have little to show for our aeons of labour,
But because we must we dance,
I am brown, and the travail of earth is in me,
And I dance, I dance.[1]

I) INTRODUCTION

Shepherd and 'Song of the Barley by Night'

This poem was originally published in the Aberdeen University student magazine, *Alma Mater* (1919), and was most likely written during Shepherd's student years (1912-1915). It is particularly illuminating in terms of my reading of *A Pass in the Grampians*. It seems a feminised version of Robert Burns' song, 'John Barleycorn' (the ballad itself being based upon an old song resembling the Dionysius myth).[2] In Burns' ballad, powerful men ('three kings')

try repeatedly to kill Barleycorn: the barley personified. They 'took a plough and plough'd him down'. They torture and use him, thereby sustaining their own lives and pleasures:

> And they hae taen his very heart's blood
> And drank it round and round;
> And still the more and more they drank,
> Their joy did more abound.

Barleycorn, however, is hardy, both physically and spiritually, he is unbroken. In spring, 'John Barleycorn got up again, And sore surprised them all'. In spirit,

> John Barleycorn was a hero bold,
> Of noble enterprise
> For if you do but taste his blood,
> 'Twill make your courage rise.
>
> Then let us toast John Barleycorn,
> Each man a glass in hand;
> And may his great posterity
> Ne'er fail in old Scotland!

Shepherd's poem closely resembles Burns' ballad in its mythological animism, its emphasis on the primitive forces of regeneration, the cycles of change, and the inexorable vigour of life. Moreover, it hints at the importance of this vigour to the broader life of Scotland. In Shepherd's poem, the barley is 'half-tamed'. The poem emphasises the same spirit of life, but it is evoked through motion and rhythm rather than the processes of death and regeneration. Shepherd conveys a deeper sense of loss, but also deeper understanding into the changes and patterns of growth. Most tellingly, Shepherd's poem personifies not merely the grain, but the means and source of the grain's annual return to life. The earth itself is personified as a maternal force.

Shepherd's poem may be linked to *A Pass in the Grampians* in many ways: the juxtaposed themes of bound labour and liberated expression, the use of the natural world, the pursuit of transcendental and primitive experience through dance and laughter, and perhaps most importantly, the description of inheritance as a source of spiritual continuity over time. Underlying all is a sense for life's irrepressible forward motion. The ideas found in this poem suggest the influence of traditional balladry and folklore, but also a more modernist influence: the philosophy of Henri Bergson. It is characteristic (and appropriate given the content of the novel) of Shepherd to combine the historical with the contemporary.

A Pass in the Grampians in Context

A Pass in the Grampians is a distinctive exploration of Shepherd's theme of change from a new angle, but consistent with the vision of change expressed in her two previous novels. It examines the rise and fall of what I will discuss as 'the Kilgour tradition', as a symbol for the perpetual evolution of human spiritual and physical life. Shepherd again asks readers to shift their perspective. She asks that we observe the present, but with a natural historian's appreciation for a time scale that extends beyond the individual's short life span. The novel is less concerned with the evolution of individuals within a small, closed community, than with the evolution of a community which is collectively and directly influenced by wider social and cultural changes. Set against the social and cultural changes of the early twentieth century, the novel focuses upon the perpetual balancing act between past and present, tradition and innovation, chaos and stability. The novel demonstrates, ultimately, that the achievement of such balance is not merely essential to the individual, but to the collective evolution of humanity.

The novel is similar to Lewis Grassic Gibbon's *A Scots Quair* in describing the decline of a long-established, rural tradition. Both Shepherd and Gibbon perceive the advantages and disadvantages of tradition for those who create it, those reliant upon it, and those subjugated by its strength. Both Shepherd and Gibbon acknowledge the broad sweep of change, the pain of awakening to personal insignificance, but also the inevitable urge toward heroic (if vain) individualistic action. Andrew Kilgour could be compared with Chris Guthrie, and Jenny Kilgour with Chris' son, Ewan. But Shepherd's conclusion is other than Gibbon's, being characterised by a detachment that Gibbon's novels lack. Gibbon gives equal weight to the force of impersonal change and the force of the individual's passion to change things. Thus, he offers a valid choice. Shepherd, however, conceives the opposition as part of a spectrum of understanding, gleaned from experience of life. Jenny's eagerness is valid, but the result of 'the invincible expectancy of youth'. Andrew, however, 'knows more than she dreams of what is passing in that bright head, but he does not speak' (PG, 116). The narrator of these passages is conveying her sense that Jenny and Andrew are playing eternal (albeit creative and non-determined) roles.

Unlike Gibbon's trilogy, Shepherd's final novel is not often discussed, not greatly admired, and perhaps not often understood. On a first reading, one might regard the

distanced tone of the novel as possibly inappropriate. But on deeper reading, this tone must be regarded as a further refinement in the communication of Shepherd's philosophical vision wherein the individual is but part of an infinite chain of events.

Like Shepherd's first novels, *A Pass in the Grampians* examines the relationship between the particulars of everyday life and the rumbles and shake-ups of underlying change, but from a more detached perspective than she has yet demonstrated. As Gunn writes: 'Your detachment at moments may have the air of intricate analysis and even almost of coldness as of an exercise'.[3] *A Pass in the Grampians* is also more of a modernist text than any of Shepherd's previous novels, in that Shepherd's style is more determined by her philosophical perspective, and less by her concern for accessibility. A detached narrative voice describes life in a community of rather detached individuals, and every particular has some wider purpose. We never truly know Jenny -- apparently the novel's protagonist. The narrative offers little access to characters' inner consciousness. The reader is left -- like a member of the community -- to guess at characters' inner thoughts according to actions and speech.

Roderick Watson describes MacDiarmid's sense that 'human life is only one facet in the teeming pattern of Creation and it is dwarfed as easily by the depths of the microcosm within himself as it is by the vast spaces of the galaxy'.[4] Shepherd explores the depths within microcosms in this novel. Physical realities (houses, weather, even characters) are symbolic to such an extent that the novel can be read on at least two levels. This makes for fascinating interpretative work, if less compelling reading in terms of pure story. Interestingly, characters within the novel are likewise prone to perceiving the world and one another as symbols. Shepherd's novels rely heavily upon symbolic meanings. Simultaneously, however, Shepherd is adamant that symbolic realities must not be used to simplify life's real complexities. Symbolic meaning is clearly important, but there is an equal emphasis on the importance of essential realities derived from pure experience.

Shepherd's study of change through fiction has its own evolution. Her first novels described the impact of change on human life through close analysis of a closed, microcosmic environment. In *The Quarry Wood* and *The Weatherhouse*, change comes from within the intimate web of character relations and perceptions. One has the sense that these first novels helped Shepherd develop and concretise her philosophical views. *A Pass in the Grampians* might be seen as Shepherd testing the verity of her philosophical vision in the contemporary

cultural arena. The novel certainly acknowledges a broader sphere of influence. It takes the Kilgour hill farm community as its immediate subject, but change is externally imposed upon the community from beyond the Pass. The changes are those that affected the rest of Western society at the turn of the century (modern art music and dance, for instance). The novel explicitly identifies the hill farm community's place within a wide sphere of being. The community is minute and vulnerable, but it is also an original and interlinking cross-section of the incessant flow of human life. Having said this, it seems clear that the vision of human existence communicated by this novel could not have accommodated the intimate style of Shepherd's previous novels.

Like her previous novels, *A Pass in the Grampians* does not lend itself to straightforward interpretation. Like her previous novels, it pursues the theme of balance without pursuing a conclusion. It makes use of natural imagery, while accentuating the importance of human interaction. Intellectual endeavour is acknowledged as necessary, while intuitive experience is vital. The novel contains narratives of physical and spiritual journeys. The novel also demonstrates parallels with Eastern thought. The novel refers to the classical myth and epic traditions used in *The Quarry Wood.* And readers are set up to expect a *Bildungsroman* about the life of Jenny Kilgour.

But this novel is less of a conventional *Bildungsroman* than *The Quarry Wood.* We are never sure what to feel about any character, least of all Jenny. This is because the novel is about evolution, rather than about any individual. Jenny represents the blank slate of the future upon which the older generation would like to engrave its views, to ensure the perpetuation of its traditions. If this novel is a *Bildungsroman,* it is the *Bildungsroman* of the future itself -- embodied in Jenny. By the end of the novel, of course, no one controls the future; and, in any case, there is no single future to control. Jenny will choose her own path, informed by the past. We are given no definite and conclusive answer about what is to come, but we cannot really expect otherwise. The *Bildungsroman* of a young woman could end happily or tragically, but if the *Bildungsroman* of the future were to end it would mean the end of human existence.

Critical Approach: Creative Evolution in the Novel

The processes of creative evolution take centre stage in *A Pass in the Grampians* -- in the defined terms of Bergsonian theory, but also in the wider terms of spiritual evolution in a world of change. In Bergson's view, human individuals have the unique capacity to contemplate their own mortality. This idea is of central importance within Shepherd's novel. Change enters the community with Bella, bringing the fear of death (real and symbolic) to the old generation. Shepherd writes of Andrew Kilgour that 'fear had silently invaded his citadel' (23). His citadel is his family's tradition, materially embodied in his farm. But change also brings creative energy, motion and freedom to the new generation.

This is not, however, a novel about physical perpetuation. Evolution in this novel does not progress according to mechanistic or predetermined pathways. Rather, the novel describes evolution that proceeds according to the will of the human spirit in interaction with its physical environment. In Bergson's view, creative evolution acts upon a foundation of memory (past experience) and inherited identity:

> What are we, in fact, what is our character, if not the condensation of the history that we have lived from our birth-- nay, even before our birth, since we bring with us prenatal dispositions . . . it is with our entire past, including the original bent of our soul, that we desire, will and act.[5]

We inherit both the best traits of the previous generation, and the capacity to evolve beyond those traits. Our creation, therefore, is at least partly in our own hands. Fear of death can be assuaged by the notion that one is not purely at the mercy of fate or mechanism, and that one's spiritual identity may be perpetuated beyond death. Thus, Shepherd writes that the 'shadow which creeps in on us continuously . . . can be held off by continuous creative act' (LM, 79).

Creative evolution occurs through a continually-renewed combination of intellectual and intuitive perceptions. Confronted by the lack of purpose and order (most notably, the meaninglessness of our own deaths), intellect is applied toward the aim of making sense of the world. Our intellectual capacity helps us create reassuring, if artificial, systems and categories, giving external shape to the internal experience of chaos. This ordering *(l'étendu)* keeps us from solipsism, allowing us to interact with experience outwith our own, and manage the chaos. Bergson argues that mathematical precision, patterns and rhythms do not exist outside of our perception. They cannot exist because these things rely upon repetition of past

phenomena, and repetition first requires arrest. Arrest of any kind contradicts his theory of *durée*. But although patterns are not inherent to universal life, this does not mean they are not valuable to human life.

