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Liz Lochhead's Drama

Submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

by

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April 1996

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Abstract

Liz Lochhead's Drama

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This thesis is an examination of Liz Lochhead's three published plays: *Blood and Ice* (1982), *Dracula* (1989), and *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off* (1989). Each of these three plays deals centrally with a literary or historical pre-text: the life of Mary Shelley and the ideology of English Romanticism in *Blood and Ice*; Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula* and late-Victorian British ruling-class culture in *Dracula*; and sixteenth-century Scottish and English history in *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off*. Given these dramatic emphases, the critical emphasis of this thesis is the plays' reassessment of their pre-texts, and particularly of those pre-texts' power to exercise and selectively to confer cultural authority.

The thesis argues that the plays critically re-cast their pre-texts, re-interpreting those texts and compelling audiences to do the same. Altering diegetic emphases, the plays emphasize and interrogate the perhaps dubious function of their pre-texts to narrate and legitimate certain cultural groups' dominance and others' subordination. And using narrative forms which contrast in significant ways with those of the pre-texts, the plays demonstrate alternative, less prescriptive narrative forms. The effect of these textual re-interpretations and alternative narrative forms to intervene in hegemonic operations of power is important not least because each of the pre-texts, in different ways, thematically and/or formally, is ostensibly committed to the "fair" distribution of power. Romanticism claims commitment to the liberation of humanity. The protagonists of Stoker's *Dracula* fight avowedly to protect the superiority of their "good" Western humanity over Dracula's "bad" Eastern monstrosity. And orthodox histories, including those of Mary Queen of Scots and Elizabeth I of England, frequently function to absolve present communities' responsibility for their "closed" histories, but also for their histories' legacies, and, thus, for responsibility for the present.

The plays' re-interpretations of their pre-texts analyse, further, whom these pre-texts selectively empower and how they do so. In terms of who is empowered, the thesis focuses on the patriarchal exercise of power and its subordination of women, and on the exercise of power according to class, sexuality, and racial and national identity. By interrogating and destabilizing hegemonic authority in their pre-texts, the plays begin to

pluralize the distribution of cultural power. In terms of how power is delegated in the pre-texts, the thesis considers the formal means by which the pre-texts potentially secure their readers' complicity with hegemonic ideologies, and examines the ways in which Lochhead's plays set up narrative and dramatic forms which both interrogate their predecessors' forms and propose potentially less coercive alternatives.

The purpose of this thesis, broadly stated, is to join Lochhead's plays in revising and pluralizing the distribution of power in dominant cultural narratives and in dominant forms of cultural narration, to explore the practices of power and narrative, and to consider power's seductions, benefits, limits, and violations.

Acknowledgements

I would like, first, to thank Liz Lochhead for sharing with me her time, her enthusiasm, her humour, and her work (much of it unpublished). Liz's personal generosity and the generosity of her writing have encouraged my work on this project throughout its completion. I would also like to thank my thesis supervisors, Professor Jan McDonald and Dr. Alasdair Cameron. Jan's critical attention to my work has been invaluable: consistently supportive, thought-provoking, and challenging. Alasdair's interest in my work until the time of his death in 1994 was always encouraging. His passionate advocacy of Scottish theatre and its study remains encouraging.

For reading and discussing earlier versions of this text, and for collegial support and friendship, I would like to thank: Andrew Botterill, Julie Crawford, Minty Donald, Richard Hand, Leslie Hill, and Jane Sillars. For intellectual support and encouragement I would also like to thank Caroline Beven, Julia Blazdell, John Caughie, Lorna Hutson, Nora Jaffary, Lisa Jardine, Ric Knowles, Annette Kuhn, Catherine Maxwell, Suzanne Raitt, and Morag Shiach. Not least, I would like to thank Catriona Cowan, Robyn Laba, Juju Vail, David Vail, my mother Judy Aykroyd Harvie, and, in memory, my father Eric Harvie.

For providing research materials, I would like to thank staff at Communicado Theatre Company, Perth Theatre Company, The Scottish Theatre Archive (University of Glasgow), and the National Library of Scotland.

This thesis is dedicated to Debbie Kilbride and Orillia Vail.

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Introduction:

Master Narrative and Lochhead's Drama

This thesis examines Liz Lochhead's three published plays, *Blood and Ice* (first published in 1982), *Dracula*, and *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off* (published together in 1989). Using two reading strategies it follows these plays' identifications of and interventions in the hegemonic and homogenizing--and, particularly, patriarchal--operations and effects of what have been called "master narratives." It proposes that dominant cultural narratives emphasize--and thereby create, or certainly enforce--particular hegemonic meanings which legitimate the social dominance of particular groups, especially men, the upper-middle classes, and other groups defined by their simultaneous superiority/normativeness (and defined, teleologically, as superior and normative). It suggests that these narratives operate effectively--that is, they successfully support dominant groups' hegemony--through two primary and interconnected means: first, through selecting and, importantly, naturalizing particular narrative contents; and second, through incorporating their audiences into sympathy with those contents by presenting themselves through particular narrative forms. It argues that Lochhead's plays both promote, and are productively responsive to, two reading strategies which engage with, interrogate, and intervene in these two master-narrative means of securing hegemonic power. And it pursues these strategies in its readings of Lochhead's plays, joining with the plays in intervening in this exercise of power.

The first reading strategy is directive, directing attention to master narratives' contents, particularly to what meanings they selectively include and exclude, and with what biases, favours, and abuses they represent their contents. This strategy focuses on: Romanticism, which celebrates the individual to the peril of the group (in *Blood and Ice*); Gothic literature, which represents female sexuality and homosexuality as monstrous (in *Dracula*); and historical convention which attributes Scotland's current social problems to its past and so locates them where they cannot be redressed (in *Mary Queen of Scots*). As my brief descriptions might suggest, this strategy scrutinizes these narratives' attitudes towards the representations of, in particular, gender, class, and racial and national identity. The plays' emphases obviously inform this reading, but it is complemented and further informed by extensive and compelling contemporary critical commentary on Romanticism, community and difference in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, and sixteenth-century Scottish and English history and culture. Broadly speaking, the purpose of this strategy is to denaturalize and refocus dominant or master narratives and so to destabilize and begin to pluralize their ostensibly coherent, monologic, and hegemonic meaning.

The second reading strategy is, rather than directive, more specifically pluralizing. Following the lead provided by Lochhead's plays, this strategy indicates how the master

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narratives raised by the three plays' pre-texts (Romanticism, Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, and dominant histories of sixteenth-century Scotland and England and Mary Queen of Scots) structurally coerce or interpellate their readers--rather than less insistently directing them--into sympathetic engagement with their hegemonic ideologies. It examines how Lochhead's plays precisely do *not* reproduce their antecedents' coercive, homogenizing narrative forms, but, through diversions against and within generic, literary, dramatic, and historical conventions, produce instead narrative and dramatic forms which incite audiences to critical engagement with the plays and their referents, and which invite audiences actively to construct plural, dialogic meanings rather than acquiescing to monologic hegemonic meaning. This reading contrasts the hegemonic audience-interpellating narrative form of Romantic poetry, of Stoker's *Dracula*, and of accepted myths of Mary Queen of Scots and Elizabeth I of England with a dramaturgy which presents its own meaning--and meaning itself--as plural, and which offers its audiences plural routes of understanding and engagement.

Both of my reading strategies aim to pluralize the meanings of the dominant narratives--and dominant "narrativizing"--which they address. They do not, however, do so with the intention of facilitating meanings' infinite multiplication, nor with the intention of dismantling narrative or dramaturgy altogether. They are specifically and politically aligned. My critical practice shares with--and learns from--Lochhead's dramatic practice a concern to identify and reform cultural, literary, historical, and dramatic narratives (both their stories and their formal conventions) which are socially disabling, particularly in relation to gender, but also in relation to sexuality, class, and racial and national identity. My project--aided and informed by Lochhead's work, and sited in analysis of that work--is to nurture a constructive scepticism about culturally dominant historical and literary narratives and dramaturgies in order to provoke their sustained reassessment, and to propose revised, reformed, but importantly not static meanings, narratives, dramaturgies, and methods of interpretation.

Susan C. Triesman has concisely summarized a focal activity of Lochhead's plays: the plays "deal in what Foucault has described as the instability innate in the procedures of mastery in patriarchal society, unleashing links between desire and power, creating discourses that reclaim the repressed and deny prohibition and exclusion" (127). Lochhead's plays take "the instability innate in the procedures of mastery in patriarchal societ[ies]" and multiply it. They take Foucault's premise, "Where there is power, there is resistance" (95), and they engage with that resistance. They reveal the sacrifices required to attain and reinforce that mastery and power, and they begin, constructively, to dismantle it.

Master Narratives

In his Foreword to Jean-François Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, Fredric Jameson uses the term "master-narratives" to describe the "two great legitimizing 'myths' or narrative archetypes. . . . identified [by Lyotard] as the alternate justifications for institutional scientific research up to our own period--that of the liberation of humanity and that of the speculative unity of all knowledge" (ix). Unlike Lyotard's, my focus is not on narratives of scientific knowledge but on narratives of cultural meaning (or cultural knowledges). And I do not concentrate my focus, as Lyotard does, on two over-arching narratives of cultural dominance but on several narratives, more specifically referential to the texts which I examine, and to their details.

Despite the differences between my project and that of Jameson writing on Lyotard, I adopt Jameson's term "master-narrative" to describe the narratives I examine because it informs my work in several important ways. First, the gender inflection of "master narrative" indicates the patriarchal bias of many dominant cultural narratives, a bias which Lochhead's and my readings of cultural narratives consistently interrogate. Second, Jameson's use of the term "master narrative" to describe myths' function as tools for legitimizing certain scientific practices places an emphasis which my work shares on the cultural function of narrative to legitimize--or to "serve as justification for"--other practices as well, including other cultural practices (*The Concise Oxford Dictionary*). Master narratives, in other words, are narratives which justify and authorize particular practices, and I select the two non-synonymous words "justify" and "authorize" advisedly. My point, and Lyotard's, is that certain narratives not only attest to the cultural legitimacy of certain practices, in so doing, they selectively define or "author" what constitutes legitimacy. Significantly, the adjective "legitimate" is defined by *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* as "lawful, proper, regular, conforming to the standard type." This list of, again, non-synonymous words illustrates the sliding function of legitimation: to recognize the "standard" and the "lawful, proper," and to render them synonymous. Legitimation not only recognizes a norm, it creates a system (legal, scientific, narratological, dramatic) which celebrates that teleologically-defined norm. The procedures of legitimation are self-legitimizing.

Master narratives effect and achieve legitimation of particular cultural practices, as I have suggested above, through the selection and representation of their particular contents, and through the organization of their particular forms.¹ This process of legitimating through narrative--as well as the process of intervening in that legitimation--is

¹ I distinguish between content and form for ease of discussion. I do not, however, perceive them as entirely mutually exclusive. An understanding of these terms as mutually implicated and overlapping informs my analysis throughout this thesis.

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perhaps best demonstrated through brief analyses of Lochhead's plays and my readings of them, analyses developed and expanded in the ensuing chapters of this thesis.

The Subject of Narrative: Contents

Master narratives function as apparatus of hegemonic legitimation first, by telling particular stories, stories which assume and, through naturalization, reinforce specific biases. Because they are naturalized, identifying these biases requires what I call interrogation, or what Adrienne Rich has called "Re-vision--the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction."² In depicting the life and experiences of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, author of *Frankenstein* and lover and wife of poet Percy Bysshe Shelley, Lochhead's *Blood and Ice* functions partly as an interrogation or re-vision of the master narrative of Romanticism, and particularly of Romanticism's putative devotion to "the liberation of humanity." As Jameson points out, the master narrative of the "liberation of humanity. . . is of course the tradition of the French eighteenth century and the French Revolution" (ix), and, I would argue, of the English Romanticism of the turn of the century. Like that of the French Revolution (not to mention that of the so-called counter culture of the 1960s, when Lochhead was in her teens and early twenties), Romanticism's narrative of liberation is self-legitimizing because it holds the promise of that virtually universally revered term: liberty. Romanticism's master narrative of the liberation of humanity proffers itself, and further legitimates itself, through various secondary master narratives, including: the celebration of creativity; the triumph of the individual; and the ascendancy of the spiritual over the material.

Lochhead's re-vision of Romanticism in *Blood and Ice*, and mine in my chapter on this play, interrogate the universal cultural legitimacy of Romanticism's master narrative of liberty. They do so by, in Adrienne Rich's words, "looking back" with "fresh eyes" on that narrative, and thus evaluating its success in effecting the "liberation of humanity." By selecting and re-presenting material from and about Romanticism, Lochhead's play and my reading of it focus on Romantic creativity, individualism, and anti-materialism. But they focus also on the less salubrious effects of these aspects of Romanticism, and especially on the effects which, as well as facilitating certain freedoms, limit and deny others. Specifically, they consider: the ways the creative freedom of the Romantic poet limits the freedom of his product; the ways prioritization of the liberty of the individual results in

² Rich 167. Also cited in "Putting New Twists to Old Stories: Feminism and Lochhead's Drama" by Jan McDonald and me (124). My present argument is in several respects a development of arguments begun in "Putting New Twists," and I am indebted to Jan for sharing ideas in the context of co-authoring that article.

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neglect of, and damage to, the liberty of the community;³ and the ways emphasis on the emancipatory effects of the imagination permits ignorance of--though certainly not eradication of--the constraining effects of the material. And in all cases, they consider particularly how Romanticism offers liberty for the upper-middle class male poet, and different forms and degrees of indenture for women and workers.

Lochhead's *Dracula* and my reading of it effect a second re-vision. They interrogate not Jameson's second master narrative of the "speculative unity of all knowledge," but Stoker's *Dracula*'s master narrative of the unity--and implicit equality--of all good people. In *Dracula*, this master narrative is itself built on a narrative which depicts and pursues the triumph of "good" over "evil," "good" people over "bad" people, "good" desires over "bad" desires, and so on. As my chapter on Lochhead's *Dracula* examines at length, the necessity of this narrative acutely to define "good" and "evil," and to protect the former from contamination by the latter, requires it not only to adopt a polarized vocabulary of saintliness and monstrosity, but ruthlessly to apply that vocabulary, again limiting subjects' freedom--to move beyond, to straddle, or to reject those definitions. In Lochhead's re-vision and mine, Stoker's *Dracula*'s master narrative of social unity becomes readable as a ruling-class fantasy about the preservation, not of social unity, but of social domination. Again, through selectively changing the emphases of Stoker's narrative (through irony and word play in particular), Lochhead's *Dracula* insinuates that the social coherence putatively advocated and sought by the novel may also be read as ruling class hegemony.

The master narratives to which Lochhead's *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off* refers are perhaps best described as narratives of the sanctity or inviolability of historical myth. Casting history as objective and/or unalterable, these master narratives are able to refer to historical myths as a set of knowledges which secure our contemporary understanding of what we have come from and how, and so are able to legitimate the present. Lochhead's *Mary Queen of Scots* examines and re-contextualizes narrative myths of sixteenth-century Scottish and English history chiefly to interrogate *what* they are used to legitimate in the present. It focuses on issues of religion, gender, sexuality, social rank, Scottish national identity, and power. And it suggests that contemporary social problems like misogyny and sectarianism are not the inevitable

³ The division of power within various communities is a consistent focus throughout Lochhead's drama. In "Feminine Pleasures and Masculine Indignities: Gender and Community in Scottish Drama," Adrienne Scullion indicates that this focus is shared by other Scots playwrights: "Scottish drama is habitually concerned with the nature and politics of the community, with the moment of inclusion or exclusion from the community as recurrent narrative spine" (198).

legacy of an unalterable past but part of on-going narratives for which it is possible to take responsibility through intervention and re-writing.

The Subject of Narrative: Forms

Master narratives' second means of enforcing hegemonic legitimation is through interpellating their audience into sympathetic engagement with their stories and with those stories' hegemonic ideologies. Interpellation is largely an effect of *how* an audience is addressed, as opposed to "with what" an audience is addressed, although the two categories are not, of course, entirely discrete. Interpellation is thus partly a function of narrative form. And intervention in this interpellation requires interrogation of master narratives' forms and adoption of different, less coercive forms.

Seduction is the term I use in the course of my chapter on *Blood and Ice* to describe the interpellating function of Romantic poetry. Romantic poetry is frequently organized as the urgent direct address of a solitary, visionary poet. It thus arrests its reader in the critical present. It flatters its reader by casting him or, in some notable cases, her as its specially (or divinely?) selected audience. It graces its audience by deigning to share its visionary powers. And it proffers to its audience a poetic world removed from material hardship. Its seductions are numerous, and resisting those seductions is difficult, not least because doing so seems not only ungracious, ungrateful, and difficult but, simply, "daft."

However, the vision and the disembodiment Romanticism champions may not be universally desirable, let alone achievable, and Lochhead's *Blood and Ice* depicts Romanticism in ways which demonstrate meaning as not solitary, divine inspiration, but as social material production. Further, the play refuses to reproduce the seductive textuality of Romanticism and so demonstrates a feasible and potentially liberating alternative textuality. Through shifts in space, time, and characterization, it presents an alternative to Romanticism's excessive present/presence. And through metatextual and meta-scenic reference it emphasizes its own material textuality. *Blood and Ice* invites recognition as a text. It thus invites criticism and multiple readings.

Bram Stoker's Gothic fiction *Dracula* interpellates its reader chiefly through fear rather than seduction. Its narrators introduce a horrific monster, tremble before it for most of the novel, and finally overcome it. Although the narrators may be many, they raise a single voice which proclaims fear of the monster and gives the reader only one articulated position with which to identify. And although the narrators' composite position--being characterized by vulnerability, anxiety, and fear--may seem undesirable for the main part of the novel, it is generically destined to be the position of triumph by the end. The narrators' concluding triumph thus teleologically confirms that their position has been the preferable one "all along."

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The narrative of Stoker's *Dracula* is remarkably homogeneous (and homogenizing). That of Lochhead's play, on the other hand, is decidedly plural. It admits ambivalence, disagreement, and dissent amongst its protagonists, and welcomes narrative contribution from the "monster" Dracula. It pluralizes Stoker's stable generic context of the Gothic by juxtaposing scenes of "good" and "bad," a device which works cumulatively to transpose the Gothic's precious categories of "good" and "bad." Where Stoker's novel respects generic conventions of the Gothic, producing a linear narrative of inevitability, those conventions and other dramatic conventions are disrupted in Lochhead's play, producing a narrative of multiple possibilities.

Like a picture legitimated as art and protected from tampering by a frame, dominant narratives of history secure their authority and inviolability--as well as their audiences' belief--by setting themselves up in legitimating historical language and in the protective frameworks of discrete historical eras. Presenting their truth as unalterable, the only position of readership they countenance is one of agreement. History in Lochhead's *Mary Queen of Scots* is quite another matter. By emphasizing its own metaphors of play, and by gesturing self-referentially to itself as play, *Mary Queen of Scots* reconfigures history as play. Further, by emphasizing that its own story is mediated through the definitely subjective narrator La Corbie, *Mary Queen of Scots* rejects the putative objectivity of conventional history. In Lochhead's permeable, adaptable framework, history's putative and solemn truths are rendered playful and debatable.

Countering Narratives

I would like to add that although Lochhead's plays considerably expand, or "liberate," critical points of entry to and analysis of both their pre-texts and themselves, they do not necessarily set up just another (spurious) master narrative of the "liberation of humanity." Nor are the plays characterized by the defeatism or infinite pluralizing of which postmodern counter narratives are frequently accused.⁴ The plays' plurality is at least partially circumscribed by both their own, directive focus on particular issues and interests, and by the very presence--and sometimes great power--of their pre-texts. And their commitment to liberty is qualified by their repeated acknowledgement of liberty's limited and vacillating accessibility. Indeed, through their simultaneous engagement with and destabilization of master narratives, and through their explorations of the pleasures and benefits as well as the abuses of various other forms of power, Lochhead's plays are characterized by a distinguishable ambivalence towards master narratives, domination, power, and even liberty. In this respect, these plays are probably more constructively

⁴ Whether or not postmodern counter narratives are guilty as accused is another matter.

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considered active, engaged countering narratives than static oppositional counter narratives.

One might ask, why make this effort to negotiate and even, in some degree, to recuperate master narratives? Theatre scholar Elin Diamond provides an instructive answer to the same question framed around the feminist recuperation of patriarchal mimesis:

Because it tends, I think, to recuperate us. It is better perhaps to acknowledge certain mimetic [or narrative] desires, to militate for the complex, the *different* referents we want to see, even as we work to dismantle the mechanisms of patriarchal [and other hegemonic] modeling. ("Mimesis" 62)

For Lochhead, ambivalent attitudes towards power are something she wants to explore: "I think my drive is towards storytelling, recording voices, exploring ambivalences, trying to be honest about the yes-and-no" ("Women's Writing" 72-73). And storytelling--or narrative--is her preferred means: "Drama and storytelling are not the same, but it's the storytelling aspect of drama that I like" (Lochhead in Clune 87).

It is partly because of their qualified and critical ambivalence that I find Lochhead's plays politically, comically, sympathetically and aesthetically most engaging. Studying this diegetic and formal ambivalence--not to mention Lochhead's own "split" position on the borders of cultural categories of domination and subordination (as, simultaneously, a Scot and a Briton for instance)--seems to me a progressive means of nuancing current analyses of "dominant" and "minor"/"postcolonial"/"women's" cultures, literatures, and dramas.⁵

⁵ In this respect, this thesis carries over an interest in the plural interstices of cultural hierarchies from my previous work on Canadian playwright Judith Thompson and on the Scots translations of the plays of *Québécois* Michel Tremblay. For my work on Thompson, please see "Constructing Fictions of an Essential Reality or 'This Pickshur Is Niiice': Judith Thompson's *Lion in the Streets*," and "(Im)Possibility: Fantasy and Judith Thompson's Drama." And for my work on Tremblay, please see "The Real Nation?: Michel Tremblay, Scotland, and Cultural Translatability."

Chapter One

Blood and Ice **A Feminist Critique of Romanticism¹**

True love differs in this from gold and clay,
That to divide is not to take away.

--from "Epipsychidion" by Percy Bysshe Shelley

"A la victime"? It is not the fashion for all time.

--Elise in *Blood and Ice*

Much writing from the male-authored English Romantic canon demands to be characterized as relentlessly seductive. Portraying its precursors, Enlightenment rationalism and materialism, as spiritually and emotionally bankrupt, it offers instead fantastically imaginative, winningly utopian, and brave revolutionary philosophies couched in stories of successful seduction, textually enticing its readers into vicarious complicity. In the lines quoted in this chapter's first epigraph, for instance, a chief member of the Romantic canon, Percy Bysshe Shelley, proposes a world in which "true love"--favourable because spiritual in a Romantic economy which denigrates the material gold and (inert "Man") clay--not only fails to fulfil but contravenes expectations furnished by a physical world. To divide the spiritual, for Percy Shelley, is to multiply it. What could be more seductive than a favourably constructed "true love" proliferating endlessly in conditions which, were it material, would diminish it, if not obliterate it entirely? Indeed, who would willingly resist seduction by an ethos which infers the spiritual might overcome the material, especially if the material is understood to include not only gold and clay, but blood and ice, physical abuse and hardship, foetal miscarriage and cultural exile? Why, in particular, might a woman resist Romanticism's seduction?

To answer my own rhetorical question, she might resist were she to consider whether Romanticism really provides the utopian dividends of liberty, self-determination, and the triumph of emotional and spiritual idealism over material adversity it so seductively proffers, and if so, for whom. Of course, one feature which distinguishes seduction from molestation is that the seducer ultimately wrests the consent of the seduced, but the fact

¹ Elements of this chapter and its arguments are developed in slightly different ways in an unpublished article I co-authored with Jane Sillars, "*Frankenstein's* Hideous Progeny: *Frankenstein*, *Blood and Ice*, and *Poor Things*."

that consent is not immediately forthcoming suggests the seduced is initially resistant and reluctant--and perhaps with very good reason. Amongst other considerations, as Jane Miller suggests, seduction has a curious way ultimately of vindicating the passionate, romantic seducer, and of tainting--or worse, seeming simply to reveal the taint of--the seduced.

The language of seduction spells out the ambiguities within an apparently shared responsibility. The seducer tempts. The one who is tempted yields to temptation. . . . Stealth and trickery and wiles--standard items in the seducers' arsenal--are bizarrely redeemed by the consent they have been shown to elicit. Blame shifts and slips easily from the deceiver to the deceived, for there can be no seduction which does not implicate the one who is seduced. (21)

Women are often both the object of Romanticism's address and its subject. ("Epipsychidion," for instance, was both about and addressed to a young woman with whom Percy Shelley became infatuated, Emilia Viviani.) Further, central Romantic qualities--of sensitivity, spirituality, and emotion--are promoted as feminine by Romantic poets and might understandably be so interpreted by others. Given femininity's and women's multiple implication in Romanticism, feminist critics of Romanticism must echo those key questions posed by feminist critics of the Renaissance, "whose Renaissance, whose re-birth?", and ask, whose Romanticism?² And, importantly, who's romanticized in Romanticism's world-improving strategies, and at what expense? It seems feminist critics might profitably resist Romanticism's seductive discursive strategies to interrogate just what Romanticism offers, how and why, and whether it actually delivers on its pledges.

² The question posited by Joan Kelly in her article, "Did Women Have a Renaissance?," can be seen as a crucial instigator of the recent and major re-evaluation of so-called Renaissance literature and culture. This re-evaluation suggests, among other things, that certain groups (such as women) were not suffered to be "reborn" in this period. On the contrary, the period's resurrection of classical languages and literatures may even have resulted in women's loss of some of the cultural freedoms they had previously enjoyed. With the term "Renaissance" and its implications increasingly seen as problematic, the period and its literature have been variously renamed, the most popular name being Early Modern. Far from being purely cosmetic, this renaming is intended to promote a paradigmatic shift in the ways we think about the period and its culture. I believe it is this kind of shift which critics like Anne K. Mellor espouse for studies in Romanticism when they propose differentiating between, for instance, a masculine and a feminine Romanticism (Mellor *Romanticism and Gender*).

It is precisely this inquiry which Liz Lochhead poses and develops in her first full length stage play, *Blood and Ice*. The play dramatizes the life of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley,³ early nineteenth-century novelist, editor, biographer, and (as Michelene Wandor emphasizes [8]) mother--and in so doing constructs an intellectually thorough and imaginatively potent critique of Romantic ideology. Although the play has seen various (and sometimes quite different) incarnations through Lochhead's repeated rewritings,⁴ it

³ I would prefer to avoid the sexist critical slip of calling women writers by their forenames and male writers by their surnames. Thus, when I refer to such historical people as Mary Shelley and Percy Shelley I shall attempt to use both their forenames and their surnames (although, for verbal economy I will call George Gordon, Lord Byron simply Lord Byron). When I refer to the characters in *Blood and Ice*, I shall generally use the names employed by Lochhead, such as Mary and Shelley.

⁴ Due to Lochhead's numerous rewrites, the play exists in several versions and different productions have used different texts. To clarify, I include an early production history showing title, date of production or first show, theatre company and its location, director, script availability and publication information, and the abbreviation I use to refer to the versions I discuss in this chapter:

- A. *Mary and the Monster*; 1981; Belgrade Theatre, Coventry; Dir. Michael Boyd; script not published.
- B. *Blood and Ice*; August 19, 1982; Traverse Theatre Club, Edinburgh; Dir. Kenny Ireland; ts. available at Glasgow University Library Special Collections, STA H.O. Box 10/2; published, Edinburgh, Salamander P, 1982; referred to here as *B&I* 1982.
- C. *Blood and Ice*; February 27, 1984; Pepper's Ghost Theatre Company at New Merlin's Cave, London; Dir. Joanna Proctor; published in *Plays by Women: Volume IV* 1985; referred to here as *B&I* 1985 or simply by page number.
- D. *Blood and Ice*; 11 September, 1986; Winged Horse Touring Productions at Harbour Arts Centre, Irvine; Dir. John Carnegie; ts. available at Glasgow University Library Special Collections, STA J.d. Box 5/5; referred to here as *B&I* 1986.
- E. *Blood and Ice*; 16 August, 1988 (Edinburgh Festival Fringe); Pen Name (RSAMD) at Harry Younger Hall (Traverse Theatre Club); Dir. Dave McVicar; ts./ms. (version "D," above, with changes) available at National Library of Scotland Archives, Acc. 10530, No. 7; referred to here as *B&I* 1988.

Although I understand the 1986 Winged Horse script may now be Lochhead's preferred text for performance, this text has not been published. The text I thus refer

consistently examines Mary Shelley's life, her relation to several important Romantic ideologues and their philosophies, and the ideological and autobiographical implications of what she called her "hideous progeny," the novel *Frankenstein*.⁵ Through each of these examinations, Lochhead's play steadily exposes some of the hypocrisies, contradictions, "tricker[ies] and wiles" of the male-biased prevailing ideology of Mary Shelley's life and time, Romanticism. It indicates that, for some, Romanticism offers not the spiritual liberation heralded in this chapter's first epigraph from Percy Shelley's "Epipsychidion," but rather the victimization identified in the second epigraph, "'A la victime'? It is not the fashion for all time," spoken by the maid Elise in Lochhead's *Blood and Ice* (1986 85).

The implications of *Blood and Ice*'s reassessment of Romanticism are manifold, for if Romanticism itself is partly a reaction to Enlightenment values, reassessing Romanticism also means reassessing the Enlightenment. Romanticism's apparent celebration of passion, emotion, inspiration, and imagination recommends it at first as a healthy--and possibly women-friendly--corrective to Enlightenment rationalism, with its apparent commitment to a philosophical and scientific reason which might easily be labelled patriarchal. *Blood and Ice*'s simple titular juxtaposition of passionate blood and cool ice, however, suggests the story is not that straightforward, and Romanticism is not necessarily undeniably preferable to Enlightenment rationalism.

Blood and Ice carefully compares Romanticism's auspicious self-definition with its practice to evaluate the aptness of the former. It pays particular attention to Romanticism's putative "femininity" and to whether Romanticism actually and generously gives to women, or whether it arrogantly steals from them. It also implicitly re-evaluates Romanticism's whipping-horse definition of the Enlightenment--a re-evaluation which is resonant not only for what might be understood as the gendered characteristics of the two ideologies, but also for what might be considered those ideologies' national identities. While the early Enlightenment within Britain is widely associated with late-sixteenth to early-eighteenth century Englishmen like Francis Bacon, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Sir Isaac Newton, the late Enlightenment within Britain is associated with eighteenth-century Scots like David Hume, Thomas Reid, and Adam Smith, and is often referred to as the Scottish Enlightenment. The Scottish Enlightenment, therefore, is the *immediate* context within and against which the all-English canon of Romantic poets--William Wordsworth, William Blake, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Lord Byron, Percy Shelley, and

to, unless otherwise noted, is the 1984 Pepper's Ghost version published in *Plays by Women: Volume IV*.

⁵ In her 1831 introduction to the revised edition of *Frankenstein* (originally published in 1818), Mary Shelley wrote: "And now, once again, I bid my hideous progeny go forth and prosper" (55).

John Keats--were writing.⁶ And according to George E. Davie's *The Scottish Enlightenment and Other Essays*, Scottish Enlightenment philosophy was characterized by an attention to the spiritual and the democratic which--although it may not have been equally characteristic of some continental European Enlightenment philosophies--certainly did not have to be re-invented within Britain by the self-congratulatory English Romantics. In an essay entitled "The Social Significance of the Scottish Philosophy of Common Sense," Davie describes how the Scottish Enlightenment's strategy for economic development, for instance, was governed by "the thesis that a sort of all-round spiritual participation by means of educational democracy is the pre-condition of material advance" (59). And in the foreword to Davie's collection, novelist James Kelman attributes to the Scottish Enlightenment questions which the Romantics would no doubt like to see as their own. He also suggests that these questions, which "derive from the primary problem of how to reconcile [Scottish] economic expansion with the moral vitality of the populace," are relevant now, as they were then.

Do people have the fundamental right to freedom? By what authority does one person, or group of people, control another? Is there a case for assuming responsibility over the social and spiritual life of other adults? When does "teaching" become colonization? Can one culture ever be "better" than another? Is the attempt to deny your right to exploit me "unconstitutional"? (Kelman n.p.)

Lochhead by no means resurrects a patriarchal Scottish philosophical tradition in *Blood and Ice*, but she does reassess English Romanticism's supposedly revolutionary advocacies and reforms, and the arrogance of its attitudes towards women, and, implicitly, towards its precursor, the Scottish Enlightenment.

To effect its feminist critique of Romanticism, *Blood and Ice* employs two complementary strategies. The first is primarily diegetic. The play focuses on, and thus directs audience focus on, Mary Shelley, not her arguably more famous lover and husband, Percy Shelley, or their friend, George Gordon, Lord Byron. It scrutinizes Romanticism's conceptualizations of the act of creation as pre-eminent over the created

⁶ Notably absent from this canon is the pre-eminent Scots ^{pre-}Romantic^A writer Robert Burns. As is the case with Percy Shelley, Burns's personal profligacies and their repercussions for his wife Jean Armour and their family undermine his association through his poetry with sexual and social liberation and social equality. Burns's differences--in class and nationality to name two very important ones--from Percy Shelley and Shelley's English Romantic brethren significantly distinguish Burns's experiences and meanings from those of the English, however.

product, of nature as innocent, of the individual as autonomous and invincible, and of women as simultaneously emblematic of wickedness (like John Keats's "belle dame") and perfection (like Percy Shelley's "Epi-psyche"). It recontextualizes and grounds Romanticism within material conditions rather than the flights of fancy preferred by its dreaming male poets. And it reframes *Frankenstein* to emphasize the implications of the novel's parallels with Mary Shelley's life. The novel's "noble experiment" of animating the Creature, for example, is juxtaposed with Mary and Percy Shelley's "noble experiment" of attempting so-called "free love." And just as Frankenstein eventually scorns the nobility of his experiment, *Blood and Ice's* Mary comes to doubt the freedom of hers. Similarly, the novel's Creature is aligned at various times and in various ways with Percy Shelley, Lord Byron, the Shelley children, and Mary Shelley herself. These alignments emphasize the operation and effects of social exclusion, they examine the concept of monstrosity, and they query the responsibility of the creator (be she or he poet, parent, or scientist) for his or her progeny.

Cumulatively, this first diegetic strategy of re-examining and criticizing Romanticism demonstrates why Lochhead's Mary Shelley chooses, as does *Frankenstein's* sea-faring Walton, to "turn back," to reject at least provisionally Romanticism's and specifically Percy Shelley's idealistic beliefs, because while these beliefs may aggrandize the self, they neglect and may injure others. Importantly, this aspect of the play also suggests that Mary Shelley's decision to "turn back" cannot be "explained away" socially by the claim that she gradually grew more and more simply to covet a certain level of bourgeois respectability and comfort, that she "sold out," a claim which Muriel Spark suggests many of Mary Shelley's critics have perhaps been overhasty to employ (x). Lochhead's play emphasizes that Mary Shelley's gradual disillusionment with Percy Shelley's professed beliefs cannot be attributed so much to vague social aspirations as to very real and trying cultural and material conditions.

Re-evaluating an ideology whose original and continued dissemination rests crucially not just on its ideas but on how they are expressed--what textual wiles its writers employ to triumph in their seductions--*Blood and Ice's* second strategy for elaborating its critique of Romantic ideology is primarily structural, focusing on how meaning is textually produced. Manipulating narrative structure and scenic effect, and using metatextual techniques, the play interrogates and problematizes Romanticism's discursive assumptions, from its championing of the individual to its implicit claims to textual innocence. The episodic narrative structure of *Blood and Ice*, moving back and forth from Mary's past to her present, and back and forth between different degrees of psychological realism, continually fractures temporal continuity and, effectively, audience engagement and identification. Repeatedly pushed in and out, the audience is not seduced to accept unquestioningly the world view offered by the characters, as in much Romantic writing, but alienated to evaluate critically the benefits and detractions of each expounded ideological

attitude. The play's metatextuality further defuses Romanticism's seductiveness by exposing Romantic texts as not innocent, unmotivated visions but as culturally determined products, produced in potentially exploitative and certainly material conditions.

This chapter parallels the play's two strategic approaches to re-evaluating Romanticism outlined here. It examines first diegetic aspects of *Blood and Ice*'s critique and then structural, metatextual, and scenic aspects to investigate how Romanticism may be constructively de-romanticized.

Flimsy Impossible Women: *Blood and Ice*'s Diegetic Critique of Romanticism

Lochhead turns in *Blood and Ice*, as she will in *Dracula* and *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off*, to material that holds mythic status in Western culture. Her narrator and central character, Mary Shelley, reminisces and "flashes back" to examine significant events, personalities, and relationships within the infamous social circle of Lord Byron, Percy Shelley, Mary Shelley herself, her step-sister Claire Clairmont, and attendant others in the years from Mary Shelley's inception of *Frankenstein*, 1816, to after Lord Byron's death in 1824. And to varying degrees in the play's different versions Lochhead revives and reconsiders Mary Shelley's wonderful story of Frankenstein and his Creature.

The history of the intellectual and creative enclave that met at Lake Geneva in 1816 has been dramatized by other playwrights, including Ann Jellicoe and Howard Brenton.⁷ However, while these playwrights use this material to examine, more specifically, Percy Shelley, his short, dramatic life, and his revolutionary ideas, Lochhead approaches the material as a means of considering Mary Shelley, her life, and her ideas. *Frankenstein* too has enjoyed (or suffered) repeated dramatization, virtually since its first publication. Again, however, Lochhead departs from common dramatic approaches to the novel. According to Steven Earl Forry's *Hideous Progenies*, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*

⁷ Jellicoe's *Shelley* and Brenton's *Bloody Poetry* are both, in various ways, critical of Romantic ideology (and certainly elements of Jellicoe's play are feminist). However, by focusing on Romanticism's male writers, both plays regrettably perpetuate an approach to, and an understanding of, Romanticism as a male domain. In *Radical Stages: Alternative History and Modern British Drama*, D. Keith Peacock performs a brief comparison of Brenton's and Lochhead's plays concluding, "In each case. . . history is employed yet again to explore concerns of the present, in [Lochhead's] case not of politics but of gender" (161). By making this concluding distinction between politics and gender, Peacock regrettably propagates and perpetuates an understanding of the two categories as mutually exclusive.

had seen ninety-six different stage dramatizations up to 1986 and over one hundred film versions since 1931 (108). Forry notes that early dramatizations set important precedents for future stage and film adaptations, crucially diminishing Mary Shelley's original complex story. For Forry, Mary Shelley's original "secularized the Faust myth, combined the techniques of romance and realism in one virtually self-destructing narrative, employed the doppelgänger theme to suggest that the created was the creator's double, presented in *Frankenstein* a portrait of the Byronic hero-villain, and implied tragic analogues between every character (each being both victim and victimizer)." Early dramatizations of the novel, in contrast, "charged the tale with alchemy, developed solely the gothic (or romance) roots of the story, abandoned the doppelgänger theme in favor of a simplified Byronic hero-villain (*Frankenstein*) tormented by a dumb show villain-hero (the Creature), and simplified the plot by removing Walton's narrative, confining the action to twenty-four hours, and reducing the major characters to four types: the hero, the villain, the persecuted heroine, and the comical rustic" (x). Early dramatizations, thus, made of Shelley's challenging, ambiguous story a well-made melodramatic moral allegory criticizing "a simple hubristic overreacher" (Forry x). This conveniently simple precedent has been re-deployed by dramatists since the nineteenth century, especially as film versions of the myth have popularized many of the same elements. Forry does remark, however, that a small number of *Frankenstein* dramatizations do "politicize the novel," particularly, for him, "in terms of apocalyptic observations of life in the modern age" (116). This return to the novel's political implications is significant but differs nonetheless from Lochhead's play. *Blood and Ice*, which is not included in Forry's catalogue, uses the novel as a political tool, not to create a moral allegory on the potential folly of genetic experimentation, but to examine the gender and class biases of Mary Shelley's situation in the early 1800s, biases which are particularly disturbing given that so many in Mary Shelley's immediate circle were self-styled champions of progressive social and political reform.

In *Blood and Ice*, Lochhead shifts emphasis from other dramatizations of, and thus from popularly circulating ideas on, Romanticism and *Frankenstein*. Her shifts impel her audiences likewise to shift their perspectives. Anne K. Mellor, an important feminist critic of Romanticism, argues that interpretations of Romanticism both have been and continue to be profoundly shaped by a prevalent construction of Romanticism "based. . . almost exclusively on the writings of six male poets (Wordsworth, Coleridge, Blake, Byron, Shelley and Keats)" (*Romanticism and Gender* 1). Thus, even when Mary Shelley's life and writings garner recognition, it is often within the context of elucidating Percy Shelley and his work. "Her life," writes one of Mary Shelley's biographers regarding Mary and Percy Shelley, "has been collapsed into his" (Sunstein 6). Admittedly, within the last decade and a half *Frankenstein* has been the subject of a vast critical re-evaluation--and resulting appreciation--heralded by George Levine's and U.C. Knoepfelmacher's 1979

collection of *Frankenstein* criticism, *The Endurance of Frankenstein*. But while Levine, Knoepfelmacher and others have keenly acknowledged *Frankenstein's* prescience, intelligence, and acute social critique, they have remained conspicuously reticent about its author Mary Shelley, and thus about attributing prescience, intelligence, and acute social critique to her. "[F]or an author who had been persistently overshadowed by critical and biographical attention to her illustrious husband and parents--Percy Bysshe Shelley, Mary Wollstonecraft, and William Godwin--the irony of being obscured even by her own renown is especially mordant," conclude the editors of the recently published *The Other Mary Shelley: Beyond Frankenstein*. "Ironically," they continue, "the canonization of *Frankenstein* [in the 1980s] has institutionalized the marginality of Mary Shelley, throwing her salient and central voice to the edges of Romantic discourse" (Fische *et al* 3-4).

Employing Mary Shelley as its central character, *Blood and Ice* emphatically attributes *Frankenstein's* insights to her, recuperating her from the relative obscurity in which literary history has cast her. Acknowledging Mary Shelley's unique position at the apex of the English Romantic movement--a movement one biographer believes Mary Shelley "literally embodied" because of her parentage (Sunstein 3)--*Blood and Ice* refocuses on Romanticism from her perspective. And selecting historical details of her life as its plot, *Blood and Ice* refocuses on Romanticism from a materialist perspective, testing the prevailing ideas of her time by situating them in material conditions. The play thus effects a materialist feminist re-examination of some of Romanticism's favoured issues and tropes, reinforcing its criticisms by suggesting that *Frankenstein* may be read symptomatically as an expression of Mary Shelley's frustration with, and even rejection of, prevailing Romantic ideology. This level of the play's interrogation of Romanticism works through a steady depiction of details which precipitate not only Mary's gradual disaffection with her situation, but also, potentially, the audience's ultimate rejection of Romanticism.

The Oxford Companion to English Literature summarizes Romanticism⁸ in terms which also convey how it is depicted in *Blood and Ice* and how it is considered in this chapter:

[Romanticism is] a literary movement, and profound shift in sensibility, which took place in Britain and throughout Europe roughly between 1770 and 1848. Intellectually, it marked a violent reaction to the Enlightenment. Politically it was inspired by the revolutions in America and France and popular wars of

⁸ J. A. Cuddon notes that in *The Decline and Fall of the Romantic Ideal*, F.L. Lucas counts 11 396 definitions of romanticism (Cuddon 813). I concur that the terms romantic and romanticism (or, as I refer to them here, Romantic and Romanticism) are multitudinous and nebulous. However, I also suggest that due largely to the influences of canon formation, certain ideas about what Romanticism means may be identified as widely held, and indeed dominant (Mellor "On Romanticism. . ." 8).

independence in Poland, Spain, Greece, and elsewhere. Emotionally, it expressed an extreme assertion of the self and the value of individual experience (the "egotistical sublime"), together with the sense of the infinite and the transcendental. Socially it championed progressive causes, though when they were frustrated it often produced a bitter, gloomy, and despairing outlook. The stylistic keynote of Romanticism is intensity, and its watchword is 'Imagination'.... Romanticism expressed an unending revolt against classical form, conservative morality, authoritarian government, personal insincerity, and human moderation. ('Romanticism' *The Oxford Companion to English Literature*)

Romanticism is unabashedly idealistic, individualistic, and revolutionary. It celebrates spiritual creativity and imagination. It proposes it possible to achieve the transcendental--truth, wholeness, perfectibility--through "the agency of the poetic imagination" (Mellor *Mary Shelley* 80). It values the creative poetic process over the created product, and it reveres the creative individual, in apparently spontaneous inspiration, as a "poet-saviour" with direct control over the material.⁹ Finally, it celebrates supposedly natural behaviour--including a rejection of social (not "natural") rules of kinship, religion, governance and ownership--as "true," desirable, and a means of achieving social equality and freedom.

