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**Voices from the 'Cauld East Countra':
Representations of Self in the Poetry of
Violet Jacob and Marion Angus**

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April 2000

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Abstract

This dissertation examines the representations of self in the poetry of Violet Jacob (1863-1946) and Marion Angus (1865-1946), two Scottish poets who wrote primarily in Scots in the inter-war years. Until recently, many critics have dismissed the work of Jacob and Angus as 'minor' in its themes or significant only as it anticipates the Scots poetry of Hugh MacDiarmid. The general absence of their work from print, and the narrow range of their poems appearing in anthologies, support the impression that their poetry is limited in scope. This dissertation suggests that in fact their poetry makes a significant contribution to the development of Scottish poetry. Their work builds upon Scottish literary traditions, interpolating balladic form and language into their lyrics, and drawing upon the rich folksong and dramatic monologue traditions as models for representing voice and self. Folk belief, too, informs their work, providing a symbolic background for many poems. To indicate the depth to their work, the thesis considers their poetry in a range of broader, interrelated contexts. By situating their poetry within historical, sociological, and literary *milieus*, and by placing their poems within a continuum of Scottish writing, one can discern key tensions underlying and informing their work.

As the predominance of first-person speakers in their poetry indicates, Jacob and Angus shared an interest in the psychology of the poetic self. Each poem offers a different representation of self, highlighting what the poetic self utters (or omits) in response to the world around it. Drawing upon a range of contemporaneous commentary and contemporary critical theory, the thesis analyzes how both poets portray the self in relation to its interior sense of time, its conception of space, and its interaction with other selves. The thesis falls into two parallel halves - the first devoted to an investigation of the self in Jacob's work, the second in Angus's. Key similarities and differences in each author's technique become evident in comparing their work.

Their treatment of the self in particular establishes them more convincingly as modern (and in the case of Angus, proto-modernist) poets whose work builds upon earlier literary traditions and revitalizes traditional models of self. Using dramatic

monologue and ballad forms, their poetry illuminates the self's inner world, limning its peripheries and borders. Specifically, their work gives eloquent utterance to voices of marginalized selves – older women, unmarried mothers, labourers, and travellers – in an innovative and non-judgemental way. Their poems compassionately portray the lives of rural women, quietly critiquing the societal *mores* limiting women to narrow domestic roles.

Time is a key issue in the work of the two poets; both show how the self's inner sense of time exists in counter-distinction to external time. In Jacob's poetry, the self struggles to re-inhabit the past but finds it cannot. In many poems, the speaker is an exile estranged from his actual surroundings by a desire to return 'home'. Loss occupies a tangible presence in these poems – lost places and people populate the narratives with spectral presences. Considered in terms of contemporaneous time theories, Jacob's often dark poems demonstrate how time 'rins forrit' continually; the self can return to its past only in dreams or memory. The self in Angus's poetry, by contrast, recurs in time. Time is bi-directional: the self moves among past, present, and future. Read with reference to J. W. Dunne and Henri Bergson, Angus's time poems illustrate how memory and perception blur as the self moves backwards in time to meet an earlier version of itself. Dual time narratives underlie Angus's work: the self both acts, and observes itself acting simultaneously.

Integrally connected to the self's sense of time in the work of these poets is its equally complex understanding of space. Their poems explore how the self shapes, and is shaped by, the landscape around it. Through the lens of contemporary critical work, the thesis teases out the dynamic between space (actual and psycho-geographical) and self. The two poets ground their poems in the 'actual' world, chiefly in north-east Scotland: Jacob's poems are 'songs of Angus' while Angus's work evokes Angus and Deeside landscapes. Jacob's poetry reveals how the self sees its internal state reflected in the landscape; influenced by memory, it discerns loss through an altered relationship with that space. The self, rather differently in Angus's *oeuvre*, internalizes the landscape – everything exists within the speaker's mind. Although it may have 'actual' world parallels – like 'Cambus Woods' – space is cerebralized. The self suffuses space with meaning; consequently natural entities – trees, hills, people, or houses – become encoded with specific (but unstated)

emotional connotations. Ultimately, space, like time, is fluid; the self can inhabit several spaces simultaneously, interpolating itself into future and past spaces while rooted in the present.

The two poets diverge most noticeably in their conception of the self's relationship to other selves, a dynamic underlying their strongest poems. For Jacob, the self exists within a community of others; the self is fundamentally a social entity whose sense of identity is determined by its connections to others. Jacob's finest articulations of self emerge in her late poems in women's voices, where she emphasizes how societally-enforced gender roles limit women's opportunities and damage relationships between women and men. Read alongside feminist theory, Jacob's women's narratives express the desires of numerous unspoken others. By contrast, Angus explores the self within an intimate space in which the self negotiates its peripheries in response to one desired other. The self's relationship to other is complicated by the pull between self-protective renunciation of, and self-destructive desire for that other. Unable to reconcile both, the self retreats into isolation or allows the other to subsume it. In many poems, the absence of gender indicators, concomitant with the recurrent image of other as ghost, encourages the use of contemporary lesbian and gender theories to elucidate Angus's 'covert narratives' of desire.

The thesis concludes with a brief consideration of the influence Jacob's and Angus's poetry had upon MacDiarmid's work, and a reflection upon their contribution to women's writing in Scotland.

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Notes on the Text

For the ease of reading, the following volumes are abbreviated within the body of the text as follows:

<i>The Lilt</i> (1922)	(TL)
<i>The Tinker's Road</i> (1924)	(TR)
<i>Sun and Candlelight</i> (1927)	(SC)
<i>The Singin' Lass</i> (1929)	(SL)
<i>The Turn of the Day</i> (1931)	(TD)
<i>Lost Country</i> (1937)	(LC)

<i>Verses</i> (1905)	(V)
<i>Songs of Angus</i> (1915)	(SA)
<i>More Songs of Angus</i> (1918)	(MS)
<i>Bonnie Joann</i> (1921)	(BJ)
<i>Northern Lights</i> (1927)	(NL)
<i>Scottish Poems</i> (1944)	(SPVJ)
<i>of Violet Jacob</i>	

Aberdeen University Special Collections	AUSC
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National Library of Scotland	NLS
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Line numbers of poems are provided in brackets, indicated by 'l'.

Sources indicated in the bibliography are those cited within the text. Additional material not cited directly has been omitted for space considerations. Full bibliography is available upon request.