Shepherd's perception of the natural world seems characterised by Bergsonian ideas. She writes: 'perhaps the eye imposes its own rhythm on what is only a confusion: one has to look creatively to see this mass of rock as more than jag and pinnacle' (LM, 79). Pure perception of the rock as itself, as 'jag and pinnacle', requires intuitive perception, free of intellect, free of self. This perception, and the rocks themselves, are one in the realm of *durée*. *The Weatherhouse* was concerned with this kind of perception. But to perceive rhythm in rock involves the cognitive division and organisation of a continuous stream into a pattern. This is an intellectual and self-conscious 'analysis of motion', as Christopher Butler writes.[6] The result is a pattern that describes and can be described, even if the experience of being, of motion, cannot be.

The perception of order and rhythm in chaos is a form of creation. The use of pattern and rhythm to communicate the spontaneity of events is a device refined notably by Cubist artistic creations. The perception of patterns in chaos (whether expressed as art or mathematics) lends convenience, order and stability to everyday life. These creations further human life: thus, creative evolution.

The spirit that motivates our creative perception (of the external world and our own inner being) is *élan vital*. Shepherd recognises that what we experience intuitively (*durée*)is the only absolute truth, but it is an inexpressible truth. What can be expressed is the illusion of rhythm created by ourselves, an illusion that nonetheless enables communication and order invaluable to human life. Shepherd implicitly corroborates Bergson's definition of creation, writing that 'all creation [is] matter impregnated with mind' (LM, 79-80). Spirit (*élan vital*) motivates evolution, but that is not to discount the material world. Shepherd has always accentuated the symbiotic relationship of substance and spirit, no less so in her final novel. As Shepherd writes: 'the forms must be there for the eye to see' (LM, 79).

The novel uses the house as an example of human creation that reconciles spirit and substance into a form that is both materially and symbolically representative of the self. The house is a logically-organised material structure permeated with, and expressive of, the spirit of its builder. The house as a symbol of identity is not a new idea. Janet Carsten and Stephen

Hugh-Jones explore Levi-Strauss's idea (though he was writing after Shepherd) that 'the house is an extension of the person; like an extra skin, carapace or second layer of clothes, it serves as much to reveal and display as it does to hide and protect. House, body, and mind are in continuous interaction'.[7] In one's home, the transient self is given embodiment and permanence.

It must be remembered, however, that in Bergson's view matter obstructs motion. Kolakowski identifies the paradox in Bergson's vision: 'matter is both a condition of the movement of life and a resistance to be overcome' (64). Sustained past usefulness, created orders impinge upon what is absolute and eternal: motion and human freedom. The collective urge for progress often conflicts with individual needs and desires, but will always prevail. Obsolete orders and rhythms must be transcended, in such a way that fresh and diverse perceptions of life can pursue material form, and thus create a new order out of the changing landscape.

II) THE KILGOUR AGE

A Family Tradition

Tradition is defined as: 'the handing down from generation to generation of the same customs, beliefs, etc. . . belonging to a particular country, people, family, or institution over a relatively long period of time'.[8] From a Bergsonian point of view, tradition might be more complexly defined as the degree to which humanity can impose (and pass down) physical and spiritual stability upon an inherently impermanent existence. Human traditions can be seen as an illustration of l'*étendu*: an artificial but convenient stability, carved out of inherently chaotic reality through intuitive perception and intellectual application.

The Kilgour tradition is an ordering of the world into external, communicable terms for the sake of making daily life practical and stable. The novel introduces the 'Kincardineshire Family' as having achieved perhaps the utmost degree of stability humans are capable of. It then describes how easily such stability is undermined and supplanted by the passing of time. The Kilgour tradition seems absolute and unassailable, but it is no more immutable than the Grampian mountains amongst which the tradition has evolved. In *The*

Living Mountain, Shepherd frequently contrasts her mountain imagery with descriptions of water to represent the irresistible action of time upon the most solid creations. Some characters allow themselves to swept along toward uncharted depths, others struggle to remain afloat and stable in the torrent.

Shepherd lends intimacy and credibility to her story (without sacrificing narrative detachment) by identifying Andrew's brothers as products of the 'lad o'pairts' tradition. They are successful in Scotland's sacred triumvirate of achievement: Medicine, Divinity and Classics.[9] 'In true Scottish style', and 'as became a Scot' respectively, they have created stable, successful lives of their own in the world 'beyond the Pass'. They have left home, but they have retained their accents, their connection to the natural world, and their love for storytelling (14-5). They have inherited strong minds and bodies, strong morals and work ethic from their rural home. They have combined instinctive hunger for the rich experiences of life (they are 'perfectly able to appreciate the fleshpots') and for disciplined intellectual study (13). Thus Shepherd writes (emphasising the spiritual significance of the house):

> From out of this bare house. . . had come a succession of scholars such as arises now and then in a humble Scottish home--sound men, country bred, strong in the pursuit of knowledge, upholding tradition and handing it on deeper and stronger than they found it, their lives rooted in the soil and in the past. (13)

The hill farm community is proud of its Kilgours, just as Scots proudly acknowledge their ploughman poets, croft-bred engineers and inventors. Perhaps Scottish readers feel the coming threat to the Kilgour tradition all the more sharply -- as a threat to national tradition. In any case, Shepherd comes near to entering the Scottish Renaissance debate about national identity. Are Scotland's social traditions fit to meet the challenges of the twentieth century? The chapter entitled 'A Kincardineshire Family' sincerely lauds the strength of the tradition behind Jenny. But the mere fact that the next inheritor is a precocious female in a tradition that has practised the subjugation of female ambition suggests that Shepherd argues on the side of social change. To the degree that Jenny is a symbol, she represents the future itself -- but not specifically the future of Scotland. The novel constantly reminds us, however, that Jenny comes from somewhere -- an identifiable Scottish tradition -- which will inevitably be changed as she changes. Like her uncles, like Scotland itself, she must evolve her own life between the symbolic and physical realities of the mountains (an established past) and the sea (an unformed future).

In Shepherd, as in Bergson, present identity and the changes of the future are built upon the foundation of the past. The past (in the form of inheritance and memory) is central to identity and evolution. This is evident in the novel's structure. The initial chapter contrasts sharply with the following three chapters. It is a minutely-detailed, present-tense account of an apparently mundane dinner conversation. By the end of it, both Bella and Jenny are introduced although their significance is unclear. The following three chapters of family history and memories begin to answer the mystery raised in the first. Chapter Two preludes Bella's arrival with Andrew reminiscing about Bella and her mother's death. Chapter Three outlines the Kilgour family history. Chapter Four is a narrative of Andrew's memories in the present-tense- a Bergsonian reminder that the past is present in us.

The narrator justifies her digression into history before the novel's present is even established, explicitly describing her view on the links between past and present: '[Andrew's] act was about to return upon him, searching powerfully into the lives of himself and his children. So incomplete is every action at the time of its performance' (10). Each present-day action is 'incomplete' in the sense that its full repercussions have yet to pass; it will inevitably inform and shape future actions in a vast temporal web.

Processes of Creation and Dissolution: The Life of Andrew Kilgour

Andrew Kilgour is a complicated creation: the human embodiment of the Kilgour tradition as it exists just before a new age transforms it. As Shepherd writes: 'all [his brothers] had done and become was present in his consciousness as part of the bedrock of being' (16). His identity has physical representation in the farm he inherited from his father, 'who had been a sheep farmer in a small way' (13). Andrew's identity is (in a Bergsonian sense) the result of strong inheritance and strong free will. We know Andrew largely through his past; Chapter Four-- a chapter of memories-- builds our impression of the man. Alan Freeman writes that this chapter provides

> a succession of states of mind, of memory and thought, together constructing the variable layers of the present as experienced by the character, and transmitted in story. Andrew's selfhood dissolves, re-forms, is consolidated by memory of the past and by contemplation of the present and future.[10]

He inherited the small sheep farm, and expanded it, building it into a successful, respected enterprise. Andrew inherited his father's store of knowledge, and added to it through experience and study. He inherited the house itself, and constructed a new wing (16). When his father died, Andrew took his father's chair but kept his old position at the table so that he might watch the weather as he had always done (25). These are actions of practical purpose, heavy with symbolic meaning, that illustrate Andrew's process of self-creation.

As Bella anxiously notes, Andrew exists on three levels: memory, man and 'a timeless and impersonal idea', embodying a kind of trinity (33). He is comprised of his own memories (as Bella's identity is informed by her memories of Andrew). Andrew's own physical form is the material embodiment of his past experiences and his spirit (what Bergson would call *élan vital*). Similarly, the opposition between I LABOUR and I AM represents a division of substance from spirit that causes tension in this novel, but not in Andrew (45). Andrew's tradition is a result of hard labour that entwines his spiritual being with the physical landscape on all sides of him: '[I]t had bogged Andrew and drenched him, scorched, numbed him with cold, tested his endurance, memory and skill' (20). As Watson writes: 'work can have its rhythms, its joys, and its spiritual release'.[11] 'Labour' in the sense used above, need not mean manual work specifically, it may refer to the act of engaging one's self with inert matter for the purpose of carving out a stable existence.

As Bella discovers in the world beyond the farm, one cannot truly 'be' if one lacks interaction with the physical world. On the other hand, 'labour' with physical matter cannot be fulfilling unless some creative spirit motivates the interaction. Thus the 'timeless and impersonal idea' that Bella thinks of is Andrew's creative spirit, stemming from the 'lad o'pairts' tradition that has driven the entire Kilgour family to success.

Andrew is best understood through his relationship with his physical surroundings. The forces which contributed to the evolution and identity of the man have likewise contributed to the evolution of the farm as it exists in his generation, such that the two are intertwined in being, as we saw above. Andrew's evolved identity is 'thirled' to the land, not in the Darwinian physical sense, but in a Bergsonian sense, where physical and spiritual are one (25). His relationship with the land is described as 'beyond all covenant', implying a spiritual aspect (20). A covenant is 'a central biblical metaphor for the relationship between God and his people', usually referring to the promise God made the Israelites if they would

worship him alone.'[12] One might say that Andrew is beyond the need for such a promise because he is actually at one with the land: '[A] large part of [Andrew's] nature was so interpenetrated with its nature that apart from it he would have lost reality' (20). The spiritual aspect to Andrew's relationship with the land is also evident in the ritual importance implied in the daily act of 'rais[ing] his eyes in the old way to scan the skies' (25). Equivalent to prayer, it indicates that Andrew's relationship with the natural world transcends the physical. The physical world has acted upon Andrew, but Andrew can likewise claim to have acted upon the physical world. The result has been a life of spiritual and physical richness; Andrew: 'possess[es] abundantly the things that most men strive for in life-- honour, love, health, material goods, power over others' (26). For other characters, however, Boggiewalls represents a very different reality.