***Blood and Ice's* Mary and Romanticism**

Blood and Ice's diegetic deconstruction of Romanticism is complex and I have chosen to map it in two ways: first, by following a narrative of Mary's gradual disillusionment with Romanticism; and second, by examining in closer detail four specific subjects--women, creation, individualism, and freedom--their Romantic interpretations, and some implications of these interpretations. *Blood and Ice's* narrative of Mary's gradual disaffection with Romanticism begins with her criticizing first not Romantic tenets--which, for her, are still unassailable--but their implementation, particularly when that implementation abuses such Romantic virtues as "the natural." "Shelley, how *could* you...?," Mary demands of Shelley after he has disrupted her tea party, possibly accidentally, by arriving naked from his swim, displaying what he calls "every inch of Percy Shelley, the whole natural man!" to her guests. He argues his right to natural--as opposed to conventional--expression, claiming neither he nor she ever "cared for the world's approval. Not in such... silly and private matters." She retorts that he behaves the way he does for by no means such an idealistic purpose as maintaining political integrity, but simply to "outrage." And she suggests that he goes "deliberately out of [his] way to

⁹ The term "poet-saviour" is Anne K. Mellor's. She uses it in both her introduction to the collection *Romanticism and Feminism*, "On Romanticism and Feminism" (7), and her book on Mary Shelley, *Mary Shelley: Her Life, Her Fiction, Her Monsters* (79).

offend elderly ladies in such... silly and trivial ways!" (83-84). The Mary Shelley presented in the play's first memory scene is prepared to defend Romantic beliefs--as she does later in the scene to the maid Elise--but also to dispute their deployment when it needlessly offends or hurts others. This is the youngest Mary Shelley we meet in the play, and she appears already to be sensitive to Romanticism's potential to display what Mellor has called a "rampant egoism," where the Romantic considers his or her own behaviour right and just and dismisses anyone else's contrary opinion (*Mary Shelley* 79).

That said, this Mary Shelley is demonstrably smitten with Percy Shelley, and she will go only so far in criticizing Romantic beliefs and practices, bound as they are with her beloved and, indeed, her love, and implicated as she is in them herself, having run away with Percy Shelley despite his "conventional" marriage to Harriet Westbrook, and despite her father's objections. But the play's audience may read beyond Mary Shelley's criticisms of Romanticism in the scene. Mary is apparently prepared to tolerate Shelley's nakedness (or, as he would have it, bodily freedom) as a gesture of his commitment to what she considers more significant forms of freedom. She explains to Elise:

You must not be surprised at anything Mr Shelley does, he is... I think you know we are not... he is not bound by normal conventions, he cares nothing for them, neither of us do! But he is a good, good man, he is against all viciousness, and cruelty, and tyranny and ownership. What is nakedness compared to...

"Shrugging," Elise replies, "It's only nature, Madame" (85). Curiously, Mary's defence of Shelley is marked by syntactical ambivalence and hesitation. Given that Romantic ideals are familiar to Mary from both her mother's and her father's writings and work, this hesitation cannot simply reflect an initiate's lack of confidence with a new found language; instead, it must admit an ambivalence in Mary's desire to accept Shelley's interpretation and performance of "natural," and an ambivalence in her desire to defend him. Ostensibly dutifully, Elise grants Shelley refuge in his "natural," but by repeating "nature" she perhaps does so ironically, drawing attention again to "nature," to its claims to universal virtuous meaning, and to the way Shelley uses it to vindicate his behaviour. By reiterating "nature," Elise subtly problematizes its interpretation, suggesting that no act or belief is "natural," value free, or free of meaning, and that meaning may differ according to the perspective of the interpreter, and indicating that some, like Shelley, may intellectualize the "natural" for "unnatural" ends.

Mary claims to reject ownership, particularly of people, since it entails curbs on individual freedom. But what she believes to be her benevolent ownership may also limit freedom, acting as cultural imperialism or a Lady Bountiful tyranny of niceness. Immediately following Mary's speech condemning "cruelty, and tyranny and ownership," she gives Elise a hand-me-down dress in the two published versions of the play, and a shawl and bonnet in the Winged Horse version. In the third version a stage direction notes, "ELISE isn't all that impressed looking with the bribery" (*B&I* 1986 10), making clear

Mary's abuse of her material domination over, and control of, Elise. Although Mary denounces ownership for the freedom she sees it taking away, she apparently does not question the *power*, and even tyranny, of ownership to bestow, reinforcing the "possession's" position of indebtedness. ". . . Elise is not my puppet," Mary insists, "It is my duty to educate her, enlighten her" (96). Simply by assuming Elise wants to be "enlightened" in the ways Mary thinks best, Mary fails to recognize how her benevolence may be cultural imperialism, or, as Byron says, "tyranis[ing] the world by force-feeding it freedom" (96). The audience can observe that Mary and Percy Shelley do not conquer tyranny and ownership by preaching natural behaviour. They simply hold the privileged position of defining these concepts for themselves in ways which may benefit them but not others. Of Elise, Mary says, "I have not bought the right to abuse her. I ought to act towards all creatures with benevolence," to which Byron replies,

Benevolence by all means, Mrs Shelley. Nicety costs nothing. But recognise that where you are paymaster, benevolence is yours to bestow... or to take away. (96)

A critique of Romanticism's projection of ideological innocence on to concepts which cannot be ideologically unburdened accrues for the play's audience and for Mary. As the play progresses, she no longer questions Romanticism's practices but its beliefs as well, particularly those that apply to women and to the domestic operation of Romantic ideology. In a long scene in which Mary, Shelley, Byron, and Claire debate Romanticism's ideas, Mary identifies and communicates the ideological burden of violence invested in Romanticism's images of women. Reciting from Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner," Mary is "sucked into her own fear," seduced by the Romantic text, and unable to stop when the others become alarmed. "'Is that a Death? And are there two? Is Death that woman's mate?'" Mary recites, continuing,

"Her lips were red, her looks were free,
Her locks were yellow as gold;
Her skin was as white as leprosy,
The Nightmare Life in Death was she,
Who thicks man's blood with cold." (98-99 cf. Coleridge, "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," ll. 192-93 and 205-209)

At this point in her recital, "SHELLEY has [a] fit of hysterics and hallucination, [and] screams." He begs,

Mary, stop. Don't look at me so. Mary! You're naked, Mary... cover yourself... your breasts! Eyes, Mary, you have eyes for nipples. Don't stare at me. Piercing. The eyes in your breasts are staring me down, piercing me to the very soul....

As Byron points out, Shelley describes Mary as "The Lamia! Eyes in breasts, like a vision from Coleridge's Christabel!" (98-99). Byron's comparison is particularly apt because the

historical Percy Shelley is reported to have had such a fit as that enacted here after a recitation of "Christabel" by the historical Lord Byron. In Coleridge's "Christabel," the "lovely lady, Christabel" (l. 23) is literally entranced by the mysterious Geraldine. Geraldine sexually initiates "holy Christabel" (l. 212), demoniacally instigating the latter's fall from innocence to experience. The collision of innocence with sexuality is captured in these lines (which also tie in with Shelley's vision of Mary's breasts), in which Geraldine has just removed her robe:

Behold! her bosom, and half her side --
Are lean and old and foul of hue.
A sight to dream of, not to tell!
And she is to sleep with Christabel. (ll. 236-39)¹⁰

Notably, in both "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" and "Christabel," the sexualized woman ("Her lips were red, her looks were free") is constructed as demonic. She heralds trial and torture for the Mariner, a loss of innocence for Christabel and for the Romantic idealist Shelley, a violent appropriation of the perspective and, literally, the gaze which the male Romantic thought he controlled (Leask 59), and a savage revolt of the female sexuality he presumably thought he had domesticated. As Karen Swann demonstrates, Romanticism "harasses" women by simultaneously magnifying them as its inspiring muses and denigrating them as evil, particularly when they are at all sexual, and especially as a means of displacing the male Romantic writer's often conflated fears of death and female sexuality (87). For Meena Alexander, "the Romantic vision of the feminine. . . might be gentle, nurturing and silent, or fiercely sexual and fatal" (6). Mary's outburst in this scene suggests she senses the contradictions of the roles she, as a woman, is expected to play according to Percy Shelley's and other Romantics' inscriptions and appropriations of femininity: "free lover" (who, as a woman, cannot be free but must be "loose"), and divine inspiration. She appears to sense that her textual seduction may mean, as Jane Miller has written, "all those ways in which women learn who they are in cultures which simultaneously include and exclude them, take their presence for granted

¹⁰ It has been speculated that these were some of the lines from "Christabel" recited by Lord Byron before Percy Shelley had an hysterical fit on June 18, 1816 at Lake Geneva. In his diary entry for this day, Dr. John Polidori, Lord Byron's travelling companion and personal physician, records:

Twelve o'clock, really began to talk ghostly. L[ord] B[yron] repeated some verses of Coleridge's *Christabel*, of the witch's breast; when silence ensued, and Shelley suddenly shrieking and putting his hands to his head, ran out of the room with a candle. Threw water in his face, and gave him ether. He was looking at Mrs. S[helley] [Mary], and suddenly thought of a woman he had heard of who had eyes instead of nipples, which, taking hold of his mind, horrified him. (127-28)

while denying it, and entice them finally into narratives which may reduce them by exalting them" (2). While Mary seems to sense Romanticism's contradictions and harassments of the feminine, she does not yet clearly articulate what Nina Auerbach has termed so succinctly women's "Romantic Imprisonment".¹¹ However, through the power and desperation of Mary's seemingly illogical outburst, a logic regarding Romanticism's relationship with women may begin to cohere for the audience, a relationship which sometimes glorifies women and sometimes vilifies them but consistently and profoundly exploits them.

Linked to Mary's discomfort with Romanticism's treatment of women is her rapidly forming dispute with the domestic operation of Romantic ideology; that is, partly, how Romanticism figures domestic relationships. Sisterhood, for example, is specially singled out, idealized, and appropriated by the Romantic Percy Shelley as a trope of "natural" equality. For him it economically signifies (sibling) equality and the conventionally female-gendered qualities of both sensibility and calmness. "Mary is my soul's sister, aren't you, Mary?," he boasts. In response to Claire's protest, "If she was your *real* sister you could not--," he maintains,

And if she were my "real sister" I could not love her any more, nor do I see any reason why--were she my "real sister"--I should love her any *less*, or modify the least expression of my love. Where is any possible harm between those that truly love? Ladies, Wollstonecraft said: "Make brothers and equals of your husbands and lovers." Shelley says: "Make husbands and lovers out of your brothers and equals"--if you so desire. Let love know no limit! (93)

For its professed commitment to equality and the free expression of desire, not to mention its politic invocation of Mary Wollstonecraft's beliefs, Shelley's argument appears ideologically attractive. However, a closer examination of his poetics, particularly his sibling metaphors, suggests his claims are duplicitous, and his interpretation of Wollstonecraft is more distorted by lust than it is guided by logic.

Alan Richardson explains that,

. . . during what literary historians call the "ages" of Sensibility and Romanticism, the patriarchal tradition was qualified by a widespread revaluation of the feminine, of the emotions, and of relationality. . . . Perhaps

¹¹ It must be noted that, for Auerbach, imprisonment is not altogether deplorable because "its oppression forces all its subjects to invent themselves. For women, romantic imprisonment is a familiar, often exhilarating condition" (xi). Mary, in *Blood and Ice*, does "invent herself," but the play suggests this is certainly not an easy task, and possibly not even an exhilarating one. Consider the play's final lines: "(MARY sits down at her writing table. Quietly, resignedly going on.) Oh, Shelley. (*Begins to write.*)" (116). Incarceration, presumably, is not always romantic.

because the gendered opposition of reason and emotion is. . . so deeply embedded in Western culture, Romantic writers could not simply claim emotional intensity and intuition as male prerogatives. Instead, where male writers had relegated sympathy and sensibility to their mothers, wives, and sisters, they now sought to reclaim "feminine" qualities through incorporating some of these same figures. (14-15)

For his ideological and poetic purposes, the male Romantic writer "colonizes," or in Richardson's words "cannibalizes" (21), the feminine. This is precisely what Shelley does in the above-quoted passage, appropriating the image of sisterhood to convey the wholeness of his love and the "emotional intensity" of "tru[e] love." As Richardson suggests, in much Romantic writing "fusion with the sister"--what Shelley elsewhere calls "Brother-body-soul melting into sister-body-soul" (*B&I* 1982 29)--is less idealistic than it sounds. Indeed, it is "a one-sided pursuit of wholeness." The woman is "subordinated to a male agenda" and there is no effective or constructive interrogation of "conventional notions of gender" (20). Shelley's subtext might thus be read, "Men: make lovers of your sisters." Power, in the poet's "incestuous" literary relationship with his "sister," is distributed asymmetrically. The "true" of "truly love" in Shelley's concept of incest must be seen, along with "nature" and "wholeness," as not ideologically neutral but again "one-sided," benefiting the "male agenda." De-romanticizing Romanticism's trope of natural, calm, sensitive equality, Romantic "sisterhood" means male appropriation of the female.

In *Blood and Ice*, Romantic idealization of sisterhood (which includes relationships between women who are not sisters but which Romanticism figures as sisterly) is destabilized for Mary and the play's audience primarily through the triangular relationship between Mary, her stepsister Claire, and the maid Elise. Mary sums up Romanticism's dream vision of sisterhood when she says, "I ought to love my sister. As myself" (*B&I* 1982 32). There should be only true love, no jealousy or animosity, between "sisters" in Romanticism's ideal world. "I ought to act towards all creatures with benevolence" (96). There should be no stratification of behaviour according to class, or relationship. But what Romanticism tropes, or hopes, is demonstrated as frequently untenable in the material conditions of the three women's interactions. Mary cannot tolerate Claire's behaviour and refuses to see it as "equal" to her own:

CLAIRE Do you not think we are somewhat alike? *Oui?* Yes, Mary, we do resemble each other after all. Oh, not in colouring, no, but in bearing, in--

MARY How could we, we are not--

CLAIRE Not in blood, no. But we are closer perhaps than sisters, *oui?* Haven't we always shared everything?

MARY Since we were three years old.

CLAIRE You love to write. And I love to write. You found a passionate poet
to be your lover. And I--

MARY Came with us.

"It really is too vexing!", Mary admits the core of her annoyance with Claire, "You behaving like a... maidservant!" (86). Defining Claire's behaviour according to a social hierarchy, and therein demoting it, Mary collapses Romantic sisterhood's supposedly paradigmatic embodiment of equality. As a sister, she demonstrates that sisterhood is not simply a metaphor, it is a lived--and frequently vexed--relationship. As an aspiring Romantic herself, she betrays a desire to self-promote--to see herself, in other words, as superior, precisely unequal--which gives the lie to Romanticism's idealistic claims to equality.

Mary is confronted by her own hypocrisy again later in the play. She claims that she has always tried to act towards Elise with sisterly "benevolence." However, when she discovers that Elise is pregnant, Mary insists that Elise leave the Shelley family's employ and marry the child's supposed father. Invoking the familiar sister metaphor, Claire challenges the unfairness of Mary's decision. "Would you condemn your sister to banishment and poverty," Claire asks Mary, "all for conceiving a child out of wedlock? It is only nature, Mary. . . . Put yourself in her place, Mary" (*B&I* 1982 24). Mary practises her own "free love" but condemns the outcome of others'. Elise, having called Mary a hypocrite, exposes the class bias of Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* and thus the class bias of Mary Shelley's beliefs, based as they are on her mother's writings.

ELISE The marvellous Mary Wollstonecraft was very keen on freedom for
Woman. At least freedom for the Woman with six hundred a year and
a mill-owning husband to support her--and a bevy of maid-servants
sweeping and starching and giving suck to her squalling infants--not
to speak of her rutting husband.

MARY *slaps her hard.* ELISE and MARY *looking at each other.* *Echoing the*
CLAIRE/MARY *mirror scene in Act One.*

Don't you think we are sisters? Are we not somewhat alike? (107)

As Elise says, "free love is not to be afforded to the working classes!"--especially, it is implied, when the worker is engaging in free love with her mistress's husband, or even being exploited by her mistress's husband's claims to be practising free love.¹² Mary, whose three children have died young and who argues the necessity of some wealth to raise children, points out, "Love is never free to any woman, Elise" (107). But Elise argues strongly that it is perhaps less free to some women, particularly women of a lower

¹² Mellor reports that, historically, on 28 December, 1818, Elena Adelaide Shelley, "the possible daughter of Percy Shelley and their Swiss nursemaid Elise, [was] born in Naples" (*Mary Shelley* xvii).

social status. The jealousies, animosities, and material inequalities between Mary, Claire, and Elise in *Blood and Ice*, when these three women are positioned repeatedly as "sisters," undermine Romanticism's appropriation of sisterhood as a constant and idealized image of calmness and equality.

Through a steady accretion of experiences which flush Romanticism's ideals with its contradictory practices, *Blood and Ice's* Mary Shelley decides to "turn back" and reject, at least provisionally, Percy Shelley's Romantic beliefs. At the end of the play and providing both a chronological summary and a running critique of her beliefs and identifications throughout the time of the play, Mary considers the autobiographical resonances in several of *Frankenstein's* main characters. She recognizes that she has seen herself at one point, like Percy Shelley, as the Romantic author who celebrates creation: "I thought: I am Frankenstein, the creator who loves creation and hates its results." Subsequently, she has seen herself, again like Percy Shelley, as a misunderstood and outcast genius: "And then I thought: no, I am the monster, poor misunderstood creature feared and hated by all mankind." Next, she has seen the differences between her position and Percy Shelley's, but has exploited those differences as entitling her to one of Romanticism's greatest extravagances, an egotistical, indulgent self-pity: "And then I thought: it is worse, worse than that, I am the female monster, gross, gashed, ten times more hideous than my male counterpart, denied life, tied to the monster bed forever." Finally, and calmly, she aligns herself with the character from *Frankenstein* who was, like her, attracted to Romanticism's ideals but repelled by its abuses and who finally settled his ambivalences by deciding, if provisionally, to "turn back," away from Romanticism's pursuit. "But now I see who I am, in my book," Mary concludes:

I am Captain Walton, explorer, survivor. My own cool narrator. The one who once dreamed of that land of wonder, where, way beyond the pole, sailing over a calm sea, further than the flickering Northern Lights--Men and Woman Might Live In Freedom.

The one who turned back.

The one who, when the ice came, stuck fast, unable to go back or forward.

The one who saw what it might cost and promised if they would be released would turn south, head for more moderate regions.

The one who could not go on without the consensus of all fellow travellers.

(115)

Explicitly equating herself with *Frankenstein's* captain of the appropriately named "Endeavour," Captain Walton, Mary equates her experiences with his. Her original project, like his, was to found or "discover" a society where "Men and Woman Might Live In Freedom." But she concedes, as does he, that the pursuit of this project, what Victor Frankenstein calls his equally ambitious and well-intentioned enterprise, this "noble

ambition," will have costs. And these costs will be borne not only by those like Mary and Walton who may choose willingly to consent to certain sacrifices in the pursuit of their endeavour. They will also be borne by others--her children and employees, his crew--for all intents and purposes unwitting passengers on board for the endeavour, passengers whom she cannot justifiably ask to make--nor seduce into making--the same sacrifices she does. By assuming all others will share their ambitions, Mary, Walton, and Frankenstein each compromise their professed commitment to democratic principles, to achieving a fairer, better world for all individuals. Mary and Walton eventually recognize the contradictions of their behaviour and conclude, if Frankenstein does not, that they cannot assume to know what is best for all, they cannot pursue their endeavours "without the consent of all fellow travellers." What is more, they will not attempt to wrest consent using the seducer's arsenal of "stealth, trickery and wiles" (Miller 21). They may attempt to gain consent through more honest means. Or they may simply accept that consent--to pursue their potentially utopian but presently inequitable world--will not be given.

The preceding examination of key moments in Mary's gradual disaffection with the "endeavour" of Romanticism suggests some of the attitudes within Romanticism which specifically contradict its professed principles and render it particularly objectionable. Five of these I would like to examine in greater detail: Romanticism's attitudes to women, freedom, creation, individualism, and nature. Romanticism often figures women as symbols of idealized wholeness and goodness. This construction may, of course, empower women by recognizing and praising their strengths. But it may also objectify, colonize, and harass them by fabricating some falsely stabilized, homogenized, and idealized concept of Woman. Part of the Romantic idealization of the feminine involves a celebration--and appropriation and abuse--of the powers of reproduction and creation. Male Romantics' "celebration" of creation appropriates creation by colonizing a prerogative which, in biological terms at least, is female. Effectively, it steals a material practice to its own spiritual realm. It is an abuse because male Romantics' belief that the process of creation entails some spiritually whole, heightened awareness results in their privileging of the creative process and their failure adequately to continue to care for and nurture the product of their process. This irresponsibility towards others, including the products of their creation, is partly a consequence of Romantics' relentless commitment to the individual as the source of truth. Construing themselves as poet-saviours or, as Mary says, "the Lord Almighty" (113), male Romantic writers further construe themselves as able to control Nature (consistently figured as female), as individually more valuable than community, and as possessor of sublime emotions and awarenesses of such things as pain, love, and perfectibility. Finally, the male Romantic poet's avowed direct access to these important insights means he can pave the way to social freedom, figured most strongly perhaps in the Romantically triumphed notion of "free love."

Romanticism, Women, and Free Love

Mary Shelley describes the better world she pursued but could not create as a place where "Men and Woman Might Live In Freedom." Implicit in this concept, as well as its grammatical construction, is the understanding that men and women should be equal. And if Mary had to "turn back" before achieving her goals, she implies that chief among the goals not achieved is this one: equality between men and women. For Mary looking back over her experiences, and for her audience looking back over the play, it becomes apparent that in Mary's immediate circle and in her culture women do not have access to the same powers as men and are even, in many ways, abused by men. In response to two questions raised at the beginning of this chapter, "whose Romanticism?" and "who's romanticized?", *Blood and Ice* suggests that the chief beneficiaries of Romanticism are men, often at the expense of a romanticization and objectification of women. Of course, Elise's point that free love is literally affordable neither to or for the working classes suggests further that Romanticism exploits not only gender difference but class difference as well.

Mary is objectified in her relationship with Shelley, where she serves as a conduit through which he gains access to her father, his idol, William Godwin. "You know, Byron," says Shelley,

I was half in love with Mary before I even met her. I'd go to Godwin's house...
how I worshipped Godwin, his politics, his reason!-- Since my hellish harried
school days he was my only hope for the future. . . .

I could not wait to see the daughter of this excellent man I wished was my
father. (93)

Shelley expresses affection for Mary, but in a way which both assimilates her as object of connection between him and William Godwin and anticipates her historical servitude in literary narratives concerned primarily, again, with her husband and father. Subordinating Mary to serve as an ornament broaching what Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick has called male homosocial desire,¹³ Shelley reaffirms men as the locus of power in the bourgeois family, not to mention the Romantic literary canon. The limitations exacted on women through their subjection to the role of adornment are suggested in Mary's and Elise's responses to Claire's affectation of, "choker fashion, a thin red velvet ribbon round her throat." "Do you not think this is fetching," Claire asks rhetorically.

¹³ In *Between Men*, Sedgwick looks at what she describes as the continuum of male homosocial desire (ranging through "friendship, mentorship, entitlement, rivalry, and hetero- and homosexuality" [1]), and how that desire results in and affects "male traffic in women" (13).

It is my latest fashion... oh rather an *antique* one to be sure, but then something genuinely flattering is surely *à la mode* for all time! (*Pause. Whispers.*) The brave beldams of the French Revolution affected it. It is called *à la victime*! Don't you love that, so witty, such a piquant sense of stylishness. Oh, only a fashion, Mary, but I'm sure the gentlemen will love it. (88 cf. 1982 11)

In response to Claire's construction of herself as perpetual fashion victim to and for men, "MARY is held in horror" (1982 11). And at the end of the Winged Horse version of the play Elise rejects her own victimization in terms which also redress Claire, particularly for her ignorant, trivializing, and insulting appropriation of the imagery of revolutions' victims (not to mention the language of the French) as trifling accessory: "'A la victime'? It is not the fashion for all time" (1986 85).¹⁴

Blood and Ice examines and rejects the way Romanticism objectifies and romanticizes women by making them function as stable receptacles of ideal values. It indicates that despite--or maybe because of--the fact Shelley practises "free love" and sexual adventure, ironically, he effectively forbids Mary to enjoy the same freedoms, requiring her to act as a stable locus of care for their children and of love and intellectual sympathy for him. Shelley "captures" and aggrandizes this self-sacrificing version of Mary by naming her "my Best Mary" and immobilizing her in the form of a boat's figurehead. After the death of her third child, she appears melancholy. But he rejects her despair and patronizingly reasserts her as his ideal, addressing her, significantly, in the third person, and infantilizing her as a passive invalid/child:

I'll take my Best Mary and I'll wrap her up warm and I'll rush her out of doors,
out of this damp and dreary summer-house and I'll sit her at the prow of my
bonny boat like a proud figurehead, and the winds will undo her hair and whip
roses to her cheeks and blow the last black wisps of melancholy away from
her, just as I promised her when she was a pretty child in a graveyard.

Shelley immobilizes Mary in terms of the ideas he needs her to represent. In material terms, however, he relies on her to move according to his whims, following him, for instance, across Italy in a journey which exacerbates their daughter's illness and leads to her death (107). Ultimately, Mary rejects her objectification as commodity, proud and stable figurehead, faithful travelling companion, and property of Shelley. "You can take your Best Mary," she tells him, adopting and undermining his patronizing third person

¹⁴ In the 1985 text, Elise's reaction to the choker occurs in Mary's dream and is perhaps more rhetorically provocative--as a question not a statement, and as a quotation displaced from Elise onto Mary through the dream--than the blunt statement of the 1986 text. Mary recounts what Elise said in the dream, "'A la victime is *à la mode* for all time, is it?'" (114).

construction of her, "and you can sail away with her, but I'll still be sitting here with my own thoughts in an empty nursery" (112). Indeed, she rejects his objectification and hopeless idealization of all women--"Mary, Woman is the door to all life. I sink to my knees and worship at her"¹⁵--with the reply, "God save all women from men who worship 'Woman'" (113). Shelley's idealized Woman, Mary realizes, harasses women. It establishes and indulges expectations women cannot fulfil: it forbids women any vices or complaints; it imperiously defines them; it renders them functional only within male Romantics' poetic purposes. It is, Mary admits, a "sweet ideal," but also, in a material world, an "impossible" one (115). Following Shelley's death by drowning, Mary speculates on which kind of woman Shelley finally saw at his moment of reckoning: his "flimsy impossible women," or her, "his flesh and blood Mary."

What bobbed up at him from the lone and level sands of the sea bottom?
Nymphs? Nereids? Mermaids? All the flimsy impossible women, glittering
hermaphrodites, did they tangle with him, did he clasp his sweet ideal at last?
Or was he beating useless limbs, dragged down by sodden duds among the
bladderwrack and nosing dogfish, fighting his way back, gulping and
struggling with bursting lungs back to his flesh and blood Mary?(115)

A central problem with Romanticism's objectification and use of women to codify an idealized home is that power in the Romantic home frequently turns out to be distributed asymmetrically by gender. Kate Ellis points out that the 1818 preface to *Frankenstein*, although ascribed to Mary Shelley, was in fact written by Percy Shelley. In it he claims one of the author's "chief concern[s]" in writing the novel was "the exhibition of the amiableness of domestic affection" (Ellis 123, *Frankenstein* Preface 62). Ellis suggests Percy Shelley practised a degree of rather wishful selectivity in this reading of *Frankenstein*, because while *Frankenstein* certainly suggests the "amiableness of domestic affection," the novel also emphasizes the limitations of that affection (Ellis 123-124). Adopting some of Mary Wollstonecraft's arguments, Ellis contends that within the bourgeois family there was indeed affection, but there was also "separation of male and female spheres of activity." For Ellis, the "pernicious effects" of this division were "the tyranny of husbands over wives and parents over children in the middle-class home" (Ellis

¹⁵ Mellor suggests that "Percy Shelley carried to an extreme [the] dual strategy of deifying the male ego even as it cannibalized the attributes of the female," and she cites his "Essay on Love" as a text in which "he defined the beloved female as the antitype of the male, 'a miniature as it were of our entire self, yet deprived of all that we condemn or despise, the ideal prototype of every thing excellent or lovely we are capable of conceiving as belonging to the nature of man'" (Mellor "On Romanticism and Feminism" 7, Shelley "Essay on Love" 170).

126).¹⁶ Bringing her arguments to bear on *Frankenstein*, Ellis suggests that it is under the patriarchal banner of protecting his family and loved ones that Frankenstein repeatedly deserts them and they, ironically unprotected, are killed by the Creature. With this in mind, the violence of Frankenstein's Creature against Frankenstein's young brother, best friend, and wife can be seen as "a language of protest, the effect of which is to expose the 'wrongs' done to women and children, friends and fiancés, in the name of domestic affection" (126). Like Ellis, Mellor emphasizes the qualified ambivalence expressed in Mary Shelley's fictions towards family, its merits, and its dangers: "Mary Shelley's novels advocate the practices of mothering in all arenas of public and private life. At the same time they painfully uncover the ways in which even nurturant families can generate incestuous and sadomasochistic desires and reproduce exploitative sexual behaviors" (*Mary Shelley* 218). *Blood and Ice* dramatizes Ellis's and Mellor's conclusions about *Frankenstein*, offering a powerful indictment of the treatment of women and children--or the gender- and age-asymmetrical distribution of power--in Percy Shelley's early nineteenth-century bourgeois family and culture.

As Mary Shelley's Frankenstein bears the standard of Family Protector and unwittingly endangers his loved ones, Lochhead's Percy Shelley styles himself as heroic pioneer of Free Love and likewise endangers--or simply abuses--those he claims to love. To advertise his beliefs, Lochhead's Shelley quotes almost verbatim from the historical Percy Shelley's 1821 "Epipsychidion." *The Oxford Companion to English Literature* summarizes "Epipsychidion" in a way which usefully informs the poem's deployment in *Blood and Ice*. For *The Oxford Companion*, the poem is characterized by its celebration of "Shelley's lifelong search for the eternal image of Beauty, in the earthly form of his various wives, mistresses, and female friends: notably Harriet Westbrook, Mary Shelley, Claire Clairmont, and Emilia Viviani--to whom the work is addressed." And it includes, notably, "an attack on conventional marriage, 'the dreariest and longest journey', and praise of 'Free' or 'True' Love (ll. 148-73)" ("Epipsychidion" *The Oxford Companion to English Literature*). Says Lochhead's Percy Shelley,

True love differs from gold and clay,
To divide is not to take away. (90, cf. "Epipsychidion," ll 160-61)

He also announces that he

. . . . never was attached to that great sect
Whose doctrine is that each one should select
Out of the crowd a mistress or a friend
And all the rest, though fair and wise, consign

¹⁶ The phrase "pernicious effects" is from the title of chapter nine of Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, "Of the Pernicious Effects which Arise from the Unnatural Distinctions Established in Society."

To cold oblivion. . . . (*B&I* 1986 78, cf. "Epipsychidion," ll 149-53)

He argues that love must be "free" and unrestrained by convention. He practises this belief by claiming to love his first wife, Harriet, all the more for having left her, and by expressing his love and admiration for women other than Mary Shelley. Shelley's tenets may be conceptually sound in some respects, but they are often inequitable in practice, as he exercises male social power at women's expense. His social "freedom" effectively means social flexibility, and social flexibility is not free to all but is rather a function of social status. More socially flexible than Harriet Shelley because he is older, wealthier, male, and unburdened by their child (which he leaves with her), Percy Shelley is logically more "free" to practise what he believes than she is. And his assumption that what he preaches must be practised by all who are, as he perceives himself to be, Romantically enlightened, may be profoundly hopeful, but it is also profoundly insensitive to the material and social constrictions of his culture, constrictions which may partly explain Harriet Shelley's motives for suicide.

Although *Blood and Ice's* Mary Shelley claims she was initially a willing participant in Percy Shelley's experiments in free love (albeit a participant whose incentive was to satisfy not her own polygamous desire, but her desire to satisfy Shelley), she comes to reject free love as a practice which is potently gender biased. When Byron tries to goad her into admitting she is jealous of Percy's mistresses, saying, "Come on, Mary, take it like a man," she replies,

Like a man! Oh yes, and write poems about it! If she wounds you between the sheets, then cut her down to size upon the page. If she is unfaithful to you then that is nothing to the cuckoldry of books. You can publish volumes, and every ode dedicated to someone else. That'll freeze her and make her burn. (109)

Alluding to Percy Shelley's numerous works dedicated to women other than Mary Shelley,¹⁷ *Blood and Ice's* Mary suggests that men's interest in "free love" may not always be motivated, as Percy Shelley claims in "Epipsychidion," by the unassailable, "natural" pursuit of "true love." Rather less honourably, they may instead be motivated by jealousy and revenge. Mary indicts male Romantic writers not only for exploiting their greater opportunity to practise "free love," but also for abusing their privilege literally to publish their exploits. She implies that male Romantics' publications, again, textually harass women through public humiliation. In the Winged Horse text of *Blood and Ice*, Mary concludes:

"True love differs from gold and clay

¹⁷ In the play's Winged Horse version, Mary counts among Shelley's loves:

[Claire.] And Jane Williams! And Emilia Viviani the "little bird" whose plight so moved your heart. And--Miss Hitchener, and Harriet--and Harriet's sister Eliza and my sister Fanny. . . . (80)

That to divide is not to take away."

I'm not sixteen years old any longer. I have learned to suspect any sentiment which rhymes that easily. (*B&I* 1986 81)

One reason the "noble experiment" of "free love" is intolerable for Mary is because it results in social exclusion and loneliness. "Oh Byron, we are treated like monsters, Shelley and I, cut off from all the world," she explains, comparing Shelley and herself explicitly to monsters and implicitly to Frankenstein's Creature whose greatest complaint is his loneliness. Mary continues,

I was sixteen years old, my mother wrote it, my father wrote it, my lover wrote it! "Marriage was a sad charade: it ought not to be prolonged for one moment longer than the natural affections did spontaneously dictate."

I did not know when I ran away with him we would be exiles from all society, the subject of vile and vicious rumour, hounded-- (108)

"From spa to spa to splendid ruin," quips Byron, allowing Mary's complaint of loneliness to stand but insisting she acknowledge her privilege of class, and implicitly criticizing her Romantic self-pity. He then expounds his materialist critique of the Shelleys' practice of Romantic Free Love. "Oh yes... intellectually I can conceive of it, Mrs Shelley," he says, commending the Shelley's ideas about freedom, but adding, "I cannot believe it can have been a very pretty thing in practice. And I'm all for practice...[*Pause*] making perfect" (100). Byron insinuates the Shelleys' Romantic revolution, like the French Revolution, has its material victims towards whom the Shelleys show blind and hypocritical disregard. "Did not Sweet Shelley's Second Honeymoon straddle the charred and blackened corpse of La Belle France? Or didn't he notice? Didn't you, Mary-Mary?" Indeed, for Byron, the combination of Mary's soaring, sanitized, and romanticized ideals with her sordid practice (here metaphorically depicted as inappropriately sexual and, by implication, adulterous, even necrophilic) classes her with her nursery rhyme namesake, "Mary-Mary quite contrary."

While Mary resists Byron's invitation, "Come on, come down to earth, where you belong, come and curl up with old Clubfooted Caliban!," as too complete a capitulation to the material, Byron does help her formulate a critique of Shelleyan Romanticism as conspicuously neglectful of material conditions. Thus she retreats from Shelley's "Dreams and Aspirations" (101) as requiring too complete an investment in the spiritual. "Oh, Shelley, Shelley," she says,

to live in the spirit as much as you do puts a great deal of strain on the body. I don't know if I can bear it. Can I change myself? I must take myself to bits, put myself together again, leave out the bit that makes me... jealous. Can I do it? (112)

Mary's disenchantment with "free love" is fuelled not only by her resentment of social alienation and her jealousy of Shelley's other women, but also by her desire for Byron.

This desire challenges and collapses her ideals by revealing flaws of lust and jealousy in what she wants to believe is her spiritual idealism. Her lust for Byron contaminates what she formerly saw as her sacrosanct love of Shelley. And her jealousy of Claire contaminates by motivating her attraction to Byron. Further, her attraction to Byron implicates her in what she sees as his wanton exploitations. In response to Mary's question, "Can I change myself?", *Blood and Ice* suggests that, no, Mary cannot engender herself a perfect Romantic--neither in Byron's material sense nor in Shelley's spiritual sense--not in social conditions of gender and class inequality which mitigate against such idealistic transformation. Mary ultimately recognizes not only her own gender oppression but her class privilege. Near the play's conclusion she observes,

To be born poor is to be born a slave. To be born a woman is to be born a slave. Poor Elise, you were a slave's slave--and that's a jumbled up collection of wood and wires. (114)

Romanticism, Creation, and the Individual

Alluded to in Mary's question, "Can I change myself?," are the second and third major failings of Romanticism after, but implicated in, its configuration and treatment of women: its attitudes towards creation, particularly self-creation, and the individual. Marlon B. Ross writes:

Romantic poets are driven to a quest for self-creation, for self-comprehension, for self-positioning that is unprecedented in literature. Convinced that within the individual an autonomous and forceful agent makes creation possible, they struggle to control that agent and manipulate its energy; they struggle for. . . a state in which the self has managed to see the world whole, to assimilate both time and space into a vision that is both individual and collective, to assemble all conflicting aspects of the self and put them to creative use, and by doing so to assert the power of the self to engender the self. (26-27)

The male Romantic poet's belief in his ability to "see the world whole" assumes a mastery of "his" world which imperiously denies other perspectives and valorizes the (male poet-legislator) individual as superior to the group. "In a very real sense," writes Ross, "the Romantics, some of them unwittingly, help[ed] prepare England for its imperial destiny. They help[ed] teach the English to universalize the experience of 'I'. . ." (31). Moreover, according to Mellor, they "gave credence to the historically emerging capitalist belief in the primacy of the individual over the group" ("On Romanticism and Feminism" 8). And they propagated sexist ideology by proclaiming their god-like power to engender themselves, thereby eclipsing women from the (pro)creative process. Finally, the intensity of the Romantic poets' focus on creative process predicated the paucity of their concern for created product.

Blood and Ice

In *Blood and Ice*, Romanticism's imperialist and capitalist attitudes are subtly criticized through the constant lurking and menacing presence of Elise, racial and economic "other" to the Shelleys' English middle-class "norm." Elise is codified as racial other by her French accent and "improper" grammar ("Monsieur Byron's man, Madame, he come and say the boat is launched you 'ave to go and sail, he say" [85]) and as social inferior by her employ. She appears intermittently throughout the play at "the edge of the light where we ought to just sense her waiting resentment" (86), "her menacing shadow presence" (104). This presence and resentment register the privilege required to make such a universalizing statement as Shelley's, ". . . I defy anyone to read [Godwin's *Political Justice*] and not be filled with the hope... no the certainty that as sound politics diffuse through society--as they inevitably will--freedom and justice for both men and women will be universal" (94). And at the end of the play Elise's critique of Shelley's arrogance is no longer silent. She declares that Shelley's heralded universal emancipation has not arrived, and perhaps will not arrive until he and others like him abandon the superior belief that they, as individuals, know what is best for all. "Maidservants," begins Elise:

"Only a maidservant" eh?

Well we won't be content to stay your slaves.

And we'll not skivvy in the factories forever either.

Nor will we go home to our working men

neither, and be slaves of slaves. Making

babies. (*B&I* 1986 84-85)

Addressing the "Reformers. Ro-mantics. Richman radicals!," Elise concludes, "We'll not be content to stay forever as the wretched of the earth," and so claims, for workers and women alike, the earth's inheritance. What might be seen as anachronistic literary references in Elise's speech--to Marilyn Butler's 1981 study of Romantic literature, *Romantics, Rebels and Reactionaries: English Literature and Its Background, 1760-1830*, and to Frantz Fanon's famous 1961 manifesto for third world liberation, *The Wretched of the Earth*--confirm Elise's prognosis.

The Romantic's egoism regarding his individual invincibility and creative powers is epitomized in his assurance that he can embody the world, experience everything, and engender himself in a solitary, narcissistic experience. This egoism is depicted perhaps most acutely in *Blood and Ice*'s portrayal of Shelley's attitude towards Mary's near-fatal miscarriage. To Mary's despondent mutterings, "I nearly died, Shelley," "I hoped to die," and "No baby," Shelley repeats the refrain, "I saved you," investing himself with god-like powers (112). To Mary's statement "I, Am, In, Pain," itself painfully protracted, Shelley replies, "It's my loss too. Why is it every woman thinks she has the patent out on pain?" (113). Again he claims all experiences--especially those which are profound and even those which, because of his sex, he could never experience, such as the pain of childbirth or miscarriage--as his own, thereby again colonizing sensibility. "You bleed on paper. I

bled through every bit of bedlinen in this house" (113), Mary reminds him, grounding her experience in the material, emphasizing the material differences of his experiences and hers, and highlighting the sexist implications of his appropriating claim to have shared her experience.

The potential for the Romantic's concern with his creative process to result in neglect for his created product is again best illustrated through Mary and Percy Shelley's relationship. As Shelley's political, literary, and romantic protégée in the search for "a new way to live" (100), Mary might be considered, in some respects, his product, his new life form. He certainly takes credit for her when she espouses the "correct" philosophy, lauding her "Bravo, Mary!" (95). But he relinquishes responsibility for her when she fails, or more accurately, when she fails him. Shelley claims to celebrate life, joyfully reciting the lines of life-loving epiphany from "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner":

O happy living things!
No tongue
Their beauty might declare;
A spring of love gushed from my heart
And I blessed them unaware!

(97 cf. "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" ll. 318-21)

But when "his creature," Mary, complains of unhappiness in her life, identifying not with the "happy living things" of the Mariner's tale but with its "thousand thousand slimy things" (113 cf. l. 274), he will not countenance her complaints. He escapes taking even partial responsibility for her by claiming he has equipped her with the philosophical apparatus to contextualize and so to cope with her disappointment:

Yes, that women die making babies is terrible. Yes it is unfair. But it's getting better. Things must improve. (113)

Like Frankenstein's Creature, Mary finds her new self excluded from society and, often, deprived of a mate. On the diminishing number of occasions when Shelley is with Mary he feebly placates her, "To turn sometimes to others is not to turn from you" (112). Having created of Mary a "free lover," Shelley deserts her, and goes on his way proselytizing free love. He evinces what Mellor has called a "sublime indifference" towards Mary, effectively abandoning her to a life of isolation (*Mary Shelley* 80, "Why Women. . ." 284).

Romanticism and Nature

Blood and Ice's fourth major criticism of Romantic ideology is that Romanticism's attitude towards nature is arrogant and superior. Integral to the Romantic's notion of free love are definitions of the "natural" and "nature" which invest these concepts with a now familiar agenda of innocence, stability, and submission to the poet-saviour's divine control. On the subject of the abolition of marriage, *Blood and Ice's* Percy Shelley triumphantly

dictates, "All connections between men and women will be natural... and right--because choice and change will be possible--even desired by both!" (91). Shelley might be more accurate to say, "what we desire to be true we will call natural," admitting his investment in a particular stable, innocent definition of nature, a definition which can morally redeem his polygamous desires. Peter Brooks suggests that Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* crucially undermines this prevalent Romantic construction of nature. Nature is not as innocent as the Romantics liked to imagine it, he suggests, if, as in *Frankenstein*, it can produce the monstrous. Indeed, notes Brooks, "'Nature' in *Frankenstein* appears to be a fragile moral concept of ambiguous implications" (215). It is, in other words, a concept which gives the lie to Romanticism's definition of it.

Frankenstein's appreciation of nature as not innocent and stable but potentially dangerous, fragile, and ambiguous is demonstrated most powerfully in *Blood and Ice's* images of drowning. In the dream that Mary recounts to Percy at the end of the play, she describes a creature fashioned by Elise with Claire's lower body below its skirts and Mary's lower body above. "You went and you lay down on top of [the creature]," Mary recounts the dream to Shelley,

and you said, "Claire," and you began to pull at the flounces peel them back from where they were flipped over her head and you fought with them to reveal--above the waist of your hellish creature was my belly, my loins, my thighs my screaming vulva and my limbs tangled with your head and pulled you down, down, down. (114-115)

In a deadly ironic reversal of his aspirations to colonize creation, Shelley finally does not give birth and is not given birth to; instead, his own birth is reversed and thereby revoked, as he is consumed and buried by, not born from, Mary's vagina. And in a reversal of Shelley's attempts to assimilate Mary--as a link to William Godwin, as a helpmeet and figurehead for his revolution, and as a literary little sister, among other things--she literally assimilates and devours him. In Mary's imagination, Shelley is ultimately drowned in the excesses of his supposedly natural but, for Mary, monstrous free love. The nature which Shelley claims to control claims him, figuratively in Mary's dream, and literally in his death by drowning. The menace of this death encompasses the play, through Shelley's first appearance, naked from the sea, and Mary's penultimate invocation of him after his death: "I dreamed Shelley walked naked into the room, blood-stained, skin in tatters, seaweed tangled in his hair, crying out, 'The Sea is Invading The House!'" (116).¹⁸ Shelley's domestic Eden, "House", with its patron saint Mary appointed by him, is vanquished by the sea he vainly aspired to master. In *Blood and Ice*, as in *Frankenstein*, nature evades Romantic mastery and perhaps even punishes its arrogance.

¹⁸ *Blood and Ice's* Winged Horse version brings Shelley back on stage after his death and states explicitly that he is "a parody of the first time we saw him" (*B&I* 1986 83).