Introduction: Historical Context

*I came to explore the wreck.
The words are purposes.
The words are maps.
I came to see the damage that was done
and the treasures that prevail.
I stroke the beam of my lamp
slowly along the flank
of something more permanent
than fish or weed*

*the thing I came for:
the wreck and not the story of the wreck
the thing itself and not the myth
[. . .]*

*We are, I am, you are
by cowardice or courage
the one who find our way
back to this scene
carrying a knife, a camera
a book of myths
in which
our names do not appear.¹*

In her 1973 poem 'Diving into the Wreck', American poet Adrienne Rich uses the image of 'diving' (l. 83) into the remains of a sunken ship as a metaphor for the recovery of 'half-destroyed' (l. 94) literary works of those whose 'names do not appear' (l. 92) in any 'book of myths' (l. 92). The symbolism of this 'book of myths' is clear: it serves as an emblem for the wide-ranging omission of people – chiefly women – from the written record. Read as a metaphor for specifically literary endeavour, the poem laments the literary 'cargo' of women writers that has been left 'to rot' 'obscurely' – in other words, out of sight and unknown (lines 81-82). One can read 'book of myths' as *book as myth*; Rich here emphasizes not just the unavailability of texts by women writers, but the general absence of women from the literary canon.

The negligible representation of women writers in the traditional literary canon to which Rich refers is not a phenomenon limited to US literary politics. The problem is perhaps more acute in Scottish literary history, as Joy Henry argues in 'Twentieth-

Century Women's Writing: The Nest of Singing Birds'. Reading through anthologies of Scottish writing, she comments upon 'the degree to which the contribution of women in twentieth-century Scottish writing has been minimised and marginalised, particularly in poetry'.² Hendry identifies a 'double disadvantage' faced by Scottish women writers in 'being firstly Scottish and secondly female' (p. 291); this doubled separation from what Rich calls simply 'power' ('Diving into the Wreck', l. 40) complicates their inclusion into the general English-language canon. Dorothy Porter McMillan, referring specifically to early twentieth-century women writers, suggests the disadvantage is *trebled* if one is a poet:

to have been Scottish and a woman and a poet in the first third of this century was to have been marginal in three ways. Marginality has some advantages [. . .] [b]ut it makes the achievement of an assured voice difficult.³

It is thanks to people like Catherine Kerrigan (who edited *An Anthology of Scottish Women's Writing*) that many of these 'marginalised' Scottish women writers are not forgotten completely. More recovery work must be done, however, as the 'damage' done by the exclusion of good writing by Scottish women will outweigh the 'treasures' – like the recently reprinted *Grampian Quartet* by Nan Shepherd – that 'prevail' on the shelves of bookstores and libraries ('Diving Into the Wreck', lines 55, 56).

This thesis originates from work begun several years ago before I came to Scotland. Interested in the work of twentieth-century Scottish women poets, I scanned through anthologies and stumbled across the work of several intriguing Scots poets. The trail went cold when it came to secondary work, however – I could find almost no critical writing on poets like Marion Angus, Violet Jacob, Helen Cruickshank, and Olive Fraser. Although women's writing in Scotland is not exactly the 'drowned' and silenced presence Rich describes in her poem, it has only recently started to attract the critical attention it deserves. Kerrigan indicates, 'after many years of neglect, and sometimes outright derision, writing by women has begun to find its permanent place on the cultural map'.⁴ This thesis in part is an attempt to draw attention to an under-explored area of the 'map' of Scottish literature: that 'cauld east countra' occupied by the work of two poets, Marion Angus (1865-1946) and Violet Jacob

(1863-1946). Both wrote primarily in Scots during the early twentieth century, producing several volumes of poetry that joined traditional elements into a modern (and in Angus's case, proto-Modernist) discourse. Building upon the pioneering work of critics like Janet Caird, Carol Anderson, Dorothy Porter McMillan, John MacRitchie, Colin Milton and others, this thesis traces three interlinked themes through the poetry of Angus and Jacob, highlighting their individual literary merits and revealing their neglected contribution to 'something more permanent / than fish or weed': modern Scottish poetry ('Diving into the Wreck', lines 59-60).

Angus and Jacob both published poems before and during what was called the 1920s Scottish Literary Renaissance; in many ways their work played a significant role in the revitalisation of Scots literary language and in Scottish literature in general.⁵ Their poems, often deceptively traditional in structure, explore a range of themes discussed more explicitly in the following chapters. One of the most compelling aspects of their work is their shared interest in the self; in reading through their work, one can see that almost all of their poems are written in the first person. The first person in their poetry is not like the lyric alter-ego one finds in the confessional poetry of slightly later poets like Hilda Doolittle (H.D.), however. In Jacob's and Angus's work, the poem's speaker is the dramatically rendered **poetic self** at the poem's centre. The poetic self represents a fictional extension of the human self, a textual shadow contained within the poem who speaks the poem's narrative, and whose perceptions imbue the text. The psychology of this poetic self, or *persona*, is at the root of Jacob's and Angus's poetry. Concomitant with an interest in the poetic self is a parallel interest in poetic **voice**; both poets 'inhabit' the voices of their speakers – to borrow a phrase from Kate Flint – by creating the poem as a written utterance of poetic self. Moreover, in exploring how poetic selves respond to a 'range of experiences and emotions' in male and female selves (childbirth, loss, death, and love), they illuminate how poetic selves 'feel' in response to the world around them.⁶ The poem becomes the self's narrative, filtered through its consciousness and therefore, for the reader, a revelation of the self's psyche. Ultimately, Jacob and Angus show how the self is inflected and influenced by its surroundings, reflecting upon the self's often undisclosed emotional 'hurt[s]' and 'hidden' needs.⁷

In particular, this thesis examines how Jacob and Angus portray the self with reference to three specific relationships: to time, space, and other selves. Why this tripartite approach? Fundamentally, the choice of these categories is a response to their thematic significance in both poets' *oeuvres*. The close readings offered here indicate how frequently the poem captures the self's attempt *in extremis* to understand or reconfigure its temporal, spatial, or inter-relational co-ordinates. In addition, the three approaches derive from the desire to situate (however briefly) Angus's and Jacob's work within a series of contemporaneous contexts.