Rituals lend stability to our inner experience of life, enabling spiritual peace. Ironically, this particular ritual (lifting his eyes to watch the weather) also signals Andrew's acute awareness of the instability of his natural environment. This reveals the source of Andrew's power. He does not labour under the delusion of absolute control. Rather, he combines flexible adaptability with 'glad, grateful' love for his environment (23). Even the weather's changeable nature is intertwined with his stable self (23). Such is Andrew's complexity that he can live a happy, well-ordered life, whilst remaining (at least subconsciously) aware of the forces of change that drive the universe. He is the aggregate, physical realisation of all the quests of Shepherd's heroines thus far. His quest, however, is for permanence. Like Shepherd's other characters, Andrew's quest becomes a process of understanding the nature of his desire.

Andrew is vulnerable to the same fears and hubris that all others are vulnerable to. He wants to believe that his life is as stable as he believes the hills ('an eternal. . . reality' he thinks) to be (16). The use of the term 'covenant' also forecasts an ambiguous relationship with higher powers, susceptible to dangerous delusions. Andrew's relationship with the land, for all its worthiness, is 'beyond' (and 'without') covenant in the sense that earth will not be absolutely bound by any human agreement or restraint (20). To think otherwise would be for Andrew to place himself on a level with God. Andrew very occasionally allows himself the weakness of this delusion: 'He had thought once that Bess was as much of the established order of life as the great crag on Clochnaben, and as indestructible' (24). Within himself, Andrew knows he

has no guarantee of peace, harmony, immortality, nor even any measure of absolute control over his environment. But accepting that reality on a practical level is more difficult.

References to Macbeth and Montrose (leader of the Covenanters) demonstrate the effects of time in human (as opposed to geological, meteorological) terms. Like wind and rain, these powerful men 'came over the passes there like . . .sheep dog[s]. Like my father's old Bess' (28). They brought change in their wake with the same certainty that Bess's arrival in the valley signalled her master's arrival six hours behind her (24). Even Montrose and Macbeth were defeated in their turn (no more immortal than mere sheep dogs), giving way to new generations of warriors. Bess died and was replaced by her progeny; similarly, 'the great crag changed shape behind them and new peaks came into view' (24). Even mountains offer only an illusion of stasis, easily surpassed by the enduring force of change itself. This is beautifully depicted by a section in *The Living Mountain* in which the Cairngorm mountains are pictured as a ship tossed in a storm, weather and water serving again as Shepherd's favourite symbols of change:

> I watched. . . the Cairngorm mass eddy and sink and rise (as it seemed) like a tossed wreck on a yellow sea. Sky and the wrack of precipice and overhang were confounded together. Now a spar, not a mast, just recognisable as a buttress or a cornice, tossed for a moment on the boiling sea of cloud. Then the sea closed on it, to open again with another glimpse of mounting spars-- a shape drove its way for a moment through the smother, and was drawn under by the vicious swirl. (LM, 27-8)

The novel is similarly concerned with describing the effects of wind, weather and sea (in human form) upon the mountain-stability of the Kilgour tradition, embodied in the life and farm of Andrew.

Sacrifice and Resentment in the Community

Shepherd is consistent in her view that one's perspective defines one's reality. Andrew's tradition is clearly worthy of respect and admiration, but it does represent different realities for different individuals. In Bergsonian terms, *l'étendu* is created by artificially dividing the perpetually-flowing stream of *durée*. Division inevitably results in hierarchy due to the relative perspectives of individuals. Thus, although Andrew's tradition is compassionate and creative, it also has the capacity to be repressive and destructive.

To the degree that Andrew has mastered his physical environment, he has also mastered the human environment. He holds 'dominion . . . over his neighbours' and lays down just laws (26). The word 'power' occurs frequently, hinting that relationships in the community are more complicated than they might appear. Andrew's life 'had its own dignity, and power, and joy. . . [he] possess[es] abundantly the things that most men strive for in life--honour, love, health, material goods, power over others' (26). Andrew (who has lost his wife and only heir) generously raises Durno's daughter and Milly's daughter as his own. He thus wins two potential heirs, while Milly and Durno are left without inheritors of their own, and without recourse. Andrew's might have been 'the encompassing mind that gave the country and its people significance,' but this implies the people are stripped of their own significance (27).

In 1932 (the year before *A Pass in the Grampians* was published) Hugh MacDiarmid wrote a poem titled 'On Any Scottish Laird';

> Your land? You fool, it hauds nae beast
> Or bird or root or tree or weed
> If they kent you as owner but
> 'Ud leave it empty as your heid.[13]

Shepherd may well have known of it. The poem demonstrates the danger of Andrew's position. Andrew does not maliciously or deliberately exercise power over the community. He is aware of his success only as a fact: 'proud. . . in a genial open fashion, knowing [his] achievement good and quite beyond the need of boasting' (14). But there are hints that some characters feel stripped of their own identities and energies in subservience to the 'Lairdie'.

The metaphor of a dam aptly describes Andrew's tradition, in accord with Shepherd's frequent metaphorical imagery of water and flood. Although well-intended, dams represent passive, but colossal power to arrest the flow of hundreds of streams, forcing them to merge anonymously in an apparently serene reservoir. All the while, the pressure of perpetual motion is caught and held within the rigid container. Bergson predicts the inevitable: 'In vain we force the living into this or that one of our moulds. All the moulds crack. They are too narrow, above all too rigid, for what we try to put into them.'[14] The Durnos and the novel's women are those most affected by the power of the Kilgour tradition.

Durno perceives that both his freedom and his name have been appropriated by Andrew. The 'two-roomed cottage on the edge of a moorland' represents the individuals

within, living on the periphery of a stable tradition. Durno's freedom has been sacrificed to the Kilgours not merely by way of employment, but through the dubious circumstances of his wife's death which deprived him of his daughter, his only inheritor. Alison articulates his loss: 'We're auld bodies, and we've none belonging us' (44).

Durno's way of life is, moreover, as threatened as Andrew's. Motorcars are making the shepherd obsolete. The shepherd has always symbolised freedom from the physical, social, even moral law. Durno, however, lives under the Kilgour law. He takes vicarious delight in creatures that can live outside the established codes: animals and children. He likewise delights in Bella's attack on the Kilgour dominance, for as Barney notes, 'the code just doesn't exist for you. No principles. No prearranged scale of values. No manners. The egoist simple and supreme' (50). Durno feels fatherly pride in his daughter, so free and able to undermine the Kilgour tradition: 'You'll nae cow yon one in a hurry, the Laird'll nae get her over his knee to whack her hurdies' (43). But Bella believes (and desires) Andrew to be her father, further torturing Durno. Durno faces both the extinction of his name, and his occupation, his spiritual and physical identity. Unsurprisingly, he resents anything that perpetuates the Kilgour tradition, despite that he could not exist without it. Though he would challenge the tradition, he is also a product of it.

III) THE BEGINNINGS OF CHANGE

The Developing Female Line: 'Half-Tamed by Men'

There are two lines of evolution in this novel, the most obvious being the Kilgour tradition. But by tracing the lives of Alison Durno, Milly, Mary, and Bella a new line can be identified, though not one defined or inherited by blood. If Jenny (representing the future) has for her metaphorical 'father' the patriarchal Kilgour tradition, then her 'mother' might be read as this line of women. The idea of metaphorical parentage is given credence in the poem quoted at the start of this chapter. In Jenny, this developing line will merge with the Kilgour tradition to define itself anew, in accord with the demands and desires of a new era.

When the Kilgour brothers return to thank Andrew for his 'sacrifices', he reflects that his lifestyle was likewise a chosen one (25). Several women in the novel, however, made

great sacrifices without choice or gratitude. The family's attitude toward any of the sons' ambitions is: 'It's an inherited attribute and we are bid not to quench the spirit' (15). But the women's spirit, it appears, must be quenched in order to 'give room' to male ambition (25).

Alison Durno is the oldest female generation in the novel (being seventy, like Andrew). Her role is parallel to that of many women in nineteenth-century fiction: to wait in silence.

> [She had a] face as of one who had watched too long and too earnestly the wide emptiness of moor and the terrible mountains, expecting an event that did not come. . . though she knew that [her brother] tormented her with deliberation, she had no resentment in her heart, but waited quietly for what would come (3-4).

Alison suffers from a double subjugation of spirit (by class and sex) resulting in social isolation which, by the end, is transformed into religious fanaticism. She is a martyr who never had a chance to escape. She is also, however, a sort of prophet who knows that the Kilgour tradition cannot last forever. She, too, looks toward the mountain pass for the coming changes. Liberation is beyond Alison's individual power and probably beyond her time. Her individual story is tragic, but her 'life-bitten' face has 'a singular purity', like a saint sure of salvation despite deprivation (3). She 'seemed to be saying Ye know not the hour', anticipating the demise of the male tradition with enforced passivity (4).

Jenny's mother, Milly, is the next generation of women in the developing female tradition described by this novel. Another tragic victim, Milly is stripped of all identity by the Kilgour patriarchy-- even the identity of mother, for Andrew virtually adopts Jenny to replace his own lost son. The most memorable description of Milly accentuates her anonymity:

> Jenny's mother, Mrs. William Kilgour, in her eternal grey jersey-- this year's, last year's, sometime's, the jersey never changed-- thrust back the wisp of hair that straggled on her shoulder. She had given up caring for her appearance, her hands were ingrained with black, and rough as graters (31).

Her daughter feels 'sweet pity for the spoilt life' of a fawn, but she never thinks to pity her own mother (30). Significantly, Milly serves as Andrew's housekeeper. Without a house of her own, 'Jenny's mother, Mrs. William Kilgour' has sacrificed her spiritual identity and physical life (represented by her appearance) to aid in perpetuating Andrew's tradition. She is an 'eternal grey' non-entity (31). Andrew looks at his farm and sees it as a place where every energy has a purpose, but is blind to the fact he has helped to deprive his very daughter of any purpose whatsoever (74).

Milly, however, is an essential link in the developing female tradition in two ways: she gave birth to a new female generation in Jenny. She also enabled Mary's physical escape, exposing the female line to a new set of circumstances beyond the farm. Unimaginative Milly merely hopes for the best future she can imagine for Jenny: a life of domestic subjugation and propriety in a prosperous male tradition.