Read Your Story:
***Blood and Ice's* Structural Critique of Romanticism**

If diegetic elements of *Blood and Ice* expose some of the oppressive material and ideological conditions of Romanticism, the play's narrative structure and its deployment of metatextual and scenic effects indicate how those conditions prevail within Romanticism by, effectively, seducing Romantic audiences. Through recurrent but variegated fracturing of its otherwise often coherent and psychologically-unified narrative, *Blood and Ice* alienates its audience to an awareness of narrative's investment in, precisely, engaging its audience. Alternately alienated and engaged, *Blood and Ice's* audience is not only sensitized generally to the potentially coercive effects of narrative engagement and identification, particularly in Romantic writing, but freed specifically to choose how it will engage with the text *Blood and Ice*. Furthermore, because *Blood and Ice's* narrative is presented as, in many respects, unstable, with no single discourse holding hegemonic authority, the audience may engage multiply, even ambivalently, with the play, its issues, and its characters, in a pluralized relationship which differs, again, from the unifying possibility propagated within Romanticism. Finally, locating its story domestically, *Blood and Ice* interrogates Romanticism's proclivity to situate its stories in distant lands, like the polar setting of *Frankenstein*, with archetypal characters, like the wedding guest and the title character of "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner." Through this variety of structural techniques and situational choices, *Blood and Ice* both presents a critique of Romanticism's coercive narrative strategies and, by contrast, facilitates critical audience engagement with its own narrative.

Along with these primarily structural techniques, *Blood and Ice* uses several metatextual techniques to reinforce its critique of Romantic textual strategy. Primary among these is its use of textual--both literary and dramatic--metaphor. Throughout the play Mary is explicitly depicted as "writing" herself. Similarly, if less literally, several other writers and their work are "re-written" in the play through recontextualization. Metadramatically, *Blood and Ice* represents casting and role-playing in ways which interrogate their power dynamics. All told, *Blood and Ice* challenges the putative textual innocence of Romanticism (doubly asserted in Samuel Taylor Coleridge's archetypal subtitle to "Kubla Khan," "A Vision in a Dream") by figuring texts as neither visions or dreams but as cultural products.

Finally, scenic effects in *Blood and Ice* function to destabilize prevalent cultural representations, particularly of women, and prevalent cultural discourses, particularly the cultural dominance of spoken or written discourses over other modes of communication, such as image, gesture, and movement. By exaggerating female roles and images, *Blood*

and Ice reinforces its already thorough interrogation of Romanticism's representation--or appropriation--of women. And by using visual effect to complicate and even confound spoken discourse, *Blood and Ice* destabilizes the cultural primacy not simply of spoken/written discourse in general, but of the purportedly well-intentioned and rational--if visionary--discourse of Percy Shelley's Romanticism in particular.

Narrative Structure

Blood and Ice sensitizes its audience to the conditions of narrative engagement by repeatedly engaging and disengaging audience identification. This pattern of repeated engagement and release boldly contrasts with the pattern of audience engagement scripted so strongly in Romantic writing, where the reader is enjoined, implicitly or otherwise, to engage whole-heartedly and without respite with the Romantic subject. Of course, identification and engagement have benefits--for feminists as well as Romantics--which must not be unreflectingly condemned. For feminism, identification facilitates the construction and hopefully widespread adoption of a political banner of female identity under which women can gather, share experiences, articulate agendas, and campaign for shared goals. For these potential benefits, and in the words of Julia Kristeva, "we must use 'we are women' as an advertisement or slogan for our demands" (137). However, two potential dangers of identification, and ones which *Blood and Ice* implies are endemic in Romanticism, are that its engagement of the subject (reader, audience, and so on) may be coercive and violent, and that the position it prescribes and promotes may not represent that subject's interests. The fact that much Romantic writing, notably that alluded to in *Blood and Ice*, provides an enthralled audience character with whom the audience, in equal thralldom, is subtly coerced to identify supports the first of these two criticisms. In "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," the title character apprehends a young wedding guest to tell the latter a story. Initially, the wedding guest resists, but before long,

He [the mariner] holds him with his glittering eye--
The Wedding-Guest stood still
And listens like a three years' child;
The Mariner hath his will. (Coleridge "Rime" ll. 17-20)

When the characters of *Blood and Ice* discuss Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner," Byron boasts "I should have given an arm and a leg--the sound one--to have heard Coleridge [recite his poetry]," adding, in words which allude to the poem's beguiling nature and the listener/reader's identification with the wedding guest, "Perhaps I'd have been afeared of his glittering eye" (98). As discussed above, Mary begins to recite the poem and continues unstoppably until the scene disintegrates with Shelley's terrified hallucinations and panicked flight from the stage. In a near parody of the coercive intensity of Romantic identification, the Romantic poem's "reader," Mary, and audience, Shelley, are not simply engaged, but seemingly possessed by the poem. The fact that the

discourse which possesses them, as discussed above, constructs sexualized women as demonic supports the second of my two proposed criticisms of identification: identification here acts to enlist Mary's engagement with a discourse which implicitly demonizes her.

To emphasize the potentially seductive effects of narrative engagement--the risks of surrender intrinsic to seduction--and to inhibit uncritical audience engagement with its own narrative, *Blood and Ice* both encourages and repels audience engagement, sometimes alternately, sometimes simultaneously. Identification is encouraged primarily through the play's seemingly consistent psychological realism whose enticement to identification is narcissistic pleasure. In psychoanalytic terms, identification with the apparent wholeness and coherence of a psychologically realistic character offers a reader or audience member the narcissistic pleasure of imagining herself as also whole, coherent, and, often, ultimately "resolved" with narrative closure. Framed as one long interior monologue, *Blood and Ice* invites identification with the deeply (it is, after all, interior) realistic psychology of Mary Shelley. Such an identification may partially subvert Romantic ideology simply because the psychologically unified character of Mary ultimately rejects Romanticism. But it may also effectively support Romantic ideology since Mary might be seen as the type of visionary individual so central to Romantic belief. In either case, however, this frame presents a strong, psychological portrait of Mary and enlists audience identification with her. The play's realistic performance segments (Mary's "flashbacks"), while perhaps not presenting the same psychological "depth" as the frame, nevertheless secure audience identification by employing realist conventions to present apparently psychologically real characters in socially real situations. Characters' fictional reality is ostensibly endorsed by their historical reality. And social reality is apparently affirmed by the unity of time and place of the "single seamless afternoon/twilight/night" of Act One in particular (Lochhead, Letter to Lichtenfels, 5).

Working in contrast and critical complement to the identification effects of *Blood and Ice* when reading it as psychological realism are the effects produced when reading that psychological realism itself as not whole and integral, but as incomplete, partial, or multiply constituted and potentially fragmented. If a reader's or audience member's pay-off for identifying with a character is the narcissistic pleasure of feeling herself to be, like the psychologically realistic character, whole, identification is jeopardized when that feeling of wholeness is jeopardized. Two potential values of this alienation are that it facilitates critical and not passive audience engagement with the text, and that it posits an understanding of identity as not coherent and stable, but adaptable and potentially politically progressive. To problematize the apparent integrity of Mary's interior monologue, *Blood and Ice* presents both her identity and her narrative control as merely provisional and, therefore, untenable for complete and continuous identification. Because Mary writes herself through the course of the play, her identity is presented as being in process and always only provisional. Her narrative control is at best partial because,

although the play may be her interior monologue, she apparently cannot control the outcome of her flashbacks nor edit out the elements that frighten, anger, and humiliate her. As Beate Neumeier points out, "Even if Mary believes in the concept of a unified identity till the end, as her successive attempts at establishing an identity with just one of her characters. . . [in the play's final scene] reveal, the audience is made aware of the multiplicity of selves within Mary, who *is* all of the characters of her novel at once" (70). Further, although *Blood and Ice's* realist performance segments may encourage identification, their truth claim, and thus their seductiveness, are repeatedly destabilized when the play switches to the potentially more "real" "Mary-now-&-alone state" when she soliloquizes and reads from *Frankenstein* (B&I 1988 43a). This state may feel more "real" because it is in "present" time, is confessional if not precisely direct address, and is apparently interior analysis as opposed to superficial action. These changes in integrity and degree of psychological realism, as well as in time and place (as Act Two fragments into numerous and, it is implied, variously located scenes), inhibit complete or continuous identification, encouraging at least critical identification. In a related way, the play eschews the type of plot line based on the gradual, titillating unfolding of a gripping mystery typical of such Romantic works as "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" and "La Belle Dame Sans Merci," presenting instead familiar characters whose "end" the play's audience is likely to know already. *Blood and Ice* thus avoids engaging its audience uniformly with the deterministic question "what will be the (singular) outcome of this story?," and presents instead a question whose possible answers are plural and not necessarily stable, "How can these characters, arguments, and relationships be--variously--resolved?"

Two final narrative features of *Blood and Ice* that resemble and yet distinguish it from Romantic narrative are the location and characters of its drama. Romantic narratives tend to favour exotic and/or forbidding locations, such as the distant seas of the "Rime," the deserted lakeside of "La Belle Dame," and the Arctic Ocean and Alps of *Frankenstein*. And they tend to people these locations with archetypal Romantic characters, so archetypal that they are often unnamed (the wedding guest, the mariner, the knight and lady of "La Belle Dame," and even the Creature of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*). Siting their stories in far away locales with anonymous characters, the Romantics effectively romanticize and remove the stories from real lived experiences, such as those of Mary and Percy Shelley. Focusing, furthermore, on the revelatory experiences of individuals made to seem archetypal through their "Everyman" anonymity and the self-centred universes of their stories, the Romantics again reinforce the cult of the individual so central to Romantic ideology and so detrimental to the community and to those not accorded the status of individual.

Lochhead sets *Blood and Ice* in a familiar Romantic landscape: a distant Italian lake, haunted by Romantic geniuses. Using this familiar Romantic locale, however,

Lochhead also subverts it by grounding her story in the local--indeed the domestic--and the personal, and grounding these further in community. Re-positioning the story of Romanticism, *Blood and Ice* implicitly interrogates the benefits accrued to Romanticism through its original positioning. One such significant benefit is that generated by Romanticism in placing the threats so central to the operation of its narratives as external to and distant from its domestic hearth (in the Alps, on the Arctic Ocean, and so on). *Blood and Ice* emphasizes the *heimlich* in the *unheimlich* by placing its threats within the home, within domestic argument. It thus suggests a certain duplicity to Romanticism's repeated attempts to construct home as a haven and all threat as external. Before making the wager for which Mary writes *Frankenstein*, Byron taunts her, "Why should we content ourselves with translated, traditional horrors--all bookish and stilted. Home-grown ones are the best. Are they?" (92). Byron is typically facetious. But Mary's reply, *Frankenstein*, and Lochhead's, *Blood and Ice*, with their indictments of the domestic violence symptomatic of (male) Romantic arrogance, are not.

Metatextual Technique

To reinforce its critique of Romanticism's textual strategies of seduction, *Blood and Ice* uses several metatextual techniques specifically to draw attention to textuality itself. Initiating this concentration on textuality is the play's dense weave of literary and dramatic metaphor. Mary is presented not simply as a person, let alone a character, but as a story in the process of being written. "Write that story!" (101), admonishes Byron, then, "Read that story. Read your story" (111), using a possessive pronoun that makes his meaning ambiguous. Does Byron mean the story *Frankenstein*? Or does he mean what "story" serves commonly as a metaphor for, life, here Mary's life? At the end of the play Mary does "read [her] story," a complex hybrid of *Frankenstein* and her own life, in which she identifies in turn with various characters from the novel (115). Through this overarching literary metaphor, Mary is framed as a literary construct, a fiction within a narrative. And how one reads that narrative is how one may interpret "Mary," as Mary demonstrates in her self-analysis/self-reading at the end of the play. This textual self-consciousness prevents the play from being just another realist crisis-of-identity story, reinforcing patriarchal Romantic notions of individuality and coherent, self-sufficient identity. The play's self-consciousness provokes its audience to interrogate notions of identity and how we are "put together" (particularly through reading or spectatorship), and to be aware of how textual construction (in)forms interpretation.

As Mary Shelley is written in the course of *Blood and Ice*, so, through recontextualization, are Lord Byron and Percy Shelley and the works of various Romantic writers. Re-framing Romantic writers' works, including "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," Lord Byron's "Oh we'll go no more a-roving. . ." (83), and Percy Shelley's "Epipsychidion" (90), these works are rendered not original, new, and inspired--essential criteria in the

Romantic canon--but familiar, re-told, and created in a context characterized by sordid reality rather than visionary fantasy. The poems' recontextualization, thus, calls into question the airy inspiration and resulting innocence claimed for Romantic poetry, emphasizing instead their textuality, their cultural production.

A final example of literary metaphor and literary self-reference in *Blood and Ice* is the play's heavy-handed, almost self-conscious use of imagery, particularly literary imagery. There is, for instance, the play's conceit of blood as ink--epitomized first by the red ink which spills on Mary's *Frankenstein* manuscript in the Traverse Theatre Club version of *Blood and Ice* (1982 21), and second by Mary's comment to Shelley, "You bleed on paper" (112). The association of blood with ink may appear to mystify writerly production of text, again making it seem "natural." However, I believe the density and vibrancy of imagery in *Blood and Ice* draw such attention to that imagery it demands to be read--not simply metaphorically--but as metaphor.

Other images which contribute to the profusion of imagery in *Blood and Ice* are those of ice, air, and earth. As the historical Lord Byron did, Lochhead's Byron repeatedly refers to Shelley as Ariel, the name of Shakespeare's fairy in *The Tempest*. "He's Ariel," pronounces Byron of Shelley, "a pure spirit moving through the changing air, fashioning liquid verse into new forms for freedom" (91). The imagery is not only overdrawn (typical for Lochhead's Byron), it is again literary, delineating Shelley explicitly as a fictional character. Pursuing his metaphor, Byron renders himself "tethered to the earth as clodhopper Caliban," and Mary, "Miranda-Mary." He defies her to "write up a revolution--like your papa, Mary--Godwin was ever one for writing up a storm of Brave New Worlds, wasn't he?" (91). Byron mocks Shelley's "airy platronics," betraying their speciousness. But he also quite simply mocks metaphor and its implicit claims to match any social phenomenon with an "elemental" counterpart such as air or earth. Byron's attitude towards metaphor, together with the very plenitude of imagery in this scene, and even the entire play, provokes an interrogation of how metaphor means--for instance how it may pacify or colonize its subject (as with sisterhood, above)--and thus promotes audience awareness of textuality and textual techniques of seducing, and of producing seductive meaning.

Acting in complement to literary metaphor and literary self-consciousness in *Blood and Ice* is a pervasive metadrama, most notably an emphasis on role-playing and other forms of playing or performing. One of the most explicit examples of role-playing in *Blood and Ice* is the scene in which Byron calls upon Elise and Mary to play, respectively, a maid and a male philosopher in Byron's experimental fiction testing William Godwin's theories of the survival of the intellectually fittest. Byron sets the scene: the philosopher's house is on fire, the maid and the philosopher are inside, who should be saved? "Byron, this is an abuse," says Mary, continuing, "--Elise, don't be alarmed, this is but a game of our neighbour's, he--" (95). In one breath, Mary calls the situation an abuse and a game;

however, she addresses the wrong character with each definition. It is precisely a game for Byron and an abuse for Elise. Mary reassures Elise, "We are only pawns, Elise. Harmless!" (*B&I* 1982 18), trivializing but nevertheless capturing the position of indenture both women--and particularly Elise as the metaphorical and real maid, doomed according to Godwin's philosophy--are forced to adopt in deference to Byron's mastery. The "performance" required of Elise in this scene, and her reaction to it--"ELISE looks down, is silent, angry, impotent" (95)--powerfully convey the pervasive empowering of the Romantic author, in this case Byron, and the seemingly necessary "en-pawn-ing" of his female subject. Furthermore, the scene's emphasis on role-playing and performance acknowledge and emphasize the specifically textual nature of the Romantic poet's command of his subject.

Blood and Ice stresses the textuality of performance throughout its length in its self-construction as play. It transpires in a nursery, where toys represent themselves and take on larger roles. Its narrator, Mary, is explicitly a story-teller: verbally rather than physically she initiates, compels, and sometimes concludes several scenes. *Blood and Ice's* opening stage directions describe a "ghostly nursery," with a "large, staring-eyed rocking horse" (83). Mary will rock this horse to represent a ship at sea (103). In the Winged Horse version of the play, the horse's head is explicitly associated with "the head of the *Fuseli* 'Nightmare' from his famous painting" (1986 2). The scene's and props' dual function--as denotative nursery and toys and connotative imaginary play space and ship and horse--as well as the opening tableau's intertextual reference to Fuseli's "Nightmare," stress the textual and performative nature of the play about to be performed. Furthermore, Mary's removed narrative voice, not so much in evidence at the beginning of the play where she broods over her isolation and Percy Shelley's death, but asserting itself at the beginning of Act Two with her repeated refrain, "Once upon a time" (103), punctuates the fact that the play is precisely a story, a textual construction.

Nowhere, however, does *Blood and Ice* more strongly emphasize its "play-ness"--or more closely risk self-parody--than in a stage direction which appears at the finale of the Traverse Theatre Club text (but which was removed from subsequent texts):

It's all go, everywhere. ELISE, CLAIRE and the MONSTER drag in "the ice" from each of the three entrances, scrunchy blue-white taffeta, that invades and muffles everything for the final resolution--except MARY's desk to which she has retreated. SHELLEY is left on the edge of the ice as FRANKENSTEIN. Music crescendos, ground-ice groans, a total gothic version of the traditional panto transformation scene, a balletic figure-of-eight-chase, total visual, sensual, scary excitement, all debate over. (*B&I* 1982 32)

The scene is manifestly theatrical, admitting its props' falsity, its own mercenary objectives (transformation and resolution), and its utter reliance on stage convention (parodied through reference to pantomime). Faced with this hyperbolic performativity, the audience

is forced to confront and criticize the text's construction, its theatricality, its objectives, and its effects, instead of being lulled into acceptance of the often naturalized structures of dramatic discourse. Once again, the text is presented as an ideologically loaded cultural product rather than an ostensibly innocent visionary revelation.

Scenic Effect

Blood and Ice's manipulation of scenic effect is the final technique for interrogating Romantic discursive practices which I will discuss here. One function of this manipulation is to destabilize prevalent Romantic constructions of women, and one manifestation of this manipulation is the play's exaggeration of female roles and images. In her article, "Mimesis, Mimicry, and the 'True-Real'," Elin Diamond, after Luce Irigaray, discusses how female characters may "mimic" womanhood; in other words, how putatively real (because realist) representations of womanhood may be problematized through excessive or exaggerated characterizations and representations of women. Diamond writes:

Subverting patriarchal mimesis is what we might call mimesis-mimicry, in which the production of objects, shadows, and voices is excessive to the truth/illusion structure of mimesis, spilling into mimicry, multiple 'fake offspring'. . . . Mimicry can function. . . as an alienation-effect, framing the gender behavior dictated by patriarchal models as a means of "recover[ing] the place of her [the performer's] exploitation." (65-66. Diamond quotes Irigaray "The Power of Discourse" 76)

In *Blood and Ice*, dolls may be seen to represent women "excessively," both literally as stage props and figuratively through description. And they may also be seen to haunt the play's *mise en scène* as well as the border between goodness (a conventional trope of dolls and women) and monstrosity. Dolls are introduced to *Blood and Ice's* scenic vocabulary at the opening of the play where the pre-set stage directions include "a china-headed doll with frightwig hair, unclothed to show the stuffed cloth slump-body with the attached china lower limbs and arms" (83).¹⁹ The doll's gender is not stipulated, but the "frightwig" suggests the doll is female, and this hair, coupled with the doll's lack of clothing which reveals a poignant artifice, immediately forms a slightly macabre index of womanhood. This doll's presence in *Blood and Ice's* opening tableau immediately alerts

¹⁹ The role of dolls in *Blood and Ice* is something Lochhead consciously emphasized in a 1983 re-write of the play. She expresses pleasure with the results of this re-write in a letter to Peter Lichtenfels who was, then, Artistic Director of the Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh: "I have done now [with the re-write], and I'm very proud of it. It has a lot to do with dolls, and a deserted dusty dust-covered nursery and a dream connecting Mary and Claire and Elise the maid. . . ." (6).

the play's audience to the implications of feminine signifiers and representations of women throughout the play.

At the beginning of Act Two, Mary is again "alone in the ghostly nursery," this time "sadly toying with a doll, of a curiosity sort." The doll is described in detail:

It is a doll like MARY herself, clothed in her costume with hair in the colour and style of the actress who has the "Mary" role. Under the skirt of the doll (although we do not know it yet) is actually not the lower half of a body but another top half, that of a doll with the head, hairstyle and costume of the actress who is to play ELISE. The skirt of this doll turns inside out and on the underside is doll-ELISE's skirt, which will cover doll-MARY's head. (103)

Appearing in the wake of the doll of the first scene, this doll may conflate characteristics of the first--monstrosity and cloaked artifice--with Mary. The doll operates as a visual stimulus to deconstruct how and what women--and particularly Mary--signify in the play.

Next, Mary imitates how Claire once described Shelley's first wife, Harriet: "[Fey] A pretty doll in a purple silk dress... A pretty doll!" (113). This "fey" repetition of a putatively complimentary description of a woman launches a verbal critique of "dollness" to match the play's heretofore visual critique. Empathizing with the absent Elise, Mary "flips the Mary-doll inside out. Showing the Elise-doll and frightening SHELLEY." Shelley responds, "Macabre toy! what a hideous--." His dismayed and affronted reaction suggests how the usually stable index of doll as pretty, and either maid or mistress but never both, has been disrupted for him. This doll teems with contradictions--Mary characterizes it as "under her skirt. . . but a maid!," or "a maid" with "a thinking head in her loins for a change" (114)--contradictions which diminish what Percy has called his "best Mary," elevate what he has called the "servant girl" (84), and, as Diamond says, "subvert patriarchal mimesis" by overloading with meaning this traditional receptacle of female values.

The excess of the topsy-turvy doll is taken one step further with the doll of the dream that Mary recounts to Shelley at the end of the play.

I dreamed Elise was back and she was making something. . . . And she was making a doll, a life-size puppet--it was spread out here on the couch, long pale limbs, cadaver-loins gleaming whitely. Its dress was over its head, Claire-flounces turned inside out covering the whole top half of its body. And Elise was stitching. . . . And she smiled to herself. "How shall I make her perfect. How shall I make her whole." And she took my mother's book. "Mary Wollstonecraft's Pattern Book," she said, "Hints on the stitching up and finishing of ladies." "Satin stitch, French hemming, blanket stitch, and I'll finish off with a strong knot where I join between the thighs lest it shall unravel," and she bent down and bit off the end of the cotton with a snap. (114)

In the dream's conclusion, Shelley enters, mounts the doll, and folds back the flounces to discover Mary's lower body.

The union here of Mary and Claire is different in kind but similar in contradiction to the union of Mary and Elise in the original topsy-turvy doll. With apparently no regard for differences of personality or situation, both dolls unite, conflate, and effectively equate, two women. However, while the first doll linked Elise's and Mary's upper bodies and faces (and the face is likely the most common and most conventional metonym for the body and the individual) the doll of Mary's dream yokes Claire's and Mary's "legs," "thighs," "loins," in short, their sexualities and their procreative powers. Emblems of sexuality and procreation thus serve metonymically for the identities of Claire and Mary in their relationships with Shelley. As Elaine Aston points out in *An Introduction to Feminism and Theatre*, this image pattern "brings together a number of anxieties: of sexual jealousy, identity, repressed desire, self-denial, etc." (146). But while it disturbs Mary, it positively frightens Shelley--partly because it wrests back the (pro)creative powers he would wrest from women--and he "flees from her" (115). Ironically, although Shelley flees this sexual hybrid--which is portrayed as monstrous not simply through the obvious parallels between its creation and that of Frankenstein's Creature, but more violently, through its extreme sexuality--he is inextricably implicated in its monstrous creation or, more specifically, in the creation of its monstrosity. Elise may make the doll, but he guarantees its meaning by mounting it. Mary's dream maps sexual and procreative hyperbole on to a doll. And what is conventionally an icon of innocence and youth (and, by extension, chastity) is rendered all the more disturbing when its innocence is subverted.

The doll of Mary's dream is not precisely a female monster, which "implies a simple reversal of 'male monster'," but, in Barbara Creed's words, a "monstrous-feminine."

The reasons why the monstrous-feminine horrifies her audience are quite different from the reasons why the male monster horrifies his audience. A new term is needed to specify these differences. As with all other stereotypes of the feminine, from virgin to whore, she is defined in terms of her sexuality.

The phrase "monstrous feminine" emphasizes the importance of gender in the construction of her monstrosity. (3)

It also emphasizes, as here, the importance of sexuality in the construction of her monstrosity. The doll "mimics"--expresses and problematizes--expectations and representations of women's sexuality within Romanticism. Mary is expected to be sensually sexual even as Romantic writing vilifies sexual women as demonic. She is expected to be fecund even though she may die (as her mother did) through childbirth and (as she nearly did) through miscarriage, and even though all but one of her children die through illnesses exacerbated by Romanticism's nomadism and belief in the power of imagination over material reality.

Employing scenic effect to problematize traditional representations, *Blood and Ice* also uses scenic effect to query traditional representational apparatus. The play relies heavily on its characters' spoken discourse, but simultaneous visual effects often undermine dialogue, throwing into question that dialogue's truth claim and the authority implicitly vested in spoken and/or written Romantic discourse.²⁰ As Mary and Claire primp themselves, Mary accuses Claire of "behaving like a... maidservant" with Byron, and agonizes over the "ironical little bob of a curtsy" and "insolent smirk" proffered by the maid to Claire after Claire lost her shoe in the garden while returning from a tryst with Byron. Mary's and Claire's privilege and complaint are silhouetted by Elise's silent presence "at the edge of the light where we ought to just sense her waiting resentment." Their frivolousness is highlighted by the fact that "She stands stock still with armful of frou-frou" (86). At the end of this scene, in a game of "blind man's buff," Mary "catches" Elise "who has been standing silent at the edge of the feast, like a disengaged, contemptuous onlooker" (88-89). "That was only the maid, Mary, and she's not *in* our game!" shouts Claire (89). Elise's lurking presence is developed in the Winged Horse version of the play, where it is "pointed up frequently all during Act One" (*B&I* 1986 7), and is joined by the pervasive presence of Frankenstein's Creature. Like Elise's, the Creature's presence questions the justice of one person's privilege when it is predicated on another person's sacrifice. *Blood and Ice's* scenic depiction of Elise and the Creature as privy to their own exclusion and subordination by the Romantic protagonists effectively undermines the supposed (visionary) authority of Romantic language, and the supposed (progressive revolutionary) inclusiveness of their ideology.

"Dreaming Frankenstein"

Romanticism was built on a plethora of seductive dreams. *Blood and Ice* suggests it may be time to scrutinize those dreams. Why, this play provokes us to ask, should Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley have dreamed up Victor Frankenstein? In a poem entitled "Dreaming Frankenstein," Lochhead speculates,

She said she
woke up with him

²⁰ As Mellor points out, in his *Defence of Poetry* Shelley "dismiss[es] the composed poem as but a 'fading coal' of its originary inspiration. . . ironically insist[ing] upon the inability of language to capture the infinite power, beauty, and goodness for which the poet yearned" ("Why Women. . ." 283). The Romantic poet's insistence on the inadequacy of language is indeed ironic considering the immensity of the Romantic canon, and that canon's preference for the privileged literary form, poetry.

in her head, in her bed.

. . . .

he was inside her

and getting him out again

would be agony fit to quarter her,

unstitching everything. (Lochhead "Dreaming Frankenstein" 11-12)

Did Mary Shelley, as the literary lore goes, dream of Frankenstein? Or might we and she object to the "dream" account as a device for denying her creative responsibility for her work?²¹ Either way, why was Frankenstein, and for that matter his Creature, in Mary Shelley's head? George Levine replies: "The dreams emerge from the complex experiences that place the young Mary Shelley, both personally and intellectually, at a point of crisis in our modern culture, where idealism, faith in human perfectibility, and revolutionary energy were counterbalanced by the moral egotism of her radical father, the potential infidelity of her ideal husband, the cynical diabolism of Byron, the felt reality of her own pregnancy, and a great deal more" ("The Ambiguous Heritage of *Frankenstein*" 4). For Levine and for Lochhead, *Frankenstein* is Mary Shelley's response to her feelings of frustration, confusion, impatience, and anger, themselves responses to the contradictions between her learned and cherished ideals and desires, and her lived and felt experiences.

Lochhead's Mary begins as an aspiring Romantic, and as such she lauds the virtues enumerated by Levine: human perfectibility, revolutionary energy, and so on. But it is the burden of *Blood and Ice* to show that attaining these ideals is, and was, fundamentally challenged by social conditions which may be eradicable, but were not eradicable during one woman's relatively brief lifetime. "If you try to force things to be too rational," Lochhead has commented in interview, "the dark and untidy bits will well up and manifest themselves in quite concrete ways" (*Sleeping with Monsters* 13). The "concrete ways" in which Mary's utopia fails are, among other things, Shelley's infidelity, Mary's and Shelley's gradual jealous estrangement, their children's deaths, and Mary's sense of economic and social disparity evinced most strongly through her eventual recognition of the plight of Elise.

²¹ In the Pen Name version of *Blood and Ice*, Mary recounts how the notion of Frankenstein came to her and she puns ironically on Hamlet's existential angst and thus possibly on an individualism endemic also in Romanticism:

I lay down. Not to sleep. I did not sleep. Nor could I have been said to "dream."
Not dreaming! I see him--! (*B&I* 1988 43a)

Lochhead's Mary Shelley chooses finally the course of pragmatism, she chooses to "turn back" from the revolutionary path she began with Shelley. Byron,²² Elise, and Mary's own experiences provoke her to see that what she and others give up in the pursuit of Shelleyan idealism is not made up by what they gain. Simply because Mary is pragmatic, however, does not mean she utterly rejects idealism. *Blood and Ice* ends with hope for change. Neumeier argues that Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* sets off "the egotistical, anti-social creative impulse of Frankenstein against Walton's ultimately altruistic abandonment of these desires" so that "Mary Shelley could give form to this impulse without having to take responsibility for it." In *Blood and Ice*, she continues, because Mary can be seen as "all of the characters in her novel at once," the play's concluding lines can be understood "not only as an acknowledgement of Mary's siding with the self-effacing Walton, but at the same time as an unrelenting expression of Frankenstein's self-assertive desire, which is linked to the utopian vision of an 'undiscovered country' for men and women, a country free of cultural gender-construction" (70). The play's concluding hope for change is signified also by the fact that Mary does not lay down her pen in an act of passive acquiescence, but carries on writing. Her hope is not unmitigated: she writes "Quietly, resignedly," not triumphantly (116). But just what she writes is worth considering. It may be *Frankenstein*, indicating her continuing, persevering interaction with that text and its characters.²³ Or, given the play's diachronic organization, it may be Mary Shelley's notes to Percy Shelley's works which she began to edit after his death. In this case, it is possible to see Mary as not only interacting with her own work, but interacting with and intervening in the Romantic canon more broadly, as she "writes" and constructs Percy Shelley, significantly shaping the Romantic canon and Romantic ideology in her image.²⁴ *Blood and Ice's* hope for change is guaranteed

²² Byron must be seen as an instigator in Mary's growing estrangement from Shelleyan Romanticism, but because his libertine philosophy and behaviour may be seen as exploitative (perhaps even more so than Shelley's philosophy and behaviour), he cannot be seen as proto-feminist.

²³ We know that *Frankenstein* has been published within the course of the play's action, but Mary Shelley did, historically, rework it for re-publication after the period of the play, in 1831, and she may be doing so in the play's closing frame.

²⁴ "In several ways," writes Mary Favret, Mary Shelley's annotated edition of Percy Shelley's poems "really belongs to the editor; it is her work that dictates how we read" (19). Susan J. Wolfson agrees, suggesting that Mary Shelley's notes "Strategically construct the poet by constructing his reader" (40). This construction, or "fifty-odd pages of commentary on poetry," is, for Favret, "a celebration of the novelist's art and

structurally, finally, by the fact that the play foregrounds its own textuality, inhibiting its audience's unthinking acceptance of its characters' Romantic ideology.

Mary may be cautious, but she is hopeful. She is hopeful perhaps that the faults of what Mellor has called "masculine romanticism"--faults such as a neglect for product, an arrogant overindulgence of the individual self, and a smug assumption of superiority over nature--may be redressed by "feminine romanticism," characterized by "an ethic of care that require[s] one to take full responsibility for the predictable consequences of one's thoughts and actions, for the children of one's mind and body" (Mellor "Why Women Didn't Like Romanticism" 285). Lochhead's Mary Shelley shares with other "feminine Romantics" a belief in "a politics of gradual rather than violent social change" (Mellor *Romanticism and Gender* 3). And she suggests a philosophy and a practice which combine the rationalism of Scottish and other Enlightenment philosophies with the altruism of English Romantic poetry, while challenging the limits of the former and avoiding the arrogance of the latter. Finally, differences in narrative construction that distinguish *Blood and Ice* from many Romantic texts provide openings which its audience may see through in order to challenge masculine Romanticism's potentially coercive narrative strategies.

demonstrates Mary Shelley's ability to comprehend and supplant her husband's work" (19).

Chapter Two

Desire and Difference in Lochhead's *Dracula*¹

What's the cliché--one big happy family?

--Mina in Lochhead's *Dracula*

In Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula*, first published in 1897, a British, imperialist, bourgeois, male, heterosexual, liberal humanist solicitor named Jonathan Harker meets a Transylvanian, imperialist, capitalist, polymorphously perverse, bisexual, transsexual vampire named Count Dracula. Dracula invades England, threatening to use his bite to transform the English into a race of vampires. With everything Harker stands for and holds dear thus jeopardized, our English hero retaliates. Accompanied and aided by a group of Western allies, Harker chases Dracula back to Transylvania and exterminates Dracula and the rest of the vampire race.

In this brief--and, for the sake of argument, exaggerated--synopsis of Stoker's *Dracula*, I present the novel as a late-nineteenth-century fantasy of ruling-class hegemony, where the ruling class is British (or, more precisely, English), imperialist, bourgeois, male, heterosexual, and liberal humanist.² By discursively creating a threat to the ruling class and then enacting a triumph of the ruling class over that threat, the novel participates in and enforces a not necessarily overt but nevertheless operative cultural agenda to maintain the power hierarchy of the late Victorian British status quo.

Given the overtness of the novel's "ruling-class agenda" as I have narrated it, any reader may presumably opt out of engaging with and supporting this agenda. Contrary to what my rather blunt reading suggests, however, the novel effectively obscures its

¹ Material from this chapter appeared originally in my article, "Desire and Difference in Liz Lochhead's *Dracula*," published in *Essays in Theatre/Etudes Théâtrales*. I would like to thank the journal's editors, Harry Lane and Ann Wilson, as well as an anonymous reader, for their constructive criticism and encouragement. For the sake of clarity, references to Bram Stoker's *Dracula* are noted throughout this chapter by the initial "S" and page number, and those to Lochhead's *Dracula*, by the letter "L" and page number.

² I invoke "class," in other words, not simply to suggest connotations of social status accorded by socio-economic position, but also by race, gender, sexuality, and belief systems.

ideological investments and draws its reader into identification with the position of the ruling class. Presenting its story as a universally irreproachable triumph of "good" over "evil," happy family over transgressive monster, pan-social cohesion over morally-bereft chaos, the novel naturalizes and renders irrefutable its conservative fantasy. Further, through narrative technique and generic convention, the novel draws its reader into acceptance of this fantasy. The reader is compelled to "buy into" the novel's ruling-class fantasy even when it may not represent his or her own best interests to do so.

In interview, Lochhead has claimed to be "forging-out a Scottish and female and working-class. . . identity as a writer" (Todd 89-90), and she presumably had several ideological reservations about Stoker's text when she was asked to adapt it for the Edinburgh Royal Lyceum Theatre Company in 1985. Indeed, her stage version of *Dracula* first foregrounds and then deftly problematizes the fantasies of ruling-class hegemony naturalized as social cohesion and "desired" so profoundly in Stoker's novel.³

Using irony, word play, and other techniques familiar from her other plays and poetry, Lochhead's *Dracula* highlights--and thereby de-naturalizes--some of the fantasies of cultural domination which motivate Stoker's *Dracula*. And using various alienation techniques, Lochhead's play further stymies audience or reader production and adoption of a unified subject position from which to comprehend the play. Lochhead's *Dracula* thus frustrates any audience bid to engage with the play from any single perspective, be that perspective status-quo-affirming (as in Stoker's novel), or otherwise. Multiplying the sites and opportunities for pleasurable engagement in the myth of "Dracula," Lochhead's play encourages its audience to recognize and experience diverse desires rather than a single trajectory of desire, thus to engage with the play on multiple levels, and finally to produce diverse meanings.

This chapter is organized to consider, first, the ruling-class fantasies of Stoker's novel, and their foregrounding and implicit problematization in Lochhead's play; and second, the narrative control and Bakhtinian monologism of Stoker's novel and its collapse and conversion to dialogism in Lochhead's play. It begins with a fairly lengthy analysis of Stoker's *Dracula* by way of identifying and establishing features which Lochhead's play picks up and tellingly re-tells.

Looking at Lochhead's play in comparison with Stoker's novel, I do not mean to treat either text transhistorically. However, I do advocate a comparative analysis of the two works because many of the power paradigms within which the novel operates also function--if, importantly, differently--in the play. And while I do not intend to universalize my argument, I do hope to suggest not only interpretations of Stoker's novel and Lochhead's play but, further, reading strategies which facilitate understanding of cultural

³ The play premiered at the Royal Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh, on 13 March, 1985, in a production directed by Hugh Hodgart.

practices of containment and emancipation operative in other texts as well. With this broader application in mind, my examination focuses on the way Lochhead's play handles the "Dracula" myth not, like Stoker's text, to reinforce ruling-class hegemony naturalized as the myth of "one big happy family"--a particularly disturbing, even menacing, myth in these days of "back-to-basics" and "family values" conservative ideologies--but rather to problematize the power balance inscribed in the big happy family cliché and to encourage a recognition and production not of social cohesion but of social difference.

Stoker's *Dracula*: Ruling-class Fantasies

Stoker's *Dracula*'s investment in maintaining certain social groups' cultural dominance becomes readable if we look at the novel not as a simple mimetic reflection (if one were possible) of late Victorian society, but as a social construct which carries symptoms of social fears, beliefs, and desires, particularly fears of, beliefs about, and desires regarding race, class, sex, and gender. The novel constructs and simultaneously idealizes a "self," places that self in conflict with an equally constructed--but as monstrously bad--"other," and enacts a triumph of that good self over that bad other. The other--usually, here, Dracula--acts as a fantasy hazardous-waste receptacle, receiving and containing that which the dominant groups fear in themselves and wish to displace outside of themselves. Once removed from the self, these fears may be ritually destroyed, with no harm to the self, even accruing glory for the self. The self obviously benefits from this unilateral "negotiation." Inevitably, the other suffers.

Nationalism and Empire

As a late-nineteenth-century fiction which combines elements of travel narrative, the gothic, "invasion-scare" (Brantlinger 233), and a central conflict between an "oriental" monstrous other and a team of mostly young upper-middle-class Englishmen, Stoker's *Dracula* is viewed by many critics as "imperial gothic," a genre Patrick Brantlinger, in his study of nineteenth-century British literature and imperialism, *Rule of Darkness*, identifies as "especially symptomatic of the anxieties that attended the climax of the British Empire" (227-28). For many critics, these anxieties include not only the ruling class's fear of its own declining *international* imperial power, compounded by its fear of some sort of retribution from the "colonies" in the form of reverse colonization, but also its fear of declining *internal* power over an increasingly outspoken and heterogeneous domestic community.

In response to this complex of fears, the imperial gothic novel constructs the potential for the realization of these fears and then abruptly and violently enacts their containment. Like the child whom Sigmund Freud studied as it played the game of *fort-*

da, the ruling-class structures which control this genre of fiction, and *Dracula* in particular, flirt with their worst fears by admitting (or discursively producing) the monster--as the child creates what it fears, "absence," by throwing its toy out of sight, exclaiming "*fort*"--and then violently destroying what provokes the fear--as the child masters the feeling of absence by making the toy reappear, "*da*" (Freud "Beyond the Pleasure Principle" 14-15). In his insightful and acute reading of the novel, "'Kiss Me with Those Red Lips': Gender and Inversion in *Dracula*," Christopher Craft suggests that much gothic fiction enacts this kind of rhythm, admitting a fear, entertaining it, and finally destroying it. He suggests further, "the gothic novel's prolonged middle, during which the text affords its ambivalence a degree of play [is] intended to produce a pleasurable, indeed a thrilling anxiety" (168).⁴ Importantly, this model recognizes that the monstrous other or object of fear is somehow created by the subject, is not really external but internal, and is, therefore, displaced onto the external in a manoeuvre that is both defensive and pleasurable, safely distancing the object from the subject where the object may be soundly and satisfyingly destroyed.

Stoker's *Dracula* displays several other symptomatic fears and fantasies related to fears of declining British imperial power. In "The Occidental Tourist: *Dracula* and the Anxiety of Reverse Colonization," Stephen Arata argues that the novel articulates fears of reverse colonization--itself a fantasy of atonement for having colonized "others" in the first place. For Arata, the fear expressed in *Dracula* "is that what has been represented as the 'civilized' world is on the point of being colonized by 'primitive' forces." He proposes, "Such fears are linked to a perceived decline--racial, moral, spiritual--which makes the nation vulnerable to attack from more vigorous, 'primitive' peoples" (623). Similarly, for Brantlinger *Dracula* expresses cultural fears of internal social disintegration and ever-weakening value systems. In Brantlinger's estimation, imperialism played a critical role in allaying these fears and thereby preserving nineteenth-century ruling-class domination, "function[ing] as an ideological safety valve, deflecting both working-class radicalism and middle-class reformism into non-critical paths while preserving fantasies of aristocratic authority at home and abroad" (35). For Brantlinger, late-nineteenth-century British imperialism provided "an ideology or political faith" which acted as "a partial substitute for declining or fallen Christianity and for declining faith in Britain's future" (228). For John Allen Stevenson in his "A Vampire in the Mirror: The Sexuality of *Dracula*," one late-Victorian fear about "Britain's future" was an anticipated contamination of British racial "purity" or "integrity," a threat posed by a particular type of reverse colonization: (reverse) sexual imperialism. In *Dracula*, this threat is posed by the Count as "excessive

⁴ Craft acknowledges the correlation of his argument to Tzvetan Todorov's theory of the fantastic as outlined in Todorov's *The Fantastic*. Craft summarizes Todorov's theory: "the essential condition of fantastic fiction is a duration characterized by readerly suspension of certainty" (Craft 190).

exogamist" (Stevenson 139, 144), someone who observes the incest taboo by "marrying out" of his immediate "family" but simultaneously transgresses cultural assumptions of "acceptable" exogamous limits by trespassing over racial boundaries. "[M]arriage, or even a sexual relation, that crosses that boundary [between 'us' and 'them']," writes Stevenson, "ceases to be a social act that simultaneously denies incest and affirms the group and becomes instead a threat" (140), exactly what Dracula becomes in the novel. As a "social adulterer"⁵ and a polygamist, Dracula threatens "the racial integrity of the West" (Stevenson 147) by setting out to colonize Britain with a race of everlasting vampires, an act which would obviously utterly obliterate British ruling-class social cohesion or hegemony.

In response to these various fears, *Dracula* constructs the fantasy outlined above, admitting the fears, entertaining them, and finally expelling them. The task of admission involves a complex narrative construction of a monstrous "other" who will present the threat to the oppositely glorified--but equally constructed--"self." As an imperialist construction, this "otherness" is centred on the other's racial difference, a difference characteristically figured as inferiority. As examined in Edward W. Said's classic study of this "othering" phenomenon, *Orientalism*, Occidental society has a long history of culturally constructing an Oriental other which corresponds more strongly to Occidental desires of what the "Orient" should signify--especially in its difference from (read "inferiority to") the "Occident"--than to how the so-called "Orient" perceives itself. Stoker's *Dracula* participates in this less than auspicious Orientalist heritage by constructing Count Dracula as other through a thorough discursive manipulation (and denigration) of his geographical and social context, behaviour, and appearance.

Dracula is only introduced to the reader after Jonathan Harker, the reader's "eyes," has travelled through Europe with his journal, discursively constructing and furnishing for the reader Dracula's foreign context. Throughout this preamble, Harker narrates--and thereby enforces, especially because his is the only perspective offered the reader--the "unbridgeable gap" he sees "separat[ing] the Western traveller from Eastern peoples" (Arata 636). Invoking conventions of travel narrative, Harker notes the "peculiarities" of his foreign environment, offering details of regional diet, dress, history, custom, and landscape (S1-11). Importantly, the novel's invocation of travel narrative, with its tone of neutral, pseudo-scientific, objective reportage, naturalizes the value-laden choices that Jonathan (or, through him, Stoker) makes in constructing--not simply "reporting"--his environment. As Arata points out, Harker places particular stress on the "contrast between British punctuality and Transylvanian tardiness," a contrast which stands, "in Harker's view, as a concrete instance of more fundamental and wide-ranging oppositions: between Western progress and Eastern stasis, between Western science

⁵ The term is Westermarck's (2: 51), quoted in Stevenson (140).

and Eastern superstition, between Western reason and Eastern emotion, between Western civilization and Eastern barbarism" (Arata 636-637). By the time Count Dracula finally appears undisguised in the novel, his otherness--and a negativity inscribed in that otherness--have already been firmly established.