Remembering that 'philosophy may not cause, but it can clarify' the driving questions of a particular era, the introduction draws upon philosophical debates of the inter-war years not to prove particular influences upon Jacob and Angus, but rather to elucidate key tensions in their poetry.⁸ By situating Jacob's and Angus's poetry within historical, sociological, and literary contexts, the introduction incorporates a range of contemporaneous and modern critical material into an exploration of how Jacob and Angus describe the self. Taking care to identify each writer's individual approach, the thesis builds towards a larger claim that Jacob and Angus, in integrating modern elements into their traditional poetic heritage, produced poetry that challenges the boundaries of poetic expression in questioning the self's relationship to the external world. Although their work is often more dissimilar than alike, the work of Jacob and Angus read in conjunction offers a radically different vision of Scottish literary history than was once imagined.⁹

The work of Angus and Jacob attracted considerable contemporaneous praise, and it is useful to consider key historical criticism in conjunction with more modern commentary as both contribute to a better understanding of the work. One recent critic, writing on Angus, calls her 'a true poet, who merits and requires careful reading'.¹⁰ For comparison, a contemporaneous reviewer comments: 'her imagination moves most freely among unknown modes of being, in a region where the partitions between seen and unseen, present and past, melt away'. Another reviewer provides a similar summary of Jacob's work, maintaining that she 'displays a delicacy of insight and a subtlety of rhythm' in her 'well-handled measures'. Moreover, in 1924 a reviewer for *The Glasgow Herald* called Jacob 'one of the most genuine of living Scottish creative writers'. These are just a few responses to their work; critics from both ends of the twentieth century note their deft use of

supernatural material, and highlight the range of 'starkly primitive, eerie, or desolate' emotions their poems relate.¹¹ The pleas of contemporary critics such as Caird, Anderson, and John MacRitchie for re-publication of their poetry regrettably has not yielded fruit yet (although Jacob's fiction has fared better).¹² Fortunately, universities and schools are beginning to teach their work again; within the past ten years the amount of critical attention to their poetry has increased (thanks to the work of a few committed individuals). This thesis draws from these sources and unpublished archival material, in conjunction with close readings of selected poems, to provide a closer examination of Jacob's and Angus's contribution to modern Scottish poetry.

Brief Biographies of Jacob and Angus

Jacob and Angus share similar birth and death dates, both spent time in north-east Scotland, and wrote in Scots and English; consequently, critics tend to write about their work as though it were largely similar. As both are considered minor poets, some critics also find it expedient to analyse their work together.¹³ This tendency often effaces the stylistic and thematic distinctions characterising their work and, as Christopher Whyte suggests, may 'prove to be a further manifestation of their disadvantaged position as women writing within a male-dominated culture rather than a means of overcoming it'.¹⁴ Moreover, some otherwise well-meaning critics write about their work only as it prefigures literary developments considered more important (in the case of Colin Milton's otherwise excellent analysis of Scots poetry, Jacob and Angus are the necessary predecessors to the true focus of his argument, MacDiarmid).¹⁵ This is not to disparage the work of those who have written about Jacob's and Angus's poetry, certainly; one can acquire a sense of each writer's unique style from a comparative study of their work. Nevertheless, I will look at each poet's work independently, but within a parallel framework so that their poetic differences and similarities may emerge. By presenting each poet individually, I hope to encourage a dialogue *between* the poets' work, rather than around it.

Before examining the work of Angus and Jacob, it is useful to consider essential aspects of their lives, albeit briefly, to acquire a biographical context for their work. Their biographies present two distinctly different challenges. Jacob hails from an aristocratic family whose history is intricately interwoven into the history of

Scotland itself. By contrast, Jacob herself is often difficult to trace: she moved frequently once leaving Scotland and rarely dated letters, so one cannot always determine her whereabouts. Angus, too, did not date her letters fully. As she never married, owned little property, and moved frequently, and, critically, did not hail from a landed family like Jacob, she left little material record behind her. About Jacob, one can find an overabundance of historical family information, but little personal information; on Angus, one can find sporadic family information and almost no personal information, barring a few letters preserved in archives. What follows represents the compilation of three years of research – a whole kettle of red herrings, a mapful of wrong turns, and, a few gems.

Violet Jacob: 'A Most Aristocratic Person'

The Public Records Office in Edinburgh has a vast collection of papers related to the House of Dun, and the historical record of the Erskine family. Jacob contributed to the wealth of information on her family with the thorough 1931 history *The Lairds of Dun*, which describes the evolution of the Erskine family in conjunction with critical episodes of Scottish history. Despite this considerable body of information, details of Jacob's personal life remain obscured. The basic dates in her biography – birth, marriage, death – are well-known and recur in articles about her work, but aspects of her life beyond these certainties remain for the most part unexplored.¹⁶ One can obtain some understanding of Jacob's biography from a consideration of her publication record. From 1891 to 1944, Jacob published a staggering number of books – including fiction, poetry, history, and short stories. She also published finely wrought essays in *Country Life* and contributed poems to C. M. Grieve's short-lived periodicals, *Northern Numbers* and *Scottish Chapbook*. The settings described in her work hint at some of the places she lived: *Verses* includes poems set in India and Egypt and in *The Sheep Stealers* (1902) she refers to the Anglo-Welsh borderland where she lived after returning from India. Nevertheless, these offer only a glimpse at Jacob's life beyond the printed word. To discover more one needs to read her letters and journals and the work of contemporary critics.

Jacob was born Violet Kennedy-Erskine in 1863 at the House of Dun outside Montrose. Her father was the eighteenth Laird of Dun; she had one younger sister

Millicent and a younger brother Augustus.¹⁷ Caird summarises Jacob's life in one pithy, un-embellished paragraph:

She was born in 1863, a Kennedy-Erskine of the House of Dun near Montrose. In 1894 she married Arthur Jacob, and thereafter led the life of an Army officer's wife in postings to India, Egypt, and various garrison towns in England. Her only child, a son, died of wounds in 1916 in France; her husband died in 1936, and Violet went to live in Kirriemuir till her death in 1946. ('The Poetry of Violet Jacob and Helen B. Cruickshank', p. 32)

Caird's *précis* presents Jacob's life as bracketed by men; she intentionally or unintentionally overlooks some of the more unusual aspects of Jacob's life. In fairness, information about Jacob's personal life outwith these bare facts is hard to locate. As both Anderson and Sarah Bing point out, Jacob's journals and letters provide only rare glimpses into her emotions. When strong emotions do surface, as they do in letters to a friend after Arthur's death, they are confined in taut sentences.¹⁸ This ability to conceal her feeling recurs in her poetry, in its carefully controlled presentations of emotion. Jacob's use of the dramatic monologue form (discussed later) allows her to 'proceed [...] by indirection', hiding any personal feelings behind the mask of persona (Porter McMillan, p. 48).