When Andrew's mother died, Mary was 'compelled to drop [her studies]' so that Andrew would have someone 'to keep his house, to milk and cook, feed beasts, rear poultry' (16). Mary's ambitions were secondary to those of her brothers, and the 'quenching of her spirit' was indeed bid by the patriarchal tradition into which she was born. When she lived on the farm, she wanted nothing more than to escape. She suffered the double hardship of having her ambitions thwarted, combined with the regular hardships of Scottish rural life. Milly's sacrifice allowed Mary to build a relatively successful urban life in London. London does not, however, sit like 'the most supple of garments' upon Mary's shoulders (19). She fails to entwine her inner being with London the way that Andrew has with his farm, largely because the Kilgour tradition did not provide her with the means. Mary's printing-house is mentioned-- her means of physical survival-- but not her actual home. She is 'too busy' in London to seek or desire love (spiritual and emotional fulfilment) (30). Furthermore, although London was a centre of modernist intellectual activity, Mary does not engage intellectually with London as she might have done had she been allowed to finish her education. Andrew 'knows a mortal lot' about sheep farming, but Mary can't 'make head nor tail' of the modernist writing that she types up in her printing-house (20, 30). There has been no exchange of being between Mary and London. In Bergsonian terms, Mary has failed to evolve a life, an identity for herself.

Mary, like many emigrant Scots, is terrified and unable to evolve spiritual and emotional certainty in an untamed wilderness. Watson writes of the Kailyard novels: 'In a time of great industrial, social and intellectual ferment, urban Scots and Scots abroad bought these books in their tens of thousands, seeking the stabilities of a . . . fixed and essentially rural past'.[15] Mary similarly transforms her homeland into an idealised, static Eden: 'She was indeed sentimental over her place and her people' (58). But Mary rejected the life at Boggiewalls years ago. The progress of the farm is irrelevant to her, so long as it does not

disappear: 'I hope it may go on unchanged for ever', she tells Gib (52). From Mary's perspective, Boggiewalls can never be anything but the embodiment of a Kailyard novel.

Andrew belongs to his hill farm for as long as it lasts. He fears death, but his fear is marked by sad acceptance and forgivable delusions of eternality. Mary is terrified of facing the knowledge that she belongs nowhere: 'Mary did not think these things, but felt them, deeply, below consciousness, where the dark tides run that have danger and glory in their running' (37). These 'dark tides' might represent the underlying chaos of existence, threatening her borrowed peace. She imagines: 'Vanish[ing] into a darkness too profound to fathom. As though one might drop through and go on falling without end' (52). Her fragile stability is not sufficient to defend against the 'pure irrational terror' (106). Mary defends against fear with delusions of arrogant superiority threatening violence. In the chapter entitled 'The Unsheathed Claw' she thinks:

> . . . my remoter ancestors were not exactly tranquil. If they had hated anyone's person and presence as I do Bella's, they'd have made short work of his house. Burned it out, himself out or in as his luck happened. His wife fled or dying in her agony, his daughter falling on the spears. But to-day we are civilized. . . I can't purge my beloved land of Bella's house by means of fire. How much wiser and better if I could. . .The Chosen People should possess the land (81).

Mary-- like Ellen Falconer of *The Weatherhouse*-- both half-recognises but desperately needs her own delusions. She also needs Jenny-- her last chance to ward off her terror of 'an alien and incomprehensible future' (106).

Mary represents the dangers of a repressed, calcified and, therefore, divided experience of life. Her return across the Pass signals that she is moving backward in time, fearful of forward progress. By showing Boggiewalls through Mary's eyes, Shepherd demonstrates the need for change. Kolakowksi describes Bergson's notion that 'it takes a creative emotion to open one's self to mankind and to abandon the way of life in which we are capable of loving some people only by hating others' (76). It is up to Jenny to open herself to creative interaction with external realities.

Alison, Milly and Mary suffered a good deal through the slow evolution away from the patriarchal tradition. The Kilgour tradition must take much of the blame for their wasted lives, having denied them the freedom and the skills necessary for more purposeful evolution. But this does not diminish their legacy. While the Pass is much akin to the Pillars of Hercules

in *The Quarry Wood*, there is a subtle difference. The Pillars of Hercules refer to a male-dominated classical world, implying that the world beyond will be a patriarchal one as well. The mountain pass is inherently without gender. Although once dominated by male heroes like Macbeth and Montrose, it has been feminised by Bella's and Mary's crossing, making Jenny's own journey somewhat easier. Unfortunately, these women fixate on Jenny as the trophy of their own battles for survival. They actually engage in controlling behaviour that threatens her freedom, rather than helps her win it. But as Bergson wrote, 'life is 'nonetheless mutually incompatible and antagonistic. So the discord. . . will go on'.[16] Provided Jenny is brave enough to go her own way, however, she can benefit from this foundation of female beginnings combined with the advantages of the older Kilgour tradition itself, both of which are stimulated by the great changes of the modern age.

Fire and Laughter: Signs of Change

Andrew, like other characters, looks to Jenny for some insurance regarding the future of his tradition. Her life has been one with his; Andrew has raised her to know and love her environment. When Durno voices his fatalistic view that: 'I'm like to die contented in the same station of life whereunto I was born', Jenny's response indicates her naïveté: 'Well, I suppose we all do that. . . Except the people you read about in the newspapers' (21). Newspapers, as Butler notes, were often used in modernism as an analogy for the chaotic motion of life upon which no master narrative can be imposed.[17] Jenny has been protected from this chaos, but her words anticipate the intrusion and impact of a woman who is 'in the newspapers' (39).

There are early signs of a need for adaptation, both in terms of Jenny's future and the future of Andrew's farm. The first such sign is laughter. Character interaction in the novel does seem occasionally stilted and unnatural, contrasting with Shepherd's usual sensitivity to the subtleties of human relations. This is partly caused by the narrator's heavy emphasis on laughter. Bella's hearty laughter at the world and at herself, and Jenny's laughing audacity and quick delight both seem overemphasised to the point of caricature. No doubt Shepherd is communicating exuberance. But the novel's symbolic narrative occasionally takes precedence over the surface narrative; laughter perhaps has a deeper meaning.

In *Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic* (1911), Bergson writes: 'Begotten of real life and akin to art, should [comedy] not also have something of its own to

tell about art and life?'.[18] Laughter, writes Bergson, confirms our humanity in two ways. Laughter encourages adaptation through its power to humiliate, but it also protects the stability we have adapted.

We laugh, says Bergson, when humanity resembles lifeless, rigid, or mechanised, matter: non-being. Concern regarding the mechanisation of humanity was certainly not unique to Shepherd or Bergson in modernism. Thus Bergson says that we laugh when we see someone trip and fall because the person is like a robot, walking without perceiving or adapting to whatever made him trip. Bergson writes about 'a certain rigidity of body, mind and character, that society would like to get rid of in order to obtain from its members the greatest possible degree of elasticity and sociability. This rigidity is the comic, and laughter is its corrective'.[19] Comedy frequently uses repetition to draw attention to the mechanistic aspects of life. Masks, puppets and caricature (referred to in *A Pass in the Grampians*) work on this basis.[20] The comic artist (like other artists) draws aside the veil of our everyday perceptions, but instead of showing 'truth', he identifies those features or patterns which we rely upon in everyday life, and magnifies them. We laugh at our own dependence, and thereby effect a kind of mini-adaptation by reminding ourselves not to live too automatically. Thus, Jenny laughs at the idea that Andrew could tell Bella what kind of house to build (11). Jenny mocks the once-accepted notion that a father could dictate his daughter's behaviour, and thereby demands change. When Mary wanted to go to London, Andrew 'let her go her own way', implying he could have stopped her, but there will be no stopping Jenny (16).

In laughing at our own inflexibility, we detach ourselves emotionally from the object of our laughter. Empathy would remind us of our own reliance upon the rigid patterns (*l'étendu*) which the comic pokes fun at- patterns which are necessary to living. Thus, if we took emotional interest in the object of ridicule or imagine ourselves in their position, we would not find the spectacle amusing, but tragic.[21] Lang Leeb of *The Weatherhouse*, for instance, has 'an intelligent indifference to life', and finds perpetual amusement in the dramas around her (13). She sees life as comedy because 'she wasn't in the habit of caring' (197). As Bergson continues: 'look upon life as a disinterested spectator: many a drama will turn into a comedy'. Lang Leeb's philosophy is perhaps not coincidentally similar: 'Life is an entertainment hard to beat when one's affections are not engaged' (7). When Lang Leeb takes emotional interest in her dying daughter, she becomes inconsolable (192).

A Pass in the Grampians, though sad, is not a tragedy. This is partly because of the narrator's detachment from events. Most characters are too engrossed with their own lives to commiserate or care about others. To 'feel the quickening that is love, this is beyond her credence' Mary reflects (recalling Martha's self-absorption) (105). Although laughter can be a positive force, characters frequently laugh to avoid recognition of the flaws in their own identities. Mary finds smug, detached amusement in Bella's 'barbarianism' (39). Bella and Jenny both communicate their self-centredness (as well as spontaneity) through laughter. In Chapter Thirteen, the narrator writes that 'the hard core of herself in Jenny's being remained inaccessible', although she was still 'beguiled into sallies of gaiety' (109). Jenny's laughter is unhindered by emotional coldness, whilst accompanying her need and desire for change. Emotional neglect (often communicated through laughter) in the novel is abundant, and has tragic results. The emphasis on laughter in *A Pass in the Grampians* does more than communicate sheer exuberance. It communicates the need both for flexible adaptation to a changing world, and it communicates the divides between individuals (thus, the need for real empathic human interaction). In 'Song of the Barley By Night', Shepherd describes 'the flicker of wayward and glancing laughter, The wanton grace of the sea', relating laughter to the sea (a familiar symbol for fluidity, change). Laughter in this novel serves the functions that Bergson ascribes to it: re-affirming humanity by reminding characters of the need for adaptation, and furthering the 'general utilitarian aims' by helping characters defend the stability of their created identities.[22]

Fire, like laughter, is a central image throughout Shepherd's writing as a symbol of the spirit of creative energy and liberation through the ages. In her poem, 'Fires', she writes:

> Driving the stars on the crest of its own commotion,
> To the little leaping flame that our own hands kindled'
> . . . And an older fire than the hearth-fires wakes from sleeping.[23]

Fire is fuelled, as in *The Weatherhouse*, by wind (source of change). In *A Pass in the Grampians*, the scene in which Andrew's brush fire is blown out of control by opposing winds is of pivotal importance. Like water, fire can be temporarily harnessed to serve human need, but it is ultimately ungovernable. Like water, fire has material form, but this form is motion. In Bergsonian terms, 'movement is the real and original stuff the world is made of', as Kolakowski writes (45). Thus, fire might be seen as a physical embodiment of *élan vital*: the

force which was given material form in the creation of the cosmos and our own human form. This force is likewise that which impels our own creations. Wind often blows the fire into being, as in *The Weatherhouse*. And, in *A Pass in the Grampians*, the narrator writes that 'the dawn wind, high on that mountain pass, [blows] the white flame of living to a fury in her soul' (66).