Once the reader finally meets Dracula, however, he is presented as other and strange in ways that only seem to increase exponentially through the course of the novel. In his description of the Count's "very marked physiognomy," Harker paints a portrait of extremes, noting that the Count's nostrils seem "peculiarly arched," his eyebrows "very massive," his teeth "peculiarly sharp," and his mouth "rather cruel-looking" (S18).⁶ "The general effect," writes Harker, "[is] one of extraordinary pallor" (S18). As Stevenson points out, through the course of the novel, Dracula's appearance is gradually but increasingly distanced from that of the Westerners and, significantly, demonized, particularly as emphasis on the death-like pallor of his skin and the redness of his mouth increases and after he receives the blow from Jonathan, leaving on his forehead a red scar reminiscent of that of the biblical sinner Cain (Stevenson 141).

Of course, it is not merely Dracula's appearance which is other but also, and more threateningly, his behaviour. Even more insidiously, it is his behaviour in "everyday" practices and customs of sexuality, diet, sleep, and work which are deviant. His sexuality is "deviant" because it is seemingly polymorphous, bisexual, and transsexual, it "monstrously" combines the tasks of both nourishment and procreation, and it is "excessively exogamous." His eating habits are "foreign" in both diet and custom. His sleeping habits invert Western temporal "logic" of day and night, light and darkness, and their respective cultural associations with good and evil. Further, they pervert the single, solemn, even hallowed, Western use of the coffin. Since Dracula considers himself a "warrior," both his profession and his world view are alien to the professional Englishman Jonathan who, it is implied, is proud of what Dracula disparagingly calls "these days of dishonourable peace" (S31, Stevenson 142-3, Arata 627-8). Dracula also speaks differently from most of the novel's other main characters; specifically, he speaks not

⁶ Jonathan's phraseology is profoundly reminiscent of Little Red Riding Hood's when she speaks to the wolf disguised as her grandmother in the Little Red Riding Hood fable. One can almost hear Dracula/the wolf (a link emphasized further by Dracula's association with wolves) reply to Jonathan's thoughts, "All the better to see and suck you with, my dear." This subtle, provocative, and humorous link between Dracula and the evil wolf of fairy tales, and Jonathan and Little Red Riding Hood is exploited by Lochhead when her Dracula teases Jonathan, "Come, come, Mr Harker, blood is not so easily curdled. In Milksope kindergartens perhaps, tales of the Big Bad Wolf might--what do you say--scare the pretty children witless?" (L94).

Standard British English, but broken English, casting him specifically as foreign to "good English."

Detail after detail accumulates, establishing and enforcing Dracula's otherness. As Heidi J. Holder observes in reference to the same kind of construction of otherness in British colonial melodrama, such "strong social, racial, and geographical oppositions" provide for the characters and suggest to the reader "a 'realistic' basis for a comprehensive view of the world as divided into 'us' and 'them,' or. . . 'self' and 'Other'" (130).⁷ Effectively, this kind of narrative construction naturalizes binary oppositional difference, masking the ideological choices that load such oppositional constructions, and inhibiting the "free play" of multiple difference.

Once the various fears have been admitted in the form of the constructed racial other, Dracula, the novel "flirts" with or entertains these fears by allowing Dracula to establish a threat of reverse colonization--the threat that he might just colonize England with a race of vampires and all that vampirism has been culturally constructed to imply: the "Orient," cultural inferiority, monstrous sexuality, the pagan primitive, and so on. Ultimately, Dracula threatens to colonize English land and English bodies, but he begins his crusade as an "Occidental tourist" by invading English minds "through the spaces of their knowledge" (Arata 634), their "bodies of knowledge"--their books which fill Dracula's library, and the valued conversation provided by Jonathan Harker. As Arata points out, while Jonathan begins the novel as a diligent, devoted, and talented Orientalist--eagerly travelling towards and through Transylvania with journal in hand, ever ready to make a note of any particularly charming local custom--he is quickly eclipsed in his anthropological expertise by Dracula, who proves to be a far more keen, probably better read, and certainly linguistically more fluent "Occidental" scholar. And while Jonathan's desire to acquire oriental knowledge appears to be motivated by the most innocent--even virtuous--anthropological interests, Dracula's desire to acquire occidental knowledge is motivated by a virtually transparent will to conquer the English. In this "monstrous" mirroring, *both* Jonathan's and Dracula's knowledge-accumulating practices are implicated in appropriation, control, and imperialism (Arata 638).

Having begun with a form of cultural imperialism, Dracula moves on to territorial imperialism, "invading" Britain by purchasing Carfax and importing his fifty boxes of special (Oriental) Transylvanian sleeping soil. Finally, he begins his self-appointed task of the "*racial* conquest and domination" of England (Arata 628), by colonizing bodies in a manner Stevenson has suggested would have been particularly frightening to the novel's late Victorian English male protagonists--by biting women's bodies, where biting may be seen as a euphemism for penetrative sex (Stevenson 144). Significantly, as Arata indicates, the battle for bodies between Dracula and the Occidental heroes becomes a

⁷ Holder cites "self" and "Other" as "Sander Gilman's terms" (Gilman 18).

battle for the bodies, specifically, of women--first Lucy, then Mina--emphasizing the imperialist use of women's bodies as mere "vehicles of racial propagation" (Arata 633). For Arata, "Dracula's biological colonization of women becomes a horrific parody of the sanctioned exploitation practiced by the Western male characters" (Arata 633), that is, within marriage, where racial propagation is certainly legitimated, and often promoted and prioritized. Once the vampiric threat to their women has been recognized by the reasonable, sceptical Western men, most of the rest of the novel is devoted to these men's heroic efforts to eradicate that threat. But, as suggested above, the threat and the uncertainty of its consolidation or eradication are permitted to linger for many pages, allowing for a prolonged flirtation with the possibility that the fears the novel presents might just be realized.

This, of course, makes the novel's triumph over those fears when the threat is finally conquered and expelled all the more effective because it is all the more gratifying. In the type of reading I have been looking at here, this expulsion comes in the Western men's re-appropriation of what Dracula has colonized: their women--as they purify Lucy and reclaim Mina from the possibility of vampirism; their land--as they track down and sabotage all of the crates of Transylvanian soil with which Dracula has "polluted" England and more specifically its metropolitan centre, London; and their knowledge--as they drive Dracula out of England so he can no longer "know" it and obliterate the knowledge he already has by committing vampire genocide, executing him and, in an act that might seem gratuitous were it not that vampires can telepathically share thoughts, obliterating the three vampire women at Castle Dracula. The discursively created triumph of what Jonathan calls "our little band of men"--the majority of whom are upper-middle class and English⁸--effectively dispels the fears discussed above: English fears of declining imperial power, of reverse colonization, of internal social disintegration, and so on. Constructing itself heroically in opposition to Dracula's demonic transgression, the British imperialist self affirms its cultural prerogative to overcome.

Class

A second major group of late-nineteenth-century ruling-class fears and fantasies represented symptomatically in Stoker's *Dracula* relates not to foreign but to domestic power, particularly class power. For Franco Moretti, in "The Dialectic of Fear," the ruling

⁸ Significantly, the American character Quincey Morris is killed in the act of killing Dracula. His potential "New World" threat to the Britons is thus eradicated while his heroic bravery is recuperated by them in the naming of their child Quincey. Once the threat of the vampire is eradicated, the Continental European Van Helsing is likewise transmogrified (and literally and metaphorically patronized) by the narrative and its English characters, from learned doctor to great godfather.

class's fear of its declining domestic power is provoked primarily by the perceived growth and proliferation of capitalism, capitalism's candid monopolization of resources, and its threat to the idea of individual liberty, so central to the self-promotion of bourgeois respectability (74). For other critics, like William Veeder in his excellent foreword to Margaret L. Carter's collection of *Dracula* criticism, *Dracula: The Vampire and the Critics*, the fear of declining bourgeois power is stimulated more specifically by a growing and increasingly powerful working class and an anxious perception that this class may potentially supersede the bourgeoisie in controlling cultural power. Whatever specifically provokes this fear, Stoker's *Dracula* is strongly inscribed with the fear of declining bourgeois power. And in response to this fear the novel, again, enacts the admission of this fear, entertains it, and, finally and triumphantly, expels it.

In Moretti's model, where the novel articulates a response to the expansion of capitalism, the admission of the threat involves the construction of Dracula as a capitalist, but a capitalist of a particular breed, where capitalism is enforced as monstrous, "naturally" bearing certain negative connotations in comparison with which the apparent virtues of the bourgeois protagonists appear ever more virtuous and also apparently "natural." Moretti suggests that for the culture which created *Dracula*, capitalism was monstrous because its candidly exploitative interests affronted bourgeois Victorian sensibilities of justice. Moretti writes that as far as this culture was concerned, "money should be used according to justice. Money must not have an end in itself, in its continuous accumulation. It must have, rather, a moral, anti-economic end" (75). Of course, as Moretti goes on to point out, "This idea of money is, for the capitalist, something inadmissible. But it is also the great ideological lie of Victorian capitalism, a capitalism which is ashamed of itself and which hides factories and stations beneath cumbrous Gothic superstructures; which prolongs and extols aristocratic models of life; which exalts the holiness of the family as the latter begins secretly to break up" (75). In creating Dracula as a monstrous capitalist, the novel, the culture in which it was originally produced, and cultures which continue to reproduce it displace an internal threat--an increasingly powerful and not "anti-economic" capitalism--outside of themselves, onto an external monstrous other where the offensive characteristic metamorphosed into an offensive being may be heroically destroyed. As Moretti would have it, the "horror" of capitalism is displaced onto Dracula just as it is hidden in factories behind cunningly designed non-factory-like façades. That displacement not only allows but also--simply by virtue of juxtaposition--fosters the perception of the novel's heroes as good, just as Victorian factories' façades portray those factories as admirable and beautiful and mask the sweatshops within.

Dracula as capitalist is constructed as horrific because he is shown, "[l]ike capital," to be "impelled towards a continuous growth, an unlimited expansion of his domain: accumulation is inherent in his nature" (Moretti 73). As each of his victims

transforms into a vampire, Dracula is compelled to accumulate new victims--just as capitalism is self-perpetuating. Dracula's expansionism is not only ideologically and socially disgusting to the bourgeois protagonists in its frankly exploitative interests and its bold practice of accumulation for accumulation's sake, it is also ideologically and socially threatening, and indeed life-threatening, because it takes the bourgeois protagonists, their culture, their territory, and their women as its object.

Readings which see *Dracula's* fears of declining bourgeois power as a symptomatic response to the rise not of capitalism *per se*, but of the working class, also propose that the novel admits that which it fears--here, the working class--but in a fashion slightly different than in those discursive acts of admission discussed previously. As demonstrated in the preceding discussions of imperialism and capitalism, fear is usually grafted onto the obvious monster, Dracula, "serv[ing] to displace the antagonisms and horrors evidenced within society to outside society itself" (Moretti 68). But in readings of *Dracula* which see the working class as posing the central threat to bourgeois hegemony, the menace is transposed not onto Dracula--the obvious monster and racially, geographically, and physiognomically outside of the narrative's dominant culture--but onto the working classes themselves, located dangerously *within* the infrastructure of British culture which also provides the majority of the novel's chief protagonists. In other words, the threat of the working class is admitted not through Dracula, who will later be expelled through the workings of the plot, but through working-class characters themselves, who will be expelled--not *in* the story, as is Dracula--but *from* the narrative, where their influence on and contribution to the plot will be admitted, entertained, but finally expelled, as they are increasingly elided from narrative contribution.

Veeder illustrates that *Dracula* "admits" the working class by furnishing a plethora of working-class roles in its narrative: the various Westenra household maids, the working-class children whom bourgeois vampire Lucy attacks, the sailors, old Mr Swales, the cartage men who deliver Dracula's crates of soil, the zoo keeper and his wife, and the locksmith--unwitting accomplice to the protagonists' forced entry to Dracula's London home (Veeder xi-xii). By admitting this multitude of characters, the novel avows the threat the working class--by its very numbers--poses to the dominant bourgeoisie. As Dracula is constructed as "other" in a narrative which he is never permitted to control and which controls, creates, and shapes him according to its own desires, so the novel's working-class characters are created by a potentially less than sympathetic narrative and less than sympathetic narrators. The novel's working class, while not explicitly figured as a monster, is, however, given monstrous qualities and is frequently and damningly associated with the arch-monster Dracula. Consider, for instance, the Westenra maids' dismissal by Van Helsing as potential blood donors, the representation of the cartage men as ruinously vulnerable to the "vice" of drink, and the contribution to Dracula's cause made, albeit unknowingly, by the sailors who transport Dracula to England, and by the

cartage men who distribute his soil to its various English destinations (Veeder xi-xii). Once again, in admitting a fear, *Dracula* constructs an other whose characteristics compare unfavourably with those of the self--the bourgeois protagonists--thereby reinforcing a favourable impression of the self.

Once the fear--of either capitalism or the working class--has been admitted, it is entertained, sustained by the narrative. Moretti observes that, "In *Dracula* there is no omniscient narrator, only individual and mutually separate points of view." He suggests, "[t]he first-person account is a clear expression of the desire to keep hold of one's individuality, which the vampire threatens to subjugate" in his capitalist monopolizing occupation (77). In the novel's period of entertainment, individual narrative voices multiply, struggling perhaps through sheer numbers to affirm an idea of individuality which *Dracula*'s totalizing vampirism threatens to subsume. The threat is sustained during this period, Moretti suggests, because a "handful of isolated individuals cannot oppose the concentrated force of the vampire" (77). Thus, in order to expel *Dracula*'s capitalist threat, "The individuality of the narration must be preserved at the same time as its negative aspect--the doubt, importance, ignorance and even mutual distrust and hostility of the protagonists--must be eliminated" (Moretti 77). For Moretti, the novel's ability to preserve the individual without succumbing to the monstrous totalization represented by *Dracula* is achieved by the collation of the individual narrators into a "collective narrator" (77). For David Seed, this triumph of the collective is doubly enforced by the novel's metatextual emphasis on its own narrative processes of collation since "*Dracula* narrates its own textual assembly" (Seed 204). Thus, through narrative convention *Dracula* enforces the value of both the collective (social cohesion) and the individual (a concept central to bourgeois liberal humanism).

Narrative functions similarly in posing the working class as a threat. Although the bourgeois English characters effectively control the narrative throughout *Dracula*, in the central "entertainment" section these characters are forced to defer to the novel's many working-class characters for crucial information about *Dracula*. Perhaps more significantly, the narrative itself is forced to "entertain" the working class in order to further its own story: consider again the crucial contributions to the plot made by the sailors, the cartage men, the maid who removes Lucy's crucifix from around her neck, and the locksmith, not to mention the crucial information furnished by the zoo keeper. Noticeably, however, as the novel nears its end, narrative contributions from any characters other than the central band of upper-middle-class Westerners are gradually elided. The fantasy of bourgeois hegemony is "made real" not only diegetically, but also structurally as the narrative autonomy of the bourgeois narrators is resoundingly affirmed. As Moretti writes, the end of the novel resolves itself into "the official version of events," with all of the ruling-class connotations of "the official" intact and the "unofficial" expunged.

The final collated narrative "unifies the different interests and cultural paradigms of the dominant class (law, commerce, the land, science) under the banner of the common good. It restores the narrative equilibrium" (Moretti 78), having safely expelled both the capitalist threat--Dracula--and the working-class threat--the working-class characters and their intrusion into the narrative. Significantly, the novel's final entry is written by the bourgeois character Jonathan Harker who tells of the birth of his son, "proof" and affirmation of the consolidation, triumph, and perpetuation of the ruling class.

Gender and Sexual Politics

Critical analysis of sexual politics in Stoker's *Dracula*--and such analysis is voluminous and exhaustive--focuses on how the social cohesion or stability of upper-middle-class Victorian England was predicated on certain (usually binary) divisions or distinctions (usually assumptions) about gender and sexuality. These assumptions legitimated male heterosexual domination of Victorian society and therefore included such general ideas as: women are dependent and sexually passive, men are dominant and sexually aggressive; and heterosexuality is natural, while homosexuality is not.

The admission that women may be sexually aggressive or may simply even feel sexual desire was threatening to a society in which dominant power was vested in the male. Thus, female sexuality could only possibly be admitted when it was likewise shown to be abhorrent as, for instance, in the paradigm of the Whore. Male (not to mention female) homosexuality or bisexuality was similarly threatening because, in a society where conventions of sexuality were inscribed within a set of binary oppositions which paralleled gender definitions--with dualities like male/female, aggressive/passive, reason/nature--a man's desire for another man collapsed these world-organizing dualisms. In a society which was experiencing the rise of the New Woman,⁹ and increased writing on sexuality in general and on the possibility of human bisexuality as "natural" in particular,¹⁰ threats to the stability of Victorian England's gender and sexual categories presented by female sexuality and male homosexuality were strong. Again, Stoker's *Dracula* admits these fears, entertains them in an ambivalent state of desire and fear, and, finally, expels them in a hyperbolic expression of dominant male heterosexuality, simultaneously justifying and heroically enacting the endurance of the status quo.

Dracula himself embodies many or most of the fears of sexuality articulated in the novel since he may be seen as polymorphously perverse, bisexual, and even transsexual, defying in all respects conventional definitions of gender and sexuality based on an understanding of sex as always reproductive function and never libidinal pleasure (Craft

⁹ Carol Senf's "*Dracula*: Stoker's Response to the New Woman" traces the New Woman's presence and characterization in *Dracula*.

¹⁰ Craft provides interesting and apposite background information on this subject.

185-186). He is polymorphously perverse because he finds the entire body erogenous--he may take his pleasure by biting or being bitten presumably anywhere on the body, although the neck does seem to be a favoured site. He is bisexual because he may, apparently without discretion, take pleasure from men or women. And he is transsexual because his own sex may be identified through metaphor as both male--when he penetrates--and female--when his mouth is a penetrable orifice or bleeding "O" (potentially a metaphor for a woman's vagina during menstruation) and when Mina sucks at his breast like a "kitten" at a saucer of "milk" (S218, Craft, and Howes). Furthermore, his sexual appetite is voracious and, as discussed above, it transgresses the boundaries of acceptable exogamy. Finally, his sexuality is not always reproductive--the claimed characteristic which invests the protagonists' sexuality with social, and not only personal, value--and is sometimes simply, literally, and (for the protagonists) immorally self-satisfying. Dracula embodies multiple sexual threats: aggressive female sexuality, male homosexuality, excessive sexuality, and non-reproductive sexuality.

Importantly, however, Dracula is not the only character to embody the threat of female sexuality. Gail B. Griffin remarks that as the novel progresses, the threat of "active vampirism, with its dimension of sexuality, is dissociated from Dracula and associated instead with four female vampires" (138)--the three female vampires in Castle Dracula and Lucy. First, the three women vampires in the castle assume sexual dominance by approaching and preparing to initiate a sexual act with supine Jonathan (S39), thereby subverting and imperilling male sexual dominance. Fortunately for Jonathan, he manages to escape, leaving these women and the threat they present in Transylvania. However, with Dracula's bite, Lucy too becomes a sexual predator, and thus the sexually predatory woman infiltrates Western society. As far as the male narrators are concerned, Lucy begins to be overtly disturbingly sexual before she dies (S168-69), but once she has died to the un-Dead, Lucy's overt sexuality is portrayed as even more aggressive and, thus, more monstrous. In the graveyard scene, she first makes a mockery of an idealized concept of motherhood, thoroughly shocking the men by dashing the child she has been feeding on to the ground, and she then makes a sexually loaded appeal to Arthur in what, for the men, is an appallingly assertive manner. "Come to me, Arthur," she demands, "Leave those others and come to me. My arms are hungry for you. Come, and we can rest together. Come, my husband, come!" (S223).

Female sexuality in Stoker's *Dracula* is represented as monstrous not only in its relation to men, but also in its physiology. The menstrual taboo epitomized by a cultural perception of menstruation as "unclean" is literalized in Stoker's *Dracula* by what is seen as the monster's revolting blood diet and the appellation of vampirism itself as "unclean." After the "primal scene" between Dracula and Mina, Mina's white nightdress is left "smeared with blood" (S298), an image evoking both menstruation and the broken hymen associated with the loss of virginity. When she sees the blood she has smeared on her

husband Mina proclaims herself "Unclean, unclean!" (S300, Griffin 141). Constructing the sexual woman in the form of a vampire and a physiological fact of female sexuality, menstruation, in a hyperbolic monstrous literalization, Stoker's *Dracula* constructs and resoundingly enforces both the perceived deviance and the threat of female sexuality.

Male homosexual desire is similarly constructed and simultaneously vilified in the novel, perhaps most explicitly through Dracula who liberally displays his desire for another man. In the mirror scene at Castle Dracula, Jonathan cuts himself shaving and Dracula springs at him with desire. Jonathan writes, ". . . the blood was trickling over my chin. . . . When the Count saw my face, his eyes blazed with a sort of demoniac fury, and he suddenly made a grab at my throat" (S26). Later, after Dracula surprises the three vampire women on the brink of vamping Jonathan, Dracula proclaims,

"How dare you touch him, any of you? How dare you cast eyes on him when I had forbidden it? Back, I tell you all! This man belongs to me!" (S40)

And, finally, Dracula repeats his warning to the vampire women to stay away from Jonathan. "Have patience," says Dracula, "To-night is mine. To-morrow night is yours!" (S53). For Christopher Craft, "the sexual threat that this novel first evokes, manipulates, sustains, but never finally represents is that Dracula will seduce, penetrate, drain another male," emasculating that man (170).

Such a possibility, Craft suggests, is inadmissible in both "this text and the gender-anxious culture form which it arose." Thus, "an implicitly homoerotic desire achieves representation as a monstrous heterosexuality" (Craft 170). Homosexuality, too disturbing to represent in itself, is displaced onto heterosexuality but there retains this culture's associations of homosexuality with deviance and evil. This displacement of male homosexual desire onto a monstrous heterosexuality is repeated and reinforced throughout the novel but is perhaps first enacted through the three vampire women in Dracula's castle. "Dracula's ungratified desire to vamp Harker is fulfilled instead by his three vampiric daughters, whose anatomical femininity," according to Craft, "permits, because it masks, the silently interdicted homoerotic embrace between Harker and the Count" (170). The women act as objects of exchange "between men" (to play on the title of Eve Sedgwick's book), "cementing the bonds of men with men" (Sedgwick 26). This "use" of women as commodities of exchange--or even conduits of intercourse--between men recurs on several occasions in the course of the novel as, for instance, when the heroes' lifeblood (recognized by many critics as metaphoric semen) flows through Lucy to Dracula; when the heroes stake--or perform a "gang rape" on--the un-Dead Lucy (S227-28, Craft 188); when Dracula tells the male protagonists, "Your girls that you all love are mine already; and through them you and others shall yet be mine" (S324); and, finally, when the "little band of men" is identified as the (spiritually) collective father of Mina's baby, Quincey Harker (S400, Craft 189). And while women in *Dracula* mediate the displaced lust "between men," they also *embody* male homosocial desire because they

too--as vampires like Dracula--may be seen as transsexual. For Craft, the most significant site of multiple sexual suggestion in the vampire is the mouth: "Luring at first with an inviting orifice, a promise of red softness, but delivering instead a piercing bone, the vampire mouth fuses and confuses what Dracula's civilized nemesis, Van Helsing and his Crew of Light, works so hard to separate--the gender-based categories of the penetrating and the receptive, or, to use Van Helsing's language, the complementary categories of 'brave men' and 'good women'" (169). Mediating and embodying the displaced lust between men, women in Stoker's *Dracula* are commodified, their own sexuality denied or monstrously transmuted in relegation to the service of men. Thus monstrous heterosexuality in Stoker's *Dracula* functions both to mask a denied yet desired same (male) sex eroticism and to justify a violent misogyny which is presented as simply necessary or even "natural" in the face of monstrously aggressive female sexuality (Craft 172).

Having thoroughly established and entertained the various threats posed by the transgression of cultural definitions of gender and sexuality, *Dracula* once again expels these threats, triumphantly affirming the status quo. In order to quell the monstrous, aggressive, female sexuality and the possibility of male homosexuality exhibited in the course of the novel, *Dracula* reasserts the stereotypical roles for women which its "gender-anxious" culture is prepared to accept and violently tailors its female characters to fit these roles through a series of hyperbolic and punishing male heterosexual enactments. Lucy, for instance, is rendered increasingly vampish or whore-like until she is despicable enough to "merit" the treatment she receives--hyperbolic penile penetration/murder with a phallic stake "some two and a half or three inches thick and about three feet long" (S226).

In the scene in which she is staked, sexual Lucy is vastly outnumbered by male representation: Van Helsing reads from a text which in his "broken" English he significantly identifies as male ("I shall read him" [S223]), and Seward and Morris provide moral support, looking on while Arthur hammers the stake through Lucy's heart. For critics who write on the novel's sexual politics, this penetration scene is understandably crucial for its condensed presentation of violent misogyny and its brutal parody of female sexuality. Seward recounts how, once Arthur struck,

The Thing in the coffin writhed; and a hideous, blood-curdling screech came from the opened red lips. The body shook and quivered and twisted in wild contortions; the sharp white teeth champed together till the lips were cut, and the mouth was smeared with crimson foam. But Arthur never faltered. He looked like a figure of Thor as his untrembling arm rose and fell, driving deeper and deeper the mercy-bearing stake, whilst the blood from the pierced heart welled and spurted up around it. His face was set, and high duty seemed to shine through it; the sight of it gave us courage so that our voices

seemed to ring through the little vault.... Finally, [the Thing] lay still. The terrible task was over. (S227-28)

Shown to be dangerously transgressive, the "whore" or "foul Thing" is violently punished. Miraculously, once the objectified "it" has "accepted" the sexual primacy of the heterosexual male(s), *she* is cured, restoring (if not reviving) the Lucy the protagonists had seen "in her life, with her face of unequalled sweetness and purity" (S228).

The patriarchal characters in the novel and the patriarchal prerogatives of the narrative construct for women two acutely limited roles: that of the whore, who must be destroyed; and that of the angel, who may safely be idolized. And while the latter role may seem more generous, it is at least as restrictive in what it permits women to do and may ultimately prove less generous because it prescribes its limits through compliment rather than criticism, making them more difficult to contest. The "[i]dealization of femininity" and "the most violent misogyny," writes Griffin, may often be seen as "two sides of the same coin" (144). As the male-controlled narrative forces Lucy to enact the role of the whore, it likewise manipulates Mina into the role of the mother or the "angel in the house," consistently aggrandizing her, but nevertheless controlling her by silencing her (gradually removing her from narrative control), literally blinding her (covering her errant eyes in the latter part of the novel), and prescriptively defining her character (Howes 115).

In one of his infinite passages of Mina-worship, Van Helsing calls her "one of God's women, fashioned by His own hand to show us men and other women that there is a heaven where we can enter, and that its light can be here on earth" (S198). Craft performs a close reading of this passage which is worth quoting at length:

The impossible idealism of this conception of women deflects attention from the complex and complicitous interaction within this sentence of gender, authority, and representation. Here Van Helsing's exegesis of God's natural text reifies Mina into a stable sign or symbol ("one of God's women") performing a fixed and comfortable function within a masculine sign system. . . . Mina signifies both a masculine artistic intention ("fashioned by His own hand") and a definite didactic purpose ("to show us men and other women" how to enter heaven), each of which constitutes an enormous constraint upon the significative possibilities of the sign or symbol that Mina here becomes. Van Helsing's reading of Mina. . . encodes woman with a "natural" meaning composed according to the textual imperatives of anxious males. . . . Mina's body/character may indeed be feminine, but the signification it bears is written and interpreted solely by males. (178-79)

In this male-dominated culture, it is important that what Craft later calls "woman-as-signifier" does not wander because, created according to Van Helsing's stipulations, she provides direct access to God (who likewise does not--because "He" must not--wander), thereby grounding and naturalizing within a Christian paradigm the dualities

identified earlier as central to the thought of this culture: male/female, passive/active, and so on. The enforcement of such reductive and restrictive dualities is made especially persuasively--and is made to appear especially natural--when it is spoken by the women themselves as, for instance, when they criticize their contemporary, the "New Woman."¹¹ Presented in juxtaposition with these neat and naturalized dualities, Dracula, who "abrogates demarcations"--between life and death, male and female, and heterosexual and homosexual to name just three examples (Craft 177)--is all the more "justifiably" conquered because his transgressions appear all the more deviant and destructive.

By the end of the novel, the sexual threat posed by Dracula is terminated with his termination. The possibility of male homosexuality is further negated with two former bachelors, Godalming and Seward, "both happily married" (S400). And the menace of aggressive female sexuality is eclipsed with Mina's literal translation into a virtuous mother who is also potentially a virgin mother since, as Carol Senf points out in "*Dracula: Stoker's Response to the New Woman*," Mina's child is presented as the product of a social or spiritual union between the "little band of men" rather than a sexual union between one man and one woman (a detail reminiscent of the scene of hyperbolic male heterosexuality or gang rape which "righted" Lucy's transgressive sexuality). Reason is shown to triumph over passionate sexuality: first, Quincey Harker's conception is construed as potentially "immaculate" and spiritual rather than sexual (Harker writes, "[The boy's] mother holds, I know, the secret belief that some of our brave friend's [Quincey's] spirit has passed into him" [400]); and, second, Harker completely undermines the truth of the preceding story of passion with the rational disclaimer, "We could hardly ask any one, even did we wish to, to accept these [documents] as proofs of so wild a story" (S400). Male triumphs over female, heterosexuality over homosexuality, reason over passion, and the social cohesion of Victorian society predicated on this type of balance within this paradigm of duality is soundly restored.

Subjectivity

While all of the issues dealt with thus far--issues of nationalism and imperialism, class, and sexuality--have been addressed on the macropolitical scale of the social group, they may also be considered on the micropolitical level of individual subjectivity. For instance, as a ruling-class fantasy of social cohesion might be based on ideas of natural social stability, superiority, and infallibility, ruling-class fantasies of subjective cohesion may likewise be based on ideas of natural subjective stability, superiority and infallibility. While the ruling-class Victorian society needed to perceive its dominance as a natural--indeed manifest--destiny, the individual ruling-class Victorian may similarly have needed

¹¹ See Griffin 144, Senf ("*Dracula: Stoker's Response to the New Woman*") 34-36, 39, 48, and S94-95.

to perceive dominance as his undeniable right (and I use the pronoun "his" advisedly). In fact, Victorian *social* cohesion may be seen to be predicated on a belief in *subjective* cohesion. Accordingly, Dracula poses not only a social menace when he, as other, prepares to invade the ruling class of the novel, he also poses a menace to the individual, subjective self because, as Burton Hatlen writes in "The Return of the Repressed/Oppressed in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*," Dracula "threatens to destroy all existing forms of order, whether in the ego or in the social order" (131).

The most obvious threat to the unity and rationality of the subject in *Dracula* is likely the threat to reason presented by the monster Dracula. This threat is established immediately in the novel's prologue (not printed in many editions), which claims, first, that the story is "simple fact"--no challenge to reason--but also that it is "a history almost at variance with the possibilities of later-day belief" (S n.p.), a claim which does begin to problematize the stability of reason. Gradually, as the novel progresses, Dracula himself and various events which he instigates begin to defy reason so that the main characters question their own sanity and rationality. For instance, when Van Helsing boldly asks Arthur, "May I cut off the head of dead Miss Lucy?", Arthur protests, "Heavens and earth, no!.... Are you mad that speak such things, or am I mad to listen to them?" (S217). But, apparently, both soon acquiesce to madness or irrationality because, some pages later, Arthur is driving a stake through Lucy's heart and Van Helsing is cutting off her head (S229).

As the Victorian ruling-class subject is expected to be reasonable, he or she is also expected to hold clear perceptions of such "transcendent truths" as beauty, justice, and love. Thus, in the course of the novel, the troubling possibility that these concepts may not be transcendent but contingent is also admitted. Seward begins to mutilate the body of Lucy, the woman he once loved, and asks himself incredulously, "Is it possible that all love is subjective, or all objective?" (S212). The unified subject is also not expected to admit simultaneously contradictory emotions, but this too begins to occur through the course of the novel. Seward writes that, upon leaving Lucy's funeral with Van Helsing,

The moment we were alone in the carriage [Van Helsing] gave way to a regular fit of hysterics. . . . He laughed till he cried, and I had to draw down the blinds lest any one should see us and misjudge; and then he cried, till he laughed again; and laughed and cried together, just as a woman does.
(S182-183)

Van Helsing explains that he has been invaded by "King Laugh"--graphically representing his character as split in two and thoroughly frightening Seward who is striving to retain his own rationality, his faith in human rationality in general, and his precious distinction between male and female which Van Helsing's laughing and crying ("just like a *woman* does") *King Laugh* collapses.

The "terrifying" middle of Stoker's *Dracula* entertains the possibility of fragmented subjectivity in many ways but, of course, resoundingly trounces this possibility in the novel's stability-restoring conclusion. In what might be considered the novel's first ending, the threats to reason posed by Dracula--the possibility of being un-Dead, of being able to change form, and so on--are overcome once Dracula is reduced to a pile of dust. More emphatically, in the novel's second conclusion, Dracula himself and the threats he presents are not merely overcome, the possibility that they ever even existed is rendered definitively problematic and potentially even impossible. Referring to the story's preceding documentation, Harker says, "We could hardly ask any one, even did we wish to,"--which, it is inferred, these reasonable characters do not--"to accept these as proofs of so wild a story" (S400). The reasonable narrator denies the fantastic story, reasserting the triumph of reason, the stability of the subject, and the stability of a society predicated on unified subjectivity.

Lochhead's *Dracula*: Foregrounding the Fantasy

Lochhead's play *Dracula*, with the cover page note "Adapted from Bram Stoker's original" (L69) and written in 1985, is obviously different from Stoker's novel *Dracula*, written in 1897. What I want to examine are the ways the play's changes both inscribe the "Dracula" myth with different ideologies from those of the novel and, further, allow for different ideological engagements for the audience or reader. Specifically, I want to argue that Lochhead's play foregrounds and deftly problematizes the ideological fantasies of ruling-class hegemony so pervasive in Stoker's novel. Clarifying the ruling-class fantasies on which Stoker's *Dracula* is predicated and which the novel naturalizes as universal, Lochhead's text problematizes Stoker's text's fantasies--showing that they may not represent simply irreproachable, even virtuous, desires regarding "natural" and "universally-accepted" dualisms (like the desire for "good" over "evil"), but, first, that a concept of difference based simply on dualism is reductive and biased, and second, that these desires certainly may not represent so-called universal interests. Having problematized the universal desirability of a social cohesion which, in any case, may be read as illusory, Lochhead's text promotes a recognition and even a cultivation of multiple cultural differences as viable and, importantly, progressive alternatives to Stoker's static and conservative "cliché" in which the social is idealistically but reductively seen as "one big happy family."

Lochhead's play is a witty re-telling of the "Dracula" myth, ambitious in scope and adroit in its sport with the late-twentieth-century resonances--particularly sexual

resonances--of the late-nineteenth-century novel.¹² Through her characteristic and accomplished use of witty ironies, telling juxtapositions, puns, and *double entendres*, Lochhead creates of the "Dracula" myth not a sombre horror tale like Stoker's *Dracula*, but what might be seen as satire, verging on comedy and playfully problematizing the fantasies of national, sexual, and class unity inscribed in Stoker's novel.

Nationalism and Empire

While Stoker performed a meticulous construction of Dracula's difference for readers who might never before have heard of the character, Lochhead relies on--and comically exploits--contemporary audience members bringing with them to the play deeply ingrained preconceptions of Dracula's difference and evil, preconceptions formed primarily through a rampant "Dracula" film industry and the general cultural currency of "Dracula" and other vampire images.¹³

Although Lochhead's *Dracula* assumes a degree of audience familiarity with its story, its villain, and his crucial racial difference, it nevertheless draws attention to that racial difference, thereby highlighting racism as one of the factors behind Dracula's usual construction as a threat, in Stoker's novel and elsewhere. In the novel, Jonathan's travel journals perform the main work of "Orientalizing" Dracula, or narrating his racial difference and enforcing that difference as negative. In the play, it is largely Dracula himself who draws attention to both his "foreignness" and its threat, a shift in "authorship" which wrests from Jonathan and bestows on Dracula the attendant authority of who produces and controls the narrative of Dracula's racial difference, indicating both the power and the racist bias of that narrative.

Dracula's racial difference is first established aurally--through his stilted, often staccato, language--and is subsequently reinforced through Dracula's own repeated and ironically literal emphasis on his "backward" and "barbaric" cultural difference. For

¹² In "'The Devil Is Beautiful': *Dracula*: Freudian Novel and Feminist Drama," Jan McDonald focuses on the intersecting sexual politics of what she describes as Stoker's Freudian novel and Lochhead's feminist drama.

¹³ The prevalence of *Dracula* and other vampire mythology has given rise to an attendant meta-*Dracula* publishing industry. Recent examples include: David J. Skal's *Hollywood Gothic: The Tangled Web of Dracula from Novel to Stage to Screen*, a well-illustrated and frequently anecdotal archival trawl through film and stage versions of *Dracula*; Christopher Frayling's *Vampyres: Lord Byron to Count Dracula* (whose back cover blurb quotes an *Observer* review, "A very Baedeker of vampirism"), a survey of mostly nineteenth-century vampire mythology; and Ken Gelder's *Reading the Vampire*, an astute critical analysis of vampires in fiction, film, and other cultural forms.

instance, briefly after meeting Jonathan and calling him "Harker Jonathan," Dracula says, "Apologies. I used my country's habit of putting the patronymic first." Immediately following, he explains he has "the manners of a barbarian" (L89). Dracula then interrogates Jonathan's "orientalist" tourist activities, provoking the latter to enumerate the differences between Transylvania and England: "And you have tasted the wine of the country?", "You find my country beautiful? You took many snaps?", "And my people?" (L91-92). Dracula gives a brief history of the "Szekelys of the noble line of Dracule" (similar to the description in Stoker's novel [S29-30]), and then, himself, describes the journey to the "Orient" that Jonathan and, by implication, the audience has made to arrive here at Castle Dracula: "But you have come far. It is many days since you leave the Orient Express, with its smells of linen and leather and buttoned carriage-cloth... and Turkish cigarettes, if I remember well?" (L92). Thus, although Lochhead's play does not physically perform Jonathan's travels, a sense of Dracula's racial difference affiliated with his geographic distance from the West is nevertheless efficiently depicted, significantly, by Dracula himself rather than Jonathan.

While Dracula's racial difference is naturalized in Stoker's *Dracula*, in Lochhead's *Dracula* it is problematized. Twice in his first scene in Lochhead's play, Dracula literalizes the threat of reverse colonization that he poses for the English. First, he comments, "Well, I shall make me a fine English man" (L90), punning on transforming himself into a passable Englishman and on preparing himself an English man meal, and calling to mind what the cannibal Giant smells in "Jack and the Beanstalk." And nearer the end of the scene he comments to Jonathan, "So, when I drink in your every word, digest it, then I shall put on my straw hat and come out from the garden of my Carfax, a real English man" (L94), insinuating the homicidal and colonizing effects of his drinking. For Lochhead's audience these composite puns on drinking and consuming literalize and parody the menace of consumption and colonization posed by cultural appropriation, foregrounding the fantasy of imperial domination. Jonathan's "orientalist" expedition is so thoroughly confounded by Dracula's occidentalist superiority that, upon returning to England, he repudiates his desire to appropriate the "foreign" by, for example, collecting and adopting foreign recipes, and proclaims instead the superiority of the English. What he most looks forward to is, he claims, "English Sunday lunch. . . . Roast beef, medium well done," with, significantly, "no garlic, no herbs, no foreign muck, just a daub of mustard and a couple of cook's best Yorkshire puddings!" (L123).

Lochhead's *Dracula* not only foregrounds tourist/imperialist attitudes and problematizes concepts of racial superiority, it contextualizes the material conditions that allow for the existence of the "magnificent" Empire. Of course, some of the chief conditions for the establishment and maintenance of empire, barely alluded to in Stoker's novel, are invasion, domination, and war. In the novel, war is permitted one notably romantic--and, therefore, romanticizing--mention. Sitting at a table in the boudoir where

he will later be approached by the vampire brides, Jonathan fantasizes that at this table, "in old times possibly some fair lady sat to pen, with much thought and many blushes, her ill-spelt love-letter," and in this room, "ladies had sat and sung and lived sweet lives whilst their gentle breasts were sad for their menfolk away in the midst of remorseless wars" (S37-38). As Ken Gelder notes in his excellent analysis of vampire literature, film, and criticism, *Reading the Vampire*, "Harker's image of the 'fair lady' certainly reproduces conventional male views of the woman writer--confined, submissive, emotional, defining themselves through the absence of men--and poor spellers!" (74). What is more, Harker's image of war certainly absents the war itself, not to mention any of its effects save those which "sweeten" the lives of women. In Lochhead's play, this ludicrous rosy fantasy--of imperialism, war, and women--is presented instead as a significantly gendered ruling-class delusion maintained by that class only through its convenient neglect of those less fortunate. When Lucy's maid Florrie appears upset, Lucy self-centredly demands,

Florrie! Florrie, what's the matter? You should be happy. Mina is married and Arthur has gone to meet the man to make me well.

Florrie does not reply directly to Lucy but, "*Out front, waving telegram*," she proclaims,

Can't read. Can't read. Don't need to read. Telegram from the military, it mean just one thing. Dead. Dead, you bastard. Torn up bits of you all over some patch of dirt other side of world. Bloody generals! Bloody Empire! Dead and me three weeks late. (L116)

Lochhead's text deftly indicates that Florrie is not an ever-so-charming poor speller but illiterate, and probably pregnant, two material conditions to which Stoker's Jonathan and the "Bloody Empire" are at best simply insensitive, and at worst callously indifferent.

Class

Introducing characters like Florrie and the nurses Nisbett and Grice, Lochhead's play constructs and acknowledges a world stratified by class. Primarily through irony, Lochhead's *Dracula* further emphasizes that such a world may be marked by its class exploitations--as Stoker's narrative exploits its working-class characters, "admitting" them only for as long as they serve the machinations of its predominantly bourgeois plot. Of the play's thirty scenes, working-class characters figure or dominate in thirteen, often in "grim" settings which, when juxtaposed with scenes in bastions of upper-middle-class privilege like the gardens of Mina's and Lucy's Heartwood House and Seward's "private study/sitting room," resonate with intimations not of social cohesion but of social inequality and oppression. The stage direction ending the play's first scene, in the "*dappled leafy light*" of the heroines' garden, typifies the kind of harsh contrast repeated throughout the play: "*The girls [MINA and LUCY] run off laughing; swing goes up; maids pick up linen; noise of pump begins; lights change and suddenly it's grim nurses with fouled laundry in the asylum.... Bedlam*" (L75). Atmospheric contrast is emphasized both visually and

aurally: McDonald reports that in the play's first production at the Edinburgh Royal Lyceum, "The opening sounds of bird-song and distant piano-playing that established the atmosphere in the garden-scene changed to a bleak, rhythmic pumping sound for the asylum" (97). As in Florrie's downstage attack on the "grand march" of British imperialism referred to above, this scene change starkly juxtaposes working-class conditions with those of the ruling class, stressing rather than masking working class exploitation.

While Stoker's text repeatedly romanticizes (and thereby diminishes) and then progressively elides the working classes, subsuming all concerns into the universalist good-to-evil thrust of the novel, Lochhead's play refuses to romanticize its working-class characters, and instead foregrounds their plight in a world which, although it may perceive and construct them romantically, allows them very little actual social or economic power. Working-class lack of privilege is highlighted in scenes like Florrie's, quoted above, and in Florrie's story about the woman from her village, "Poor Fanny Waller," who was born "not right, with a humpback and a harelip and a port-wine birthmark and a good sight more than six and three ha'p'orth short in the shilling." Not having had "to delve in the rag bag" for three months, Fanny is taken to the wise woman explaining she sometimes feels "somethin' like li'l bird flutterin'." When Fanny responds, "No, mum," to the wise woman's question, "And did you not feel that li'l bird go in?," the wise woman concludes, "Oh well, then, by Christ, and ye'll feel it cam back out again!" (L105). The suggestion that Fanny has been "taken advantage of" emphasizes the "use" the underprivileged are put to by those with more privilege and power.