A close reading of some of Jacob's non-fiction offers a slightly fuller picture of Jacob's personal life. Despite Jacob's tendency to maintain a formal distance in her published writing, in certain pieces she offers surprisingly personal revelations about her life. In a 1920 essay, Jacob relates childhood memories of a summer in Brittany. Her description of the manor where they stayed reveals as much about her own nature as it does about the place:

There were corners dark enough for mystery, windows high enough in the roof for us to look out over the boundaries of its domain and see snatches of the foreign world of which we knew so little. On the roof, the bell was there in its iron pagoda, suggestive of everything romantic - of curfews, alarms, dangers, the summons to desperate deeds. . . .¹⁹

One can see how 'corners dark enough for mystery' captivate Jacob even as an adult; her short fiction in particular explores 'corners' of the human psyche. Stories like

'Annie Cargill' and 'A Middle-Aged Drama' both hinge upon the revelation of secrets contained in 'corners' of characters' minds. Other excerpts from this essay illustrate what Anderson calls Jacob's 'irreverent sense of humour' (p. 349). In one passage, Jacob describes how in defiance of the 'suffocating respectability' they were meant to maintain, she and her siblings raced 'decorous little French girls' down the road in a donkey cart (p. 686). Jacob's glee in reporting this is evident. Similarly, passages from her India journals and letters reveal other unexpected aspects of her character: she read Balzac, smoked, went riding on her own (probably in men's clothing), and learned enough Hindi to ask about local flora. Moreover, she helped nurse the ill in the army hospital in India, an activity she would later repeat (in Britain) during WWII.²⁰

Photographs of Jacob are rare; I have seen only one photograph from her youth in print, and a handful of her in later life.²¹ She resolutely avoided using photographs for publicity purposes. 'Once, when asked for one, she gently but firmly replied:

as for a photograph, I do not possess one and in any case I am bound to admit that I could not let you have one. I have stood out permanently for declining to join the throng of writers who advertise their books by their countenances; and as I have refused so many applications for mine, I can never make an exception, no matter how anxious to connect, without giving offence to people whom I should regret in any way to offend. I hope you will forgive me for this.²²

The few extant images of Jacob – including a bronze bust by William Lamb, and an oil painting – suggest a regal, slightly distant woman of considerable beauty. One can understand why a Maharajah once told her, '[y]ou are a most aristocratic person; I have seen people like you in Buckingham Palace' (DLI, p. 31).

The preoccupation with loss explored in Jacob's poetry has roots in her personal life. Anderson recognizes that Jacob 'knew sorrow, losing both her father and sister in early life' and indicates that the loss of her mother and son Harry within two years was devastating.²³ Bing suggests that Jacob's belief in 'life after death' helped assuage some of the pain caused by the loss of her son (p. 109); she cites a letter Jacob wrote to a friend, admitting, 'I believe so much in the "communion of saints" that I am

certain that he is never far from me' (p. 109). In the letter, Jacob adds that she knows that her grief will 'cloud' Harry's joy, so she tries 'harder than ever to conquer [grief] and to wait in hope and patience'. Some of the struggle to 'conquer' sorrow manifests itself in the poetry Jacob wrote after Harry's death. Her friend Susan Tweedsmuir attributes Jacob's movement into poetry to Harry's death: 'when [Harry] was killed in the 1914 War a spring in her broke. She never wrote a long book again, and turned to writing poems in the Scottish vernacular'.²⁴ Although Jacob had experimented with Scots before (including an early poem she co-authored), her 1915 *Songs of Angus* marked a move away from the fiction she wrote in the 1910s. She turned her careful, incisive vision away from fictional pieces to short, lyrical poems.

After her husband's death, Jacob moved to Kirriemuir after spending most of her adult life outside of Scotland. In a letter to a friend she remarks:

I always knew that, should I be left alone, the only thing that would keep me from breaking my heart would be to live in Angus. Montrose was too cold and Brechin too tragic in its recollections, so I went to Kirrie. My husband would be glad to know, he loved Angus so dearly (Papers of James Christison).

She closes the letter: 'no words can express how much I miss him. But it is not everyone who can look back for over 40 years of such happiness. There never was anyone like him' (ibid.). While in Kirriemuir she received numerous honours for her work, including an honorary degree from the University of Edinburgh. Her final book, *The Scottish Poetry of Violet Jacob*, was published to great acclaim in 1944; it is a testament to her popularity that despite wartime paper rations, the book was re-printed several times. When she died, she was buried next to her husband in the cemetery at Dun Church (not in the family plot on the estate) under a simple headstone.

Marion Angus: 'Nothing If Not Original'

In a characteristically elusive letter to her publisher Charles Graves, Angus once described herself as inheriting 'Scottish Border blood on Mother's side and that of a

line of seceding ministers in the North East' from her father.²⁵ Angus simply did not reveal details about her life in public. The persistent image of Angus in the literary record, if one exists at all, is the portrait Cruickshank took when Angus was in her eighties and recovering from a stroke. She looks every bit as otherworldly, fey, and 'delicate' as Maurice Lindsay's introduction to her *Selected Poems* implies she was. Cruickshank's recollection of Angus's 'old-fashioned cottage' and her 'gnomic charms' condemns her – however unconsciously on Cruickshank's part – to the rank of minor poet.²⁶

Angus's work was immensely popular, although her literary output is relatively slim. Like Jacob, her *oeuvre* included different genres, from travel writing (*Round About Geneva*), fiction (*Christabel's Diary*) and biography (*Sheriff Watson of Aberdeen*) to poetry. Like Jacob, Angus published work in journals and magazines. She also wrote at least one play – for the 'Children's Hour Scott Centenary'.²⁷ Her first publications are the result of newspaper work for *The Arbroath Guide*. Regrettably she did not pursue fiction as assertively as Jacob did. The witty, Wilde-like feminist prose Angus produced in the *fin-de-siècle* is sharply observant, but perhaps once she left the relatively protected Arbroath circle, she may have found that she could not maintain the 'assured voice' (p. 48) Porter McMillan associates with (chiefly male) authorial privilege.

Critics have speculated upon the subject of her love poems – MacRitchie wonders whether the her work emerges out of the loss of a lover in WWI – and others have pondered, warily, her female speakers' 'secret stories' (Porter McMillan, p. 50). Biographical investigations yield little illumination, although one can discover some surprising facets of her personality. Thanks to the work of MacRitchie and Gibson, we have some of the essential information about her early life. She was born Marion Emily Angus in Sunderland, England, in 1865, the eldest daughter in a family of eight that included her parents Henry (a Presbyterian minister) and Mary-Jessie, and siblings William Watson (b. 1870), Henry (b. 1864), Ethel Mary (b. 1871), Annie Katharine (b. 1869), and Amy Margaret (b. 1872).²⁸ They moved to Arbroath when Marion was eleven. Unlike her brothers (in particular, Henry, who became a doctor), Angus did not continue her education beyond high school. As Catriona Burness reminds us, higher education for women in nineteenth-century Scotland was

deemed unnecessary, and as the eldest daughter of the manse, Angus would have had ample filial duties.²⁹ Furthermore, even for women in the generation after Angus, equal access to education was rare. Margery Palmer McCulloch observes:

a society organised on patriarchal principles has no means whereby young women can enter into adulthood alongside their brothers as *human beings*; they are instead categorised and constricted by biological function and by the perception of marriage as their essential goal.³⁰