Opposing and unexpected winds from over the Pass blow Andrew's fire out of control, threatening his plantation. Fire is feminised here: 'not the kitchen wench they usually made of her, but a free spirit' (18). The free-burning flames symbolise women's escape from domestic subjugation, and that liberation must signal the end of his carefully-established life. Jenny and Andrew fight the fire, but in the struggle 'consciousness of selfhood, and all the intricate coils of living' dissolve into oneness with 'fire, earth, space, the wind' (18-9). It is Jenny's first experience of the wellspring of the life of the cosmos and everything within it, but also that which has the power to destroy and submerge the individual. Jenny might be said to have experienced what Bergson called *durée*, initiating her own creative evolution. Jenny desires to experience more of the world beyond the Pass which, like herself, is blown by unpredictable, unfamiliar winds. She must eventually-- as Kilgours before her have done-- 'master and direct the blaze', but she wants first to 'lick up the world in [her] progress' (66).

For Andrew, the fire represents the limits of his control over the environment. 'Grand-dad couldn't know there would be two opposite winds at the same time, could he?' asks Jenny (20). The fire reminds him that he cannot 'ensure' his granddaughter's happiness (17). His stable life is indeed 'without covenant.' There is further Biblical reference when we are told (at least five times) that Andrew is seventy years old (10, 19). Seventy is the Biblical allotment of years, hinting at the end of Andrew's era. During the fire scene, usually-tame elementals are 'freed from accepted logic', rousing Andrew's fear of death.[24] When Jenny suggests that there is room in Kincardineshire for more houses and more people, her grandfather tells her 'Twould be the end of us, my lass' (23). Jenny-- one with her grandfather in many ways-- intuits his fear: 'Graves and things' (23). But her face is 'full of mischief', implying she does not yet have any real fear or understanding of death (23). There is sympathy between these two generations, for Andrew recalls his own youth when 'the leagues of undiscovered country [were]. . . blue and incredible as talk of death' (24).

Andrew leaves Jenny responsible for guarding the fire herself, symbolic of his desire that she carry on in his footsteps. Unlike Mary and Bella, he realises that it is not enough to hand down his way of life, he must hand down the means for adapting it. Andrew long ago adapted his own inheritance to the substance and spirit of the environment around him. That environment has changed, and Jenny must adapt her inherited tradition to the new environment. Most drastically, the patriarchal tradition must be adapted to allow for its next inheritor: a 'lass o'pairts'. In scenes like the above Andrew, despite his fears, gives Jenny leave to adapt his tradition in her own way. Andrew himself is incapable of questioning the merit of his tradition, but understands that the next generation has no choice but to do so.

The fire anticipates Bella's arrival, and the changes that accompany a character very strongly connected with revolutionary ideas. Jenny asks, at the end of the chapter, 'Who do you think will come by it next?', bounding ahead 'racing the sheep dogs' (28). Just as the wildfire excites Jenny and frightens Andrew, so will Bella excite Jenny and cause Andrew anxiety. Bella represents different things for each. This explains the chapter paradoxically entitled: 'Bella Horrida Bella'. Bella has a paradoxical reality: beautiful to some and horrible to others. And of course, Bella has a view of herself, complete with her own reasons for returning across the Pass to the Kilgour farm.

Bella's Childhood and Escape

Bella's disruptive return to the valley adds a link to the novel's evolving chain of female development. She makes an impact upon Jenny's evolution, and the evolution of the farm, though her own evolution is not what she had anticipated. Bella and Mary were raised virtually as sisters; they are in many ways alter-egos (one of many paired identities in the novel). But Bella was an orphan of ambiguous parentage, adding a twist to the question of inherited identity. Like Alison, Milly and Mary, Bella suffered the effects of being female within a patriarchal tradition. But although the Kilgour tradition may have claimed her childhood, Bella could not lay claim to the tradition herself. Both Mary and Bella escape to what they had thought would be a world of freedom beyond the farm. Both discover that exclusion and repression exist everywhere. They return with their own agendas and delusions. Mary imagines she had a happy life at the Kilgour farm; Bella imagines she has been cheated of her rightful place in the Kilgour tradition. Mary's ambitions were thwarted; Bella believes

her very identity to have been thwarted. Mary returns seeking spiritual fulfilment; Bella returns seeking physical confirmation of her identity -- a place to belong.

Bella's rambunctious personality may have developed in reaction to the knowledge that she could never belong. In any case, Bella never fitted the Kilgour mould. The repression of Bella's identity is communicated through her memory of the stick shed- quite different from Mary's memory of the same scene (54). Bella remembers cleaning potatoes to the 'steady rhythm' of Bill's axe as he cut kindling (46). The rhythmic sound of chopping and the tedious labour itself shows that farm life can resemble mechanised factory work- soulless and endless. The phrase 'on and on' is repeated three times, and Bella is 'silent from a sense of powerlessness and despair' (46). Bella sees herself as the 'one spot of discontent' in the shed (46). Labour that Andrew views as essential to spiritual fulfilment, Bella perceives as mechanistic toil that represses her natural instincts. Labour with inert matter, as we saw above, is essential to creation. But without motivating spirit, the labour is indeed merely dull and unredeeming. Bella offers an inverted view of the characteristics usually associated with urban and rural life. Somewhat ironically, she perceives rural life as mechanistic and repressive, and escapes to the city for 'the sparkle of busy intercourse, the headlong rapture of creation' (34). Bella reminds us again that reality is but a matter of perspective.

Bella has cut whatever material ties she had and escaped, creating an impressive life for herself marked by uninhibited spiritual freedom from order, gentility, and physical labour. Her escape required a tremendous assertion of ego. Mary relies on a sentimentalised version of the Kilgour tradition for some sort of borrowed stability; Bella relies upon the stability of her weighty ego, having been forced to reject anything more solid in order to win her spiritual freedom. She has changed her name, symbolic of her self-created persona. Her name is without tradition or implied ancestry: 'I'm Dorabel Cassidy,' she insists. Her invented name, like her bungalow, is 'a defiant self-justification' (34). 'You can chuck all this stuff about the family tree', she insists (38). She cannot, however, escape her memories (as the above passage implies), or her biological inheritance. Despite Bella's insistence that she is her own creation, biologically, she is not. Dr. Parks says of Bella: 'she needs no ancestry', but she has ancestry (38). As John Kilgour says of her: 'There's roots to that' (53). Bella's roots sprout from deep within the Kilgour landscape (if not within the Kilgour clan itself).

In her escape and return, Bella bears parallels to Elise Mütze of Willa Muir's *Imagined Corners*, but Bella's return to the Kilgour farm is motivated by something quite different. Although free, Bella does not belong anywhere. She returns to gloat. On a deeper level, however, she returns to the hill farm because her life is incomplete. Her return is motivated by a somewhat ironic quest (given her reasons for leaving) to claim her physical roots: a home, and (despite her insistence to the contrary) what she wants to believe is her real name: Kilgour.

IV) THE FRENZY OF BATTLE AND CREATION

Bella as an Embodiment of Élan vital

Bella likes to imagine that she embodies a way of life approximating *élan vital.* She effectively convinces several characters of this, who perceive her variously depending upon the effect she will bear upon their own lives. Arriving just after the wildfire scene, Bella's car and her clothes are scarlet and mustard- the colours of flame. In truth, Bella more resembles wind than flame: an unpredictable force causing change. Her existence can only be perceived by its effect; her restless being has no material embodiment itself. Her influence upon the community is more akin to the effect of wind upon fire (as seen in the Chapter Four), than fire itself. The narrator herself undermines the flame analogy by comparing Bella to 'a petrol pump' (72). Bella's role in the novel is more as fuel for flame than flame itself. When Bella walks into the Kilgour home, 'its tranquil air went quite away. . . the wood fire crackled' (32). She is an unpredictable and uncontrollable force in the way that *durée* (fuelled by *élan vital)* is. Just as Andrew could not control the winds that blew the fire he started out of control, Andrew cannot control Bella's whim to build a pink-turreted bungalow, though he raised her.

Thus, Andrew reflects upon 'Bella's ungoverned and blatant nature, her terrible vitality. . . The demons of speed and din . . . the dreadful tides of a new and incomprehensible life' (28). From his perspective, Bella indeed embodies something akin to *élan vital*: a force of change that threatens his established way of life. Barney's perception of her perhaps most accurately captures her true ambiguity (to incur both creation and destruction). He is seized by a passion of love and hate for Bella; seeing her as a liberating creative spirit, though she

causes 'dark urgent horror' within him (61). She represents a dangerous power that threatens to swamp his self-importance; and yet she is necessary to his art and to his own half-hearted rebellion against tradition (50). Finally, Jenny's perception of Bella constitutes more of a spiritual experience than an everyday human relationship: 'All was natural, as though life flowered so and in no other way; and fleeting and unregretted as a flower, the moment passed' (60). It is interesting that in Bella's company, Jenny (whose past is strong within her) finds herself forgetting both near and distant past in full engagement with the present: 'She couldn't exactly recollect what they had done in the interval . . . Nothing was quite clear, but everything was being said, an eternal re-pursuit of meaning' (61). This demonstrates clearly that -- for Jenny -- Bella embodies all the characteristics of what Bergson would call *élan vital*. Bella allows Jenny to escape the weight of her own past and live fully in the moment.

Desire for Physical Representation: Bella's Battle of Creation

The human creative spirit, in Bergson's theory of evolution, pursues material form. While others perceive Bella as representing the spirit of change, this disembodied spirit itself seeks material embodiment. Bergson writes of *durée*: 'it is enough that. . . in recalling [former states], it does not need to set them alongside its actual state as one point alongside another, but forms both the past and the present into an organic whole'.[25] Bella is far from representing organic unity. Although other characters see her as representing fluid, perpetual and careless (often destructive) motion through time, Bella is clearly desperate for concrete representation and unification of the various states of her life. The representation is sparse and disjointed. There are no pictures of her as a child: 'If they were ever to ask me,' Bella says 'I'd have to say-- Oh, I'd say, Childhood unmentionable. All records suppressed' (49). Her current life seems represented only by pictures: an abundant collage of newspaper 'bitties' and photographs, without form or order (4). She exists in the world (quite distinct, in her view, from Boggiewalls) as a disembodied radio voice, whose creation is dependent upon the response of an anonymous audience. She has no children, no house (yet), no real physical dimension to her life (past, present or future).