The "use" value of the working classes includes its functionalism in Stoker's novel, where working-class characters often figure as perhaps unwitting but nonetheless effective accomplices in Dracula's exploits, significantly aligning them with Dracula's evil. Adopting and adapting Stoker's episode where the maid (whom Stoker's Van Helsing calls a "worthless wretch") so conveniently "steals" the crucifix from around Lucy's neck, rendering her vulnerable to Dracula's attack (S175), Lochhead's play foregrounds the prejudice of the middle-class assumption that servants suffer insatiable desires to steal from their masters. Lochhead's Lucy must struggle to persuade Florrie to take the crucifix because Florrie is aware others will assume she stole it. Florrie finally relents and removes the crucifix from Lucy's clothes, but protests, "I don't want it, mind!" (L120). Predictably, Van Helsing does assume Lucy has been robbed, commenting, "May God forgive! Whoever robbed this maiden took more than a trinket." "Well you may take it back," says Florrie, her defence prepared for an accusation she anticipated:

I never stole it. Florrie Hathersage, as long as she lived, never stole nothing from no one. Miss Lucy gave it to me, wouldn't take no for an answer, I didden want it. (L121)

Lochhead's handling of the scene indicates the class bias behind both Van Helsing's assumption and the logic of Stoker's plot.

As Lochhead's play highlights ruling-class assumptions about working-class weaknesses, it highlights a ruling-class predilection to romanticize the working classes. And, as for women being cast as an angel may be no more liberating than being relegated to the status of whore, for members of the working class, romanticization can be as detrimental as denigration. Lochhead's play suggests that the ruling class's idealistic and "admirable" dream of a classless society epitomized in Stoker's novel is precisely a fantasy maintained only through the ruling class's (strategic) failure to recognize how its own power is predicated on a hierarchical class system. Voicing the ruling class's idealistic romanticization of the working class, Mina asks Florrie, "Are you happy here?," to which Florrie responds, "Happy, miss?... I haven't thought to think," happiness not being an expectation in which Florrie, unlike her "superiors," indulges in regard to her work. "I hope for you to be happy, Florrie," Mina generously opines and Florrie, "*curtseying*," responds as though to an order, "Yes, miss." Mina summarizes the fantasy of social equality and cohesion entertained by the dominant group when she asks Florrie rhetorically,

Don't you think we can all work together, be--what's the cliché--one big happy family? . . . Call me Mina! Florrie, we want but one year to a brand new century, times are changing, we'll have no more mistress and servants, I don't believe in them. (196)

Florrie is willing to play along with this ruling-class whim--as she is expected to humour all of the whims of the Wester^{man} sisters who describe one another as "a little odd sometimes" (L96-97)--but her concern, "You will still pay my wages?" (L96), suggests through irony that economic stability and class status are pre-requisites for such a utopian claim--or order--as Mina's.

Having begun the scene on an idealistic note, Mistress Mina becomes upset during its course and exits remonstrating, "Florrie! Florrie, look at the mess in there. Things everywhere! Go tidy up!" (L97). Lucy takes her turn at being familiar with Florrie, also becomes annoyed, and departs commanding Florrie, "*Do* change the drawing-room flowers. Those lilies are so funereal! Something pretty to cheer Mina up." Florrie, aware of the irony of her situation--at once "chums" with and virtual slave to the sisters--"*pick[s] up behind them*" and comments,

Don't believe in servants! Oh, don't believe in servants, don't you, that's very interesting. Better pinch yourself, Florrie my girl, look in the mirror, pinch yourself to see if you're real. (L98)

The ironic juxtaposition of Mina's "big happy family" claim and both Mina's and Lucy's subsequent tyrannical outbursts emphasizes the way an order--whether it is familiar or commanding--is an order, and its exercise is a function of privilege--here class privilege. As Byron's philosopher-in-a-fire parable conceived Mary Shelley's putative benevolence towards her maid Elise as--best intentions notwithstanding--power over her maid, this

scene problematizes Mina's power investment in--including how she may benefit from--her role as a "Lady Bountiful" towards Florrie.

Other scenes provide further examples of the class stratification so much a part of the society idealized in Stoker's novel. Lochhead's play efficiently establishes Jonathan's and Seward's class backgrounds by furnishing the information that Jonathan used to fag for Seward at their public school. Musing on Jonathan's marital engagement, Seward says,

Miss Westerman, eh? The sugar millionairess? Well, well, I thought to myself, that's marrying *trade*, but I suppose these days being the youngest son of a baronet doesn't pay many bar bills.

Seward demonstrates obvious contempt for "*trade*" and thus for its counterpart, capitalism, despite the benefits he has accrued through his own market practices. In response to Seward's quip, Jonathan complains, "You scholarship boys always were the worst snobs!" (L79). The irony here is that, although he mocks trade, Seward has used it through his respectable yet still business-oriented role as a doctor and hospital manager to achieve economic and social power. This little scene brings out from behind the Victorian façades referred to by Moretti, first, the ruling class's fear of the rise of capitalism and the decline of the bourgeoisie, and second, its desire--which may be unconscious but is nevertheless operative--to conceal its own complicity in, and ability to benefit from, the workings of capitalism.

Dracula, the monstrous other, unabashedly displays--and thereby confronts the Victorians with--the very behaviour which they claim to abhor but which they nevertheless practise. Jonathan confidently boasts to Seward of the pleasure he takes with his secretary Miss Bell (L81), but with Dracula he hides behind a façade of virtue, refusing to take up the import of Dracula's *double entendre* after the mention of Transylvanian "serving girls," "And you have tasted the wine of the country?" (L91). Jonathan shows Dracula Kodak snapshots of Heartwood's gardens and of Mina, Lucy, and Florrie, and Dracula comments, "Is very wonderful thing this photography. Although I am sure that portrait painters do not agree with us! Each common clerk can keep his last duchess in sepia inside his pigskin wallet" (L91). In this quick remark and reference to Robert Browning's poem "My Last Duchess," Dracula connects likenesses like portraits with both ownership and wealth, lamenting how, with capitalism and mass production (here, of Kodaks and photographs), owning women and displaying wealth through portraiture will no longer be a privilege reserved for the bourgeoisie. Again, Dracula's habit of ignoring the discretions or façades of the respectable Victorian ruling classes flusters Jonathan who first redirects the conversation and then attempts to reassert his mastery by suggesting to take Dracula's picture. While Jonathan refuses to acknowledge the hypocrisy of his class attitudes, the ironies of a dream of social cohesion and

classlessness illuminated here by *Dracula* and in other scenes elsewhere in the play may not be lost on the play's audience.

Gender and Sexual Politics

As examined above, many contemporary critics of Stoker's *Dracula* read the novel's greatest expressions of anxiety in its responses to and representations of sexuality and desire, particularly male homosexuality and female sexuality, and including other "unnatural" subject/object desires, non-monogamous desire, and female-initiated desire. Notably, however, these expressions of anxiety are generally read by critics in the "symptoms" provided by the text, rather than in any explicit statements about sexuality. As Gelder writes, Stoker's "*Dracula* overcodes sexuality at the level of performance, but undercodes it at the level of utterance" (67). While male homosexuality and female sexuality are unspeakable in the novel, the homophobic and misogynist anxieties they induce are hyperbolically performed, implicitly but exuberantly proclaiming male heterosexual hegemony in a society so anxious about gender and sexuality it can acknowledge only subtextually and negatively its own potential sexual heterogeneity. Lochhead's *Dracula* makes explicit the threats of male homosexuality, female sexuality, and the multiplicity of desire which permeate--but are "closeted"--in Stoker's novel, parodying the anxieties of a heterosexual male dominated culture which provoke the representation of these sexualities as threatening in the first place, and revealing the subtextual workings of ideologies which preserve what for many may be an undesirable male heterosexual cultural hegemony.

In Stoker's novel, the homosexual threat presented by Dracula is channelled through the threat that he might bite and penetrate another male (Craft). In Lochhead's play, this repressed sexuality is comically revealed, parodying the homosexual-scare mentality that perceives and represents homosexuality as threatening. A homosexual, or at least homosocial, tension between Dracula and Jonathan is, for instance, parodically and repeatedly insinuated in their first meeting. Dracula reads from a letter of introduction written by Jonathan's employer, Mr Hawkins. The letter "sells" Jonathan, but with a distinctly sexual subtext, framing him--with words like "energy... talent... discreet... silent" (93) which Dracula seems to linger over as though they were a good meal--perhaps more suggestively as male escort than solicitor. It is as though, rather than having articulated to be a solicitor, Jonathan has served an apprenticeship of prostitution under Mr. Hawkins who writes to Dracula of his protégé's "... Faithful disposition which has grown with him into manhood in my service [and] will, I am fully confident, put itself to your every use and render him malleable to your every instruction." A stage direction immediately following this potentially compromising delineation of his "malleability" describes Jonathan--guardian of Victorian ruling-class values--as "*somewhat disconcerted*" (L93). The loaded pause of Dracula's statement, "But, my friend, I want you for... conversation," admits a

sexual dimension to Dracula's desire for Jonathan, a desire reiterated in Dracula's claim, "I want you because you are young," and in his response to Jonathan's excuse, "Count, I cannot stay with you,"

Ssh, no such thing as cannot. Sleep first. In the morning, believe me, you will feel differently. If there be one axiom in human affairs that be it.... (L94)

One aspect of homosexuality threatening to a Victorian male imagination was its perceived fragmentation of gender definition. The idea that one man might "play the role of woman" with another man imperilled a world view in which gender categories were indelibly bound to physical sexual difference, consistently, reliably, and reassuringly referring to certain values and characteristics. Again, Lochhead's play literalizes the threat of gender ambiguity symptomatic in Stoker's novel. In Dracula's comment juxtaposed with Jonathan's mention of "serving girls," "And you have tasted the wine of the country?" (L91), Dracula intimates the sexual "service" he expects domestic staff to provide for their "masters," an expectation he invokes in his offer of service to Jonathan: "So I, my friend, tonight I will be happy to... play the valet, or the chambermaid, whatever you will" (L95). Dracula offers himself (sexually) to Jonathan as a man or a woman, literalizing the ambiguity of what John Allen Stevenson has called "vampire sexuality." Jonathan does not reply directly to the Count's potentially sexual proposal, revealing in his silence that the Count's "perversity" is incommensurate with, and unspeakable within, Jonathan's male heterosexist culture.

As Lochhead's play excavates the "Dracula" myth's potential homophobia, it foregrounds the story's potential misogyny, literalizing the threat female sexuality posed to Victorian male imagination, and demonstrating Victorian patriarchy's consequent attempt to confine and control its women. Making explicit the link between female sexuality and vampirism which Stoker's *Dracula* never overtly admits, Lochhead's play demonstrates that naturalized within the novel's expressions of vampire hatred lurks a violent misogyny. In Stoker's *Dracula* vampiric women are called "unclean." The term's debt to gynophobic conceptions of female sexuality, although unacknowledged, is certainly not inactive. In Lochhead's play, the association of female sexuality and the "unclean" is made explicit and explicitly problematized. Mina calls menstruation the "curse," and Lucy calls it "My friend, my bloody friend." "Don't you always feel... unclean?" Lucy asks Mina and Florrie, presumably in reference to the menarche, but the ambiguity of the remark allows it to suggest that women might always (be made to) feel unclean (L105). When Mina is bitten by Dracula, she twice calls herself cursed (L138, 141), establishing a verbal link--between the curse previously mentioned and this curse, between women's sexuality and monstrous vampirism--which the novel cannot acknowledge. And, as McDonald points out, it is in the morning after Dracula's night-time arrival in England that Lucy announces, "I've got a visitor. . . Must have come in the night. . . My friend, my bloody friend" (L105, McDonald 92). Because of Lucy's decorous appellation of menstruation as "friend" and "visitor," the

words' references are again ambiguous, further enforcing a link between female sexuality and cultural perceptions and representations of monstrosity, the other, the socially repugnant.

As well as foregrounding the sexism of certain assumptions regarding female sexuality, Lochhead's *Dracula* indicates the class-insensitivity of others, including those held by some women. Lucy advocates "no whingeing" during menstruation "or the gentlemen'll never treat us as equals." "No gentleman need ever know," opines Mina (L105). Mina and Lucy reject menstrual discomfort in order to assert their equality with men, but in so doing they conflate the material with the social in a fashion accessible and comfortably affordable to them but not to others. Mina and Lucy, after all, have the herb-tea, hot water bottles, and other servants' attentions which make the "sacrifice" of such comforts possible (L105). While privileged Lucy renounces menstruation as "Some friend!", Florrie points out that "many women are pleased to see such a friend" (L105), and recounts the story of "Poor Fanny Waller" for whom the rejection, or absence, of menstruation would have a different, far less "liberating" connotation than for Lucy. Thus, Lochhead's *Dracula* demonstrates that not only may sexual desires be multiple, multiple too are the conditions in which those desires are experienced, and by which they are affected.

Lochhead's *Dracula* explores the curse, the threat, and the material specificity of female sexuality. It explores also the allure of female sexuality; or, more specifically, male fantasies of the allure of female sexuality, particularly in its guises of aggressive seductress, passive waif, and angel. The play problematizes these stereotypes by demonstrating them to be, not so much female realities, as male fantasies or projections. Their "authorship" problematized, their portrayal is also problematized as the female characters repeatedly reject stereotypical roles and their reductive one-dimensionality.

In the central vamping scene with Jonathan and the vampire brides, the vampires "are recognizably MRS MANNERS (etc.) and FLORRIE and led by LUCY" (L99). Earlier, in the luncheon scene, we have witnessed Jonathan's distracted attraction to two of these "forbidden" women, Lucy, his fiancée's sister, not only younger but incapacitated by illness, and Florrie, his fiancée's initiate maid. Jonathan's desire for these two women is inappropriate in both object choice and expression--here in his fiancée's garden, "under her nose." This transgressive desire returns in the vamping scene but, not surprisingly, with significant revisions. Where, earlier, Jonathan desired the women and struggled to contain that desire, now they desire him and aggressively demonstrate that desire. This new configuration of desire first displaces the responsibility of forbidden desire from Jonathan to the women. Further, the demonization and hyperbolization of these women's desire--as three predators, encircling Jonathan, gnashing their teeth, and so on--makes it worse than his, eclipsing his. Jonathan is no longer simply not culpable for his

transgressive desire, contrasted to these monsters, he is comparatively innocent, and at the mercy of these monsters, he is victim and martyr.

The male fantasy which allows Jonathan simultaneously to experience his pleasure (sexual engagement with the forbidden women) and to be worthier than an innocent, to be a martyr, is not only operative but exposed in this scene. While Stoker's novel does not identify the vampire women, in Lochhead's play they are recognizably the women for whom Jonathan has earlier expressed desire. The history of desire between Jonathan and these women--beginning with Jonathan's transgressive desire for them and metamorphosing into their monstrous desire for him--is thus traceable. And the narrative of desire wherein Jonathan's transgressive desire and his resulting culpability are both revised and re-allocated in his favour is made clear. Clear also are the patriarchal prerogatives which figure the sexualized women as evil.

A second object of male characters' desire in Lochhead's *Dracula* is the passive--better yet, incapacitated--waif, anorexic Lucy.¹⁴ Lucy is initially quite feisty, cavorting with Mina in the garden, throwing an exuberant temper tantrum at lunch, and, upon receipt of her third proposal of marriage, wailing, "Oh why oh why can't they let a girl marry three men at once, or at least as many as want her?" (97). Lucy's proposed polygamy is however, and of course, not sanctioned. She is not even permitted the pleasure of fulfilled mature desire through monogamous sexual love, as her fiancé Seward patronizes and infantilizes her. Ostensibly ministering to her illness, he shaves her hair, a gesture in which, according to McDonald, "He is subconsciously trying to return her to the childlike creature who attracted him" (88). Lucy is indeed incapacitated, but incapacitated by whom and for whom?

Despite Seward's perseverance, Lucy repeatedly refuses to play the role of child he would have her assume, and she challenges Seward's right to play her parent. "Well, Arthur," she tells him, "I do hate it when you... protect me all the time" (L111). And to Dr Van Helsing she complains, "Arthur thinks I am just a silly little girl, it's all in my head, I make things up" (L118). Lucy's character not only rejects patronage, the play refuses to perform it. The play's version of the staking scene quoted from the novel, above, is notable for its repudiation of the novel's salacious, misogynist, sex-and-death detail. Late in the second act,

SEWARD *performs the ritual of staking LUCY. Steels himself. Crosses himself. Does it with deliberation. Just a single stroke. Perhaps a single*

¹⁴ McDonald records "Lochhead's view" that "Lucy is almost certainly anorexic" and quotes from Lochhead's Lucy's dramatic monologue poem, "Lucy's Diary":

This gross flesh I will confine
in the whalebone of my very own
hunger. (Lochhead "Lucy's Diary" 62, McDonald 87)

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gasp or deep sigh or a sort of shudder of LUCY's voice. Certainly nothing violent, not a scream, a consummation. (L 141-142)

Lochhead's Lucy consistently exceeds the bounds of acquiescent, sexually-passive, deferring femininity within which Seward attempts to contain her. What is more, she comments on the limits of those bounds, and, both implicitly and explicitly, on Seward's motivations for asserting them when and where he does. Paralleling this Lucy's behaviour, the play refuses to perform the novel's hyperbolic imposition of paternalistic punishment in the staking scene. All told, the role of infantilized and phallically punished adult woman is refused by the play thereby problematizing the desirability of such a role--both the desirability for women, and the male desire for self-aggrandizement which constructs such a "distaff" role.

A final female stereotype Lochhead's *Dracula* engages with and declines is that of angel. Both Stoker's novel and Lochhead's play go some way to figuring Mina in this role, but where the novel's portrayal may be seen to succeed, the play's portrayal is more troubled and, ultimately, unsuccessful. The Mina of the play's opening is caring towards her sister (dressing her) and her fiancé (learning to be his secretary), well organized (preparing the luncheon and the wedding), and virtuous (declining Jonathan's pre-nuptial invitation to bed). But she can also be selfish, jealous, and petulant, as when she sulks aggressively upon announcement of Lucy's and Seward's engagement (L86). The Mina of the play's ending, again, has much of the virtuousness and stateliness of the novel's concluding Mina. However, Lochhead's Mina is, finally, constructed not like Stoker's heroine, as all-forgiving and simultaneously self-deprecating, acquiescing to her role as servile to men, but as engaging in a social power struggle. When her husband calls to her, "Oh, Mina, Mina, I went through hell to get back to you," (L129), Lochhead's Mina turns away, perhaps rejecting Jonathan's potential subtext, the inference that Mina, whom he would like to cast as an angel, should be grateful to him for going "through hell" to come back to her, never mind that he might have (or should have?) wanted to come back, that she might "dutifully" have waited, that she ultimately came to collect him in Budapest, that she might not altogether want him, or that if he had not come back her "relationship" with Dracula might have developed, undetected and undisturbed. Lochhead's characterization of the female characters and relationships I have discussed in this section achieves at least two important things: it problematizes both Stoker's and its own male characters' interest in certain performances of femininity, whether passive or aggressive; and it broadens representations of women and their desires significantly beyond stereotype.

Stoker's *Dracula*: Engaging the Reader

Contrasts between Stoker's novel and Lochhead's play operate not only in the details of each text's story but also, importantly, in how that story is structured, and how that structure affects the relationship between the text and its readers or audience. Stoker's novel not only recounts a ruling-class fantasy, it effectively masks that social fantasy as universal truth, and interpellates its reader into acceptance of this "truth." Thus, the reader accepts ideological positions--on the division of power according to race, class, gender, sexuality, and subjectivity, not to mention "sanity," religion, and age--which, were they expressed explicitly, she or he might reject.

Stoker's *Dracula* attains reader identification with a unified subject or subjects primarily through particular narrative techniques such as its use of voice. Lacking a single omniscient narrator and characterized initially by a multiplication of narrative voices, the novel might at first appear to offer not a single, dominant narrative, but many different--and potentially conflicting--narratives and many potentially conflicting sites of identification. Ultimately, however, this apparent narrative incoherence may operate in a manner similar to the novel's admission of other perils discussed previously--in order to establish a threat which may then be conquered all the more heroically and cathartically. Indeed, as the novel progresses, the initially fragmented narrative coalesces, homogenizing voices so that although several characters still alternately "speak," there is a sense in which they have one "voice," representing, as Moretti comments, not many fragmented individuals, but a collective.

Furthermore, while Stoker's *Dracula* may be notable for its use of multiple narrative voices, Moretti and Senf point out that the scope of those voices is remarkably limited. Most remarkable is the fact that the embodied multiple threat, Dracula himself, is never permitted control of the narrative. What is more, he is instead represented (and manipulated) by narrators who are violently biased against him, having "determined to destroy him" (Senf "*Dracula*: The Unseen Face" 95). Similarly, as Moretti writes, we are never given unmediated "access to Van Helsing's point of view, or to Morris's" (77)--the two members of the protagonists' "club" who are not English--or to the point of view of any of the novel's numerous working-class characters. The novel's "string of events exists only in the form and with the meaning stamped upon it by British Victorian culture," a fact belied for Moretti by the novel's highly symptomatic predominance of "Standard British English over any kind of linguistic transgression" (77). Thus, narrative control, although superficially fragmented and dispersed, is effectively controlled by the novel's young upper-middle-class English women and, more often, men, and it thereby enforces reader identification with the objectives and values of that very particular, indeed dominant, group.

Dracula

Reader identification is further ensured by the novel's use of first-person present-time narrative which inculcates the reader in a feeling of natural presence rather than allowing him or her to step back from the novel and out of its fantasies. Similarly, the novel's parataxis--the fact that it never establishes causal connections but jumps from narrator to narrator without explanation--as Moretti says, "drags" the reader into the text, creating "not a thinking reader but a frightened one." "Of course," Moretti adds, "fear is not an end in itself: it is a means to obtain consent to the [novel's] ideological values" (84).

A second method Stoker's *Dracula* exercises in enforcing reader engagement involves fulfilling reader expectations. Stimulating and satisfying certain reader expectations, the novel affirms not only the logic of its own narrative, but the adoption of a reader position most complicit with that logic and, thus, most favourable for the reader. In Stoker's *Dracula*, reader expectations are provoked and fulfilled through many textual aspects--characterization, plot, language, imagery, and so on. But I shall look briefly at the ways in which generic conventions are invoked and fulfilled in the novel.

Stephen Arata points out that Stoker's *Dracula* engages in generic traditions of both travel literature and gothic horror fiction (624-26) and that it fulfils patterns associated with both genres. Examined in some detail above is the idea that, as travel narrative, the novel strongly emphasizes the differences between a glorified "us" of the West and a denigrated "them" of the East, reifying those readings of difference. As gothic horror fiction, Stoker's *Dracula* meets audience assumptions of the tripartite scheme outlined by Craft, above, and applied throughout my discussion of the novel: a threat is admitted, is entertained through the length of the story, and is finally expelled or destroyed. This movement from horror to healing, resolution, and containment offers the reader not simply catharsis, but affirmation that a desirable social cohesion has been justly restored. As Moretti points out, this genre's ability to produce terror and then to heal it gives the illusion that it is possible to step outside of history, potentially diffusing any will to change stimulated in the reader in the course of the novel (68). In this way, the novel may function not only to maintain a fictional status quo, but to help perpetuate one in the social world outside of the novel.

Thus, horror fiction--and Stoker's *Dracula* in particular--is, for many critics, ultimately conservative. It portrays narrative unity--unity of movement, characterization, subjectivity, sexuality, and so on--reifying and naturalizing a unified social order. As a work of what Moretti calls "the literature of terror," Stoker's *Dracula* is "[i]lliberal in a deep sense" because it "mirrors and promotes the desire for an integrated society." For Moretti, as a Marxist, this means that the novel enforces a "capitalism that manages to be organic" (84), but it might further be seen to enforce English imperialism, misogyny, homophobia, and liberal humanist individualism by likewise establishing them as organic and/or universal. In Stoker's *Dracula* ruling-class fantasies of social cohesion or hegemony--or

the cliché that the world is made up of "one big happy family"--are effectively naturalized and circulate not as fantasies but as apparent universal truths.

Lochhead's *Dracula*: Frustrating the Fantasy

I suggest that Stoker's text coercively engages its readers, a suggestion informed by the work of many critics, chief among them Moretti. For Ken Gelder, however, "Whether or not 'the reader is frightened into consenting'" to the novel's prerogatives is "an open question." He takes issue with Moretti: "For Moretti, one necessarily identifies with the 'Crew of Light'--as if they *are* entirely integrated--and one does *not* identify with Dracula; but readerly identification need not be so polarised." Gelder notes that many critics of horror fiction resist what he sees as Moretti's reader-disabling analysis, where the "reader is manipulated by 'fear,'" and attempt instead to articulate ways in which the genre can be seen as progressive, where fear is enabling rather than disabling, or where the reader responds not reactively to fear, but proactively through desire. Gelder notes that for James Donald, for instance, "horror texts utilise 'desire and terror' to destabilise"--rather than confirm--"the prevailing order, demonstrating 'the impossibility of its closure or perfection'" (Gelder 19, Donald 119). A reading counter to Moretti's, Gelder suggests, "may draw out the many differences and tensions amongst the 'Crew,'" denying the reader a unified subject with which to identify. "[A]t another level," he proposes, "'fear' in its conventional sense may not drive the reader at all but, rather, modes of pleasure or delight or, as Donald suggests, desire--even, at times, a desire for the vampire, a desire to be *like* the vampire" (19).

While I agree with Gelder's suggestion that "readerly identification need not be so polarised" as it is in Moretti's model, I suggest nevertheless that the *predominant* effect of Stoker's novel is to secure "reader consent" to the supremacy of the ruling class--and not simply through fear. The novel secures "readerly consent" first, as Gelder suggests, by engaging reader identification with an apparently unified--and, not incidentally, heroic--subject (or, admittedly, subjects) in the novel, and second, by executing generic conventions and associated reader expectations, simultaneously enacting and engaging "consent" for the appropriateness of its own conclusion, where good heroes triumph over their polar opposite, the evil villain. Stoker's *Dracula* constructs, proffers, and (coercively) promotes a unified position from which to read the novel, a position which itself promotes belief in both an ostensibly coherent but practically hierarchized community and the manifest destiny of such a community.

In Lochhead's *Dracula*, by contrast, the construction of a unified audience position is not facilitated but, rather, textually and theatrically frustrated. The play's audience is encouraged not to reproduce a single dominant ideology but to generate plural meanings

and to recognize the social as heterogeneous--racially, socio-economically, sexually--with diverse and often conflicting interests and desires. While Gelder's proposed desire *for* the vampire may lurk in Stoker's *Dracula*, providing some degree of destabilization, this desire is explicit in Lochhead's *Dracula*, cannily, assiduously, and ultimately winningly dismantling the economy of loathing and fear which constructs the other as evil in Stoker's *Dracula*.

In order to achieve a recognition of both difference and its potential value, the play problematizes itself--its coherence, its unity, its narrative construction, linguistic reference, literary autonomy, presentational style, visual meaning, and, last but not least, its heroes. The play diversifies its own potential meanings and the options it offers for audience engagement and understanding. Having foregrounded Stoker's text's fantasy by drawing attention to the hegemonic power reinscribed by Stoker's clichés, Lochhead's *Dracula* frustrates the fantasy, initiating a redistribution of that power, a redistribution requiring not potentially masochistic audience passivity, as in Stoker's novel, but audience activity and proactive plural desire.

Narrative

As a gothic horror story, Stoker's *Dracula* operates within certain generic imperatives, chief among them is the imperative to toy with its central threat as long as possible, but ultimately to expel, overcome, and obliterate that threat and to restore "unity." Accordingly, the conclusion of Stoker's novel meticulously details both the geographical progress of Dracula and his pursuers from London, through Europe, to Transylvania, and the narrative progress from Dracula's expulsion from England, through his pursuit across Europe, to his extermination in Transylvania. Cumulatively, the novel generically constructs a kind of geographical and narrative inevitability to Dracula's death, an inevitability which, as I suggest above, draws the reader into complicity with the conservative protectionism which motivates both the novel's concluding movement--from horror to unity--and its concluding gesture--killing Dracula.

While maintaining many of horror's generic elements, including its movement from horror to (a kind of) unity, Lochhead's *Dracula* denaturalizes this movement by rendering it less seemingly inevitable, more obviously constructed, and more plainly motivated. While Stoker's ending may be read as inevitable, Lochhead's ending concentrates and hyperbolizes this inevitability in a way which problematizes its motivations and necessity. In the play's last three brief scenes, Mina is "infected" with vampirism and a total of seven characters--including Renfield, Lucy (for the second time), Arthur, the three vampire women, and, of course, Dracula--are all killed off. While many reviewers of the play's first production complained about what Owen Dudley Edwards on BBC Radio Scotland referred to as Lochhead's "necessity to shove in the plot almost brutally like the stake

being hammered in to place,"¹⁵ I suggest the bold linearity, and indeed ruthlessness, of the play's conclusion might not be structural "flaws," but metatextual flags, marking both the imposition of a conclusion on a complex field of meaning, and specifically, the imposition of punishment on the culturally transgressive Dracula. In other words, the play's admittedly abrupt conclusion may be self-conscious, and self-consciously inadequate--or, rather, more than adequate--drawing attention to itself and to what it and the audience exclude--chiefly Dracula, and the desires and transgressions he represents--in the act of concluding. As in the novel, Dracula is killed; in contrast to the novel, the characters and the text pursue this conclusion with a desperation symptomatic rather more of their anxiety (and of a narrative imperative to "tie things up") than of Dracula's evil. In a sense, the audience is offered two parallel and mutually-problematizing endings: one which mimics Stoker's ending and its upper-middle-class triumph literally, and one which mimics that ending in Elin Diamond's deconstructive sense of mimicry, simultaneously problematizing that ending, its motivations, its platitudes, and its distribution of power (Diamond "Mimesis, Mimicry, and the 'True-real'"). The self-reference of Lochhead's narrative ending may frustrate and even anger its audience (as it apparently did Edwards), but it may equally, politically, and even humourously draw audience attention to the manipulative potential of narrative.

Language

Although frequently highly emotive (a characteristic Lochhead happily exploits), the language in Stoker's novel is predominantly naturalistic. This linguistic naturalism lends credibility to the novel's narrative of ruling-class triumph in two ways: first, by seeming itself to denote linguistic truth--presenting its meaning as natural, single, obvious, and true; and second, by seeming therefore to connote narrative truth, to be telling a literally true story. Lochhead's play, in contrast, destabilizes both its linguistic and narrative meaning by emphasizing the very multiplicity of its linguistic meaning. Through punning, which fractures and multiplies single cohesive meanings and is characteristically plentiful in Lochhead's writing, and through the use of irony, *double entendre*, and Brechtian "quoting," Lochhead's *Dracula* emphasizes that not only is linguistic meaning mutable, it is also ideologically constructed, never merely reflecting a social reality, but rather constructing and potentially promoting ideologically biased realities.

By playing on the denotative congruity and connotative incongruity of homographs--on the fault line between single symbol and multiple meanings--puns emphasize the arbitrariness, as opposed to "natural-ness," of language. Puns denaturalize meaning. And especially vulnerable to this kind of denaturalizing play are

¹⁵ The ending of the play's first production was specially noted by other critics as well, including Brennan, Easton, Hemming, Reid, and McDonald (102, 104 n32).

those expressions which wear their presumptive truthfulness with candour, Lochhead's favoured stomping ground, aphorisms and clichés. By denaturalizing putative truths, puns trouble the grounds on which those truths are (usually implicitly) based, indicating words' or expressions' at least multiple, frequently contradictory, and usually ironic and comic meanings.

Lochhead's penchant for punning is suitably and well exercised in *Dracula*, particularly around meanings of edibility, sexuality, flowers, and femininity. I have already looked at Dracula's references to blood and drinking--and their very specific *double entendres* in relation to him--in his first meeting with Jonathan. But references to and puns on oral consumption, prandial delectability, and sexual desirability run throughout the play, beginning in the opening scene and focusing notably on women. On Mina's entrance, stage directions describe her: "*Proper English rose, a peach, eating one*" (L73). Not one but two clichés of femininity herald Mina and are reinforced by her act of eating a peach. The peach joke might seem more effective read in its stage directions than viewed live in performance were it not that several lines later Lucy tells Mina, "Oh, Mina, aren't you pretty in your silk? You look good enough to eat" (L73), explicitly drawing connections between feminine prettiness and desirability figured as edibility, and implicitly drawing connections between Mina and precisely what is being eaten on stage, "a peach." This scene's jokes on eating obviously initiate a dramatic irony surrounding these women's fates at the hands (and teeth) of Dracula; they also, however, tease out (gendered and sexed) metaphors of appetite, potentially denaturalizing them and their effects. "Good enough to eat": what is playfully complimentary to women is also objectifying, diminishing, romanticizing and--literally--cannibalizing of women.

Lochhead's *Dracula* puns not only on the literal but also on the literary, explicitly quoting from Stoker's *Dracula* but, through recontextualization, creating an alternative meaning of the same text. This quoting is similar to a method of Brechtian feminist performance delineated by Elin Diamond wherein "the actor 'alienates' rather than impersonates her character; she 'quotes' or demonstrates the character's behavior instead of identifying with it" ("Brechtian Theory/Feminist Theory" 84). Through quoting Stoker's text, Lochhead's text "'quotes' or demonstrates" *Stoker's text's* behaviour instead of identifying with, or, importantly, promoting it. Lochhead's longest quotations from Stoker's text occur not in her dialogue but in her stage directions. Being--lengthy and potentially exaggerated--physical enactment, as opposed to verbal expression, they are already visually isolated, or "quoted," within a text characterized by its attention to dialogue and discussion and perhaps recognizable as that of a poet. Further, the anachronistic quality of their (Victorian Gothic) language suggests interpretation in performance as different to--or, again, "quoted" within--the rest of the play. Quoting long passages of the novel in its stage directions, Lochhead's *Dracula* isolates for scrutiny some of the assumptions inscribed in those passages, specifically assumptions concerning desire.

Dracula

I have argued that the language of Stoker's *Dracula* is predominantly naturalistic, but in its most "horrific" and anxiety-saturated scenes--the vamping and attempted vamping scenes--the language betrays that horror and anxiety through its melodramatic excess of metaphors (of bestiality and monstrosity, especially), physical gesture, and visual images. Lochhead's *Dracula* explicitly quotes from and performs those passages, not translating but transposing Stoker's late-nineteenth-century gothic prose so that its excesses and the anxieties they symptomatically indicate are thrown into relief.

The scene in which Jonathan is very nearly vamped by the triumvirate of women includes lengthy and telling quotations from the novel in its stage directions, quotations worth reprinting at length:

JONATHAN *lying back in thrall*. VAMPIRE 3 (LUCY) *advances and bends over him until he can 'feel the movement of her breath upon [him], sweet, honey-sweet [send] the same tingling through the nerves as her voice but with a bitter underlying the sweet, a bitter offensiveness as one smells in blood'*. JONATHAN *is 'afraid to raise his eyelids but looks out and sees perfectly under the lashes'*. VAMPIRE 3 *'goes on her knees and bends over him, fairly gloating. There is a deliberate voluptuousness which is both thrilling and repulsive and as she arches her neck she actually licks her lips like an animal till he can see in the moonlight the moisture shining on the scarlet lips and on the red tongue as it laps the white sharp teeth. Lower and lower goes the head as the lips go below the range of his mouth and seem about to fasten on his throat. Then she pauses and her tongue flickers in and out and her hot breath is on his neck. JONATHAN's flesh tingles and he feels the soft shivering touch of lips and the hard dents of two sharp teeth just touching and pausing. He closes his eyes in a languorous ecstasy and waits with a beating heart.'* Quote, unquote. (L100; cf. S39-40)

As discussed above, Jonathan's earlier desire for Vampire 3/Lucy metamorphoses in this scene into her aggressive desire for, and "deliberate" seduction of, Jonathan. The desire is further transposed from Jonathan's "innocent"--because "natural" and "unrealized"--desire for Lucy, to Vampire 3's corrupt--because vain ("gloating," "deliberate") and bestial ("like an animal")--desire for him.

Lochhead's text quotes, similarly, from the scene in which vampire Lucy is foiled in her attempt to "kiss" Arthur: "*a 'spasm of rage flits like a shadow over LUCY's face and her sharp teeth clamp together'*" (L122; cf. S168-169). And, again, from that in which Mina and Dracula are interrupted "vamping" one another: "*The Count 'turns his face and that hellish look leaps into it. His eyes flame red with devilish passion, his nostrils quiver and the white sharp teeth behind the full lips of the blood-dripping mouth champ together like those of a wild beast'*" (L137; cf. S298). In the adjective-saturated prose of Stoker's monster-describing narrative, the vampires are repeatedly and explicitly aligned with the

devil, they are consumed with passionate rage, their mouths are hyperbolic sites of sexual gluttony and surfeit, and they are not human but animal. Repeatedly quoting Stoker's *Dracula*, Lochhead's play recontextualizes and thereby emphasizes his text's repeated coupling of bestial monstrosity with any "improper" desire--that is (for the novel) any desire that is not expressed, first, by a male, and then, only for his socially sanctioned partner. The play "'alienates' rather than impersonates," estranges rather than endorses, the novel's consistent damning of any "different," non-normative desire (Diamond "Brechtian Theory/Feminist Theory" 84).

Literary Reference

Lochhead's *Dracula* refers to numerous other literary texts besides Stoker's *Dracula*, "alienating" too those texts' meanings through recontextualization and the significant juxtapositions and emphases which result, indicating particularly those texts' racist and sexist pre-occupations and assumptions, and, by scrutinizing other texts, destabilizing by implication its own meaning.

Citing two narratives which chronicle "civilized man's" "retreat" or "regression" into "native savagery," Lochhead's *Dracula* marks its engagement in this generic tradition, a tradition symptomatic of declining imperial cultures, recounting narratives which help to quell the fears of such decline, if only by discursively containing them. Nurse Grice calls fly-eating mental patient Renfield "Lord of the sodding flies" (L116), invoking William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*. And when the English doctor Seward is interrupted ill-treating his patient Renfield, stage directions describe the scene: "SEWARD *desists*. RENFIELD, *a sobbing heap on the floor*. SEWARD *looking at his hands*. *The horror*" (L126). The doctor/colonizer confronts his own savagery and the text cues Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. By framing the Seward/Renfield relationship in particular in terms of famous literary relationships of colonial arrogance decisively confronted and collapsed, Lochhead's play emphasizes Seward's ruling-class arrogance. Further, by delineating the generic heritage of Stoker's novel, the play denaturalizes the anxiety-controlling purposes of "return of the repressed" narratives, interrupts *their* "horrific" ill-treatment of their subjects (the so-called savage or native), and defuses the inevitability of their "evil"-conquering dénouement.

Similarly, the play acknowledges and problematizes its participation in a heritage of literary constructions of women who are passionate and "therefore" errant (errant because their assertive sexuality "transgresses male systems of control" [Triesman 128] and so is emasculating). When Renfield complains to Seward, "The Beldams of Bedlam *sans merci*, doctor, they are poisoning me" (L77), the play invokes John Keats's "La belle dame sans merci" and the putative passionate nihilism of the belle dame--as reported by the emasculated knight, a perhaps not so reliable witness. Dracula's comment to Jonathan on the subject of photography, "Each common clerk can keep his last duchess

in sepia inside his pigskin wallet" (L91) evokes Robert Browning's "My Last Duchess" and the derision of the poem's speaker for what he identifies as his former wife's fickleness and what we might identify as her emasculating--because independent and, it is implied, polygamous--sexuality. The duke complains:

She had
A heart--how shall I say?--too soon made glad,
Too easily impressed; she liked whate'er
She looked on, and her looks went everywhere. (Browning 545)

While Keats's poem effectively vilifies *la belle dame* for her emasculation of the knight, Brownings' perhaps circuitously celebrates the duchess for her (possibly unwitting) emasculation of the self-aggrandizing and insecure duke. In both cases, however, Lochhead's references invoke a literary tradition characteristic for its anxiety around, and concern regarding, desiring, passionate, expressive women and the threat their independent sexuality poses to men. Lochhead's references thus denaturalize that tradition and its potentially concealed misogynist practices. Further, explicitly contextualizing itself within such a tradition, Lochhead's play both troubles its own relationship to that tradition--whether or not its narratives, too, are socially and sexually exploitative--and alienates its audiences' engagement with that tradition, facilitating audience awareness of what narratives they construct and participate in in watching the play.

Presentational Style

Hyperbolizing Stoker's novel's narrative thrust, disturbing its linguistic naturalism, and alienating its literary traditions are three methods through which Lochhead's play interrupts coercive engagement of "reader consent" with the "Dracula" myth and indicates alternative, potentially more multiple, engagements. As a performance text, the play further performs multiple engagements with the myth by using not a predominantly coherent presentational style--as Stoker's novel uses naturalism--but multiple styles. By varying its presentational styles, the play both denaturalizes Stoker's naturalism, interrogating its putative truths and proffered narrative, and invites, instead, various, changing, importantly not singular but multiple audience/text relationships.

As the play effects destabilization by introducing non-naturalistic language to Stoker's novel's and to its own predominant linguistic naturalism, it checks a pervasively naturalistic performance style with less naturalistic and non-naturalistic performance, again destabilizing its meaning but particularly, in this case, by multiplying the ways in which its audience engages with that meaning and by encouraging engagement which is more active than passive. In particular, direct audience address and acutely poetic language frequently interrupt and disrupt the play's naturalistic dialogue, alienating the

audience from what might otherwise be a spectatorial passivity which allows the text coercively to secure "reader consent."

In her telegram scene quoted above, for instance, Florrie potentially fractures the fourth wall of naturalistic performance convention and addresses the audience directly, confronting the audience's possible implication in structures which countenance--if they do not precisely cause--both her illiteracy and her male working-class counterpart's sacrificial death at war. More prevalent in the play than direct address is, however, poetic address which may operate on a single (or several) naturalistic level(s) but may also indicate alternative, less naturalistic meanings, again denaturalizing naturalism but also performing, not normativeness--as does Stoker's text--but difference.

It is Renfield's recurring poetic and associative verbal outbursts which most frequently--and potentially insidiously--interrupt the play's naturalism, offering naturalistic meanings, but also others, of vying appeal. Following his claim that his food is deliberately being poisoned--"Listen, Listen, they put things in my food, they do!" (L77)--and despite the fact that the inattentive doctor Seward has left the stage, Renfield continues:

They put things in. Bad stuff. Puss, piss, jiss, bad blood and mother's milk, it open up my head to him, you got to listen, help me or he get in. The poison make me want to let him in. He say, let me, I come in your head to throb in your temples with the golden altars and the swelling organs and the ruby ruby light from the high windows will spill, spill on the floor my power and my glory. I say no I say no I shut my mouth ears nose eyes I say no he say yes he say isn't it shame isn't disgrace I'll get in though it be not through the hole in your face. Doctor! You leave me alone and scared and I want to let him in. Help me, Dr Seward, I don't want to want to let him in! (L78)

These lines may be read naturalistically as the paranoid and insignificant ramblings of a madman, or even as the prescient and reasonable anxieties of a vulnerable man deserted by his protector.¹⁶ But they may also be read for many other poetic and associative resonances. Although *Dracula* has, as yet, neither appeared nor been named, Renfield foreshadows his coming. The "swelling organs" and "his" implied mode of "entry" into Renfield begin to elaborate Dracula's (homo)sexual menace. The religious imagery of organs, temples, and altars organize the coming foe as a kind of antichrist. Significantly, Renfield's claim, "I don't want to want to let him in," plays with the ambiguity and complexity of desire in the manner of a double negative, simultaneously expressing both a

¹⁶ Significantly, Seward deserts both Renfield and Lucy, effectively abandoning them to Dracula in a pattern reminiscent of both Frankenstein's desertion of his loved ones and Percy Shelley's of his. Each case potentially reveals the faulty logic of assuming every patriarch will be an effective protector.

(transgressive) desire and its prohibition, with the result that neither quite cancels out the other. Where desire is fiercely maintained as coherent, pure, and normative in Stoker's novel, its ambivalences, varieties, and sometime contradictions are admitted and even allowed to thrive in Lochhead's play. Finally, the "you" of Renfield's speech may be Dr Seward, but he is absent, casting the audience, uncomfortably, as the object of address. Once again, audience complicity in the social effect on, and social treatment of, Renfield is queried by this direct address. What is further questioned is the audience's potential complicity with Renfield's ambivalent desire for Dracula, a desire which, as Gelder suggests, may "destabilise the prevailing"--and, I would add, ruling-class--"order" (19), and a desire perhaps articulated upon Dracula's first entrance, in scene seven. "*At last, arms open in welcome, out of us, out of auditorium in a sweep, [comes] DRACULA himself.*" Dracula enters, significantly, "*out of us,*" a physical performance of audience desire for him, or of audience projections of what he should be. With his first words, "At last. I am Dracula" (L89), the Count welcomes Jonathan. Read self-reflexively, however, this line acknowledges audiences' attendance on--even impatience for--Dracula's arrival, alluding to their desiring complicity in conjuring or constructing him.

In numerous other Renfield rants (including those acutely glossed by McDonald [99-101]), Dracula's monologue on the wolves (L94), Van Helsing's soliloquy on receipt of Seward's letter about Lucy (L113), and Mina's monologue about her journey to Transylvania (L144), poetic language and performance repeatedly displace naturalistic language and performance in Lochhead's *Dracula*. This denaturalizes naturalism, facilitates the expression of multiple meaning, and invites dynamic audience engagement with a performance which rewards the divination of multiple associative meanings and the expression of multiple--even ambivalent--desires.