By not marrying or having children, Angus did not fulfil either 'goal'; she did not have the freedom to travel widely, as her brother did. (Henry lived in Vienna and Otago, New Zealand in the 1880s.) Angus *did* travel – she records one trip to Geneva in 1899, and perhaps managed to reach Algeria, where her father preached in the mid-1880s; moreover, Henry's travels certainly would have exposed her to a wider world beyond Scotland.³¹ Her writing reveals a broad knowledge of literature in English (including the work of Tennyson, Shelley, Scott, Byron, Stevenson, Shakespeare, Pater, Thoreau, Housman, Donne, and Wordsworth) and art, and a keen appreciation of Wilde's work.³²

A long-neglected article by Nan Shepherd recalls that Angus (called 'Minnie' by her family) and her sister Ethel ran a private school in Cults, Aberdeen before WWI (p. 9). Both sisters volunteered in the war effort; Ethel went overseas to Calais as a VAD (Voluntary Aid Detachment) nurse, Marion worked in the canteen at the base at Stobbs (Shepherd, pp. 8-16). Their nephew William recalls that Marion was 'much exhausted by this work, with its long hours and harsh conditions, but she spoke after it with the greatest respect and admiration for the ordinary private soldiers, and their simple good sense and kindness'. These missing pieces of information provide a better picture of Angus's life. She ceases to be the 'slight, almost frail' creature Cruickshank evokes in her 'Personal Note', and becomes a far harder *human*.³³ Significantly, Shepherd remembers her not as a delicate creature but as 'a master of astringent, not to say scarifying, comment' (p. 10); although her verse did not show it, Shepherd remarks, 'barbaric fire' could 'suddenly scorch one from her mouth' (p. 4). Gibson records she had a 'puckish sense of humour, and was given to making devastating remarks' (n/p). In other words, she was hardly the 'home-made Marion'

Alan Bold calls her. As she writes to a friend in 1931, 'It's a queer world but you will find someone to laugh at and someone to weep with at every turn.'³⁴

Angus like Jacob lived in several locations. After WWI she and Ethel lived in Peebles but at the end of the 1920s, they moved to Aberdeen, to Zoar, the 'old-fashioned cottage' Cruickshank describes (*Octobiography*, p. 76). Angus refers to Zoar as 'a house of happiness' located 'just on the edge of town'.³⁵ The cottage still stands; one can imagine Angus writing in the cloistered upstairs rooms or in the living room by the hearth. This house – named after the place of refuge occupied by Lot and his daughters after they fled Sodom (Genesis, 19:20-22) – is where Angus lived when she wrote her finest poems. It is not clear whether Angus named the house; 'Zoar' means 'small' in Hebrew, and implies a sheltered space. Sadly, Ethel's illness in the 1930s forced her to sell the house and disperse her possessions.³⁶ From 1931 onwards, Angus rented rooms (notably in Greenock, near her sister Amy Service) or stayed in friends' houses. She continued to play a part in Scottish literary politics through her involvement with P.E.N. (she was a founding member of the Aberdeen chapter) but was somewhat less involved because of her debilitating grief for her sister. According to one source, she was also a member of the General Council of the Scottish Association for the Speaking of Verse, and as part of her involvement with that group gave lectures on poetry.³⁷ Similarly, she broadcast several lectures on poetry for the BBC during the late 1920s and early 1930s. Interestingly, in 1931, at the behest of Naomi Mitchison and Cruickshank, she met the young W. H. Auden; Cruickshank recalls Angus wrote, 'is this the new poetry? It sounds like a voice from another planet' ('A Personal Note', p. xvi). Although Angus may have found 'new poetry' like Auden's baffling, her interest in it did not fade with age or infirmity. As one friend remembered, '[s]he was so alertly interested in new books and new writers; so selflessly mindful of those she herself had known in her more active and social days'.³⁸ Angus's letters from the 1930s demonstrate her 'alert' interest in new literature – she frequently wrote to fellow writers like Gunn, Soutar, and Shepherd to praise them for new work; she similarly comments upon what new books she was reading in notes to friends.

Angus was by all accounts unconventional – one friend recollected that she eschewed worries about her 'old' and 'wrinkly' body to go bathing (perhaps skinny-dipping)

when she was in her sixties; another Arbroath resident remembered her as the first woman in town to ride a bicycle and to smoke (although another resident flatly denied the former).³⁹ A compelling description of her appeared in the *Arbroath Guide* after her death:

She was nothing if not original. I feel pretty sure she enjoying shocking correct and conventional people (at times she could say fairly devastating things), but her friends enjoyed her extravaganzas and loved her for them, because they knew that, even when her wit was mordant, she had a capacious and most generous heart [...] any picture of her, however, would seem to be incomplete which did not mention her deliciously unpractical ways.⁴⁰

A profoundly different image of Angus's life emerges from these vignettes. Her 'mordant' wit and iconoclastic tendencies are a surprising contrast to the image Lindsay offers of her as a mere 'sensitive appreciator' who is 'catapulted' into verse by an unknown stimulus (p. xi). While these revelations do not answer many of the questions asked by those interested in Angus's work – what kinds of poetry did she write before she published *The Lilt*? did she write more short stories? and what happened to her letters and books after she left Zoar? – they do offer some insight into the personal influences behind her often enigmatic verse.

Angus, like Jacob, moved back to the north-east late in life. Writing to Cruickshank in the last years of her life, Angus remarks, 'I am now very frail and indeed there is little of the original ego left' but adds, 'Your literary life is of great interest. I have to go to live in Arbroath soon with a kindly competent maid and shall be always glad to hear of or from you.'⁴¹ Angus, like Jacob, died in 1946; her ashes were scattered on Elliot Links outside Arbroath by her friend W. S. Matthews and her nephew William Angus.⁴²