Although insistent that she is content simply 'to be', a close look at Bella's life reveals that she seeks more: namely, a stable physical existence in a physical environment. Her monstrous appetite for both food and people indicates, as Andrew intuits, 'not greed, but need'

(9). Similarly, her bright clothing calls attention to her physical being with exultation, but perhaps desperation as well. Most importantly, however, Bella believes that she can carve out a physical home for herself in the landscape and tradition that she long ago rejected. Thus, she has a deep, submerged longing 'to win [Andrew's] approbation. . . and in time his acknowledgement' both for reasons of pride and so that she might finally belong to a stable, physical tradition (35). She betrays this longing to Barney: 'I bet you're fond of your family. . . So'm I, you know. Of these Kilgours, I mean' (48). There is another subtle hint of her intentions in the chapter entitled 'Fatherhood'. Andrew warns Bella: 'You'll get a name to yourself, Bella, with these goings-on' (98). There is a double meaning to his words: 'a name', in Andrew's sense, means a bad reputation. But, having a name to yourself in this novel also implies membership in a stable tradition, the advantages of inherited identity- all that Bella claims to be independent of. Her response, however, is telling: 'What better could I wish?' (98).

The leitmotif of battle runs through this novel, beginning with mention of Macbeth and Montrose. Likewise, Andrew describes his family's farming tradition as a battle against the 'old antagonist Nature':

> one of those centuries-long battles between man and elemental forces that go to make an age. As man's knowledge of the elemental forces grows, he alters the weapons and mode of attack by which he compels the universe to yield him what he wants; and a new age begins. . . through countless generations they had fought such a battle as had brought them not only the means of livelihood, but a respect and love for the antagonist they had come to know so well (26).

Bella also arrives in the valley in a speeding, loud motorcar, flying the 'scarlet' flag and bent upon war (31). To Jenny, the car represents delirious motion (characteristic of *durée).* 'She wanted the full-blooded life that Dorabel held out' (65). Without undermining the validity of Jenny's perspective, it may be seen that the car simultaneously hints at the mechanical and contrived nature of Bella's creative aspirations. Alan Freeman describes her 'predatorial instincts', writing that she 'journeys with the intention of severing connections'.[26] Andrew, whom she plans to conquer, is Bella's nemesis. He possesses everything that she has been unable to achieve for herself: a more or less stable, material reality achieved through some degree of control over the natural world. The language with which he is described reveals the source of her resentful hate: 'Solid -- that was the word . . . Bella had the sense of his solidity

as not a physical attribute: as though all that he stood for-- his rocklike stability, industry and honour -- had solidified . . . a solid body . . . with an impact of such force and hardness that she recoiled' (33).

The weapons with which she wages war on the Kilgour tradition clearly come from a modernist arsenal which has proved successful at undermining stability in the world beyond the Pass: her car, wine, a jazz-playing gramophone, newspapers-- all are aspects of a riotous, Dionysian hedonism utterly at odds with anything stable. Art, architecture and dance comprise the specific means whereby she attempts to impose her physical presence on the valley. These things shape the evolution of the community, giving form to Shepherd's philosophical discussion of evolution. It is interesting that the native community does not take well to the changes she introduces: 'No one saluted the glad spontaneous gaiety of the action' (73).

The garish house that Bella is building is her first assault upon the tradition that disembodied and disempowered her. It is her attempt to impose the physical reality of Dorabel Cassidy upon the Kilgour community. Carsten and Hugh-Jones write, paraphrasing Levi-Strauss, that: 'If the house is an extension of the person, it is also an extension of the self'.[27] Bella builds her house in view of Andrew's land as an affront to his power, but the proximity indicates her yearning for the stability and prestige embodied in the Kilgour landscape and name. It is significant that the house is an empty shell in the process of being constructed: an unidentifiable pile of rubble. The pink turrets and cheap materials represent the structure of Bella's own identity: built of fluff and ego. But it must be remembered that she is having to start from scratch, having been deprived of any pre-existing foundation (in physical or spiritual terms) whatsoever. The image she has of the house is like the image she has of herself: flamboyant, colourful, eccentric, but lacking material reality in time and space. When she is given a material reality by virtue of discovering her true physical/biological foundations (symbolically anticipated when she discovers Durno lurking inside her unfinished house), she destroys the fanciful house in the same way that her own prideful fancy has been destroyed.

Perspectives and Realities: Modern Art in the Novel

Barney is Shepherd's parody of a modernist artist through whom the novel enacts a subtle dialogue about modern art, further engaging with the broad context of events beyond the novel's setting. He has been plucked up by Bella in the middle of his sketching holiday: 'Dorabel had not been there a day before she scooped up boy and tent together in her greedy palm. . . She squeezed paint out of tubes as though it were an essence of life that she must not miss' (46-7). She wants control of him, perhaps, because of the artist's capacity to create and communicate perceptions of reality. His perception of her is, according to the Bergsonian definition of the artist, particularly lucid. Gillies writes that the artist 'enables a viewer or participant to see life more clearly' (20). More valuable to Bella still, is the fact that an artist can give visible, tangible expression to those things that are usually without physical representation- such as Bella herself.

Bergson contends that artistic creation involves three phases. In the first phase, artists seek an intuitive experience of the essence of life, of *durée.* As Barney says: 'Life-- you've got to get hold of that before you can create'.[28] In the second phase, artists attempt to re-create the object according to his or her own experience of it. In the third phase, the observer must appropriate the object for himself, transforming it back from an externalised art work to a (new) internal experience.

Barney is not merely an 'artist', however, he is a developing individual. His life confirms the confusion of an entire generation. His conventional upbringing conflicts with his intuitive desire for freedom: he is in love with the symbol he has made of Bella, but 'his breeding revolted. In the raw life she offered he saw his own salvation from gentility; yet a sense of evil pursued him, he felt himself unclean' (61). Barney abandons his attempts at modernist landscape painting (representing his own struggle between conformity and rebellion), ready to believe that he has discovered the essential spirit of life symbolised by Bella. But does he truly perceive the essence of life, or is he deluding himself? The answer (enacted in his art) has ramifications for Bella's own reality. But if Bella and others respond to his art, Barney is (by Bergsonian definition) an artist. The Kilgours all recognise Barney's portrait of Bella as a child: 'They think that's art', says Barney, and in a way it is because his audience has responded to his creative effort to perceive and reconstruct Bella's essence, if only by drawing attention to her physical reality, and not her spiritual reality.

Barney has decided, intellectually and consciously, that Bella represents the essence of life. But he feels that he cannot depict Bella's life-energy on canvas, producing only caricatures and imitations, but nothing original. This suggests two opposite but equally illuminating possibilities. Does Barney fail to capture Bella's essence because he has failed as an artist? That is, is he too bound by his own conforming nature, his self-conscious ego, because his trained and patterned perceptions are inadequate to see and portray the essence of her being? The answer is probably yes. 'Most people do not use their perceptive faculties fully or properly' Gillies writes, in describing Bergson's theory of art. Gib Munro hints in the novel that: 'These painting lads have a heap of nonsense in their heads. Can't see life as it is. All distorted, upside down'. (51) On the other hand, it is possible that Barney succeeds in perceiving and revealing Bella's true essence through his sketches. Perhaps he has intuitively (and art must comprise intuitive perceptions) perceived the truth that Bella's essential being is not a physical embodiment of *élan vital*, but merely lonely caricature and plagiarism devoid of original substance. He tells Jenny: 'you don't know what she is. . . Cruel, utterly remorseless. She'll take you, and use you, and crush the life out of you, and never know she's done it' (64). While this could stand for an apt description of *élan vital*, it could just as easily describe the state of a lonely, desperate woman.

Dance of Creation and Destruction

Andrew's tradition is a result of having imposed some order (temporarily, in any case) upon the perpetually-shifting chaos of his environment. Bella tries to use motion itself as a symbolic weapon to undermine Andrew's stable life. She is, as the opening poem reads, 'Wild with the lust for rhythm and movement, And the brutal urge to flight.' She again contrives to enlist *élan vital* to her struggle through dance. Shepherd's fiction contains many moments when the individual loses consciousness of self through motion or contact with the natural world. In this novel, however, in moments that should be transcendental, selfless experiences often give way to scenes of heightened self-consciousness.

Dance and rhythm fascinated Bergson, as well as many other modernist thinkers-artists, writers, philosophers alike. Bergson believed that each individual's experience of *durée* is different, and has its own rhythm. Thus, he compares consciousness to a melody. Since the self is a material embodiment, this proves 'a synthesis of the temporal and spatial'.[29]

Dance may be seen as the creative, physical expression of that synthesis, the individual's experience of *durée*. Dance is inherently paradoxical, in that it is an intuitive and spontaneous act, but one which incorporates rhythm, ordered movement, and repetition. It is patterned and predictable, but no two performances can be the same. Dance gives visible motion and form to the *élan vital* within us. It can be a display of passion marked by remarkable precision and order -- not always without deliberation and self-conscious ego.

It is tempting to see Bella's seven-hour dance as a human representation of perpetual motion, symbolic of Bella's spiritual liberation and oneness with the perpetual motion of being. Bergson was particularly interested in dance as a mobile art form incorporating both spontaneity and pre-established, repeated rhythms and steps. Shepherd has previously used dance as an intuitive expression of creative urges. Dance has a rhythm and pattern, but each movement is unique, and unrepeatable. Like fire, it liberates the human spirit with creative and also destructive results. Certainly, Bella's seven hour dance begins as a 'frenzied' dance of 'thoughtless delight in being', recalling the seven days of Creation (73-4). Watching the dance, Jenny reflects: 'In endurance, how like a god', implying the creative inspiration that initially motivates Bella's dance (75). The landscape is described as melting and then taking form again in new shapes 'that seemed hardly of this world' (74), implying that Bella's dancing has won access to a new spiritual realm. Dance can function as a monumental creative endeavour invoking a universal sympathy and purpose. It is in this sense that Duncan MacMillan writes (of John Duncan Fergusson's painting, *Les Eus*): 'It is very much as picture of men and women under nature behaving in an intuitive and spontaneous way . . . it takes up Bergsonian ideas of sympathy expressed through the rhythm of the dance'.[30]

The dance, however, ceases to be an act of spontaneous creation when Bella sees Andrew watching her (74). He perceives her release of creative energy as 'waste, to delight in it a degradation' (75). Bella is suddenly self-conscious. The narrator writes: 'in some queer land that none of them knew, foreign voices broke in gusty laughter', invoking the Biblical story of the tower of Babel (like Bella's incomplete house). The Tower is 'a symbol of the pride of man and his inevitable fall . . . linked with the confusion and broken fellowship between men and nations when separated from God'.[31] Bella's dance loses its spontaneous aspect of liberating energy, and becomes a quite strategical and belaboured assault upon the solidity of the Kilgour tradition. Thus, Maggie's proclamation that 'the Deevil wunna set the

likes o'me to dancin' implies her view that Bella must be motivated by dark forces other than sheer delight in being (77). Bella herself regards the achievement of her dance in less spiritual terms: 'Seven hours, they get into the papers for the like of that' (95). Dance is, after all, merely a symbol of the perpetual energy and motion of the cosmos. Human beings cannot live in perpetual motion, as Bella's return to the valley in search of stability indicates. Proof of this is that Bella cannot dance forever- seven hours is a fine symbolic attempt, but she collapses in exhaustion.