Visual Meaning

Along with generic, linguistic, literary, and stylistic meanings, Lochhead's *Dracula* diversifies visual meaning by using visual imagery which is often polyvalent, acting like Brechtian *Gestus* or visual punning to multiply and amplify meanings--particularly of femininity--rather than to limit them, and to admit ambivalence--particularly of desire--rather than to stifle and constrain it to ruling-class orthodoxy. Susan C. Triesman notes that Lochhead's work "is, increasingly, imagistic work, where the play of significations across the central image precludes single meanings." Triesman warns, "this is a passionate process that launches the audience into contradictions, into the questions that appear in the interstices of a complex intertext. This does not necessarily happen at a conscious level, but the audience is itself repositioned as subject in relation to its engagements" (127). The visual text's plural meanings invite the audience to pursue plural interpretations and an understanding of meaning itself as plural and not linear, singular, and authorized.

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Flower imagery, as McDonald observes, recurs throughout the play (McDonald 100-101). But it has no single, stable referent; if anything, it plays with and troubles flowers' common cultural associations with femininity, virginity, fertility, and nature. Notably, the play's flower imagery extrapolates that associative continuum to include not only fragrant perfume, at one end, but festering poison, at another.

LUCY: Roses, roses, oh, I do love roses. So sad when all the pretty petals fall... Mina and I used to gather up all the petals in the garden when we were little, and put them in a jar with rainwater and try to make perfume. Did you ever do that, Florrie?

FLORRIE: Should think all little girls did, Miss Lucy.

LUCY: But after we left it a week it always festered. Stink and fur! So then we'd turn it into poison. We'd put in... oh, a dead mouse and, and... pee... and poison-pods from off the lupins. It was even better fun making poison than making perfume. (L110-111)

Like the rose petals, Florrie Hathersage's diminutive first name may at first conjure stereotypes of purity and innocence, resonances compounded by her surname's double floral invocation of both heather and sage. But like the perfume gone awry, Dracula later shatters that simple symbolism by reading "Florrie" literally. "Far as I'm concerned," he says of her, "she's blossoming. Come tomorrow night, my flower, you'll be ready for the plucking. Lovelier than Lucy and *twice* as full of life..." (L136). At the end of the play, snow falls, then turns to "*blush-pink petals like apple blossom and confetti, darker pink and finally red, red petals as the curtain falls*" (L147). This *Gestus* theatrically performs the bleeding together of images which might conventionally be considered oppositional--ice and blood, white and red petals, purity and passion--obfuscating the demarcation and reductionism of binary difference, particularly, here, of representations of femininity.

Desire's potential diversity and ambivalence are performed in Lochhead's *Dracula* less through imagery than through gestic tableaux. Van Helsing's "King Laugh" is described in stage directions as "*black ironic*" (L126) and is characterized by simultaneous crying and laughing as he cries over Lucy's death and contemplates (or relishes?) the ironic challenge of his position--*knowing* that she must yet be rendered truly dead, and that he must tell her family so. The laugh is repeated and parodied by Renfield who "*uses it to fuel a leap that breaks his chains [so that], sobbing and laughing, he escapes*" from the hospital to his "saviour" and his doom, Dracula (L132). "King Laugh" epitomizes the conflict--but equally the potential mutual inclusiveness--of contradictory emotions, of grief and joy, and contradictory desires, for deliverance and destruction.

"King Laugh" articulates an individual's ambivalent emotions and desires; the play's gestic continuum from devotional pietàs, through romantic swoons and embraces, to vamped defeats locates such ambivalence in relation to one's worship of, desire for, or conquest by another. Following his encounter with the three vampire women,

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"JONATHAN *slumps*," and "DRACULA *picks up the fainted JONATHAN in his arms as in a pietà*" (L101). Dracula's desire for Jonathan is performed as not wholly--or even primarily--mercenary or "blood-thirsty," but caring, even reverential, adoring. Later, a semi-converted vampire Lucy bids, "Come in. Come to me, my love. Come in."

Noises. Shadows. LUCY gets out of bed with sheet bundled up in front of her and, sleepwalking, goes to Mina's wedding dress. DRACULA is there, embraces her with the wedding dress, picks her up and sucks at the wound on her neck. The classic swoon. Blood all over the stage. Red petals fall.
(L112)

Wrapped in a wedding dress, lifted (as over the conjugal threshold), and swooning, Lucy's desire for Dracula is performed within a visual economy of married bliss, an economy graphically (and doubly) confirmed and consummated by the scene's blood-spilling, petal-plucking *mise en scène*. And near the end of the play, after Mina has been vamped by Dracula,

She grasps at his cloak. Very ambiguous. Almost like an embrace, but also to detain him. (L137)

The desires encompassed in the *Gestus* of Mina's attempt--to enjoy Dracula, to detain and destroy him--are multiple and contradictory but expressly not mutually exclusive. Repeatedly, the play performs multiple, transgressive, contradictory, and ambivalent desires--admitting and permitting such desires within its diegesis and in its audience's relationship with that diegesis. Lochhead's *Dracula* is not about securing "reader consent" to a ruling-class agenda, but rather about facilitating diverse audience desire.

Heroism and Identification

Lochhead's protagonists' gestic expressions of desire articulate their characters in markedly different ways from Stoker's characters. And through these character differences, the two texts offer markedly different options for readers' engagement with both character and narrative. Stoker's characters bond with solidarity and common purpose against a foe they all and equally recognize. They consistently and completely demonize that foe, aggrandize themselves, and present themselves as a coherent site of readerly identification which, if assumed or "consented to" by the reader, offers him/her the reward of triumph over evil. Stoker's characterization and narrative organization are virtually tyrannical in that they offer a single identificatory option to his novel's reader--an identification which teleologically confirms Dracula as evil, his characteristics and behaviour as transgressive, and his eradication as not only desirable but necessary. Equally, and in a related way, Stoker's novel dictates the triumph of the ruling class because the ruling class provides the novel's coherent, triumphant, virtuous heroes.

In notable contrast to the coherent solidarity of Stoker's "Crew of Light," Lochhead's protagonists are riven by disagreement, distrust, and conflicting desires. They

do not present a coherent and consistent site of identification for the audience. In their frequently ambivalent relationships to each other, neither do they proffer a single viewpoint, let alone confirm any such viewpoint as the sole meaningful viewpoint. Finally, in their frequently ambivalent relationships to Dracula and the other vampires, they do not damn the vampires either as the sole site of evil or as a site solely of evil. Through the multiplicity of their characterizations and desires, the play's characters furnish not a single ruling-class route of identification or triumph but, rather, multiple options for both pleasurable audience engagement, and not the triumph of the ruling class but the expression of and identification with non-normative desire and cultural heterodoxy.

Particularly following Lucy's death, the male characters in Stoker's novel bond in a circle of spiritual love and protectionism around their Mina whose transcendent virtue Van Helsing summarizes: "She is one of God's women, fashioned by His own hand to show us men and other women that there is a heaven where we can enter, and that its light can be here on earth" (S198). As Craft notes, Stoker's male characters' descriptions of Mina organize an otherwise potentially disturbing world by providing a stable site of goodness worth fighting for. And Mina upholds her role by loving and caring for them all, cherishing their care, and having what some critics read as their collective spiritual child. Stoker's male characters' unambiguous--and significantly non-carnal--desire is to save Mina; and Stoker's Mina's sole desire seems to be, reciprocally and equally non-carnally, to save the men. Further, Mina's primary role is apparently to reward the men by being saved.

As my analysis of *Gestus*, above, indicates, desire is a lot less straightforward in Lochhead's *Dracula*; and notably fraught are relationships of desire between Mina and "the band of men." Centrally, both Mina's and Jonathan's marital monogamous desire for one another is significantly contested. Early in the play, Jonathan intimates his dalliance with his stenographer, Miss Bell (L81), and flirts over chicken legs and breasts with Florrie (L84), already rewriting the singular affections of Stoker's Jonathan for Mina. Also early in the play, Mina goes into a jealous rage after Lucy and Seward announce their engagement (L86-87), and she and Seward bond visibly following Lucy's death: "MINA and SEWARD meet and embrace, weeping both of them, as miserable JONATHAN stands by them, touching one or the other's arm" (S126). Neither Jonathan's nor Mina's affections are either singular or, in their terms, entirely "virtuous"--his are also "improper" and hers are also jealous.

While Stoker's *Dracula* sanctimoniously presents as its motivations such things as commitment to ostensibly virtuous love and purity, these variations on desire in Lochhead's play admit a diversity of possible behavioural motivations well beyond Stoker's *Dracula*. But perhaps more significant are the play's emphases on--and, even, endorsements of--transgressive desires which, were they admitted to the novel, would utterly collapse its logic. And most frequently and significantly, these desires are those of non-vampire characters for vampires.

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Lochhead's Jonathan swoons in--attempting to abscond responsibility for--his desire for the three vampire women, particularly she who is (like) Lucy. But, in order to confirm what Van Helsing has already suspected and to prove to the others that Dracula is indeed a vampire, Jonathan re-enacts and confesses to that desire under Van Helsing's hypnosis.

One, my head--aah! (*It jerks back like when it happened.*) Two, my legs, no! Prise... prising, yes, oh she, she, the third one yes oh she down down down. I say no, I lie! I want. Yes. I want her. . . . I pretend to be asleep. Yes. Pretend--I am afraid to look, cannot raise my eyelids. I look out. I look under, I see, I see. Perfect--Lucy. Lucy? Not--Lucy. (L128)

Coming around, Jonathan admits, "It's true. (*Sobbing in anguish*) God help me, it's all true" (L129). He admits his transgressive desire and is, not surprisingly, ostracized for it. "(*Crying out*) Oh, Mina, Mina, I went through hell to get back to you," he "*reaches out*" but "[s]he moves from him" (L129). Perhaps more surprisingly, Mina's motivation for moving away might not be her alienation from and condemnation of his transgressive desire, but rather her sympathy with that desire. During Jonathan's confessional speech, the stage directions inform us, "*first MINA and then SEWARD too get appalled, jealously, then... guilt?*" (L128). And, even more compromisingly, when Dracula has murdered Arthur Seward, and Van Helsing and Jonathan have murdered Dracula, stage directions read:

MINA *is sunk to her knees sobbing. For ARTHUR? No--probably for DRACULA. Anyway, very ambiguously.*

Her object of address unspecified, she cries, "Oh, my love!" (L145). Confirming his fears, Jonathan observes, "You wanted him," to which Mina replies, "Yes" (L146), an admission enforced by her literal subjective identification with Dracula following their mutual vamp. Recounting her impressions of the trip in pursuit of Dracula, Mina is both partly "me," herself, and partly "I," Dracula: "You fed me oranges; I smelt the peel, spat out the pips, but all the time I tasted blood. Then all around me the noise and bustle of an English port, whilst already in the darkness of my own head I was landed on a European shore" (L144). Jonathan confirms his fears about Mina's desire for Dracula; she likewise confirms hers about his desire for the vampire women.

MINA: You wanted her.

JONATHAN: That bride...? Oh yes, I did. I wanted them all. (L146)

* * *

"I wanted them all." Its protagonists presenting, and even professing, multiple, mobile polyvalent desire--including a desire *for* the vampire--Lochhead's *Dracula* offers

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routes of identification which follow that desire and its pluralism and which disabuse putatively transgressive desires of their associations with cultural deviance and evil. The play leads its audience to accept the expression of difference and of different desires, to identify with or admit feeling desire for the putative other, and to de-demonize the other. In response to Jonathan's accusation regarding Dracula, "You wanted him," Lochhead's audience can join Mina in affirming, "Yes" (L146).

Chapter Three

Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off **History and Histrionics**

Don't
let history frame you
in a pretty lie.

--from Lochhead's "Construction for a Site:
Library on an Old Croquet Lawn, St. Andrews.
Nine Approaches," *Dreaming Frankenstein* 21

The above epigraph, excerpted from "Construction for a Site," a poem in Lochhead's 1984 collection *Dreaming Frankenstein*, poses a caveat heavy with innuendo: history, a supposedly respectable and objective bastion of truth, may detrimentally "misrepresent" its subjects to form stories which are "pretty"--perhaps palatable, safe, or romantic--but, the lines imply, dangerously trivialized, diminished, romanticized, made untrue. This caution is perhaps addressed to the "site," suggesting that architectural and historical framing pose dangers for the subject of representation. But considering the line is a direct address, it may also petition the poem's reader, warning the reader of literary, historical, and geographical landscapes to beware not only of entreaty to enter into those landscapes but of the nature of that entreaty--whether it casts entry as optional or obligatory--and of the effects of that entry. The lines warn that tellings of history are precisely that--tellings, narratives, stories, not objective and immutable truths. Through direct address, they warn also that framings of history alter not only the past but, importantly, the present. In these three lines, Lochhead's characteristic understatement is, also characteristically, resplendent in ironies, belying the objectivity of history, the naturalization of history as narrative, the innocence of the pretty, the pettiness of the lie, and the arbitrariness--or impossibility--of separating past from present.

The cautions voiced and instructions implied in this excerpt from "Construction for a Site" are, respectively, reiterated and observed in Lochhead's 1987 play, *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off*. The play focuses on one of Scotland's most famous and infamous historical figures, Mary Stuart. However, Lochhead emphasizes "this is *not* a 'history play'" ("Rough Magic"). "It's really about Scotland," she says, "more about the present than the past, how those myths of the past have carried on into the present

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malaise of Scotland today. [Mary] was around when a lot of the things that rule Scotland today were forming and hardening, you know, misogyny, Calvinism, all sorts of stuff like that" (*Sleeping with Monsters* 9). The play is not simply about history, but about the ways history can be and has been shaped into "pretty lies"--often stereotypes, clichés, and "received wisdoms"--and at the same time naturalized as true for trade in the present. The play demonstrates that history is representation or, in cultural critic and historian Hayden White's terms, narrative. In the introduction to his collection *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism*, White states,

. . . we are faced with the ineluctable fact that even in the most chaste discursive prose, texts intended to represent "things as they are" without rhetorical adornment or poetic imagery, there is always a failure of intention. . . . On analysis, every mimesis can be shown to be distorted and can serve, therefore, as an occasion for yet another description of the same phenomenon, one claiming to be more realistic, more "faithful to the facts." ("Introduction: Tropology, Discourse, and the Modes of Human Consciousness" 3)

History is representation which selects, edits, lies (insofar as it does not tell "the truth"), and distorts (in that it necessarily shapes and frames facts). Because history can only exist in narrative, its "facts" are inevitably overcoded with meaning resulting from narrative organization, emphases, content selection, and so on. In this respect, no "true" history exists, and *how* histories are *given* meaning--how they are framed--becomes a concern. It becomes a concern partly because the hegemonic imperative of certain tellings of history is strong. As Lochhead has said, *Mary Queen of Scots* "is quite a difficult thing to write about without being corny or romantic," without, in other words, adopting a clichéd romantic narrative which is generically destined to celebrate and/or trivialize Mary (*Sleeping with Monsters* 9). *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off* does not necessarily imply that there are tellings of history that are more true than others, nor that there is any single, recoverable, true history. But it does caution its viewers or readers to be wary of the potential motives behind, and resulting effects of, certain tellings of history.

Specifically, *Mary Queen of Scots* focuses on a critical period in Scottish history to scrutinize some of the ways in which power relations of religion, gender, and social rank were culturally determined then and, in many respects, persist today. As historian Ian B. Cowan thoroughly demonstrates in *The Enigma of Mary Stuart*, prevailing tellings of history make, alternately, a martyr and a villain of Mary and frequently set her up as a metonym for Scotland whether, again, to celebrate both her and Scotland, or to vilify them. *Mary Queen of Scots* adjusts the frame on Mary to examine some of the cultural investments History has in constructing narratives--or telling "lies"--of her as martyr or villain (which is, of course, not to say she was or was not either, but to consider the implications of either story). Importantly, *Mary Queen of Scots* does not self-righteously

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imply that previous writings of Mary's history are false, that their so-called facts are incorrect, and that this play sets the story straight. The play is not concerned with the epistemological conundrum of putative historical veracity; what it is concerned with are the social implications of histories' effects. Historical accuracy is not at issue; the effects of historical narratives are. After all, the same "facts" can be told to vastly different effects: a representation of Mary as, for instance, evil may denigrate Scotland (if maligning Queen Mary means impugning the country she metonymically represents), or, alternatively, empower Scotland (if demonstrating Mary's malignancy means demonstrating the effects of, particularly, colonial abuse, and championing a Scottish spirit of resistance). Histories' effects are important because, as my example suggests, they can prove culturally disabling or enabling. In *Siting Translation*, literary critic Tejaswini Niranjana argues against concerning ourselves with historical narrative's accuracy and proposes that, alternatively, "we should look at its *effects*, arguing that different representations can produce other, more enabling or empowering effects" (39).

Lochhead's *Mary Queen of Scots* is concerned to offer two kinds of enabling effects: empowerment through telling a story which is thought-provoking, entertaining, and acute in its cultural observation, analysis, and critique, and empowerment through practising and promoting a method of story-telling which intervenes in and actively engages with history. Re-focusing history, *Mary Queen of Scots* also re-focuses *on* history, playing with it, irreverently, histrionically, so that the play's subject becomes not only historical subjects (persons and events), but the subject of history itself--how it orders and thereby creates meaning. Through re-focusing Scottish history, *Mary Queen of Scots* offers an alternative reading of that history and, particularly, its ongoing cultural repercussions. And through re-focusing on history itself, *Mary Queen of Scots* invites its audience to engage critically and actively with history--recognizing the power of history to make meaning, and taking responsibility for its own making of historical and cultural meaning.

Re-focusing history, *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off* "redeploys" Mary and some of her significant contemporaries--Queen Elizabeth, John Knox, Henry Darnley, Hepburn O'Bothwell--to interrogate their legacy in the present, and to consider, specifically, possible lines of descent to contemporary Scottish attitudes towards women, Scotland itself, religion, and class differences. Lochhead's concern with class differences and women's positions in society (what she reportedly has called "my country of gender"¹) is familiar from much of her previous writing. But *Mary Queen of Scots*'s emphasis on

¹ In "Not a Crying Game: The Feminist Appeal: Nationalism, Feminism, and the Contemporary Literatures of Scotland and Ireland," Marilyn Reizbaum records that "Lochhead used the expression 'my country of gender' in introductory remarks at a reading for students at the University of Edinburgh in June 1988" (30).

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Scotland marks a significant departure in her playwriting: a growing interest in and commitment to the meanings of Scottishness.² Re-presenting Scottish history (past and present), mythology, balladry, and iconography, *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off* marks Lochhead's increasing inclination to examine through playwriting national culture as a significant axis of identity. Where Lochhead acknowledges that women have been the focus of her earlier work because, as she says, "until recently I've felt that my country was woman," she suggests that more recently she has felt an increasing need to explore other important cultural determinants of identity, most strikingly, national identity:

I feel that my country is Scotland as well. At the moment I know that I don't like this macho Scottish culture, but I also know that I want to stay here and negotiate it. I can't whinge about it if I don't talk back to it, if I don't have a go. ("Knucklebones" 223).

And have a go she does, through a polysemic representation of Mary Queen of Scots, whom Susan C. Triesman calls "the body of the nation/woman" (129).

Like *Blood and Ice* and *Dracula*, *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off* demythologizes and reinterprets a pre-existing text of literature or history. However, unlike those two earlier plays, *Mary Queen of Scots* is arguably less naturalistic and less directive in its engagement of its viewers' and readers' attention, although it does notably focus on issues of gender and nationality--and, less centrally, religion and sexuality--through its comparison of Scots and English female regents and their subjects. With its consistent and playful destabilization of meaning, and joyous irreverence towards history (qualities which are both epitomized by La Corbie), *Mary Queen of Scots* is more culturally critical and stylistically destabilized and destabilizing than Lochhead's two previously published plays. Particularly in its characterization and structure, the play less offers reassuring coherence than it stimulates creative curiosity. This significant stylistic change in Lochhead's dramaturgy is informed partly by the fact *Mary Queen of Scots* was originally produced by Communicado Theatre Company, a company committed to physical and not strictly narrative-centred theatre, and to whose previous work Lochhead acknowledges a debt.³ Thus, the first section of this chapter examines specifically what

² This is a departure in her playwriting if not in her poetry, revue-writing, and translation, all of which, in varying degrees, employ Scottish subjects, language, and dialects.

³ On Communicado Theatre Company see artistic director Gerry Mulgrew's "The Poor Mouth?" Lochhead discusses her writing of *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off*, and the relationship of that writing to Communicado, in "Rough Magic," an article in a Perth Theatre promotional pamphlet. Lochhead emphasizes:

The play wasn't "workshopped," "devised" and most certainly not "improvised," or at least not in pursuit of text. . . . When I acknowledge the debt this play owes to

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history is scrutinized in *Mary Queen of Scots* and some of the implications and effects of this focus--that is, how this story may be disabling or enabling. The second section examines the interrogative techniques employed in making history's narrative--or its lie telling, its story-telling, its representation--the focus of the play and of its audience's understanding. It examines how the play attunes its audience to the concept that history is not natural and immutable but constructed and made to mean, how disabling story-telling may be contravened, and how enabling story-telling and reading may be practised.

Story: History in "Not a 'History Play'"

Considering that Lochhead claims her subject in *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off* is more precisely present-day Scotland than any Scotland of the past, one might ask why her main subjects throughout the play are historical figures of the sixteenth century. She partially answers this question in her interview in *Sleeping with Monsters*, quoted above, where she characterizes history as legacy, a legacy not frozen into in consequence and insignificance in the proverbial mists of time, but a legacy actively impinging upon ensuing history, right up to the present and into the future. History, for Lochhead, is what Niranjana has defined as "historicity": "that part of the past that is still operative in the present" (37). In an early draft version of *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off* located in the National Library of Scotland's fairly extensive archival holdings relating to this play, Lochhead writes that the play ends with John Knox "teaching the kids hatred and religious intolerance winding them right up, setting the ugly men against women, Catholic against Protestant, scene for industrial Scotland which prevailed so totally almost right up until today, and is still a bitter, unexpiated legacy" (Acc. 10176, no. 4, n.p.).

Further, the sixteenth century is by no means an arbitrarily selected site in which to ground this history. Lochhead is not alone in identifying this period as critical in Scottish, not to mention British, history. As part of the Renaissance or Early Modern period, the sixteenth century is often seen as (in the former terminology) the "re-birth" time of, or (in the latter) an early and defining point in, much of Western civilization. This period is marked not only by crucial changes in the West's ideas about its own cultural antecedents, in philosophical understandings of the subject, and in the division and distribution of labour, but in related ways--and this is primarily where *Mary Queen of Scots* focuses--by monumental religious changes, the monarchy of not one but two queens in what is now Great Britain, associated changes in understanding of women's cultural roles,

Communicado and Mulgrew, I mean I was influenced by the previous work of the company, which I had (mostly) loved.

and the impending union of the Scottish and English crowns under the Stuart monarchy--or what some narratives of history see as the impending loss of Scotland's national sovereignty and agency, and the coinciding ascendancy of its Stuart myth.⁴

Religion

With the rise of Protestantism in both England, where Queen Elizabeth herself was of course Protestant, and in Scotland, where John Knox held increasing sway but where Queen Mary was Catholic, the sixteenth century in Europe, and in Britain in particular, experienced what was perhaps an inevitable and frequently violent confrontation between these two religions. Mutual disagreement between the two churches was complemented by internal disagreement within both churches, particularly, for my interests here, on gender issues. Despite Knox's and Elizabeth's shared religion, for instance, they did not share beliefs about female rule: in "The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women," which Mary Queen of Scots neatly distills, Knox famously denounced gynocracy. Concomitantly, Protestantism's rejection of Catholic Mariology--disparagingly referred to as Mariolatry--entailed the displacement of a powerful female iconography from, and a usurpation of female power by, the ascendant Protestant church. That said, the Virgin Mary's meaning for women and for the status of women was not then and is not now, of course, straightforward. In her book *Mary--The Feminine Face of the Church*, Rosemary Ruether asks, "Is Mary a liberator of women or is she more a tool of male power over women?" (2). Similarly, one might ask whether the Protestant abnegation of the Virgin Mary contributed to a cultural desire for a new female icon and role model, a desire a female regent could potentially satisfy and thereby exploit. In an article on *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Louis Montrose writes:

C.L. Barber has suggested that "the very central and problematical role of women in Shakespeare--and in Elizabethan drama generally--reflects the fact that Protestantism did away with the cult of the Virgin Mary. It meant the loss of ritual resource for dealing with the internal residues in all of us of the once all-powerful and all-inclusive mother." What Barber fails to note is that a woman also had "a very central and problematical role" in the Elizabethan state and that a concerted effort was made to appropriate the symbolism and

⁴ In his introduction to *Gendering the Nation: Studies in Modern Scottish Literature*, Christopher Whyte writes, "Scottish culture, we are told, was mutilated by the twin disasters of the Union of the Crowns and the Union of the Parliaments, landmarks in a process of assimilation to England which increasingly diluted a pre-existing core of genuine Scottishness" (xii). Whyte goes on to demonstrate how this narrative of Scottish history is sexist, essentialist, and potentially xenophobic, and he dismisses it. Lochhead also criticizes such a narrative, as well as its ill effects, but she explores too the motivating desires for such a narrative.

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affective power of the suppressed Marian cult in order to foster an Elizabethan cult. (Montrose 66, cites Barber 196)

As *Mary Queen of Scots*'s treatment of the Virgin Mary suggests, however, whether she is seen as either a "liberator" or "a tool of male power," and whether an object of Catholic worship or--through Elizabethan appropriation and transmutation--of Protestant worship, the Virgin Mary's iconography and meaning--potent, poetic, and its subject female--was in any case strongly contested and deeply resonant in the sixteenth century.

The religious difficulties which plagued this period in Britain--and which, the play demonstrates, still persist--are most acutely presented in *Mary Queen of Scots* act I, scene iv, entitled "Knox and Mary." The scene begins with what stage directions describe as "*a parodic public parade*," in which Knox, with anachronistic bowler hat and umbrella, marches and "*rant[s]*" while other performers "*sway a big sheet like a blank banner behind him, [and] swagger on the spot with exaggerated Orangemen's gait*."⁵ Knox segues into a speech in which he condemns, first, female rule, and second, Catholicism: "I hae been commandit to blaw the first blast o' the trumpet against the monstrous regiment o' women, an abomination against nature and before God; and to disclose unto this my realm the vanity and iniquity of the papistical religion in all its pestilent manifestations in Sodom priesthooses and poxetten nunneries" (19). He then enters into an interview with Mary in which he decrees he cannot condone her marriage to "ony husband wha isna o' the one true faith" (20).

Ironically, while Knox avows "I believe only what God plainly speaks in his word" (21) in order to claim his beliefs as expressed in this scene are rational, logical, and right, his hypocrisy is belied by his hyperbolic language, intransigence, and intolerance--he will not accept his interpretation of the scriptures is an interpretation, one of many possible interpretations (McDonald and Harvie 143). "Hark at him," interjects a sardonic La Corbie during the scene, "'The Guid Lord says, and I agree wi' him!' Hark. Cark Cark" (20). Moreover, the play suggests that Knox's immense investment in seeing and presenting himself as rational requires his sublimation of any feelings which disrupt that persona. Of course, for Lochhead, these sublimated feelings inevitably, and often horribly, well up in violent expressions of attack. When Mary "*breaks down sobbing*" following Knox's denunciation of the Catholic Mass, stage directions indicate "*KNOX is uncomfortable, genuinely. Stirring of certain pity, perhaps lust*" (22). However, when Mary "*recoils*" from

⁵ Lochhead, Liz. *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off*. *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off and Dracula*. London: Penguin, 1989. 7-67. Page 19. All further references to this text in this chapter will appear in parentheses in the body of the text.

his attempt to touch her, his sympathy or desire contorts into remonstrance: he says, ". . . I had tae thole your saut tears, rather than I betray my God or nation by my silence" (22).⁶

Later, when Knox "*chides a cheeky wee harlot on the cauld Canongate*," his attraction to the girl is even more grotesquely distorted into vitriolic lust. What was a moment before the child Mairn becomes, in a theatrical freeze, "*suddenly straight and tall, totally MARY in our eyes, and in KNOX's*." With his "*hand raised in anger but stayed in awe*," Knox sadistically admonishes Mary/Mairn:

By Christ. Ah'll tan yir arse fur ye ya wee hoor o' Babylon. Lukk at ye! Wi' yir lang hair lik' a flag in the wind an advertisement o' lust tae honest men an' they big roon een lik' a dumb animal, slinkan alang the road wi' yir hurdies hingin' oot yir sark an' yon smell aff ye, ya durty wee fork-arsed bitch ye. Nae wonder it is written in the Guid Book that your kind are the very gate and post o' the devil--Ah'll leave the rid mark o' ma haun on your white flesh afore Ah--
(33)

As we saw in *Blood and Ice* in Mary Shelley's reference to "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," and in *Dracula* in the transmutation of Jonathan's lust for Lucy and Florrie into the vampire women's lustful attack on him, appalled by their own lust, the Mariner and Jonathan in those plays and Knox here make their lust women's sin, conveniently deflecting--indeed abusively redirecting--that lust by projecting it onto the objects of their desire (McDonald and Harvie 143). Knox calls Mary/Mairn "an advertisement o' lust," charging her for inciting lust rather than, himself, taking responsibility for the lust he creates in his reading of her--a reading which is conspicuously fetishistic, focusing on her hair, her eyes, her crotch, and her flesh. His remark, "Ah'll leave the rid mark o' ma haun on your white flesh," expresses a desire to touch sublimated into a threat of violent abuse. It is sadistic: Knox simultaneously fulfils his desire and punishes the object that he envisions provokes the desire. He abuses Mary/Mairn not only by threatening to hit her, but by degrading her to the status of animal: he likens her to a "dumb animal," claims her hurdies (or haunches, a term which applies to human beings as well as to animals) hang out of her shift, and calls her a bitch, a term which bestializes and pejoratively sexualizes her.

Notes in an earlier draft version of the play remark that Knox's bestial and misogynous vocabulary in this scene does violence not only to women, but integrally, to the Catholic church, commonly characterized as feminine but here so characterized specifically pejoratively by Knox. Lochhead writes, "All Knox's religious arguments are expressed in horrible sexual metaphors (the Church of Rome is an Whore of Babylon, an

⁶ *The Pocket Scots Dictionary* offers these definitions for "thole": "1. suffer, have to bear (pain, grief etc). 2. suffer with patience or bravery, put up with. 3. be able to endure; manage. 4. be patient, wait patiently."

spiritual harlot corrupted and diseased etc.)" (Acc. 10176, no. 4, n.p.). She also describes Knox as, "through his own troubled, powerful and un-selfacknowledged--therefore threatening--sexuality towards women, deeply flawed by misogyny," concluding, "As he finds Mary disturbingly attractive, by God he's going to make her suffer for it" (Acc. 10176, No. 4, n.p.).⁷

The efforts of Knox and his Kirk to achieve and maintain a putative rationality--which, for instance, denies attraction and is predicated on a belief in evil and the necessity of its punishment--are, the play suggests, excessive, immoderate, and therefore inevitably self-defeating, resulting not only in sectarianism and misogyny, but, in related ways, in truncated powers of imagination and poetry. In the collection *Twelve More Modern Scottish Poets*, Lochhead comments, "[T]he longer I live in Scotland the more assertively feminist--in the sense of longing for 'womanly values' in both men and women in this repressed, violent, colonised society--I get" (140). Framing "womanly values" in inverted commas, and acknowledging that they are appropriate for both women and men, Lochhead suggests that those characteristics (such as expressiveness, peacefulness, and freedom) which Western culture conventionally perceives and construes as female, and which she suggests as antidotes to the social ills she identifies (repression, violence, and colonization) may usefully be learned and adopted. Importantly, Lochhead does not suggest those values are biologically determined and essentially female, a suggestion which would reify them as solely the domain of women, enforce them as characteristic of all women, and imply that once "lost" from the "gene pool" they are irretrievable. Suggesting they may be learned, Lochhead facilitates that learning.

And it is a learning that is desirable and necessary, considering, as *Mary Queen of Scots* indicates, that elements of generative, creative poetry in religion in Scotland suffered through the sectarianism surrounding the Reformation. In her article on "Women's Discourse on the Scottish Stage," Susan C. Triesman identifies this as a central issue for one of Lochhead's fellow Scottish playwrights, Joan Ure:

[Ure] herself identified the major problem in Scotland as the divorce of intellect from imagination ("the suspect stepbairn"), with John Knox the culprit, "the reformed church in Scotland reformed magic out of existence. With the last witch went the last shred of imagination in the flames." She links this life-denying culture with sexism: if Jane Austen had lived in Scotland, she says, they would have had her buttering bannocks.⁸

⁷ I have edited this quotation's punctuation slightly to ease readability.

⁸ Triesman 125-126. Triesman cites Scottish Theatre Archive (Special Collections, Glasgow University Library), MSS 1513, no. 194, 1968 (more accurately, Scottish Theatre Archives, MS 1513/194, pages 2, 23, 24, and 28). The reference is to the Scottish Theatre Archives' extensive holdings of Joan Ure's writings, and specifically

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Jan McDonald and I in our article "New Twists to Old Stories" conclude that "what Knox seems to lack most, for Lochhead, is poetry," or more specifically, a generative, life-affirming poetry (Knox is certainly not without powers of rhetorical verbal evisceration). Knox's deficiency in this respect is evidenced not simply through demonstration of his own lack of compassion and verbal gentleness, but through comparison with La Corbie's poetic scope--which can, of course, be cruelly critical, but also gentle and kind. "While [Knox] begins the scene [I, iv] with a marching, abusive catalogue of the evils of women and Catholicism, La Corbie ends the scene with this poetic tribute to Mary's spiritual 'mother'" (McDonald and Harvie 144). La Corbie's tribute is worth quoting in full:

LA CORBIE Knox has torn the Mother of God from oot the sky o' Scotland
and has trampit her celestial blue goon amang the muck and
mire and has blotted oot every name by which ye praise her--
Stella Maris, Star of the Sea, Holy Mother, Notre Dame, Oor
Lady o' Perpetual Succour.

MARY But if he hae torn her frae the blue sky what has he left in her place?

LA CORBIE A black hole, a jaggit gash, *naethin'*. (23)

Finally, this absence of poetry, of sensitivity, and of what--for La Corbie and Mary in any case--are positive images of women is remarked in *Mary Queen of Scots* not only in the mock-past of the play's main action, but also in the present, in the final scene of the play. Act II, scene vii, entitled "Jock Thamson's Bairns," begins with "*all our characters, stripped of all dignity and historicity, transformed to twentieth-century children by the rolling up of trouser legs, addition of a cardigan or pair of socks*" coming back on stage as, "*one by one KNOX,*" significantly, not yet stripped of historical costume and character, "*baptizes them by pouring a cup of dirty water from his pail over their heads, soaking them*" (63). Knox literally saturates the children with a dirty and uncomfortable legacy which they internalize and immediately manifest in their sexist and sectarian, at once naive and savage, ditties and slanders. Spotting Marie, the children assail her with a remarkably sexist attack. James Hepburn "*wolf-whistles*" and Wee Betty and Fiddler call out.

Hiya, stranger!
I hope yir maw
Thinks you're braw!
Naw, naw
Nae chance! Nae danger!

to a lecture Ure wrote on Scottish literature and culture for a lecture series entitled "Writers on their Work."

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Betty continues, "Little Orphan Annie! Show us your fanny" (64). When Marie tells the other children her name, they cross-examine her about her religion in a litany of slang:

WEE BETTY Marie? Whit school do you go to?

JAMES HEPBURN She means urr ye a left-fitter?

Haw, stranger, d'you eat fish oan a Friday?

WEE BETTY You a Tim?

JAMES HEPBURN You a Fenian?

WEE BETTY Are you a Pape?

When Marie assents, she is Catholic, Wee Betty's response, notably "*Very savage*," is "Well, away and get converted!" (64).

Re-focusing on religion in the sixteenth century, *Mary Queen of Scots* traces a legacy of religious repression and persecution in Scotland, foregrounds some of the detrimental effects of these conditions, and demonstrates their hegemony, so powerful they suffuse twentieth-century school yard play. The main events referred to in the play may have taken place centuries ago, but *Mary Queen of Scots* proposes Scots reproduce them and their causes now, charging contemporary Scottish culture with responsibility for what happened "then" now. *Mary Queen of Scots* severely indicts religious sectarianism in Scotland, and particularly its attendant misogyny, demanding attention be paid to this history and its legacy.

Women

The sixteenth century in Britain was a time of drastic ideological change in perceptions of women, not only in the church, but also in sovereignty. Along with the religious strife resulting from the uncomfortable cohabitation of two powerful religions in what La Corbie refers to as "wan green island" (12), much of the sixteenth century was marked by profound gender strife, as the people of England and Scotland tried--or not--to come to terms with what previously had been virtually unimaginable: a female prince. Montrose's comments on "the Elizabethan sex/gender system" bear consideration in relation to attitudes towards sex and gender in Scotland as well as England:

As the female ruler of what was, at least in theory, a patriarchal society, Elizabeth incarnated a contradiction at the very center of the Elizabethan sex/gender system. . . . Queen Elizabeth was a cultural anomaly; and this anomalousness made her powerful and dangerous. (80)

One widely held sixteenth century theory of regency characterized the regent as having two bodies--one "unerring and immortal" body politic, and one body "natural," "subject to infancy, infirmity, error and old age" (Axton 12). Despite the somewhat vexed status held by the resulting "split" monarch, the "two bodies" theory was serviceable to certain arguments regarding succession. In *The Queen's Two Bodies: Drama and the Elizabethan Succession*, Marie Axton explains:

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Settlement of the succession [after Elizabeth Tudor] turned upon conflicting views of the legal standing of king and commoner. Stuarts throve upon absolute legal discrimination between heir apparent and subject; Suffolks strove to abolish this distinction. "King as common man" history plays follow this debate and form a distinct genre from 1561 to 1642; they are persistently anti-Stuart. (26)

Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off reopens the "king as common man" genre, with Lochhead's usual gender twist: "... I ask you, when's a queen a queen/ And when's a queen juist a wummin?" (16) asks La Corbie in what Adrienne Scullion identifies as "the central riddle of the play" ("Liz Lochhead" 395). The issue of Tudor-Stuart succession does not hold the same currency in the twentieth century as it did in the sixteenth, so the play's "riddle" raises other points relating to women and power in *Mary Queen of Scots*, including: the actual potency of the two queens' putative political agency; the degree to which the queens were obliged to sublimate certain desires in order to maintain political control; and the similarities and differences between Mary and Elizabeth and their subjects, particularly the female subjects whom the queens' actresses double to play.

Sixteenth century theories of the regent's two bodies predictably fell into double standard posturing as soon as they factored in the issue of gender. It was one thing that a king's body might fall ill, dangerously inverting the world-stabilizing hierarchy of the body politic over the body natural. But it was entirely another that a queen's body might bear her own successor, confounding the division of the body by factoring in not one but two bodies, a situation which could be complicated further should the child be male since his supposedly superior sex might displace--and would certainly complicate--the queen's right to rule. Furthermore, the pregnant regent bore profound physical testimony to the superficiality, even ridiculousness, of the metaphor of the prince's two divided, hierarchized bodies. In an article which considers the queen's "body natural", Karen Robertson speculates,

In 1567-68, the body of Mary Queen of Scots marked the intersection of a number of ideological systems--courtly love, Roman Catholicism, sovereignty, marriage, and maternity. The first four years of Mary's personal rule in Scotland attest to her successful negotiation of several of these systems. It was the marriage and subsequent pregnancy of the sovereign which precipitated the crisis which cost her her crown. (25)

The queen's role as a regent, where she would rule all her subjects, was incommensurate with both her role as a wife, where she would be ruled by her subject-husband (Jordan 425, 440), and her role as a mother, where she might bear a superior (because male) successor/usurper. Prior to the sixteenth century in Britain, it may have been inconceivable that women could command as much power as was exercised by Elizabeth

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Tudor and Mary Stuart; thus their regency must be regarded as, in certain respects, revolutionary and progressive. However, given that Elizabeth's and Mary's "trailblazing" was not necessarily an enjoyable task, much less an easy or stable one, their regency must also be seen as politically fraught and more a site of contest over, rather than resolution of, cultural resistance to women's rule.

Women's status in the sixteenth century cannot be viewed as ever-improving; however, it is important to recognize that profound cultural changes, especially in relation to gender, were taking place in this period and they certainly deeply influenced women's cultural positions, possibly for better *and* for worse. As Phyllis Rackin indicates, "The issue of the changing positions of women in Renaissance England"--if not, notably, in Scotland--"has been much debated in recent years." She enumerates some of the points of debate:

Was humanist education a force for women's liberation (Dusinberre 2), or did it inculcate "docility and obedience" (Jardine 53)? Was the presence of a powerful female ruler "a spur to feminism" (Dusinberre 2), or was Elizabeth the proverbial "token" woman who reinforces patriarchal restraints on the rest of her sex (Jardine 195)? . . . Did Protestantism and Puritanism, with their new conceptions of marriage, undermine "the Old Pauline orthodoxies about women" and provide for significant advance in women's status during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries (Dusinberre 5, Stone *Crisis* 269-302)? Or did "the Reformation actually [remove] some of the possibilities for women's independent thought and action" (Jardine 49) and the Puritan conception of marriage actually lead to "greater patriarchy in husband-wife relations," a "decline" in the status and legal rights of wives, and the increasingly sanctified and nuclear family structure (Stone *Family* 136-7)? (Rackin 31-32, cited in Ferris 132)

Unfortunately, very little has been written on Scottish women's history, beyond the many volumes on Mary Stuart (Antonia Fraser's *Mary Queen of Scots* being one of the better known), and Rosalind K. Marshall's ambitious *Virgins and Viragos: A History of Women in Scotland from 1080-1980*. Despite Scotland's and England's differences during the Renaissance and in the present, I think many of the questions Rackin poses are relevant to both countries. Thus, to summarize Rackin crudely, the status of women in Britain in the sixteenth century was notably fraught. And for that reason alone, this period usefully bears analysis, by cultural historians and in Lochhead's *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off*.

And analysis the play gives it. For Lochhead, *Mary Queen of Scots* centres on the issue of women and power: in 1990 she commented, "[The play's] theme is women in power and their strategies--or in Mary's case lack of strategy--for maintaining power" (in Farrell 22). *Mary Queen of Scots* is not, of course, a simplistic tract advocating women's

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right to power: the play takes a more ambivalent, more complex, and, arguably, more effective approach to its subject. In 1992, Lochhead acknowledged she found the play's concerns clear, but implied also that these concerns should be considered as ranges of concern rather than stable, unchanging objects of concern: "The play now, when I watch it, seems simple, inevitable, strong, and quite clear about its central theme which is the impossible dilemma for both Mary and Elizabeth, 'twa queens on the wan green island', between womanhood and power, between the ordinary productive, reproductive 'natural' ongoing-to-the-next-generation life of a woman and queenship" ("Rough Magic"). The play explores the determinants of female power, examining the ways women institutionally are meted or simply denied power, the sacrifices demanded of powerful women in patriarchal cultures, the cultural insecurities and anxieties which engender limits on women's power, and the perhaps dangerous and insidious potential for women ourselves to censor and curb our own and other women's exercise of power.

Lochhead is quick to emphasize that women are not beyond reproach in our own oppression. "I'm very ambivalent about women," she says,

they're people with problems too. I get at them because I am one. I'm allowed to. Although I am a feminist, I don't want to give my writing back only to women, I don't want to become a feminist separatist, nor do I want to "solve the world" solely for women because I find that position too bleak. ("Knucklebones" 204)

In an article on Lochhead's poetry, Dorothy Porter McMillan characterizes Lochhead's frequently non-coddling approach to representing women as "the ungentle art of clyping." McMillan explains:

the story-teller is also otherwise nameable as a tell-tale and one of the still raging debates about not merely female propriety, which we can probably thumb our noses at, but female solidarity, is about what I should like to style "clyping," and Lochhead, also the poet of the Scottish school playground, will know what I mean. The verb "clype" in Scotland means to gossip or more firmly to be a tell-tale; a "clype" or a "clypie" is a gossip or tell-tale, often malicious, and the word is most often applied to women. (19)

In *Mary Queen of Scots*, Lochhead clypes on the treatment of women by Scotland, John Knox, Hepburn O'Bothwell, and Henry Darnley, but also, significantly, by those potentially most privileged of women, the queens, Mary and Elizabeth.

This clype, or critique, is focused through a depiction and problematization of sixteenth century (and continuing) ambivalences about whether, in the first place, women can be rulers, and--accepting women's rule as inevitable if not desirable--whether they can reign without sublimating all qualities which aver their femininity, including their sexual desire, their capacity to conceive and procreate, and their sympathy. John Knox, author of "The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women," of course

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historically denied women's capacity to rule, and does so in Lochhead's play. In interview with Mary, Knox pragmatically claims he does not deny *her* rule, but rather Elizabeth's, explaining, "This blast was neither against you or your regiment, but against that bloody Jezebel o' England!" (21). Perhaps predictably, his claim here of tolerance towards Mary is undermined later when he proclaims of Mary: "She's only a silly spilte wee French lassie, Bothwell." To Bothwell's reply that Mary controls vast and humbling power--"Only a silly spilte wee French lassie wha could cowp the kirk and cut your heid aff, John Knox"⁹--Knox remains unperturbed:

KNOX She's only a queen.