Historical Context

The biographies of Jacob and Angus are important to consider when reading their work, as these biographical sketches shed light upon the places and people significant to their lives. One also should examine their work with reference to the

wider context in which they wrote. The following sections present three contexts – historical, sociological, and literary – in which to consider their work, emphasizing the importance of a multifaceted approach to their poetry. As Howard Nemerov discovers in ‘The Blue Swallows’, a ‘kaleidoscopic’ approach reveals unexpected visions – in the case of Jacob’s and Angus’s poetry, a ‘kaleidoscopic’ contextual analysis is useful as it draws attention to dominant themes in their work, while allowing for a broader range of critical approaches.⁴³ On one hand, to examine their work with reference only to a generalised sociological history is to risk deracinating their work, thus minimising their contribution to the development of Scottish literature. To place them solely in a Scottish literary context, on the other hand, is to deny the larger forces influencing their development. Clive Bloom stresses that an examination of literature must take into consideration ‘the relationship between history, culture and social relations’ influencing the text. Furthermore, as Liz Yorke (commenting specifically on women’s writing) reminds us, texts are ‘palimpsest[s] of social, historical and personal experience’. In examining different aspects of ‘history, culture, and social relations’, the following sections sketch out three related contextual backgrounds in order to present Jacob’s and Angus’s work as ‘palimpsest[s]’ of traditional and modern influences. Analyzing their work with reference to a multitude of different contexts avoids placing their work deeper into the critical ‘wilderness’ Elaine Showalter has suggested is the fate of women writers.⁴⁴

History in These ‘Wanchancy’ Times

The historical period in which Jacob and Angus wrote was one fraught with ‘momentous’ change and social and economic disruptions.⁴⁵ The events shaping their youth in the Victorian age – including the ‘major educational reforms’ of the 1870s, the ‘New Woman’ debate, and the blend of post-Darwinian secular doubt and spiritualist fervour animating literature – played a vital role in their early development. The context in which they wrote, however, is highlighted here for it leaves the most indelible marks upon their portrayal of the self. Jacob’s first full-length Scots volume, *Songs of Angus*, appeared in 1915; Angus’s last book was the 1937 *Lost Country*. For convenience and clarity, I will refer to the period bracketed by these two dates as the years in which they were most active (although both produced work outwith this period). During this twenty-two year period, Scotland –

and the rest of the world – witnessed enormous social changes: a devastating World War (1914-1919); the Russian revolution (1917); the military build-up preceding the second World War; the General Strike (1926); the beginning of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939); the US stock market crash and consequent economic depression (1929, 1930s).⁴⁶ These tremendous political and historical changes had significant effects upon society; by the late 1930s many felt Scotland was ‘lost’ in what MacDiarmid identified as ‘deep surroondin’ darkness’.⁴⁷ Others, however, found energy in developments like the extension of voting rights to women (1918 for women over thirty, 1928 for all women); the rejection of the Home Rule Bill in Ireland and the establishment of Irish Free State (1913; 1922); the election of Britain’s first Labour government (1924); and the foundation of the Scottish National Party (1934). The events of these two decades radically redefined Scottish society.

Scotland during the inter-war years also faced significant internal unrest. The general movement out of rural areas and into urban centres in the late nineteenth century – compellingly dramatized in Edwin Muir’s autobiography – meant that by 1900, one in three Scots lived in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee, or Aberdeen.⁴⁸ By 1911, nearly seventy percent of Britain lived in urban areas (Carter and McRae, p. 347). Swelling urban populations strained civil infrastructures (if and when they existed); sanitation and housing were often substandard and overcrowding, particularly in Glasgow, was rampant. Combined with this, in the inter-war years industries upon which the economy had been based for decades suffered economic decline: according to Bloom, the coal-mining workforce was reduced by over twenty percent during the 1910s and 1920s (p. 9); shipbuilding (as illustrated in George Blake’s *The Shipbuilders*) suffered similar setbacks – the number of jobs declined by half (Bloom, p. 9). Because of these and related factors, almost a fifth of the population lived below the poverty line during these years (Bloom, p. 10). Even before the post-war economic decline, numerous Scots, lured by promises of wealth overseas, emigrated to Canada or the United States.⁴⁹ At the same time, thousands of other Europeans flooded into Scotland: Italians, Irish, Lithuanians, and Jewish émigrés from Eastern Europe either stayed temporarily on their way to the US or settled in Scottish cities and smaller towns, where vibrant immigrant communities flourished. The tension between some

immigrant communities and native Scots - in particular, between Irish Catholics and Scottish Protestants - bubbled continually below the surface (Devine, pp. 484-492).

WWI proved to be far more disruptive to Scottish society than any of its internal tensions. Lynch reveals that although 'no official overall death roll of Scots was ever issued [. . .] it is likely that Scotland lost nearer 110,000 dead than 75,000, a fifth rather than an eighth of the total 573,000 for the four nations' (p. 422). Royle offers a slightly lower approximate, suggesting 'of the half-million Scots who volunteered to serve' nearly '125,000 were killed in action or died on active service, one-sixth of the total British and Empire casualty list'.⁵⁰ As Lynch points out, for cities like Glasgow, this proportionately translated into over *ten percent of the adult male population* (p. 422). If large cities were profoundly affected, so too were small towns; it is rare to find a Scottish village without a monument commemorating war dead. The great 'lost generation' of men killed in battle, combined with the large proportion of young men who emigrated before WWI, disrupted the gender ratios in Scotland to such an extent that there were thousands more women than men. According to the 1931 census, nearly a third of all women aged 50 to 54 in the Highlands had never been married (Devine, p. 536).

WWI - and the gender imbalance it created - had a profound effect on women's lives in Scotland. Because such a significant proportion of the male population participated in the war, women became involved in various kinds of employment - from traditionally 'female' jobs like nursing to industrial employment in munitions factories (Devine, p. 536). Over three million women worked in industry (Lynch emphasizes that 'less than one in four' worked in traditionally male occupations) (p. 423). In general, the war 'disrupted established gender assumptions', allowing some women greater freedom: to go 'bicycling or dancing' and to visit 'theatres, music halls and cinemas'.⁵¹ This increased freedom helped fuel the women's suffrage campaign (although it was 1928 before universal suffrage existed). War work was not limited only to young women, however. Jacob and Angus like many older women served in some capacity during WWI. As Rowbotham notes, even those not involved in war work would have contributed to the effort; everyone was affected by food and petrol rations, and nearly everyone lost someone in the war (Rowbotham, pp. 79-82).

The influence these historical alterations had upon literature is well documented by contemporaneous writers and recent critics. Carter and McRae claim that 'most writers between the wars displayed an engagement with the issues of the time'; the inter-war writers they mention 'fused the private and public worlds' into one discourse (pp. 374, 376). The distinction between the lyricist's internal world and the political commentator's external world disappears in works like Sorley MacLean's *Dàin do Eimir* (1943).⁵² Poems like Hugh MacDiarmid's *A Drunk Man Looks at the Thistle* (1926) struggle to make sense of the uncertainty of these blurred worlds in a 'wanchancy time'.⁵³ Novels like Lewis Grassie Gibbon's *Grey Granite* (1934), Catherine Carswell's *Open the Door!* (1920), and Willa Muir's *Imagined Corners* (1931) tackled the socio-political and gender-based divisions in Scottish society and uncovered the dark want at the core of modern life. Inter-war literature like this radically altered the threshold between internal and external as writers tried to reconcile themselves to the enormous changes brought about by the war.