In Shepherd, reality always prevails over contrived symbol. Reality is that the dance is both an act of joyous and intuitive harmony, and an aggressive act of destructive intent and egotism. It is, in any case, a dance of creation/evolution, containing contradictions within itself: violence and harmony, the passions of hate and love. It contributes to Jenny's successful evolution, if it signals Bella's failure.

Bella's battle for physical identity and representation on the Kilgour landscape is ultimately unsuccessful because she does not understand that Andrew's created stability is the result of labour, interaction and study, as well as inherited attributes. Creation, as Bergson contends, entails a selfless interaction with the forces of *durée.* Bella's 'creative' efforts are characterised by self-conscious (indeed, egotistical) effort and destructive intent, certainly not by sympathetic communication or reciprocal interpenetration. It is true that creation and destruction are two aspects of the same phenomenon. But creation cannot be engineered. As in Eastern thought, creative endeavour is only successful when achieved through a selfless interaction with the essential nature of life. Whereas Andrew's battle with Nature was characterised by 'respect and love' for his antagonist, Bella feels nothing but resentment and jealousy for Andrew. There is creation and destruction in this novel, but not of the kind that Bella had anticipated.

Jenny's Creative Evolution

The poem quoted at the beginning of this chapter reads: 'Only, at night I dance with my mother/ In stately solemn glee'. 'Stately solemn glee' is a strange phrase, accurately communicating the paradoxical nature of the novel's dance of creation. It is spontaneous and unique, but it occurs within the parameters of a certain order (dance steps and music). This kind of dance represents the best that human creation can achieve -- movement through time

that is flexible, intuitive, and utterly original, but movement that is supported through chaos by a series of identifiable, reassuring patterns and purpose. This kind of dance might be seen to represent Jenny's physical and spiritual state at the conclusion of the novel.

Several characters in the novel want to shape Jenny in their own image to ensure their own survival. Characters fail to see Jenny as a flesh-and-blood individual, much the way Luke misperceived Martha in *The Quarry Wood.* But where Luke imposes an idealised identity upon Martha, characters in this novel, rather, try to impose their own identities upon Jenny. Characters in *A Pass in the Grampians* are motivated by survival instinct, rather than creative ego. Jenny, however, is 'quite unconscious of herself as an instrument of destiny' (65).

In the chapter entitled 'Fatherhood', all the tensions of the novel culminate in a scene of physical confrontation. Each character makes a final bid for Jenny's favour: 'It's a ploy she likes, the farm work," says Andrew, telling Bella that 'Jenny will stay at home in the meantime' (98). And Mary tells Bella that, 'Jenny will come with me to London when she's old enough' (99). To each of them, Jenny is a symbol of their own future, and not a real and developing adolescent girl. Bella wheedles away: 'isn't Jenny old enough to choose? Jenny. . . will you come with me to London?' (98) She tries to tempt Jenny with ego gratification: 'You'll be talked about, Jenny. . . Think of it' (98). But Jenny is not vain in the way that Bella is. She does not want to be talked about, she wants the experience of life, pure and simple.

Throughout the novel, we are given little inkling as to Jenny's inner thoughts. She has spent the duration of the novel observing and experiencing the various lives around her. The triumph of the novel is that she inherits none and all of them. They have all shaped her identity, in keeping with Bergson's notion that past experience creates our identity in the present moment, but she proves strong enough to maintain her own essence. As the narrative voice tells us: 'like a flame, like a jet of water, she is blown by contrary winds from her true shape, yet momently resumes it and is herself' (99). Jenny does not represent the prize of a battle won or lost, but rather the process whereby small changes in perspective gradually move unique individuals along the path of human history.

In terms of Jenny's development, the conclusion of this novel acknowledges Jenny's individualism. It implies Jenny's evolution toward thinking for herself. She 'has come to judgement and herself must be the judge'. . . her life 'must find its own terms of acceptance or repudiation' with the lives that touch her being (110-11). The conclusion contains judgements

indicating that she is making own decisions. She concludes that she likes Sammy's artwork, despite its absurdity. Bergson gives creative responsibility to the perceiver as well as the artist. Gillies writes: 'for it was their responsibility to recreate the art form and to come to terms with what the artist had represented' (24). Thus, Jenny's conclusion (echoing Martha's) implies that she has won the confidence and courage to take responsibility for her own creations. She realises that she likes Dorabel and Barney as people, not as codes or symbols, but for the life-energy they possess: 'I'm not going to stop [liking them] even though they're not our kind', she thinks. (112) Jenny's evolution is implied in her embrace of the strange contradictions of life as well, in her realisation that Bella 'has a good heart, and she's generous, and greedy, and noisy, and vulgar, and I like her, and I'm going to see her again some day'. (113).

Bergson writes: 'We choose in reality without ceasing; without ceasing, also, we abandon many things'.[32] So, Jenny chooses amongst the influences available to her, abandoning some, without ever ceasing to live. Bella's achievement is not in winning Jenny, but in being able to claim influence upon Jenny's perspective and development: 'Dorabel has been Jenny's initiation into herself' (111). Bella's battle against Andrew has the positive effect of revealing to Jenny the joys of a hedonistic spiritual freedom and independent, unfettered exploration:

> [Jenny's] solid, sweet, rich content was invaded. She had looked on Dorabel, and all her nature quivered and sang. She was in love, oh, terribly in love, and the summer dawn, flooding the earth, flowed over her like an ocean, washed her under to such immensity as she had never yet conceived. (67)

When Bella offers to pay Jenny's expenses, Jenny perceives that Bella has a material nature at odds with the spiritual nature of her own journey, and 'the sea lost its music' (99). Such lucid insight is what kept Jenny from leaving with Bella as Barney did: 'darkly she understands that if she yields her will to either of them now. . . she is lost' (99). Jenny and Barney form another of the novel's paired characterisations: both of the same generation, both caught between the somewhat rebellious creative instincts of youth and compulsion to conform to inherited traditions. But Barney represents the choice Jenny did not make. He fails to take responsibility for his own creation when he gives up his own car. He leaves the valley as a passenger in Bella's car, symbolically giving up responsibility for his own journey much the way Martha could have handed over self-responsibility to Roy Foubister. Jenny

(like Martha), on the other hand, chooses to make the journey on her own terms, in her own time.

While Jenny embraces the advantages of her inherited identity, she knows that she will never truly adapt to her environment the way her grandfather did unless she moves beyond the Pass, beyond a reality built of pre-established symbols and inherited perceptions. The greatest inheritance she receives from her family is not stability or prestige, but an awareness of the strangeness of life, and the desire to experience such strangeness: "Fear, fascination, torment and limitless desire are in her blood.' (115). Thus, she reflects: 'She loves it [her family's tradition] as her very life, she will praise it for ever as the only life worth having, but she must know the other' (111).

While Barney's future is unknown, it is compromised. Jenny's future is equally unknown, but undictated by external forces, representing the much vaster future of being in a general sense. In *Creative Evolution*, Bergson mentions God only once: 'God. . . is uninterrupted life, action, freedom. And the creation, so conceived, is not a mystery; we experience it ourselves when we act freely' (249). There is no overt concern with God in this novel, but Jenny's evolution has been to learn to act freely. The narrator, in the last chapter, describes Jenny's curiosity to know things for herself, 'the thrawn refusal of her whole being to accept what she is told and does not apprehend' (111). She can take the responsibility that her grandfather offered her in the beginning: to guard the fire and try to direct its 'fury of being'. With this understanding of the conditions for the creative evolution of one's identity, and one's tradition, Jenny will go over the Pass seeking 'the wild lovely stormy things' of change (115).

And this -- the turmoil of change -- is the final lesson of the novel, and of Shepherd's creative work and vision. Jenny will make her own choices, like other Shepherd's characters. She will progress through life in pursuit and attainment of peace, self-assurance, happiness. She will probably reach the end of her life and find herself in a situation much like Andrew Kilgour. Such a pattern has revealed itself in Shepherd's novels, each explores the pattern from a different perspective. But underneath all is the stream of change -- inexorable, sustaining, all-inclusive and all-overwhelming. Andrew has undergone his own evolution, from fearing and denying the end of his tradition, he has come to accept it (much like Chris at the end of *Grey Granite*). There is more to his revelation than pure resignation, however, there is the future in which -- while there is no room for him-- there is room for his spiritual

legacy in the life that his granddaughter creates. Thus, 'for him it is an end inevitable and unforeseen, that has come, as such ends always must, too soon. But for her it is a beginning, and not an end, to anticipation' (PG, 116).

A Pass in the Grampians ends much like the poem with which this chapter began. Just as, in the poem, 'we have little to show for our aeons of labour', the novel's conclusion demonstrates that Jenny and Andrew are 'both are aware that it is the end. Their perfect unity is over' (PG, 116). But the novel describes their end, and their perfect unity. But the 'travail of earth', 'the dance' will continue. The narrator, detached from the intimate tragedy of their story, makes it evident that life and unity will continue. Each impermanent element of life has a physical place in a brief present moment, but in that moment one may create and bequeathe a spiritual legacy that inevitably bears influence upon all that will pass in the future.

ENDNOTES

[1]Nan Shepherd, 'Song of the Barley by Night' in *Alma Mater Anthology: 1883-1919*, ed. by Nan Shepherd and Agnes Mure Mackenzie, (Aberdeen: W&W Lindsay, 1919), page number unknown.

[2]Robert Burns, 'John Barleycorn', in *The Poems and Songs of Robert Burns*, 4th edn., ed. by Andrew Lang, (London: Methuen, [1896] 1926), pp. 26-28.

[3]NLS, MSS 26900, (1933).

[4]Roderick Watson, 'The Symbolism of a Drunk Man Looks at the Thistle' in *Hugh MacDiarmid: A Critical Survey*, ed. by Duncan Glen, (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1972), pp. 94-116, (p. 98).

[5]*Creative Evolution*, p. 5.

[6]Christopher Butler, *Early Modernism: Literature, Music and Painting in Europe: 1900-1916,* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), p. 146.

[7]Janet Carsten and Stephen Hugh-Jones, 'Introduction' to *About the House: Levi Strauss and Beyond,* eds. Janet Carsten and Stephen Hugh-Jones, (Cambridge: University Press, pp. 1-46), p. 2.

[8]Patrick Hanks, ed., *Collins Dictionary of the English Language,* (Glasgow: William Collins, 1979).