BOTHWELL (*As they begin to exit*) And what's a queen?

KNOX Juist a silly, spilte, wee lassie. (34).

Knox is the only character in *Mary Queen of Scots* to reject so explicitly rule by women in general, and by Mary in particular, but others express similar, if less explicit and polemic, doubts about the compatibility of women and rule, or at least about the compatibility of any degree of femininity and rule. Queen Elizabeth, to offer an example of one woman's capacity to clype, claims not only to sublimate her femininity in order to practise effective command, but also to detest Mary Stuart for even attempting to exercise both sexuality and regency--"I hate her for trying to be a woman-queen!" says Elizabeth in an early draft of *Mary Queen of Scots* (Acc. 10176, no. 1, 36A). Act I, scene v, appropriately entitled "Repressed Loves," specifies that Elizabeth suppresses her sexual and romantic desire for Robert Dudley in order to maintain political control. Her desire for him is established in scene iii where, "*To herself, thinking of him,*" she calls, "Robert Dudley, my darling, my Lord Leicester... my love" (18). But by scene v, La Corbie observes: "in Englan' the Lass-Wha-Was-Born-To-Be-King/ Maun dowse her womanische nature" (23). The scene begins with Elizabeth in the throes of a nightmare about her mother's execution and about the threats of overthrow and assassination which marriage poses to her own rule. In the dream, the Fiddler, Elizabeth's stand-in, has been "'married" to one of the men, "*She turns round to kiss him, eyes shut, trusting. He steals her crown.*" Elizabeth "*wakes up with a cry,*" and tells her maid,

ELIZABETH I couldn't have married him, Marian...

MARIAN Well... no madam. Perhaps not.

⁹ The verb "to cowp" (also "coup") is, appropriately (given Lochhead's fondness for punning), redolent with meanings pertinent here. *The Pocket Scots Dictionary* offers these: upset, overturn, lay low, ruin, tilt up, empty by overturning, swallow, drink (quickly), over-balance, fall over, capsize, go bankrupt, bend, heel over, buy, trade (goods, horses), barter, and exchange.

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ELIZABETH I told him! I said, Leicester, if I married you and we lay down together as King and Queen, then we should wake as plain Mister and Mistress Dudley. The Nation would not have it. (24)

Lochhead's Elizabeth has accepted--unnecessarily, Marian suggests through her pause and equivocating language--the sexist logic rooting her era's theories of the queen's two bodies, theories which subordinate the material body to the ruling body, and the female body to the male body, hierarchizing a separation of "bodies" which is already, at least in one respect, arbitrary. "In this scene," writes Lochhead in an early draft, "we see how for ELIZABETH, when it's a choice between *power* and *love*, then power wins hands down every time" (Acc. 10176, no. 4, n.p.).¹⁰ In a recent article on contemporary British women's drama, Anne Varty remarks that "Elizabeth's personal decision to suppress an important aspect of herself is presented as necessary in a culture where women are not the 'natural' heirs to power" ("From Queens to Convicts" 72), and, as Lochhead emphasizes, where women's love and women's power are perceived to be mutually exclusive. Elizabeth savagely and hyperbolically re-enacts her era's sexist logic upon herself, not merely denying her affections and desires, but perversely rendering their fulfilment impossible by bestowing the very object of her desire on her rival, and masquerading herself as a site of androgynous self-sufficiency. When Marian counsels her, "Marry him secretly! In six months... a year... everyone will have forgotten she [Dudley's dead wife] ever lived," Elizabeth plays her trump card of repression: "Too late! I've told him I want him to marry Madam o'Scots" (24). "I'm sure she'll make him happy," Elizabeth claims, adding, "that'll shut all their mouths and we'll have a loyal Englishman--I think we may depend on him to remain a loyal Englishman--in her bed" (25). *Mary Queen of Scots* does show minor cracks in Elizabeth's resolve: "ELIZABETH *holds her defiance, then suddenly it crumbles, breaks, and she is sobbing in real abandonment and agony,*" allowing herself to be comforted by Marian. But soon she calms again and says,

No more. What shall it profit a woman if she can rule a whole kingdom but cannot quell her own rebellious heart. Robert, you are more dangerous to me than a thousand, thousand Northern Catholics poised and armed. I am not proud I love him--but I am proud that loving him, still I will not let him master me. (25)

In Elizabeth's perception, the anomaly of the female regent can--and will--be tolerated by herself and her people so long as she does not subordinate herself to another or to her own desires--to the "body natural." This, of course, effectively rules out marriage since she sees subordination as intrinsic to the woman's position in matrimony. She cannot be "mastered" if she remains master. Elizabeth's logic here necessitates her adoption of a somewhat androgynous persona through which she wields (and exploits)

¹⁰ This passage has been edited slightly for clarity.

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qualities associated with both the male and the female, a persona she shares with traditional representations--as well as more recent feminist representations--of her historical namesake. In "Shakespeare's Comic Heroines, Elizabeth I, and the Political Uses of Androgyny," Leah S. Marcus suggests some of the motivations behind the historical Elizabeth Tudor's styling, by herself and others, as androgyne: "Queen Elizabeth presented herself to the nation as both man and woman, queen and king, mother and firstborn son. Especially in years of political crisis and at the end of her reign, we can observe her building the myth of her own androgyny in order to palliate the political anxieties aroused by her presence as a 'frail' woman on the throne, by her perennial refusal to marry and beget children or even to name a successor" (137). Marcus emphasizes that Elizabeth's putative virginity formed a cornerstone in her iconography of androgyny: "As a virgin queen, Elizabeth I was anomalous, unprecedented in England. Her virginity exempted her from most of the recognized categories of female experience, allowing her to preserve her independence while simultaneously tapping into the emotional power behind the images of wife and mother through fictionalized versions of herself" (138).

In a rough parody of the strategies women must employ in order to secure and exercise any power in a culture with defined and limited ideas about appropriate gender behaviour, Lochhead's Elizabeth similarly masquerades as both "feminine" and "masculine," and exploits the advantages that each role furnishes her. At the play's beginning, Elizabeth demonstrates her adeptness at playing the feminine coquette, a role which allows her simultaneously to entice and to stave off her suitors. Receiving a proposal of marriage from King Philip of Spain, Elizabeth's immediate response is, "A *king!* We do not think we could marry a *king!*" But after consideration she flirts alliteratively, "On the other hand, Cecil, do contrive to keep the ambassador dangling. Do dandle the odd demi-promise, lest Philip o' Spain should try to get a nibble... elsewhere!" (13). Later, she demonstrates a more assured sexual address, in consultation with Henry Darnley whom she is conniving to set up with Mary. After divulging the information that she is considering allowing him to go to Scotland and being met with his surprise, Elizabeth cajoles,

Oh nonsense! You know how your Mama Lennox has been two--three years at wheedling at me. "Will I help her to restore your father and your sire to his rightful lands and estate in Scotland?"

(Foxy) What do you suppose your mother really wants? (29)

Elizabeth's masquerade of femininity has been developed cogently, and humorously, in productions of *Mary Queen of Scots*. Following precedent established

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with the play's first production by Communicado Theatre Company,¹¹ Elizabeth is often physically styled as a virtual parody of femininity, especially the clichéd femininity of the 1950s, notable for its exaggeration of the female silhouette--an exaggeration literalized in 1950s women's fashion--emphasizing at once femininity and artifice. In the Communicado production, as pictured on the cover of the Penguin edition of *Mary Queen of Scots* and in plates seven and eight in *Liz Lochhead's Voices*, Elizabeth sports a strapless ball gown, long gloves, and a beehive hairdo. This costume was reiterated in the 1994 Brunton Theatre Company production where, adding insult to injury, Elizabeth's costume was the sickly sweet colour of buttercup and her hair a brilliant, artificial red. Furthermore, in both productions, the hyper-femininity of Elizabeth's costume and character is emphasized through their contrast with Mary's less flamboyant costume: a more demure, long-sleeved dress, and long hair carefully bundled away in both of the productions.¹²

Leah Marcus argues that the historical Elizabeth I exploited for her own interests not only stereotypical meanings of femininity--coyness, purity, and so on--but also meanings of masculinity. *Mary Queen of Scots's* Elizabeth, likewise, masquerades as manly in order to reinforce her authority, primarily through demonstrating a raunchy self-confidence and a distinct irreverence towards cultural expectations of gender behaviour. In a wonderful display of hyperbolic androgyny, almost a bi-transvestism, Elizabeth enters in act I, scene vii under an accoutrement characteristically associated with women, a parasol, "*puffing on a clay pipe*" (36, and Crawford and Varty, plate 8). In the Brunton production, Elizabeth performed the same scene swilling from a pint of heavy and smoking a cigar.

Elizabeth's portrayal as androgyne in the script for *Mary Queen of Scots* and, popularly, in productions of the play, obviously has rich comic potential. But it is also laden with irony, delineating the roles Elizabeth is forced to play in her desperate bid for power, and querying the necessity and desirability of those roles. This is a reflection on women's exercise of power in the sixteenth century, but also, importantly, in the twentieth. In her article on Lochhead's "Scripts and Performances" in *Liz Lochhead's Voices*, Anne Varty has traced the play's perceptible reference to Britain's prime minister from 1979-1990, Margaret Thatcher:

Critics [of a Contact production in Manchester, 1991] also noted that "there is no handbag but author and actress clearly have Thatcher in mind" (Alan

¹¹ *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off* was first performed by Communicado Theatre Company at the Lyceum Studio Theatre, Edinburgh, on 10 August, 1987. The director was Gerard Mulgrew.

¹² See *Liz Lochhead's Voices'* plate seven for a photo of Anne Lacey as Mary in the Communicado production.

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Hulme, *Manchester Evening News*, 28 September 1991), picking up a quality of the characterisation which Lochhead admitted during composition, "she's somebody you love to hate, and so it was easy to compare her with the Thatcher monster" (*Time Out*, 16-23 September 1987). (163)

Despite its monstrosity, the queens' forced androgyny is not immediately reparable, the myth of appropriate gender behaviour proving too strong and predicating each queen's double role-playing or, in Mary's case, her search for a complementary Mr. Right. Mary voices the opinion that if only she and Elizabeth could wed, all would be resolved, "Indeed I wish that Elizabeth was a man and I would willingly marry her! And wouldn't that make an end of all debates!" (15). Elizabeth's and Mary's intimate connection and their equally powerful remove is theatricalized in *Mary Queen of Scots* by the fact *they* never "meet" but, obliquely, they share great intimacy as the actress who plays Mary also plays Marian, Elizabeth's maid, and Elizabeth's actress also plays Mary's maid Bessie. The Brunton production of *Mary Queen of Scots* offered a resonant enactment of what Michael G. Paulson has termed the anachronism of the two queens' encounter, an encounter which never, historically, occurred but which has subsequently fascinated playwrights as a profound dramatic possibility, what Paulson calls "perhaps one of history's greatest 'might-have-been's'" (218). Set in a gently collapsing fifties dance hall, with a parqueted dance floor flanked by bar tables, crumbling columns, and slouching curtains, the Brunton production featured what Alan Hulme found conspicuously absent in the Contact production: handbags. In the scene in which Mary bemoans the fact Elizabeth is not a man whom Mary could then marry, the two women took the dance floor, placed their handbags together on the floor, and danced, closely but without touching, around them.

The parody of Elizabeth's approach to rule--through celibacy, masochistic self-denial, and androgyny--is contextualized by Mary's approach, portrayed as more "true" to her feelings but no more--and perhaps even less--successful than Elizabeth's. Despite the apparent solemnity of Mary's behaviour when compared with Elizabeth's campiness, Lochhead has emphasized in interview with Emily B. Todd that both characters are the object of her ironic scrutiny: "You know, [Elizabeth is] a sort of bad pantomime queen. She had a lot of vigour and fun. I wasn't trying to send her up any more than Mary" (95). While Elizabeth brutally sublimates her sexuality, Mary gives hers what Elizabeth sees as a naively free reign. Mary is, for instance, easily seduced into the romantic Darnley-trap constructed by Elizabeth. "Then the measles!" observes Elizabeth cynically,

What a stroke of luck, poor Darnley all flushed and fevered, and Queen Mary playing nursemaid, brought out her tender feelings, most affecting... And now they are to be married. All it took was for me to *expressly* forbid it and he was irresistible. Which should keep her busy at home sorting out the snarls and

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quarrels that lad'll cause among her nobility! Too busy to indulge in any mischief among *my* disenchanted Catholics... (36)

And Mary pays for her naiveté. A silver ryal is produced which displaces her to a position secondary to Henry: "The damnable cheek of it," says Mary, "*Henricus* et Maria, Deo Gratia Rex et Regina Scotorum! Wrang order" (40). And just as Elizabeth predicted, Henry does cause trouble which diverts Mary's attention from important matters of state. Described by La Corbie as "Yin big bairn" (44), Henry develops a fierce jealousy of Mary's secretary Riccio, her "maist special servant" (56), and connives with various Scotsmen to murder him, violently undermining Mary's authority.

Mary's infatuation with Henry, thus, proves a political miscalculation, ending with his assassination in a bomb blast at Kirk o' Field. This event, however, is theatrically linked with the consummation of an affair between Mary and Bothwell, so that Mary's fortuitous delivery from the political fiasco of her marriage is immediately, inextricably, and unfortunately (for her) associated with adultery. Again, Mary's romantic and sexual desire is readable, and is indeed read by her people, as necessitating her political downfall, if not indeed her execution. "*As smoke clears [from the bomb blast] everyone else but MARY and BOTHWELL, who are still writhing in love-making on the floor, begins the accusatory chant,*" potently sexual, pejorative, and reminiscent of accusations of witchcraft, "Burn the hoor! Burn the hoor! Burn the hoor!" (60). The theatrical hyperbole of this scene draws the audience's attention to History's hyperbolic exaggeration of Mary's sexual appetite and lack of restraint. For Ilona Koren-Deutsch, "*Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off* represents neither Mary's nor Elizabeth's sexuality in traditional, pre-defined terms." She argues:

Mary is not promiscuous; neither is Elizabeth a virgin. Lochhead also does not place a moral value on each woman's sexual choices. Instead she provides the audience with the opportunities to judge, or not judge, each woman's behavior. (431)

Neither Elizabeth's androgynous approach to rule nor Mary's approach, in which she tries to follow her sexual and romantic desires, standing by the slogan, "I will marry wha I can love!" (23), proves entirely successful in *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off*. Mary does, precisely, get her head chopped off. And Elizabeth--loath, in one respect, to command Mary's execution because she realizes her command to execute a queen undermines the entire institution of female regency--is eventually left with no other viable political option. For Elizabeth, it is not simply the co-existence of the queen's two bodies which, she concludes, is impossible, but the co-existence of two queens; in La Corbie's words, "*twa queens* on the wan green island" (12). Elizabeth ultimately maintains authority, but with only one route through which to exercise it--a route which calls for the beheading of her cousin, fellow queen, and metaphoric sister, Mary--even this authority smarts of impotence. *Mary Queen of Scots* thus examines the

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pervasive cultural restraints on women's exercise of political power, not to propose--altruistically and/or didactically--a remedy to these restraints, but to explore their multiple and sometimes disturbing sources (in men *and* women) and their multiple effects.

Scotland, the Stuart Myth, and the Myth of Mary Stuart

A people who lose their nationality create a legend to take its place.

--Edwin Muir, 1936, quoted in Pittock,
The Invention of Scotland, 1

In the mid- to late-sixteenth century, Scotland was negotiating not only the palpable effects of the Protestant Reformation and the uncomfortable novelty of being ruled by a queen, but also a distinct and compelling possibility that the Stuart line might succeed to the throne of England. The eventual Stuart succession and the resulting Union of the Crowns has unquestionably had profound repercussions on Scottish national identity, Scottish cultural and political determinacy, and particularly Scotland's relationship with England. *Mary Queen of Scots*'s focus on the period just before the Union of the Crowns offers a germane vantage point from which to consider the nature of these repercussions.

Rather than vaulting into a position of considerable status with its monarchic union with England, Scotland is seen by many as subsiding into virtual impotence in an assumption by England, an assumption which may have been gradual, but was confirmed by the union of the English and Scottish parliaments at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Pursuing this line of argument, the Union of the Crowns cemented Scotland's subordination to England by removing many of the features by which Scotland articulated its national difference: a resident sovereign, a court based in Scotland, and a monarchy, history, and culture distinct from, if related to, England's. In the epigraph to this section, Edwin Muir suggests that a people suffering the loss of national identity fill that loss with a legend. And for historian Murray Pittock, this legend in Scotland is the Stuart myth.

According to Pittock, for many Scots the Stuarts are "sacred monarchs of folkloric tradition" (5). This Stuart legacy results partly from the ways the Stuarts mythologized and propagandized themselves during their reigns, as heirs to Arthur and even Christ (Pittock 3-4 and Goldberg), and partly from the ways they have been mythologized subsequently. Their ultimate loss of rule may have done less to devalue the Stuarts, suggests Pittock, than to reinforce their mythic stature--their exile and ever-anticipated return mimicking nicely a trope of death and resurrection (Pittock 3). Pittock writes eloquently: "[T]he loss of the Stuarts was more than a dynastic upheaval: it was the occasion for lasting constitutional change, and the submergence or loss of national identities. Their loss was also accompanied by the sense, true or false, that an older antiquarian, sacred, and mythic set of values had gone forever" (5).

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Whatever the precise reasons for the Stuarts' significance--their embodiment of the union of Scotland and England and of both Catholicism and Protestantism, their mythic portrayal as sacred, their (still, in some quarters, contested) displacement from rule--they are, says Pittock, irrevocably vested with significance for Scotland. "From early times," he contests, "the Stuart myth claimed to be a pan-Scottish myth, an account of the nature of Scotland's royal and cultural identities" (Pittock 164). Moreover, because the Stuarts reigned in the century spanning the union of the Scottish and English crowns and parliaments, and because the end of the Stuart dynasty is so intricately connected to the end of Scottish independence, the Stuarts are inextricably linked to the very notion of Scottish independence. To examine the Stuarts, thus, is to examine a crucial locus of Scotland's perceptions of its own identity, and its vested interests in locating that identity in the Stuarts.

It is, of course, significant, that Lochhead focuses not merely on the Stuarts in general in *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off*, but more precisely on one of the dynasty's most prominent female figures: Mary Stuart. As the Scottish queen executed by the English crown, Mary operates culturally as a succinct emblem of Scottish heroism, English abuse, and the Stuart--and by extension Scottish--fate. This is an emblem taken to task in *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off*, where Mary is certainly fallible, and her fate is at least partially of her own making. It is also a gendered emblem, and has thus accrued gendered meanings in its use, meanings which again do not escape scrutiny in Lochhead's play.¹³ Many writers of history seem unable to resist positioning Mary in terms of her reported, or construed, appearance rather than in terms of her political practice. "[Charles I] was not alone among his dynasty in being described in terms of paradoxical extremes," offers Pittock. "James VI and I is famously known as 'the wisest fool in Christendom'; Mary of Scots, Charles's grandmother, is judged controversially by posterity as by her contemporaries: was she foolish murderess or wronged beauty?" (7-8). Even more bluntly, Paulson writes:

One important detail [about Mary] is her appearance. Contemporary friend or foe, all admit that Mary was strikingly beautiful. If not, following the logic of Knox and her other enemies, how else could she have captivated so many men and led them to their ruin? François the dauphin, Châtelard, Rizzio, Darnley, Bothwell, George Douglas, Norfolk, Babington, just to name a few, fell under her spell, a spell perpetuated in the literature from her own day to the works of the present age. (39)

And a spell perhaps reified by sensationalist portraits like Paulson's.

¹³ Mary is also, of course, notably Catholic, a fact which further problematizes her pan-Scottishness.

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Scotland and Scottishness are declared the ironic emphasis of *Mary Queen of Scots* directly from the play's opening. Scene one is entitled "Scotland, Whit Like?", "whit like" being a common Scottish phrase meaning "what is its nature," but suggesting also a certain tone of irony or rhetorical questioning through the ellipsis of any verb, and in this case undercutting "Scotland" with a clipping interrogative tone. "Alone, FIDDLER *charges up the space with eldritch tune, wild and sad, then goes*" (11).¹⁴ The instrument and the music the Fiddler plays may be traditional, and specifically Celtic, again referring explicitly to common, and somewhat romantic, emblems of Scottish mythic identity. But while that identity is summoned, it is also treated ironically, acknowledging it is vested with mythic meaning, but simultaneously disallowing it from carrying only romantic connotations. In productions of *Mary Queen of Scots*, the Fiddler, like all the other characters, typically wears a costume which is by no means "historical," or solemn, but rather campy and emphatically irreverent towards history. Contextualized by costume, set, and the ensuing historically referent but anti-historical action, the Fiddler's music at the play's opening is dialogic, not merely a dirge to the tragedy of Scotland's past but an ironic gloss on tragic, or indeed defeatist, attitudes to that past.

Introduced by the irony of the scene's title and the Fiddler's music, La Corbie enters, described in the play's published version as "*An interesting, ragged ambiguous creature in her cold spotlight*" (11), and perhaps more feistily in a draft version of the play as "*A rag-feathered, black-eyed, gimlet-sharp creature, almost as big as Mary Queen of Scots herself, head a terrifying piker-out of lamb's eyes, no cute panto talking creature this*" (Acc. 10176, no. 2, p. 14).¹⁵ Significantly, La Corbie is female, ragged, ambiguous, terrifying, not cute. In other words, she resists easy audience consumption as heroic, romantic, or simply endearing, whether she is taken broadly as a mascot of Scottish identity or more simply as the choral narrator of this romp through Scottish history. She offers the audience an exuberant but precisely--politically, critically--engaging way into the play.

Her first task is to respond to her own question, "Country: Scotland. Whit like is it?" which she does with a litany of possibilities:

It's a peatbog, it's a daurk forest.

It's a cauldron o' lye, a saltpan or a coal mine.

If you're gey lucky it's a bricht bere meadow or a park o' kye.

Or mibbe... it's a field o' stanes.

¹⁴ *The Pocket Scots Dictionary* offers these meanings for "eldritch": "of or like elves, etc.," and "weird, ghostly, strange, unearthly."

¹⁵ To pike has various resonant meanings in this context. *The Pocket Scots Dictionary* offers these among others: "steal, pilfer," "make thin, reduce to skin and bone," and "nibble, pick (at food)."

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It's a tenement or a merchant's ha'.

It's a hure hoose or a humble cot. Princes Street or Paddy's Merkit.

It's a fistfu' o' fish or a pickle o' oatmeal.

It's a queen's banquet o' roast meats and junketts.

It depends. It depends... (11)

What La Corbie enumerates in the first lines of the play are the vast ranges of possible lived experiences in Scotland, especially the differences made by wealth, or poverty. With this emphasis on difference, and specifically class difference, in Scotland, La Corbie immediately places in relief the impossibility, even undesirability, of finding a single, neatly resolving response to her question, "Scotland. Whit like is it?" She implicitly interrogates claims like the one Pittock makes for the Stuart myth, that there is any such thing as "a pan-Scottish myth" (Pittock 164), thereby problematizing the audience's relationship with myths of Scottishness, with the play itself, and especially with myths of Queen Mary, a figure who is otherwise sometimes accorded pan-Scottish significance.

Concluding that there is no solitary, universal meaning for Scotland, La Corbie concedes, "Ah dinna ken whit like *your* Scotland is," and offers a description of her own.

Here's mines.

National flower: the thistle.

National pastime: nostalgia.

National weather: smirr, haar, drizzle, snow.

National bird: the crow, the corbie, le corbeau, moi!

How me? Eh? Eh? Eh? Voice like a choked laugh. Ragbag o' a burd in ma black duds, a' angles and elbows and broken oxter feathers, black beady een in ma executioner's hood. No braw, but Ah think Ah ha'e a sort of black glamour.

Do I no put ye in mind of a skating minister, or, on the other fit, the parish priest, the dirty beast?

My nest's a rickle o' sticks.

I live on lamb's eyes and road accidents.

Oh, see, after the battle, after the battle, man, it's a pure feast--ma eyes are ower big even for *my* belly, in lean years o' peace, my belly thinks my throat's been cut. (11-12)

Delineating her Scotland in a series of emblems she claims as vessels of national meaning, La Corbie explicitly invites the play's audience to consider Scottish national identity in terms of its "symbols" and their characteristic meanings. Significantly, of course, La Corbie does not necessarily offer "characteristic meanings" in her sketch of a Scottish coat of arms.

Some prevalent Scottish myths to which La Corbie refers--but which she does not specifically resurrect--are those which cultural critics repeatedly identify as hegemonic in

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Scottish cultural discourse: the discourse of tartanry, of rough and ready bravery, against the elements and against rival clans; and the discourse of kailyard, of domestic wholesomeness and stoicism in the face of poverty. For Tom Nairn, writing in the mid 1970s, these hegemonic discourses are regrettably negative, enforcing a Scottish cultural position of defeat.¹⁶ Colin McArthur, in a 1981-1982 article entitled "Breaking the Signs," echoed Nairn's position, arguing, "Clearly the traditions of Kailyard and Tartanry have to be exposed and deconstructed, and more politically progressive representations constructed, circulated and discussed" (25, cited in McCrone 167). For sociologist David McCrone, writing in 1989, Nairn's analysis, and *its* subsequent hegemony, simply reinforce these "defeatist" discourses, becoming "a dominant discourse which itself has to be examined critically" (161). McCrone explains, "[A]pplying Tartanry/Kailyard as the essentials of our national culture, albeit negative ones, is to simplify and freeze them. This process will also predispose us to look for what we have lost, to reduce culture to a series of tragic failures--in which Scotland is not lacking--the 'Ally McLeod syndrome', with its devastating combination of 'if only' and 'we wuz robbed'" (170). McCrone's conclusion is that the most detrimental myth is that which suggests it is possible to define a culture conclusively, and thus to limit it, through myths or by any other means.

La Corbie invokes certain recognizable myths of Scottish identity but, by skewing them and absurdly accumulating them, she problematizes them, interrogating their currency. For instance, in the speech quoted above, she suggests the favourite Scottish national pastime is not acting heroically, as the Scottish discourse of tartanry might imply, but being nostalgic, or, passively celebrating heroic acts. For La Corbie, Scottish weather is neither bonny or brave, as the kailyard tradition might have it, but rather mundane. And the national bird is neither heroic or stoic, but a gawky and greedy scavenger. If La Corbie does invoke one prevalent cultural discourse, of dismal defeatism, she does so with a repetition and an accumulation which suggest a self-conscious over-articulation and an implicit critique of that discourse. In her entry on Lochhead in *Contemporary Dramatists*, Adrienne Scullion observes that, "Scottish theatre writing is often criticised for its essential nostalgia and preoccupation with the nation's history, and certainly *Mary Queen of Scots* is a play about a privileged moment in Scotland's political development. Typically of Lochhead, however, the play energises the discourse of nostalgia through the use of rhymes and games" ("Liz Lochhead" 395) and, I would add, through drawing attention, as here, specifically to the role and function of nostalgia, its construction of a past for the purpose of celebration in the present. La Corbie's irony specifically interdicts naive, beatific celebration of the past, or the present, but encourages instead a bold, playful approach to understanding and representing historical and cultural identity.

¹⁶ In Nairn's 1977 collection of essays, *The Break-up of Britain*, see especially chapter three, "Old and New Scottish Nationalism" (126-195).

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Scullion observes further that Lochhead "mixes the introspection of much of Scottish culture with a desire to develop a new set of images and a new system of metaphors for the depiction of domestic and psychological drama," ("Liz Lochhead" 395) and, I would again add, for the depiction of Scotland.

La Corbie is the richest re-vamped metaphor for Scotland offered in *Mary Queen of Scots*, personifying--or, more precisely, crowifying--Scotland's ironies, in the speech quoted above and throughout the play: its vast differences of wealth; its two strong, and strongly opposed, religions; and its vampiric relationship with its own history, thriving ironically on the blood and tragedy of its own defeats, and growing metaphorically emaciated when there are no defeats to mourn or, precisely, to celebrate as tragic. La Corbie is at once a familiar or comforting--even empowering--figure of Scottish identity, and a disturbing one. The Strathclyde Theatre Group, which produced *Mary Queen of Scots* in the autumn of 1993, points out in its programme that although "La Corbie is a familiar figure from the Scottish folk ballad tradition," she is not solely, and safely, confined to the past, "she moves between the Scotland of the sixteenth and twentieth centuries."¹⁷ This understanding of La Corbie as diachronic is corroborated by Lochhead: "La Corbie is an immortal, a 'spirit of Scotland', a then-and-now sardonic, beady-eyed chorus figure in the form of a talking crow" ("Rough Magic"). Through her diachronism, La Corbie's meanings are not relegated strictly to a removed time and place where they can be worshipped but can effect no change. She is a living metaphor, changing meaning, bearing continuing significance, bearing change and effecting change. As the Strathclyde Theatre Group's programme claims, "She sets the agenda" and may be seen as "the voice of Scotland itself," but her agenda is precisely to interrogate what Scotland is, what Scottish history is, and whether Scotland might have many, polyphonic voices and myths rather than a solitary, monologic voice and mythology.

Having elaborated on some of the internal differences which make Scotland resist simplistic, or even coherent, story-telling, and having offered herself--provocatively equivocally--as a new-ish site of polyvocal Scottish meaning, La Corbie goes on to place Scotland in a relationship with England, a passage worth quoting in its entirety:

(With both Queens by the hand, parading them) Once upon a time there were *twa queens* on the wan green island, and the wan green island was split inty twa kingdoms. But no equal kingdoms, naebody in their richt mind would insist on that. For the northern kingdom was cauld and sma'. And the people were low-statured and ignorant and feart o' their lords and poor! They were starvin'. And their queen was beautiful and tall and fair and... Frenchified. The other kingdom in the island was large, and prosperous, with wheat and barley and fat kye in the fields o' her yeoman farmers, and wool in her looms,

¹⁷ This quotation has been edited slightly for clarity.

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and beer in her barrels and, at the mouth of her greatest river, a great port, a glistening city that sucked all wealth to its centre which was a palace and a court of a queen. She was a cousin, a clever cousin a wee bit aulder, and mibbe no sae braw as the other queen, but a queen nevertheless. Queen o' a country wi' an army, an' a navy and dominion over many lands. (12)

La Corbie depicts the Scottish-English relationship with self-conscious simplicity: she begins with the archetypal fairy tale opening, "Once upon a time,"¹⁸ and goes on to describe the two countries in a series of short, storybook-style juxtapositions. La Corbie's emphatic self-appointment as fabulist and her description's declamatory style draw attention to this passage's manifest depiction--precisely not mimetic reflection--of history. In this passage, La Corbie draws attention to history as narrative, story, as much fiction as reality.

The polemics of La Corbie's story--painting a depressed, impoverished, kailyard-reminiscent picture of Scotland, and a teeming, wealthy portrait of England--are thus allowed to stand but are nevertheless intrinsically problematized. "That is what [irony] attempts to do," Lochhead has commented in interview,

to subvert from within. It relates to my attraction to cliché, which you cannot use without acknowledging it to be a cliché. You enter into a relationship with the reader whereby you have the reader join in the game with you, to complete the acknowledgement. ("Knucklebones" 216)

La Corbie's story situates Scotland as subordinate to a rich England, and particularly to England's thriving metropolis, London. Implicitly, Scotland, is one of the "many lands" over which England enjoys dominion. And this national colonial position is one which Lochhead intends to emphasize in the play, particularly for its parallels with the culturally prevalent subordination of women to men:

I guess I would say that the big split in Scotland is between self and other self. In many ways I think that the big theme in Scottish literature is the split, from *Justified Sinner* to *Jekyll and Hyde*, and I think that's natural if you're Scottish where you are half English, really. There's a bit of you who's internalised all of that, so you're English, but you're Scots. So two different halves of you talk to each other which is very similar to the states of the male and the feminine.

¹⁸ In "Rough Magic," Lochhead credits Gerry Mulgrew, Communicado Theatre Company's "founder member, man of many mad ideas, and Artistic Director," with "constantly reminding [her] that the most complicated conspiratorial histories can be broken down to the fairy story 'once upon a time'." Lochhead consequently breaks her story down in such a way, but she also draws critical attention to her narrative strategies, and thus to her narrativizing, or story making, of history.

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The Scot is in some ways in the position of being the feminine with regard to Britain. (Lochhead *Verse* 90)¹⁹

In an article entitled "Women's Writing and the Millennium," Lochhead places her argument in the context of Scottish writing:

. . . I don't doubt that the traditional heavy industries of the central belt led to an excessive gender-differentiation of roles. Nor that in the land of the split personality, the home of the creators of *Confessions of a Justified Sinner* and *Jekyll and Hyde* (mythmakers more than novelists in these works) the male psyche is going to fear the disintegration threatened by admitting further splits. If Scottish male writers could do more than dimly sense themselves as regarded as "The Second nation," the "Shadow," the other, the outsider, the eccentric, the *anima*, almost (at least from the point of view of the dominant London centre-of-the-empire literary establishment) then one might hope for sympathy for the female position. (74)

Mary Queen of Scots thus proposes that Scotland is subordinate to England, a proposition which is useful because it facilitates analysis of Scotland's and England's colonial/imperial relationship and reinforces the play's general focus on hierarchies of power, through gender, religion, and so on. However, the play makes the proposition that Scotland is subordinate to England with enough irony to interrogate that assumption, as Lochhead has said, "to subvert from within," to suggest this myth of subordination may be more detrimental than helpful, more disabling than enabling, to suggest it is in any case not an intractable verity but a myth upon which the audience is invited both to register its agreement or disagreement and to act. The play thus evokes dominant and strongly familiar myths of Scotland--the Stuart myth, myths of tartanry and kailyard--but pulls the tartan rug out from under them, their entrenchment, and the inevitability of their perpetuation.

Finally, *Mary Queen of Scots* engages boldly with the myth of Mary Stuart. In *Mary Queen of Scots in Nineteenth and Twentieth-Century Drama: Poetic License with History* (a volume from which Lochhead's play is conspicuously absent), Pearl Brandwein concludes that fictional works on Mary Stuart "are dominated by her heroism and fierce independence, her quest for justice and compassion fuelled by emotional desire, as well as her indomitable spirit in the face of endless personal trauma coupled with political miscalculations" (xi). But Brandwein points out that some fictional works hold a dissenting view of Mary, portraying her not as hero but as villain. For instance, Brandwein writes that in Gordon Bottomley's 1935 play *The White Widow*,

¹⁹ The novels to which Lochhead refers are, of course, James Hogg's *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* and R.L. Stevenson's *Strange Case of Doctor Jekyll and Mr Hyde*.

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Mary is portrayed as an evil woman whose reign was marked by bloodshed and rebellion. As a Scottish nationalist, Bottomley's use of history not only sustains his own prejudiced views of the *dramatis personae* but also voices Scottish popular opinion concerning the tragedy of Mary Stuart. Her political leadership ruined Scotland, according to him, therefore, she deserved her tragic *dénouement*. (239)

Brandwein does not reveal the source of her privileged access to Scottish popular opinion, but elements of her generalizations are duplicated by Ian Cowan in *The Enigma of Mary Stuart*. Cowan predicts the endurance of Mary's "dual legend," in which she is alternately aggrandized as "innocent martyr," a hero of Scottish history, and diminished as "adulterous murderess," a scapegoat for all of Scotland's perceived subsequent problems (Cowan 12 and 34).

Lochhead's *Mary Queen of Scots* offers a portrait of Mary which obviously refers to prevalent cultural constructions of her--as wronged beauty or adulterous murderess (Cowan). But the play simultaneously interrogates assumptions about her, particularly by demonstrating how meaning is *read into* her rather than being somehow indelibly vested in her. For instance, in a scene entitled "Mary Queen of Scots's Progress and John Knox's Shame," a "*wee poor Scottish beggar lass*," Mairn (played by Mary's actor), is castigated for being cheeky by John Knox. Suddenly, Mairn metamorphoses into a Mary described in the stage directions as "*suddenly straight and tall, totally MARY in our eyes*" (33). It is a description which suggests dignity and resolve, not the inveigling licentiousness implied by Knox's address to Mary, quoted above but worth repeating:

Ah'll tan yir arse fur ye ya wee hoor o' Babylon. Lukk at ye! Wi' yir lang hair lik' a flag in the wind an advertisement o' lust tae honest men an' they big roon een lik' a dumb animal, slinkan alang the road wi' yir hurdies hingin' oot yir sark an' yon smell aff ye, ya durty wee fork-arsed bitch ye. (33)

Knox reads Mary as salacious and evil because such a reading conforms to his narrative in which she is fatally misguided, and misguiding for his Scottish flock. But the obvious differences between his characterization of Mary and her physical portrayal during this speech highlight for the play's audience the subjective story-telling of his reading.

Earlier in the same scene, Leezie and Mairn respond to, and thereby also construct, Mary. "Mary Queen of Scots's Progress and John Knox's Shame" begins with this stage direction:

In a procession the Queen is passing but instead of seeing her we see the crowd who are watching, cheering hurrah! and waving bits of rag. MARY is now MAIRN, a wee poor Scottish beggar lass; ELIZABETH is LEEZIE, her tarty wee companion. They are just wee girls of thirteen or so, in love with royalty and splendour. The whole set of Brueghel grotesques is cheering. (32)

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Historian Michael Lynch argues that the historical Mary Stuart deftly manipulated the cult of monarchy to win her favour. For Lynch, "the high point of Mary's personal reign, both in terms of the unanimity engineered amongst her nobles and their expectations of the future, was. . . the month the court spent at Stirling between December 1566 and January 1567," a month spent celebrating, with many masques and much festivity, the baptism of Mary's son James, celebrating, in other words, the very institution of the monarchy ("Queen Mary's Triumph" 21).²⁰ But a cult of monarchy's strength should perhaps be considered as much a product of that monarchy's reading by its subjects as of its writing by the monarch.

In the stage directions quoted above, *Mary Queen of Scots* focuses precisely not on the queen but on her subjects' response to and reading of her, their worship of the monarch, a worship which at the very least contributes to the monarch's meaning, if it does not entirely construct that meaning. Notably, Leezie and Mairn respond mostly to what I identified above as one of historians' favourite subjects regarding Mary, her appearance:

MAIRN The Queen! The Queen! She's comin'.

LEEZIE Aw, she's beautiful, eh, Mairn?

MAIRN Lovely.

LEEZIE Mind you, we'd be braw in braw claes...

MAIRN Ah don't think Ah could lukk lik' the Queen, Leezie...

LEEZIE Aye ye could, if yer froack wis French velvet, wi' a siller-lace collar.

(32)

Mary's beauty is not something the audience observes but is told. Her very existence is constructed, in its very absence, in this scene, emphasizing the degree to which mythic meaning may be seen as not innate but inscribed--here to give these girls something to aspire to, to admire, with which to compare themselves favourably. Furthermore, this scene may be played with the actors facing and/or directly addressing the audience, as though Mary is proceeding through, or is in, the audience. Such a staging, as in the play's final scene, would stress particularly the ways the audience creates Mary's meaning, bringing responsibility for history's legacies, our readings of the past, into the present.

²⁰ Elsewhere, Lynch elaborates: "The baptism at Stirling of the son of Mary Queen of Scots in December 1566 was the occasion for a full-scale Renaissance triumph, the first ever staged in Britain, which combined spectacle, the literature of four languages--Latin, French, Italian, and Scots--and the arts of war to convey the message that only the Stewart dynasty could bring peace to a troubled land" ("The Age of Renaissance and Reformation" 31).

Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off

Story-Telling: "Make Up Your Past"

And there's no point being Scottish if you can't make up your past as you go along.

Everyone else does.

--from A.L. Kennedy's "The Role of Notable
Silences in Scottish History," 64

The subversive laughter of the musichall appeals to me a great deal.

The trouble is that the folksy in this culture can become cosy and self-congratulatory:
hand-knitted instead of subversive.

--Liz Lochhead, *Knucklebones of Irony*, 221

In this section's first epigraph, the narrator of A. L. Kennedy's short story "The Role of Notable Silences in Scottish History" argues her right to reclaim and reform her history--and particularly Scottish history--according to her changing and contingent needs. Defending her claim to indulge this liberty, the narrator states simply, "Everyone else does." However, the simplicity of this statement is deceptive: the three words are as much a defence of the narrator's actions as a denouncement of the same actions when performed by "everyone else." What is on one level a defence of Scots's right to define their history is also a subversive criticism of others' opportunistic practice of historical self-adaptation, and, perhaps more caustically, a criticism of others' imperialist presumption to define, not their own histories, but Scottish history.

What Kennedy's passage articulates is partially what Lochhead argues for in the quotation from *Knucklebones of Irony* which provides this section's second epigraph. Using a redolent metaphor for unsophisticated, simplistic, "cosy and self-congratulatory" woolliness in cultural self-representation, "hand-knitted," Lochhead petitions for such representation to be embedded with sharpened knitting needles, Kennedy's causticity, the power to subvert. Taken together, Kennedy's narrator and Lochhead herself advocate Scots's active rewriting of Scottish history, rewriting that is wilfully confrontational and challenging to "received wisdom."

The subject of *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off* is, in many respects, familiar Scottish history. But it is the play's project to intervene--wilfully, in confrontation--in canonical representations of history, to defamiliarize the familiar, and to provoke audiences to recognize yet refuse to receive so-called received wisdom. Instead of treating history as it is so often treated--as a revered, privileged, and non-negotiable site of cultural identity and meaning--*Mary Queen of Scots* treats history as play, carnival, performance, the domain not so much of real people, places and events, but of characters and adaptable plot. The play uses histrionics--renegade, playful, overtly performative

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performance which shows its sutures and is not seamlessly and cosily hand-knitted--to draw its audience's awareness to the notion that its meaning, and by extension all history, is made meaning. As McDonald and I suggest in our article in *Liz Lochhead's Voices*, "Stressing the performance of *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off* precisely as a performative and therefore an interpretative act, the play emphasises that representation does not neutrally reflect, but actively interprets" (139). In this respect, *Mary Queen of Scots* shares crucial features with much contemporary "historical" drama as delineated by Paul Hernadi in *Interpreting Events: Tragicomedies of History on the Modern Stage*. *Mary Queen of Scots*, like many of the plays discussed by Hernadi, is not simply "an interpretation of events"--however different and thus potentially emancipating from formerly dominant interpretations that interpretation may be--it is also "an event of interpretation," flaunting not only its own, barbed interpretation, but the interpretative function of all history-making (Hernadi 10).

Play

Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off draws its audience's attention to the constructed basis of history primarily by emphasizing its own performance, by being (to adapt a phrase of Hernadi's) "conspicuously fictional" (10). It achieves this effect of "performativeness" using two main, and interconnected, techniques: foregrounding literal play (children's play, game playing, theatrical performance) and its power; and emphasizing its own play by being hyper-theatrical and self-referential in that theatricality.

Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off is conspicuously riddled with play, and by no means gratuitously. The piece begins with La Corbie framing Scottish history in a style familiar from children's story-telling (beginning "Once upon a time. . ." [12]), but marked nevertheless with adult ironies--about Scotland's subordinate position to England, the relative beauty of the two lands' queens, and so on. The play ends in a playground with children ridiculing one another with a verve which might suggest objects of ridicule were randomly selected were the reasons for ridicule, especially sexism and sectarianism, not so precise and explicit. Both scenes feature play (as do many other scenes throughout the action), so that *Mary Queen of Scots* itself is framed as play, as a space which permits the playful taking of license--with the handling of facts, for instance--but emphasizes nevertheless the potentially serious effects of taking such license. Importantly, although the play marks itself as play, it does not present itself as trivial or dismissible; and nor does it take playing with history entirely lightly. The political implications of La Corbie's depiction of the "wan green island," and the abuses of the children's play emphasize that although history may be play, play may be dangerous. Thus, *Mary Queen of Scots* boldly and humourously dethrones History, but implicitly warns that although such play with history may be--even should be--irreverent, it should not be irresponsible, but rather politically engaged.

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This type of play which challenges authority--debunking its subject and demonstrating that no history is infallible--but is at the same time somewhat sardonic--humourously but effectively demanding serious engagement--permeates *Mary Queen of Scots*. La Corbie herself initiates and sustains throughout the action a tone of slightly devilish play. Her first entrance is described, "*Enter into the ring, whip in hand, our 'chorus,' LA CORBIE*" (11). The "ring" refers to the circus-like setting devised for the first production of *Mary Queen of Scots*, and the whip, to La Corbie's role as ring master. The play is expressly performance, directed on-stage by La Corbie. And the actors are expressly performers--they are referred to in stage directions as "THE ANIMALS" who, on their first group entrance, "*circle, snarling, smiling, posing*" (12). The circus setting establishes a mood of revelry and a forum for cultural celebration. But, as suggested in Mikhail Bakhtin's emphasis on the ambivalence of carnival, this setting establishes also a forum for cultural resistance--emblemized in the characters' snarling and La Corbie's rough justice-dealing whip. And through La Corbie, "*our 'chorus,'*" the audience is drawn into both these aspects of carnival: complicitous celebration of, and jesting resistance to, among other things, history.

In his most extensive study of carnival, *Rabelais and His World*, Bakhtin characterizes "carnival laughter" as "regenerating ambivalence" (21). He stresses that "folk humor is ambivalent" because, although "folk humor denies" (through mockery and derision), "it revives and renews at the same time" (12). It is thus, ambivalently, both destructive and regenerative, a point which distinguishes it, crucially for Bakhtin, from "the negative and formal parody" and "pure satire of modern times," both of which, Bakhtin infers, are unambivalently negative (11, 12).