In comparison to the work of self-consciously political poets like MacDiarmid or Maclean, Angus and Jacob for the most part avoid references to major historical events. One finds little evocation in their poetry of the suffrage movement, for example, although both would have been interested in the issue as their poetry challenges conventional gender tropes. In Angus's work, Caird identifies 'Remembrance Day' from *The Lilt* as the *one* poem that refers to a specific historical event. Caird emphasizes the 'curiously timeless quality' in Angus's poetry and questions why 'nothing of the events of that tumultuous period [of her life] is reflected in her verse' (p. 46). MacRitchie claims, 'it is as if she has decided not to let the present-day into her imaginative world' (n/p). It is not surprising that Angus's war work has gone unnoticed; her lack of war poems to some readers seems to imply an *absence* of wartime experience. Porter McMillan pushes these critical responses one step further by interpreting the absence of historical poems in Angus's *oeuvre* as proof that Angus makes 'no attempt at major poetry' (p. 49). MacDiarmid levies a similar judgement upon Jacob (although here, significantly, in reference to her fiction) in *Contemporary Scottish Studies*. He scolds her for failing to engage with 'vital' national issues that a 'better-oriented spirit with her raciality of character' would have confronted.⁵⁴ Cruickshank attributes the absence of political discourse

in both poets' work to age and ill health: 'as both ladies had been confirmed invalids for years, both dying at the age of eighty, a preoccupation with modern political revolutions was hardly to be expected' ('A Personal Note', p. xx). Although Cruickshank offers this in defence of their work, her statement effectively draws an intraversable line between their poetry and 'modern' issues; she relegates their work to an 'old-fashioned' (*Octobiography*, p. 76), pre-modern literary era. (Incidentally, in the process she negates any subversive tendencies in their verse by emphasizing their age, rather than output). In these critics' analyses, Angus and Jacob are 'minor' poets not as much because of a perceived lack of skill, apparently, but because of their disinterest in 'political revolutions' (Lindsay, p. xiii; Porter McMillan, p. 49; Cruickshank, p. 76). It has taken perhaps until the end of the century to consider, as Rich does, the personal as political – and in this light, reconsider the work of Jacob and Angus as 'political' not in the standard definition, but in the sense of engaging (more significantly than previously believed) with social issues.⁵⁵

Jacob's War Poetry

One must note that unlike Angus, however, Jacob did produce poems specifically about WWI – the 1918 volume *More Songs of Angus* – many of which dwell upon the bond between mother and soldier-son. Despite this (and her dedication in *The Scottish Poems of Violet Jacob* to 'the comrade beyond'), she is not remembered as a war poet. She does not feature in most volumes of war poetry (including *The Virago Book of Women's War Poetry and Verse*) and remains largely absent from critical consideration.⁵⁶ Royle's *In Flanders Field* is the notable exception. Jacob perhaps falls into the double bind of being a Scottish woman poet in a market that privileges poetry by English men. As Jan Montefiore observes:

the absence of women from critical history is not because of a corresponding absence of relevant material [...] A woman's place is still *not* thought to be that intersection of public and private life where major literature is supposed to be constructed.⁵⁷

Montefiore is correct in noting that there is not a dearth of women's writing, particularly on the subject of war. Although Montefiore's analysis refers primarily to

fiction, her conclusions usefully can be extended to include poetry. According to Keith Robbins, *thousands* of people in Britain wrote war poetry during WWI; he speculates that 'one and a half million war poems were written in August 1914 – 50,000 a day'. Many of these poets were women, as Khan makes clear. Yet, as Margaret Higgonet explains, 'the definition of war poetry privileges actual battlefield experience'.⁵⁸ Jacob's evocation of battlefield scenes fails to command the attention attracted by poems by male counterparts like Charles Murray in part because she lacks 'actual battlefield experience'.

Gray proposes that the enormous outpouring of poetry during WWI represents 'a way of coming to terms with the experience of war' (p. 50) – either as a participant or as an observer. Pushing Gray's conclusions further, one can discern how some war poetry prioritises catharsis over poetic integrity; Montefiore argues that the uneasy juxtaposition of dogma and lyric emotion often produced work memorable more as part of the cultural record than for its literary merits (pp. 65-69). Here one can discover another possible reason for the neglect of Jacob's political poetry: generally, her war poems are not her best. Porter McMillan claims they are hampered by 'banal conventionality' of language and sentiment; Harry's death was still too recent to address, however 'depersonalise[d]' Jacob's language. Douglas Young, however, disagrees, insisting that Jacob's war poetry 'succeeded best in conveying' the war's 'profound emotions', in her 'powerful utterance[s]'. Anderson summarizes it best when she admits Jacob's war poems are 'mixed in quality'.⁵⁹ Although poems like 'The Brig' or 'The Field by the Lirk o' the Hill' are powerful evocations of women's loss in war, others, like 'The Twa Weelums' and 'Kirsty's Opinion', read more like propaganda.⁶⁰ Perhaps because Jacob was both a participant (as a nurse) and an observer (through correspondence with Harry) her need for catharsis at times can overwhelm the poem. Despite this, one *should* consider Jacob's war poetry not solely as cultural relics but as proof that she did engage quite seriously with 'vital' issues in a way that does challenge the neat boundaries between 'public and private life' (Montefiore, p. 25).

Social History: Self, Time, and Space

The basic historical background provided above offers one context in which to consider the work of Jacob and Angus. It is also useful to indicate the broad sociological framework in which they wrote, for an understanding of inter-war society allows one to read their portrayals of self in light of contemporaneous beliefs. Moreover, situating their work within a series of different *milieus* allows for a blend of critical approaches; aware of the context in which they wrote, one can interpret their work in light of more recent critical theory in an informed manner. Far from being sensitive souls 'catapulted' into poetry by a single biographical event (Lindsay, p. xi), Jacob and Angus are conscious, careful poets whose best work grapples with social and philosophical questions.

Self

An exploration of self is at the centre of both poets' work. A brief survey of how the self was considered in the inter-war years enables the reader to situate their work more effectively; consequently, the following sections consider how in an age 'broken up not merely by its events but by its perspectives' (Bloom, p. 5), general attitudes towards self altered, often in response to innovations in psychology and anthropology. The great sociological discoveries of Jacob's and Angus's youth – and the repercussions of *The Communist Manifesto* (1848), Charles Darwin's controversial *Origin of the Species* (1859), and Frederick Nietzsche's *Twilight of the Idols* (1899) and *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886) – challenged assumptions about human behaviour.⁶¹ In the early twentieth century, issues once considered taboo (including sexuality) attracted significant public debate. Psychologists like Havelock Ellis, Sigmund Freud (and later Carl Jung), and William James, among others, delved into the inner mind, exposing its unconscious desires.⁶² Simultaneously, anthropologists like James Frazer claimed a common ritual base in societies regardless of belief system or background, while scientists like Albert Einstein strove to understand wider forces vivifying the physical world. These separate discourses developed distinct and often contradictory attitudes towards the self.