[9]Watson, 'Introduction' to PG, p. vi.

[10]Freeman, p. 216.

[11]'"To Know Being"', p. 420.

[12]David Noel Freeman, ed., *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Vol. I, (New York: Doubleday, 1992).

[13]Hugh MacDiarmid, 'To Any Scottish Laird', in *Hugh MacDiarmid: Complete Poems, Volume II,* Michael Grieve and others, eds., (Manchester: Carcanet Press, 1994), p. 1253.

[14]*Creative Evolution*, p. x.

[15]Watson, 'Dialectics of "Voice" and "Place": Literature in Scots and English from 1700', in *Scotland: A Concise Cultural History*, ed. by Paul H. Scott, (Edinburgh: Mainstream Press, 1993), pp. 99-126 (p. 115).

[16]*Creative Evolution*, p. 109.

[17]Butler, p. 158.

[18]Bergson, *Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic*, trs. Cloudesley Brereton and Fred Rothwell (London: Macmillan, 1911), p. 5.

[19]*Laughter,* p. 21.

[20]*Laughter*, p. 26-29. Bergson writes about caricature, and the marionette (p. 35).

[21]*Laughter,* p. 5.

[22]*Laughter,* p. 20.

[23]Shepherd, 'Fires' from *IC.*

[24]Umbro Apollonio, *Futurist Manifestos* (1973), quoted by Butler, p. 148.

[25]Bergson, *Essai sur les donnees immediates de la conscience* (1889), quoted by Butler, p. 142.

[26]Freeman, p. 215.

[27]Carsten and Hugh-Jones, p. 3.

[28]Shepherd, PG, p. 50. The text here actually reads: 'Like-- you've. . .', but this seems likely to be a typographical error; the text should read 'Life. . .'.

[29]Mark Antliff, 'The Rhythms of Duration: Bergson and the Art of Matisse', in *The New Bergson*, ed. by John Mullarkey, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999) pp. 184-208, (p. 188).

[30]Duncan MacMillan, *Scottish Art in the 20th Century,* (Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing, 1994), p. 37.

[31]J.D. Douglas, *The New Bible Dictionary,* 2nd edn., (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, [1962] 1990).

[32]*Creative Evolution*, p. 105.

Conclusion

This thesis has attempted to reveal and elucidate the deeper narratives underlying the surface of Shepherd's austere fiction. My purpose has been to reveal what is inherently there. Sam Frazer's review (1977) of *The Living Mountain* (for the *Aberdeen University Review*) describes a general passion for mountains, and captures what, in essence, Shepherd's novels are about: 'the urge to rise above the plain, to view the world from the vantage point of a mountain top, and to return to everyday life in the valley, in some way exalted and revitalised by the experience'. This thesis has sought a fuller understanding of these things in Shepherd's fiction: the urge to rise above, the changing vision, the exaltation and revitalisation, and the return to everyday life.

More might be done. Other directions might be pursued. I have benefited from the strong, if limited, foundation of criticism and research that has already been conducted regarding Shepherd's life and work. But anyone who contributes to the existing body of research must realise how much scope there is for future projects.

Identifying Shepherd's friends and influences is easy. She was never reticent when it came to acknowledging others. Identifying the broad range of her influences is more difficult, for she read both deeply and widely. Her home overflowed with books.[1] A sampling of names suggests, to some degree, the spectrum of influences and possible directions for future study. From her earliest sketchbooks to letters written in her final years, Shepherd's intellectual sphere reached far beyond her particular time or place. She was influenced by philosophers, often evolutionists (Aldous Huxley, Darwin, Leibniz, and Bergson, also Plotinus and Plato through to Kierkegaard and John MacMurray). She read poets both long past and more recent (from Homer, Dante, Shakespeare to John Donne, Schiller, Tennyson, Rudyard Kipling, Walter de la Mare, W.H. Hudson, Thomas Hardy, Keats, Gerard Manley Hopkins, Rupert Brooke, T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Emily Dickinson, George Eliot). Her reading further included the work of Spenser, the Brontë sisters, Tolstoy, Lafcadio Hearn, G.B. Shaw, Henrik Ibsen, D.H. Lawrence, Virginia Woolf, Charles Lamb, Raymond Chandler, John Updike, and Peter Matthiessen.[2] These names suggest an infinitude of angles from which Shepherd's work might be critically approached. A comparison of Shepherd's work with D.H. Lawrence seems particularly promising.

It is important to realise that Shepherd was intuitively a poet, even if the quality of her prose far exceeds that of her fiction. Her poetry provides a valuable companion to her fiction, as this thesis has sought to demonstrate. *The Scottish Educational Journal* reviewed *In the Cairngorms* in 1934, and commented upon 'its significance in the evolution of contemporary Scottish poetry'. Certainly, Shepherd's poems should be recognised in a tradition of Northeast poetry that includes Marion Angus, Charles Murray, Violet Jacob, John Milne, Helen Cruickshank, George Bruce, and others. And yet, Shepherd's poetry is repeatedly omitted from anthologies of Scottish, and even Northeast poetry. *In the Cairngorms* is almost impossible to find in book shops and libraries. One would very much like to see a new edition, perhaps supplemented by her uncollected poems, and some of her articles (often illuminating and entertaining in themselves).

The Living Mountain, too, deserves more attention. Therein, Shepherd's philosophical vision is most explicitly, most personally explored. Vivienne Forrest calls it her best book, writing 'its appeal is as universal as its subject'.[3] Cuthbert Graham calls it 'her masterpiece. . . a long prose poem of startling originality'.[5] Crossing many literary genres, Shepherd's last book is illuminating in its own right. And to get into the heart of Shepherd's novels, one should read them with *The Living Mountain* at one elbow.

Shepherd was never comfortable seated on a metaphorical pedestal, but rather chose to define herself in relation to those around her. For this reason, it is important to understand Shepherd within the context of her times. A biographical (perhaps non-academic) work would be useful-- as much of Shepherd's work was drawn from her own experience-- and also make for good reading in its own right.

Shepherd was influenced by and had influence upon her Scottish predecessors and contemporaries, those with both wide and limited reputations. Any work that looks more deeply into Shepherd's place in modernism and in the Scottish Renaissance would be valuable. Shepherd is increasingly being considered alongside other female writers of the time. Critics such as Carol Anderson, Alison Lumsden, Gillian Carter, Cheryl Maxwell, Alan Freeman, and others have made a beginning. A study of the combination of realist and fantasy elements in George MacDonald and Shepherd would be fascinating, as would an interpretation of Shepherd through the philosophy of John MacMurray.

My interpretation of Shepherd's fiction through Bergsonian and Eastern philosophy may seem counterproductive to those interested in locating Shepherd within Scotland's literary tradition. Shepherd was undeniably rooted in Scotland, both physically and spiritually. It cannot be argued that she was seeking to escape, or isolate herself from Scottish concerns. Quite the opposite, Shepherd sought to make Scotland's creative culture and concerns of relevance beyond Scotland. Her work reveals a tacit and unstrained confidence in the local *and universal* relevance of Scotland's culture. This quiet confidence is a strong and rare trait in itself.

The presence of Eastern spiritual thought in Shepherd's writing is worthy of further study, for its own sake and in terms of Scotland's evolving literary tradition. Shepherd's affinity for Eastern philosophy does not remove her from the Scottish context, but rather broadens that context. Scottish critics, poets, essayists and novelists (notably, John Burns and Kenneth White) are revealing strong connections between Scotland's creative tradition and Eastern philosophies. This thesis has only touched upon the strong link between Gunn and Shepherd (rooted in their philosophical vision). The connection between Shepherd and Willa Muir might also warrant further research. They shared a concern for female identity development, a modernist fascination with psychology and the creation of self, and, again, a manifest awareness of Eastern thought juxtaposed against a strong consciousness of Scotland's philosophical roots.

The parallels between Shepherd and Hugh MacDiarmid are especially compelling. The kindred nature of their spiritual vision has been briefly discussed. Again, Eastern philosophy peeks in unexpectedly. MacDiarmid drew upon many sources to move Scotland beyond itself, not least Eastern philosophy. 'In Memoriam James Joyce' quotes Herrigel at length, describing the interfusion of self and other that is so integral to Shepherd's vision:

> So that fundamentally the marksman aims at himself
> And may even succeed in hitting himself.'
> The bow and arrow are merely the means
> Of achieving a state of spiritual enlightenment,
> Wherein the bow, arrow, marksman, and target,
> As well as everything else in the universe,
> Become one.[6]

The influence of Scotland's ancient cultures upon Scotland's recent literature is acknowledged, both by its practitioners and its critics. A broader study dedicated to the impact of Eastern culture upon Scotland's twentieth century literature would be well-founded and likely to provide exciting results.

Shepherd's instinct and ability to look, through Scotland, beyond Scotland, should be recognised and celebrated. It is an instinct which gives depth and dimension to Scotland's perception of itself, and also marks Scotland's distinctive place in the world. With simplicity and grace, Shepherd juxtaposes that which is Scottish against what is very un-Scottish. She is confident that Scottish voices carry far and well. One of Shepherd's few poems in Scots describes, with characteristic elegance and economy, how the 'licht amo' the hills' must be kept burning. This very title evokes the substance and spirit of her fiction. With characteristic elegance and economy, the poem itself describes the capacity of Scottish minds and voices to relevance and influence within and beyond Scotland:

> 'the thochts of men
> 'll traivel 'yont the warld
> Frae aff some shinin' Ben.'[7]

We must excuse the word 'men', and perceive Shepherd's mind and voice as amongst those that 'traiveled' deeply, both in Scotland and 'yont the warld'.

ENDNOTES

[1]NLS, Shepherd MSS 27443, 'Scots Women Writers Interviewed: II- Nan Shepherd', in *The Scotsman*, (November 14, 1931)

[2]NLS, Shepherd MSS 27439-40. These names are drawn from Shepherd's sketchbooks, 'Gleanings' (covering the period c.1904-1911) and 'My Medley Book' (covering c. 1911-1914). Alongside passages from the above named authors are included sundial inscriptions, headstone epitaphs, recorded wireless conversations between fighter pilots, the minutes of sixteenth and seventeenth century Northeast Kirk Sessions, and Gaelic runes. Names are also drawn from articles by Forrest and Donald.

[3]Forrest, p. 19.

[4]NLS, Shepherd MSS 27443.

[5]MacDiarmid, 'In Memoriam James Joyce', in *Complete Poems, Vol. II*, p. 828.

[6]Nan Shepherd, 'O Licht Amo' the Hills', in IC.

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------ Book Review of *A Festschrift*, by Hugh MacDiarmid, *AUR, 40* (1963-64), 38-9

------ 'Aberdonian Salt', *AUR*, 40 (1963-64), 102-5

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