Bakhtin emphasizes that humour and carnival must not be analyzed ahistorically; his focus is Renaissance literary humour, and, arguably, his conclusions are primarily relevant to humour and carnival of that literary period. Bearing in mind Bakhtin's caution against ahistoricism, his characterization of carnival humour as "regenerating ambivalence" seems nevertheless usefully applicable in analysis of the humour in *Mary Queen of Scots*. In the play, humour--towards, for instance, Scotland's many positions (social, economic, even sexual) in relation to England--is scathingly critical, and therefore potentially destructive, but also feistily challenging, and therefore potentially renewing. The play's mood, choreographed skilfully by La Corbie, is critical but not cynical; change is not only desirable but, politically progressively, possible.

Bakhtin usefully highlights one point about the ambivalence of both carnival and folk humour; I want to emphasize another. Folk humour and carnival may be, as Bakhtin argued, anti-authoritarian, being "opposed to the official feast. . . celebrat[ing] temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order. . . [and] mark[ing] the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms and prohibitions" (10). But it must

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also--in the sense hinted at in Bakhtin's qualified "*temporary liberation*"²¹--coexist with authority. Concomitantly, it may even reinforce authority, simply by referring to it, and so authoring it, and so authorizing it. This aspect of carnival's ambivalence does not completely undermine its political alterity; rather, by referring to rather than ignoring or destroying an object of authority, carnival preserves its political referents, and preserves its political relevance.

To demonstrate the carnival aspects of Lochhead's treatment of Mary Stuart and Elizabeth Tudor, *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off* bears useful comparison with Friedrich von Schiller's classic tragedy *Mary Stuart* (1800) and with Robert Bolt's more recent play *Vivat! Vivat Regina!*, first published in 1971. Where Bolt ends his examination of the life and death of Mary Queen of Scots with the same "moment"--Mary's execution--which Lochhead chooses and which Schiller locates very close to the end, followed only by scenes which demonstrate Elizabeth's troubled response to Mary's execution, the three playwrights handle the scene quite differently, consummating at least two very different relationships with history. Bolt's play, like Lochhead's and unlike Schiller's, often interrogates history, resisting presenting it as an entirely seamless truth. For instance, in Knox's Monstrous Regiment speech in Bolt's play, Knox frequently interrupts his own "*formal academic manner*," to explain, among other things,

Er, this is my First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women. Yes, I John Knox that am the Father of the Kirk and spake with Calvin as a friend, regard myself as naething mair than a wee trumpet in the hands of the Almighty... And if that's not humility, I'd like to know what is...
(Bolt 16)

Despite this and other gestures to anti-historicism and anti-heroism, however, Bolt's play constructs a Mary predominantly consonant with the grandiloquence of his play's title and typical of her representation in a dramatic tradition reaching back to and founded by Schiller: she is a heroic character who dramatically, confidently, and gloriously embraces her death. Before approaching her execution, Bolt's Mary tells the advisor Davison to inform Elizabeth, "There is more living in a death that is embraced than in a life that is avoided across three score years and ten. And I embrace it--thus! (*She throws off the black revealing scarlet head to foot.*)" A moment later, she "*Plunges off along the carpet. [Others] tumble after her, taken by surprise*" (95). Approaching death, Mary is magnified, made into a hero worth celebrating for her scarlet and precipitate courage and independence. Bolt's Elizabeth has this final exit: "*She rises painfully, and makes towards Exit. A triumphant fanfare. She ignores it*" (96). Elizabeth's exit is one of defeat, but it is a defeat which fortifies the play's cumulating sense of tragedy, the sense that

²¹ The emphasis is mine.

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Mary is a glorious scapegoat for history, in whose death those who succeed her may live. Bolt toys slightly with history throughout his play, but concludes with a portrait of Mary and Elizabeth which is strongly reverent and refers to an apparently stable, true, and heroic history. Such romantic reverence is all the more in evidence in Schiller's play. Schiller's Mary's final exit comes as a breathless climax to an entire act devoted to preparations for her execution, including peace-makings and leave-takings all around, heroic (because self-denying and self-remonstrating) romantic resolution, and a great deal of mourning--mourning which is admittedly premature but, of course, no less energetic, romantic, or dramatically insistent for that prematurity. The dignity and resolve of Schiller's Mary's final exit are, again, made all the more heroic by the play's ensuing and concluding focus on Elizabeth's self-doubt, petty recriminations, and desperate bids to displace the blame for Mary's execution from her own royal seat.

In contrast to these heroicizing and romanticizing narrative conclusions offered by both Schiller and Bolt, the final scene of Lochhead's play portrays Mary's execution as one performed metaphorically by excited children on another terrified child on the anti-heroic landscape of a twentieth-century, urban, underprivileged playground. There is no dignity in this Mary's death. Having verbally cut off Marie/Mary's head, the children fantasize about dividing her possessions and desecrating her body:

WEE BETTY And eftir you're deid, we'll share oot yir froacks and pu' a'
 the stones oot yir brooches and gie yir golden slippers a'
 away to the Salvation Army, and we'll gie' the Saint
 Vincent de Paul--

JAMES HEPBURN Sweet fuck all!

WEE BETTY And eftir you're deid
 We'll pick up your heid
 Up aff the flair
 By the long rid hair--

JAMES HEPBURN Wallop!

WEE HENRY Haw-haw! It was just a wig!
 Yir heid goes--

JAMES HEPBURN Wallop!
 And it stoats along the flair like a great big--
 Tumshie!

ALL Wallop! Bum... bum... bum... bum.

WEE HENRY Skoosh!

ALL *Splat!*
 (Pause)

WEE BETTY And her wee dug...
 (Mock tearful) Her lovely wee dug...

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Her lovely wee dug

Wi' the big brown eyes that loved her so much...

Comes scooshing oot fae under her crimson skirts where
it has been hiding--

--And skites aboot among the blood barking and shiting
itself! (66-67)

La Corbie has the play's final lines--"Mary Queen of Scots got her... head... chopped... off"--which segue directly into the stage direction, "*And all around MARIE/MARY suddenly grab up at her throat in a tableau, just her head above their hands. Very still in the red light for a moment then black*" (67).

Where Schiller's and Bolt's endings are reverential, Lochhead's is irreverent, resisting casting Mary finally as "true" and heroic. Lochhead's ending offers a contemporary carnival enactment--notably ambivalent, along Bakhtin's lines of analysis--performed by children, of Mary's execution. This enactment both acknowledges history and its legacies, discussed above, but it also, ambivalently, refuses to be cowed by that history, as the children rebel against the authority of history, treating it bawdily, aggressively, even cruelly. In their greed and fervour, the children do not condescend to cast lots for Mary's possessions, a gesture which might confirm Mary as a martyr by aligning her with Christ; they simply dictate these possessions' unequal distribution. The children not only decapitate Mary's body verbally, they go one step further and "decapitate" her pride by taking her hair off her head. They topple Mary from her regal estate by equating her head--emblem of her authority as Head of State--with the most common Scottish vegetable, the turnip, which they debase further by calling by its most colloquial name, tumshie.²² Finally, they reduce Mary's surviving companion--and in a sense her surrogate--"Her lovely wee dug," to a completely physically incapacitated hysteric.

Where Schiller's and Bolt's plays focus precisely not on Mary's execution (which occurs offstage in both plays) but on her dignified and nobly willing approach to it, thereby commandeering a lingering impression of Mary as brave, martyred hero, Lochhead's play revels in the dignity-depriving details of Mary's execution, depriving History of its unassailable, untouchable refuge in dignity. Furthermore, Lochhead's ending is specifically enacted (on Marie), first, explicitly fictionalizing Mary's execution, depriving it of the refuge of naturalism Bolt's ending gives it, and second, bringing what is for Schiller and Bolt "obscene" on-stage, confronting the audience with the event and provoking consideration of its violence, its motivations, and the locations of its culpability. Explicitly

²² As Lynda Mugglestone notes, Lochhead's "work abounds in the forms conventionally stigmatised as shibboleths and 'vulgarisms': 'to lose the heid', 'up to high doh', 'tumshies' rather than 'neeps'" (96).

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performed in Lochhead's play, Mary's execution is presented as one interpretation, one possible version of events. This version is partially determined by the children's inherited sectarianism and sexism, but the historical ambiguity of this ending (which enacts in an ambiguous present²³ the present enacting the past) multiplies and implicitly interrogates the origins of this sectarianism and sexism. Where Bolt's and Schiller's endings allow the troubles of Mary's age to be relegated palliatively in the comfortable and impermeable distance of history, the plural temporality of Lochhead's ending enforces the interconnectedness of past and present, and the present's responsibility for the past.

The differences between Schiller's, Bolt's, and Lochhead's versions of events are succinctly encompassed in the plays' closing images of Mary. Where Schiller's and Bolt's final images of Mary emphasize dignity and steadfast resolve, Lochhead's final image--of a head suspended in a pool of red light above a collar of hands--is polyvalent. First, it is overtly theatrically constructed, using actors' hands to form a kind of collar, or a performed frame, around Mary's neck. It is thus less reverent than either Schiller's or Bolt's text towards both performance--disregarding naturalistic convention--and history--literally playing with its historical characters. Secondly, Lochhead's image may be stark but it is not necessarily dignified. It does not dictate, as both Schiller's and Bolt's texts attempt to, any strict interpretation of Mary, as noble or otherwise. Furthermore, in the mode of carnival's "regenerating ambivalence" discussed by Bakhtin, Lochhead's final scene and image both "destroy" a hegemonic history--as the children savagely mock and abuse Mary--and "revive" an active engagement with history, proffering a final ambivalent image--which confronts, which is dead, which is dramatically alive--of Mary's staring head. *Mary Queen of Scots's* audience is not utterly denied the sympathetic identification with Mary which is facilitated by naturalism and is thus possible in Schiller's and Bolt's plays, but such identification is qualified, first, by possible identification with the children and their--destructive but also active and potentially reviving--motivations, and second, by a degree of theatrical alienation, facilitating critical engagement with the scene.

Where the first, Communicado Theatre Company, production of *Mary Queen of Scots* used a circus setting to ground the play in performance--and performance which is often culturally liminal (in partial exile at cities' outskirts, itinerant, made up of social [and

²³ As Anne Varty notes in her "Scripts and Performances" in *Liz Lochhead's Voices*, early draft versions of *Mary Queen of Scots* which record scenes workshopped with Communicado compare the play's children to those painted by artist Joan Eardley and locate them specifically in 1950s Glasgow:

Sc. 1. The back court, a Glasgow tenement 1953. The actors are all kids, Joan Eardley street brats in this scene. Betty and Margaret have got a reluctant Wee Henry cawing their rope for them. One skips and both sing. (Manuscript at the National Library of Scotland, Acc. 10176 No. 2, cited in Varty 161)

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theatrical] misfits and outcasts)--subsequent productions of the play have used different strategies to similar effect. The Perth Theatre Company's autumn 1992 production featured costumes which, in their heterogeneity, looked as though they were assembled from a children's dress-up box. The suggestion that the characters were children playing with history was thus visually enforced throughout the length of the play. In the Brunton Theatre Company production of 1994, play and entertainment were emphasized through the dance hall setting and through continual and lingering visual references to play. In this production, a heightened emphasis on Rizzio's tarot cards and dominoes, both of which remained down stage centre for extended periods of time, literally foregrounded mysticism and games, visually undermining History's solemn determinism.

Playing

Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off makes efficient use of narrative references to, and settings of, play in order to accentuate play and to emphasize the way all history, like play, is less an object of autonomous, immaculate conception than of social assembly. But these overt references are made far stronger by the play's pervasive emphasis on itself as play. In many respects, of course, this emphasis is indivisible from the play's emphasis on other kinds of play, forming a seamless, saturated climate of play which enfolds *Mary Queen of Scots's* history. Yet despite the layers' apparent inextricability, their multitude and their differences are important. Like a Chinese box, the layers of play extrapolate outwards, informing a sense that the play itself is encompassed in another "box" of play, as is its audience, and so on. Importantly, this construction draws *Mary Queen of Scots's* lessons about history--its fallibility, its function as narrative--beyond the realm and length of the play itself, into the lives of its audience members, beyond the so-called theatre event. In other words, the play's emphasis on itself as play potentially implicates its audience in that play in ways which examples of play within the text may not. Where it may be possible to see the play's last scene as, simply, children playing--admittedly *making* history, but in a play which is otherwise formally contained *by* history--the play's emphasis on itself as play ruptures that formal containment. Lessons about history as narrative thus go beyond the play so that the audience may see its own history--past, present, and future--as constructed and re-conceivable. *Mary Queen of Scots's* emphasis on itself as play is thus crucial to the play's avoidance of "hand-knittedness," and to the play's aspirations to subversion, coaxing its audience--by making it imaginatively possible--to alter history, for instance, to see Scotland's legacies of religious sectarianism and sexism as feasibly alterable.

Mary Queen of Scots's main strategies for highlighting its constitutive make-up as play include being hyper-theatrical and--often through a rupture in performance style or through a shift in performance/audience relationship--being self-referential in that theatricality. The play's exaggerated theatricality is pervasive. Lochhead has commented

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that her choices regarding the play's structure and style were heavily influenced by the Communicado Theatre Company's style: "Their [Communicado's] whole expressionistic, epic, storytelling, anachronistic, *non* 'fourth wall' direct-to-audience style of *presentation* (rather than 'acting') informed my whole approach and allowed the play to find, with difficulty, its proper form. I *do* think the play arrived at the right structure--it's a bold one with jumps and gaps all held together by La Corbie's wee rhyming asides direct to the audience, involving us, showing us this is *not* a 'history play'" ("Rough Magic").

As Lochhead emphasizes, the play *presents* itself as representation. It does this, she notes, through its story-telling approach and direct address to its audience. However, it reinforces these strategies of presentation with many others: the use of scene titles (which may be presented, Brechtian fashion, as signs); the use of editorializing song; on-stage scene-changing and actor role-changing, abrupt scene-changing, and non-linear deployment of time, all of which act as a kind of visible editing; the use of anachronism; resistance to naturalistic closure; and the simultaneous and mutually disruptive use of naturalistic characterization and anti-naturalistic characterization.

A scene like "The Suitors," act I, scene ii, effectively establishes--and usefully demonstrates--*Mary Queen of Scots's* exaggerated theatricality. The scene begins with this stage direction:

MARY and ELIZABETH *raised up at either corner*. Others alternate between ambassadors, courtiers or commoners to each in turn. A dance, a mad tango, to music. LA CORBIE *watching*. (12)

With the two queens "*raised up*" and their subjects and courtiers trafficking between them, the play immediately and boldly theatrically encapsulates--and emphasizes--the characters' relative power and relationships. The multiplicity and quick switching of roles played by the actors other than the queens and La Corbie highlight the construction of character, and its mutability. The dance performance style--explicitly not sedate, courtly, and "period," but "a mad tango"--resists naturalistic integration into a court setting and temporal relegation to a distant, unchanging past, emphasizing both its own performance and the present's control of its past and present. La Corbie's on-stage watching makes explicit--by performing--the scene's performance for an audience. The stylization of the scene's dialogue, like its performance style, draws attention to itself as theatre. Repetition is a key element of this stylization: the ambassadors repeatedly offer new matches, the "commoners" repeatedly rejoice when a suitor is not French, the queens repeatedly speculate on the suitability of each proffered match. The scene's final moment, where Mary and Elizabeth "*come together*" and Mary states, "Indeed I wish that Elizabeth was a man and I would willingly marry her! And wouldn't that make an end of all debates!" (15), physically and imaginatively unites and, simultaneously, separates the women. The queens' simultaneous presence with each other, and absence from one another, is diachronically theatricalized. In a sense, this scene mocks (royal) power as mere

performance; but perhaps more emphatically it impressively performs the contingency and vulnerability of that power, not to mention the urgency with which it is apparently only slimly maintained. Again, the metaphors of performance and play do not trivialize their subject so much as they permit articulation of that subject's many and sometimes contradictory characteristics.

La Corbie offers, once again, some of *Mary Queen of Scots*'s strongest examples of self-referential play. She is at once deeply implicated in the play and its narrative--being its ring master, initiator, manipulator, chorus, mascot, and virtually omnipresent witness--and profoundly excluded from the play--seldom being recognized or certainly explicitly included by any of the play's other characters (indeed, Mary may be the only character who even possibly "sees" or "hears" La Corbie). Through her role as chorus and other ways in which she is implicated in the play, La Corbie draws the play's audience into sympathetic engagement with the play. For instance, when Mary, in attempting to discipline Bothwell, begins to cry at his resistance, La Corbie appeals directly to her, "Don't greet!," a caution with which the play's audience might agree and sympathize. However, through her liminal relationship to the play, La Corbie simultaneously holds the play's audience at a distance from its events. Bothwell's response to Mary's crying is, "Madam, I hae the greatest respect for my anointed queen, whase grace and beauty gladdens my heart and whase gentleness and clemency does tame my savagery," provoking La Corbie's editorial remark, "Aye well, there's mibbe somethin' tae be said for weepin'..." (27). This is again a comment with which the play's audience may agree, drawing the audience into sympathy with La Corbie, but it notably lacks the direct address of La Corbie's first "Don't greet!" It is precisely an editorial comment which pulls the audience back from its naturalistic engagement with Mary's and Bothwell's plight--from its suture with their situation as a reality--into a critical relationship with the play. From this position of remove, the audience may critically assess not only the dynamics of Mary's and Bothwell's relationship, but also the dynamics of its own interaction with the play; for instance, the critical distance it relinquishes when it experiences suture with the (romantic) text, and the capacity to change history it neglects when it sees character or situation as real and fixed. As Joe Farrell has written, in *Mary Queen of Scots* "the corbie--the crow--acts as alienating factor, chorus, jester subversive, *vox populi*" (22). She functions as a frame, both drawing attention to the subject she frames (the play's "story"), and standing separate from that story, emphasizing--the way a frame may do for a picture--the limits of the story.

La Corbie usefully frames history in *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off*, but she also, importantly, frames gender.²⁴ I have argued above that, although

²⁴ Diversifying the possibilities of meaning for history and usefully complicating what it means to be a woman, La Corbie also confounds what it means to be Scottish, and,

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Lochhead may have constructed a Mary and an Elizabeth who display features of womanhood which Lochhead wants to criticize or, as she says, "talk back to," she does not render these examples of womanhood entirely intractable. I argue, for instance, that *Mary Queen of Scots* demonstrates that Mary's popular portrayal as sensual and--concomitantly for her detractors--politically naive is indeed a portrayal, a construction with inevitably biased interests. But *Mary Queen of Scots* further complicates "womanhood" and "femininity"--not to mention Scottishness--by introducing a rather "non-traditional" and (in that her engagement with the play is discontinuous) non-linear female character: La Corbie.

In her article in *Liz Lochhead's Voices*, "Lochhead's Language: Styles, Status, Gender and Identity," Lynda Mugglestone argues that the maid Dorine in Lochhead's adaptation of Molière's *Tartuffe* "emerges as perhaps the strongest female voice in Lochhead's work. . . ." Many of Mugglestone's points about Dorine bear useful comparison with La Corbie. Mugglestone characterizes Dorine's language as "pithy, spirited, and direct," and continues,

it is she who confronts Orgon with his own stupidity, pointing out the folly, as Marianne should have done, of his ludicrous proposals that she should marry Tartuffe: "What would yon bigot want wi' oor wee lassie" (*Tartuffe* 17). Consistently assertive, outspoken, refusing to be subdued or to conform to feminine models of propriety in language, her speech is marked by a supreme colloquial verve. As seems entirely just, in Lochhead's *Tartuffe*, though not in Molière's, it is Dorine who gets the last word:

We'll be happy ever eftir. And the band will play. (Mugglestone 106-107)

Mugglestone's critical focus is voice and language, but if we consider voice, language, *and* physical presence, La Corbie emerges as a very strong, if not stronger, female character in Lochhead's work. La Corbie, like Dorine, speaks language "pithy, spirited, and direct": regarding Knox, La Corbie advises Mary, "Corbie says by the bones of your beloved mother you must destroy this man" (20). She is "assertive, outspoken, refusing to be subdued": regarding marriage, she advises the queens:

But when a queen wud wed, or tak' a man tae bed,

playfully, what it means to be a bird. She plays on her appearance as a crow and on her Scottish nationality and its two dominant religions, Presbyterianism and Catholicism, asking, "Do I no put you in mind of a skating minister, or, on the other fit, the parish priest, the dirty beast?" A skating minister is the subject of a famous Scottish painting (famous not least because the minister has become something of a mascot for the National Galleries of Scotland, his gliding silhouetted profile adorning their carrier bags and gifts), *Reverend Robert Walker Skating on Duddingston Loch* by Henry Raeburn (1756-1823).

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She only does whit *ony* maid funns chancy!

Dinnae argue the toss, juist show them wha's boss

You're the Queen--so mairry wha ye fancy. (25)

In production, La Corbie has "refuse[d] to conform to feminine models of propriety" not only in language, but in dance. The Strathclyde Theatre Group 1993 production of *Mary Queen of Scots* played on the conventional link between femininity and birdlike grace with La Corbie dancing--clumsily and inelegantly--what appeared to be her "a' angles and elbows and broken oxter feathers" (11) *Corbie Loch* version of *Swan Lake*. Finally, La Corbie also gets the play's last word and, importantly, the last--assertive, definitive--gesture, snapping the head off the dandelion as she recites, "Mary Queen of Scots got her... head... chopped... off" (67). In contrast to what might sometimes seem Mary's demuring, and Elizabeth's aggressive, powerlessness, La Corbie bristles with a highly critical and insightful power.

Another feature of La Corbie's characterization distinguishes her crucially from Dorine--crucially because through it La Corbie offers potentially even greater possibilities of emancipation from stereotypes of femininity than does Dorine. Mugglestone argues that Dorine embodies an empowering because empowered femininity. La Corbie does this too but, because her relationship to the play is discontinuous--in some respects involved in, in others excluded from the play--she also disrupts femininity. She thus disrupts its unified construction, whether it is constructed as unassertive and "proper," or, conversely, as assertive and aggressive. By overtly performing herself, La Corbie performs her gender, highlighting its construction, and rendering possible its deconstruction.

Throughout *Mary Queen of Scots*, La Corbie's relationship with the play shifts back and forth through sympathetic engagement and critical remove, and through her role as chorus she facilitates an audience engagement with the play which shifts similarly. Ironically, given her literally disruptive relationship with the play, La Corbie's role is the only one which a single actor plays consistently throughout the play. All the other roles, while more consistently "engaging" (as opposed to alienating), are contrastingly played by actors who play more than one role. Thus, although these other roles may be more naturalistically uniform than La Corbie's, they too--by being interrupted when their actors switch to play alternate roles, and thus by being temporally *inconsistent*--may interrupt and destabilize audiences' engagement with *Mary Queen of Scots*, self-referentially drawing attention to the play's theatricality.

In his article in *Liz Lochhead's Voices*, "The Two-faced Language of Lochhead's Poetry," Robert Crawford calls Lochhead's tricks with role doubling "human puns," a name which usefully draws comparison between these, visual, puns and Lochhead's numerous other, particularly verbal, puns (Crawford 68). The play's employment of role doubling and switching has several potential effects. First, as a verbal pun blurs, plays with, and

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troubles distinctions between a single word's multiple meanings, the play's visual puns blur distinctions between a single actor's roles, distinctions, for instance, like those between Queen Mary, the maid Marion, the historical child Mairn, and the contemporary child, Marie, all played by the same actor. Linked by the same actor but held apart by different roles, these theatrical and cultural roles' similarities and differences are both highlighted. The ambivalent emphasis on literal and metaphorical sisterhood--across and within classes, generations, and families--notable in both *Blood and Ice* and *Dracula* as well as much of Lochhead's other work is thus echoed in *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off*. Crawford writes:

Lochhead has taken the theatrical convention of "doubling" and has adopted it to the animation of three-dimensional puns as identity shifts and slides in front of the audience. Mary both is and is not the same as Mairn. Child and adult, queen and commoner, victor and victim are all kaleidoscopically interchanged in front of the audience: same difference. ("The Two-faced Language" 68)

Mary's doubling as Mairn and the comparability of her Marie to Elizabeth's Bessie demonstrate, for instance, at least three different relationships between women and sex. Queen Mary may be sexually attracted to Bothwell, but she is socially prohibited from consummating that desire unless her husband is dead or unless the consummation occurs at one remove through fantasy, as when the maid Bessie is massaging Mary's shoulders and Bothwell "kisses BESSIE's neck lewdly" so that a "swaying shudder runs with a gasp through BESSIE straight through MARY herself" (29). Mary's desire is forbidden and Bessie's, although (or precisely because) it is illicit--below stairs, across rank (44)--is not. However, the women's multiple--because multiply role-doubling--relationships emblemize the way Mary's impossible desire becomes socially possible when at a remove, a remove, socially, downwards. Similarly, as we have seen, Knox's sexual desire for and revulsion towards Mary find distorted expression in his violent castigation of the transfigured "cheeky wee harlot," Mairn, "on the cauld Canongate" (33).

Eminently skilled at destabilizing linguistic meaning through verbal punning, Lochhead displays great dexterity with visual punning in *Mary Queen of Scots*, further destabilizing meaning. And emphasizing both similarities and differences between its subjects through its visual puns, *Mary Queen of Scots* records the ambivalences of these subjects, records, for instance, the ways it is more useful to attempt neither totally to raze nor wholly to reinforce, for instance, all women's differences, but to attempt to recognize similarities and differences, as well as their social determinants, and to make an effort to negotiate them. Through role doubling, *Mary Queen of Scots* becomes a study not simply of Mary's and Elizabeth's relative power as queens, but of women's relative power in general--as queens, as maids, as girls, and across age, class, and nationality.

As well as the destabilization of meaning, a second potential effect of *Mary Queen of Scots's* role doubling is the destabilization, through interruption, of audience

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identification. Using extensive role doubling, *Mary Queen of Scots* constantly suspends roles, so that an audience's identification with, for instance, Mary may be oddly "displaced" or arrested when she "becomes," however briefly, Marion or Mairn or Marie. The play's repeated interruption of psychologically "deep" characterization, in characters like Elizabeth and Mary, with parodic and symbolic characterization, in characters like the suitors of scene ii and the mummers of II.v, further interrupts identification, destabilizing through juxtaposition the naturalism and sense of psychological depth of the play's central characters. Interrupting the performance/audience relationship of identification, *Mary Queen of Scots*'s role doubling again potentially draws attention to that relationship, and to the play's own performance, and it facilitates audience/character relationships of both sympathetic identification and alienated criticism. In the play's final tableau, for instance, the play's audience may maintain sympathetic identification with Mary, care for her, and concern with histories' representations of her, but, through its incomplete or interrupted identification with her, it may simultaneously scrutinize and criticize not only history's relationship with her, but also its own, particularly its implication in cultural tendencies to romanticize her and to demonize her.

Using techniques of character construction and fragmentation to disrupt character/audience identification is the primary means by which *Mary Queen of Scots* interrupts and draws attention to its own theatricality. However, another way the play effects this self-reference is through fragmenting its narrative, thereby interrupting its own narrative flow. This narrative fragmentation is achieved in a variety of ways: using anachronism; varying performance styles; employing a range of different performance discourses--from dance to music, prose, verse, and song; and utilizing language which is most uniform perhaps in its consistent heterogeneity.

Time, in *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off*, is always at least diachronic, always more than one time, always, therefore, not "real" but theatrical. This multiple temporality is signalled in the play's very title which, although it uses the past tense to refer to a past event, also uses the active verb form "got" and is a contemporary if traditional children's rhyme, invoking an active present. The rhyme's raunchiness emphatically juxtaposes the past of its subject with the present of its delivery, not merely playfully subverting its subject, but drawing attention to the play's internal temporal schism, to its anachronism, to its performance. Other anachronisms in *Mary Queen of Scots* operate similarly, taking details highly localized in the temporal specificity of the present and recent past and injecting them into the distant past of Mary's reign. In his analysis of Lochhead's poetry, Crawford notes a similar use of specific details from popular culture in her poetry.²⁵ He concludes that this willingness--even effort--to ground

²⁵ Crawford sites Lochhead's use of the "actual shop name" Woolworth's in the poem "Outer" (*Dreaming Frankenstein* 111) and her repeated use of product names

her work in the temporally, culturally, economically, and gender specific (to which I would add the geographically specific) bespeaks a significant familiarity and sympathy between Lochhead and her audience (Crawford "The Two-faced Language" 65). Lochhead's use of temporally specific and recent details in *Mary Queen of Scots* facilitates a bind of familiarity similar to that achieved through her use of references to popular culture in her poetry, proffering a shared vocabulary of time and place to draw her audience into the work, but also to draw connections between the "world" of the play and that of its audience and to criticize those connections.

For instance, Knox first enters "*in bowler hat and with umbrella*," like a twentieth-century metropolitan businessman, to deliver his sixteenth century speech "against the monstrous regiment of women" (19).²⁶ Knox's dual temporality locates the misogyny of his speech simultaneously in the sixteenth and twentieth centuries, and the exaggeration of his temporal dualism draws attention to his performance as performance. Similarly, Elizabeth's "*Polaroid snapshot of a baby as if from proud new parents*" locates the significance of James's birth in relation to both an historic Elizabeth and the present. When Mary leaves Darnley to join Bothwell, her maid Bessie screams, "Oh, naw Bothwell. Bothwell! I'm your Bess!," but she "*gets whirled away in a mad dance, a hideous anachronistic waltz*" (60). The historical characters and "*hideous anachronistic waltz*" make this scenario both historical and contemporary, a contemporary retelling of Mary's and Bothwell's story. All these examples are jarring and joking in their temporal

(Crawford 65). Lochhead's poetry is also notably riddled with references to specific proper place names; for example, in *Dreaming Frankenstein*, St. Andrews (20), Qu'Appelle (27), Salmon Arm (29), Danforth Avenue (37), and Paddy's Market (*Dreaming Frankenstein* 118 and *Mary Queen of Scots* 11).

²⁶ Contemporary Scottish literature offers an interesting intertext for this specific depiction of Knox (and this relatively familiar depiction of Protestantism). The central protagonist of Alasdair Gray's novel *Lanark* is Duncan Thaw, an aspiring artist, and he too illustrates a religious figure from the past (in his case, Jonah) with bowler hat and umbrella. When asked, "but why have you given him a bowler hat and an umbrella?", Thaw replies,

Because he was that kind of man. Jonah is the only prophet who didn't want to be a prophet. God forced it on him. I see him as a fat middle-aged man with a job in an insurance office, someone naturally quiet and mediocre whom God has to goad into courage and greatness. (193).

While Thaw's bowler hat and umbrella seem designed to connote his Jonah's humble lack of presumption, Lochhead's Knox's bowler hat and umbrella suggest a patronizing, businesslike, even mercenary efficiency in all his dealings.

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incoherence, not trying to smooth over that incoherence but to emphasize it, rupturing *Mary Queen of Scots's* historicity and making explicit the play's performance.

Mary Queen of Scots's abrupt, frequent, and dramatic variation of performance styles also intervenes in the play's own unity, disturbing it and drawing attention to the play as play. As McDonald and I have noted, these performance styles range from the "naturalistic to the heightened theatricality of the songs and dances" (145). For instance, the "Knox and Mary" scene in which the two characters negotiate their relative powers is fairly naturalistic--with plausible motivations for coherent behaviour (and Method performance), naturalistic dialogue, and so on. Conversely, the scene "A Wedding," in which La Corbie sings a wedding song and the other characters perform a stylized ceremony of union around Mary and Darnley, is relatively non-naturalistic, determined as performative by the description "*Solemn. Erotic*" (36), by the non-dialogue discourse of song, by the characters' singing about--rather than to--Mary and Darnley who are, after all, on-stage, and by Mary's non-naturalistic, highly poetic, and erotic verse speech which concludes:

And I shall loose ma lang rid hair,
Ungimp ma girdles o' the plaited silk
Slip frae ma sark and in the dark
Ma bodie will gleam as white as milk
And I shall be dressed in nakedness,
My briests twa aiples o' desire
And you shall hae the brichtest jewel
That nestles in my brooch o' red-gowd wire. (37-38)

While naturalistic performance is plentiful in *Mary Queen of Scots*, so is non-naturalistic performance, not only in individual scenes like "A Wedding," but also in the Fiddler's and the Dancer's on-going, semi-participatory, and sometimes eerie presence, as they contribute musical and physical counterpoints to La Corbie's verbal commentary.²⁷ Present too is quasi-naturalistic performance, in scenes which can act

²⁷ Writing about the premiere production of *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off*, Anne Varty observes, "A beating drum and the constant stage presence of the fiddler (Anne Wood) set the pace and an often ironical atmosphere ('mad tango music', for instance, accompanies 'The Suitors' [I.ii]), while the dancer (Frank McConnell) acts as a kind of voiceless chorus, complementing La Corbie" ("Scripts and Performances" 163). The dancer's conventional doubling as Rizzio--a virtually silent character whose few lines are in Italian and French, who is racially, culturally, and physically different from other members of the court (he "*has a slight hunchback and an elaborate embroidered brocade waistcoat*"[39]), and who, largely because of his difference, represents a threat to that court--reinforces that performer's role as

naturalistically, metaphorically, and anti-naturalistically. In the "Mummers and Murderers" scene (II.v), the collapse of Mary's reign is, significantly, puppetted: on a naturalistic level, the show intimidates Mary with the ill will of her putative subjects and enlists her non-naturalistic performance in the "act" of Rizzio's murder; on a metaphoric level, it invokes the puppet metaphor for a weak government and performs the weakness of, specifically, Mary's government; and on an anti-naturalistic level, it adds another box layer of performance to history.

Finally, *Mary Queen of Scots* resists linguistic coherence, again disturbing the unity of its performance and its audience's seamless suture with that performance. Mugglestone has written, "Language, as Lochhead is well aware, is neither monolithic nor neutral" (93). Lochhead takes obvious pleasure in depicting language's multiple possibilities, including its vulnerability to "corruption," and in emphasizing its polysemicity. She uses language irreverently, disregarding historical accuracy and usage consistency, openly displaying her play with language to impede the determinism of, not only history, but also, as Mugglestone observes, language. Lochhead's translation of Molière's *Tartuffe* received high critical acclaim for its irreverent play with language, particularly Scots. First produced less than two years prior to *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off*, the *Tartuffe* translation anticipates some of the linguistic techniques Lochhead employs subsequently in *Mary Queen of Scots*.

For *Tartuffe*, Lochhead patchworked a multifarious and highly stylized Scots which escapes simple categorization itself, and evidences the heterogeneity of language in general. In the Introduction to *Tartuffe*, Lochhead emphasizes the variety, cultural breadth, and historical depth of her linguistic sources, writing, "it is a totally invented and, I hope, theatrical Scots, full of anachronisms, demotic speech from various eras and areas; it's proverbial, slangy, couthy, clichéd, catch-phrasey, and vulgar; it's based on Byron, Burns, Stanley Holloway, Ogden Nash and George Formby, as well as the sharp tongue of my granny; it's deliberately varied in register--most of the characters except Dorine are at least bilingual and consequently more or less 'two faced'" (*Tartuffe* Introduction). Mugglestone concurs with Lochhead's analysis, arguing that Lochhead's literary use of Scots "is of course far from that synthetic and idealised Scots used by MacDiarmid and followers, drawing not on the dictionary and the linguistic legacies of the past, but on the colloquial, urban, and demotic legacies of the present. Her work abounds in the forms conventionally stigmatised as shibboleths and 'vulgarisms'" (96).

outsider/commentator. The Brunton Theatre Company 1994 production further emphasized this difference and remove by casting a black actor/dancer (Peter Titus) to dance the role of Rizzio while the rest of the cast, all white actors, by contrast, "acted" theirs.

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With *Tartuffe*'s entire text in varieties of Scots, its many characters spanning vast age and social spectra, and individual character's linguistic usages being--as Lochhead points out--broad, this translation offers Lochhead great opportunities for linguistic experimentation. But even with its more limited use of Scots, *Mary Queen of Scots* demonstrates many of the same characteristics of linguistic heterogeneity as *Tartuffe*, again denoting characters' cultural, racial, class, and power differences,²⁸ but also highlighting the play's own performance. *Mary Queen of Scots*'s motley language is, appropriately, most manifest in the "*ragged ambiguous creature*" of La Corbie (11). Like *Tartuffe*'s Scots, La Corbie's is rippled with anachronisms. Her Scots has a presiding sense of contemporaneity, marked by common phrases like "Whit like is it?" (11), and by colloquial words of emphasis and address like "see" and "man," as in "Oh, see, after the battle, after the battle, man it's a pure feast--my eyes are ower big even for *my* belly" (12). But her language is also speckled by obsolete Scots words like "gaberlunzies" (31) (beggars or tramps), and occasionally she recites a ballad, like the "Twa Corbies" (60-61), or a lullaby, like "Wee chookie burdie" (57), both of which may still commonly be recited but which evoke nevertheless a sense of tradition and historical depth. As well as being temporally adventurous, La Corbie's Scots is geographically restless, exhibiting characteristics of several local Scottish dialects. Her Scots has a certain Glasgow couthiness, in usages like the above mentioned "see" and "Whit like is it?" But it also has elements of east central vocabulary, as in "bairn" (44) instead of the west central "wean" or English "child," and north eastern vocabulary, as in "widdershins" (40) instead of the English "anti-clockwise." Contemporary, traditional, archaic, western, eastern, northern--La Corbie's Scots is anarchic, resisting uniformity. Boldly culled and assembled from a

²⁸ Following a brief but useful account of some of the key historical influences on Scots language usage, Mugglestone concludes:

Language use in Scotland is therefore highly complex in the schema of differentiation it offers, and it is presumably this circumstance which leads Lochhead to assert the supreme value of Scots as a "language for multiplicity of register" (*Verse*, 93) and for the foregrounding of social, gendered and geographical divisions, the modulations of voice and register which inevitably accompany every exchange. It is certainly an aspect which Lochhead herself explores and exploits, to a considerable extent in her own work, drawing upon the emblematic aspects of language as a symbol of national identity in *Mary Queen of Scots Got her Head Chopped Off*. . . . Mary and Elizabeth, in *Mary Queen of Scots*, are visually opposed in Lochhead's stage directions ("MARY and ELIZABETH *raised up at either corner*" [MQD 12]) and verbally opposed in their use of, and attitudes to, Scottish speech. . . . (94-95)

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variety of sources, it is unabashedly theatrical and disruptive of naturalistic seamlessness, foregrounding its own play.

Framing History

In *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off*, Liz Lochhead takes seriously her own caveat, "Don't/ let history frame you/ in a pretty lie" (*Dreaming Frankenstein* 21). The play itself reframes history showing, for instance, that Scottish history and its abiding influences are not necessarily "pretty." Reframing history, the play challenges its audience to reconsider particularly: popular conceptions of the two dominant religions in Scotland, cultural restrictions on women's access to power, and meanings of Scottishness.

Importantly, although *Mary Queen of Scots* addresses some of Scotland's less pretty, more negative, characteristics, it is precisely not a negative address. In 1988 Lochhead wrote, "Just speaking personally, the most exciting thing to me about being a playwright in Scotland at the moment is the very real hunger in Scottish audiences for plays that speak to them about their own culture and/or history" ("Staging a Revival"). Lochhead's enthusiasm is evident--and infectious--in *Mary Queen of Scots*, and the play is hopeful because it allows the possibility of change. *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off* not only reframes history, through histrionics it breaks the frame--the enclosing, sanitizing frame--on history, and on its own performance. It foregrounds its own construction thereby emphasizing the construction--not "truth"--of history. It bridges the remove between object of representation and audience, implicating its audience in history, challenging its audience to take responsibility for that connection, and allowing--even facilitating--its audience's taking of responsibility by being open to interaction, interaction which is at once joyously playful and passionately critical.

Afterword

The preceding analysis of Liz Lochhead's three published plays focuses consistently on issues of cultural, narratological, and dramatic power. Proposing that each of the three plays refers explicitly and implicitly to literary and/or historical pre-texts, it demonstrates that each play performs sustained and multiple critiques of the ways those pre-texts distribute--and, importantly, limit--power, both amongst their diegetic subjects and amongst their audiences.

A central point shared by Lochhead's plays and my analysis is that the dominant cultural narratives to which the plays refer, despite being purportedly progressive, are in many respects hegemonic, extending cultural franchise to some groups, groups who generally already enjoy cultural privilege, and enforcing cultural constraints on others. Lochhead's plays interrogate and begin to reconfigure this distribution of power on two levels, the diegetic and the structural.

Diegetically, the plays significantly re-contextualize the dominant narratives of their pre-texts, de-naturalizing and destabilizing the positions of privilege within those narratives, demonstrating the oppressions on which privilege is predicated, and cataloguing the subjective ends which narrative fulfils, as opposed to the objective or disinterested ends which it might profess to fulfil. Through these means, Lochhead's plays draw attention to and indict the strict limits of authority--as well as the strict limits on "acceptable" identities, meanings, and desires--prescribed within dominant cultural discourses. Illustrating and implicitly criticizing their pre-texts' diegetic limits in these ways, the plays further delineate the formal means by which the pre-texts police those limits, and they facilitate, through their own narrative forms, interpretation which is multiple and variable. The narratological techniques of the plays' pretexts (Romanticism, Stoker's *Dracula*, and orthodox history) each enjoin their audiences' complicity with their dominant narratives. The narrative and dramatic techniques of Lochhead's plays, by contrast, do not structurally enforce any particular uniform audience engagement; rather, they encourage engagement which is multiple, adaptable, critical, and able to participate in, and able to express, contingency and ambivalence. They facilitate audiences' production of multiple meanings. And, by demonstrating some methods of structurally reconfiguring the arena of meanings' production, they demonstrate means of intervening in, disputing, and even arresting the hegemonic function of dominant narratives.

I pursue these emphases in analysing Lochhead's plays for several reasons. First, I do so because Lochhead's plays themselves invoke, and provide productive sites in which to explore, these emphases. Repeatedly, Lochhead's plays (like her poems) engage with familiar and very powerful cultural narratives. The plays reconfigure these narratives, both in terms of content and in terms of form. Thus, they consistently,

humorously, and effectively elucidate whom and what those narratives empower and disable, and how they do so. Second, I pursue these emphases because the plays provide generative sites not only for considering their literary and historical pre-texts, but for considering, in contrast, contemporary drama and its forms. Cross-media comparison of the pre-texts and the plays contributes to contemporary critical reassessment of the plays' pre-texts; but it also contributes to contemporary critical assessment of dramatic form, of the relationship between the dramatic text and its audience, and of the powers of drama and performance.

A central thematic emphasis of this study is limits--what they are, how narrative inscribes them, and how they might be dismantled, reconfigured, or simply transgressed. Despite this thematic focus on transgressing limits, this study is inevitably inscribed by and with its own limits, and ways in which it might be developed are numerous. In relation to Lochhead's work, this study examines only her published plays. It does so because they are deserving of, and rewarding to, critical attention, but also because, in practical terms, they are generally available--for reading and production, and as crucial intertexts to this study. In examining only Lochhead's published plays, however, this study respects (and reinforces) various "limits" and privileges. Centrally, it privileges published texts, the authority that publication confers, and the stasis that publication necessitates. This privilege is, of course, particularly spurious within drama and drama studies, where plays are frequently unpublished and frequently revised for re-production. Further exploration of Lochhead's unpublished work would--and does--valuably undermine this privilege.¹ By focusing on Lochhead's drama, considering only briefly her poetry, and omitting discussion of her biography, fiction, and film,² not to mention her graphic art, this study respects certain disciplinary boundaries (although, by examining the plays' literary and historical pre-texts, it does transgress others). Cross-disciplinary analysis of Lochhead's work would enrich the study of all her work by elucidating the ways different disciplinary skills operate across disciplines in that work, and would break down the sometimes unhelpful boundaries between disciplines. Study of Lochhead's work might develop further in many directions, several I have only begun to explore. The following areas of research seem particularly fertile for further study: Lochhead's uses of language and

¹ For information regarding Lochhead's unpublished work before 1993, see "Liz Lochhead: A Checklist," compiled by Hamish Whyte in *Liz Lochhead's Voices*. For more information on and analysis of her unpublished drama, see Varty's "Scripts and Performances." And for more on her revue performance, see Clune's "Hearing Voices."

² Lochhead's biography includes "A Protestant Girlhood," her fictional prose includes the unpublished short story "The Last Thing To Go," and her screen writing includes the 1994 Tartan Short *Latin for a Dark Room*.

humour; performance styles which her work provokes; productions of her plays and their reception; and the places of Lochhead's work within contemporary women's drama, contemporary Scottish drama and theatre, and contemporary Scottish literature.

Another area of analysis which might be pursued following this thesis is contemporary dramatic form, and particularly the ways it constructs certain more or less open relationships with its audience. Analyses of dramatic form in this thesis are formed partly as responses to analyses of literary and historical narrative forms. They thus focus on dramatic narrative form and generic convention. Further study might profitably continue analyses begun here of dramatic convention, performance style, scenic representation, temporal audience/performance relationships, and spatial audience/performance relationships.

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