One aspect of the self rigorously investigated during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was its relationship to the mind. Psychologist William James (1842-1910) argues that the self is composed of multiple 'constituents', including 'material', 'social', and 'spiritual' aspects.⁶³ While the self's physical or 'material' nature persists, its 'social' aspect contains multiple facets that alter in response to the social situation. One has as many selves as 'there are individuals who recognize him' (p. 294); social interactions 'divide' the self into 'several selves' (p. 294). The self is *fluid*; a feeling of 'warmth' connects the present self to previous avatars (p. 331). Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) looked at the darker motivations of the self's 'several' constituents in his research into mental illnesses. Introduced to many in Britain through *The New Age* (the London-based periodical and preferred reading of Muir and MacDiarmid), Freud's work explores the tension between conscious will and unconscious desires.⁶⁴ His findings explain human behaviours by exposing the self's often ambiguous impulses. In particular, he focuses upon how dreams reveal the 'workings of the unconscious mind' (Carter and McRae, p. 350). Freud's conclusions were profoundly disturbing at the time because they suggested that the nineteenth-century's scientific idealism was misguided – humans are not rational, but subject to *internal* and external forces beyond their comprehension. For many, the work of Freud and others ultimately suggested that the self is fragmentary, rather than whole (or wholly conscious).

The psychologist's model of an irrational, fluid self coexisted with another vision of self espoused by anthropologists and folklorists in the early twentieth century.

People like James Frazer (1854-1941) (and before him, Andrew Lang) explored the self as it exists within a 'universe of cultures' (Carter and McRae, p. 350). In his multi-volume work *The Golden Bough* (1890-1915), Frazer compares 'social' practices across cultures, revealing shared human behaviours (Carter and McRae, p. 350). In providing what Christopher Nash calls an 'overriding vision of the evolution of human culture' from 'the dawn of pre-history to the Edwardian present', Frazer's work offers a cohesive vision of 'the feeling, thought and action of a people'.⁶⁵ Similar anthropological works on Scottish folklore, including *Primitive Beliefs in the North-East of Scotland* (1929) and the earlier *Folklore of Scottish Lochs and Springs* (1893), were equally significant. They record 'old traditions' and identify how communities over time synthesize older non-Christian rites with Christian belief. Defining the

self in the context of 'universal myth[s]' (Carter and McRae, p. 350), these works imply that at the root of the fluid self exists a core of 'universal' behaviour Jungian analysts later link with the collective unconscious.

Seeing the self as multifarious yet connected to other selves gives one a better understanding of how Jacob and Angus portray the self. For Angus, texts like *Primitive Beliefs in the North-East of Scotland* (one of her favourite books, according to Shepherd) show how the 'primitive' self is perhaps 'lost and gone and forgotten', and yet inextricable from the modern self.⁶⁶ The tension between these selves in time animates her earliest work (discussed in chapter four). In Jacob's case, the ethnographic urge to preserve 'lost' beliefs behind works like *Folklore of Scottish Lochs and Springs* underlies her own writing; her essays on Anglo-Welsh folklore, reflections upon Hindu mythology, and inclusion of explanatory footnotes in poems for non-Scots readers indicates a desire to explain folk beliefs to others.⁶⁷ The self in both poets' work emerges out of a dual motivation – the desire to connect with the past, and a need to integrate this past into the present.

Time

Both poets' tendency to incorporate past elements into the present is closely related to their treatment of time; each explores how the self reconciles its inner sense of duration (what Jacob calls the time 'our he'rts remember') with external time.⁶⁸ Their shared interest in time parallels a widespread literary and cultural preoccupation with time during the inter-war years. To Wyndham Lewis, writing in 1927, the world seemed entranced in a 'cult of Time'. Indeed, Stevenson claims these years were characterised by 'a new sense of temporality' that 'imbue[d] the whole age, not only in literature and philosophy but throughout "the modern sensibility"'. The 'new sense' Stevenson observes emerges in response to technological and scientific advances in late Victorian and early modern eras that pushed what was always a human concern to the forefront.⁶⁹ Prior to the 1880s, clock-time in Britain was not uniform; each town set its own time in contradistinction to 'Railway Time', the closest Britain had a standard national time (Stevenson, p. 122). In 1884, the Prime Meridian Conference established Greenwich, England as the zero point from which all other times are calculated, and 'determined the exact length of the day, divided

the earth into twenty-four time zones one hour apart, and fixed a precise beginning of the universal day' (Kern, p. 12). Because of international changes like these the world 'moved from the charms and idiosyncracies of local time-zones' to 'a system which ensured, globally, that time and space were rationally divided, ordered and defined' (Stevenson, p. 123). These societal changes had an immense impact upon life in Britain. A worldwide standard contingent upon geographical distance from a single point in England gradually replaced internally or locally regulated concepts of time.

At the same time, the philosophical innovations of people like Alfred Einstein (1879-1955) and Henri Bergson (1859-1941) revolutionised how people understood time. Einstein's theory of special relativity (1905) and general relativity (1916) altered how the general public conceived of the self's relationship to time.⁷⁰ By suggesting 'every reference body' has 'its own particular time' Einstein offers scientific evidence of multiple time frames previously theorised by James (p. 26). For our purposes, Bergson's work, which appeared in English in the 1910s (*Introduction to Metaphysics* in 1910, *Matter and Memory* in 1911, *Time and Free Will* in 1910), is even more important. His notion of *durée* – the self's 'internal time' – offers an explanation of how the self processes time, as it is mediated by memory. He argues that 'pure duration' occurs when the self's 'conscious states' flow into one another.⁷¹ The 'fundamental' or 'ever changing' (p. 130) inner self contains within it all its 'former states' and forms from these 'both the past and present states into an organic whole' (p. 100). Duration insists upon continuity between past and present that is not dissected into clock-time units. Lewis, although sceptical of Bergson's claims, astutely interprets duration as a 'complete *interpenetration*' of past and present (p. 411; his emphasis). Duration, as an 'organic' admixture of the past and present, is characterized by its enduring, continual cognizance of the past. This blend of times thrives on flux rather than division and circumscription.

Gillies calls Bergson a 'cultural phenomenon' (p. 25) whose ideas were 'common currency, in the academic as well as the fashionable societies throughout Europe and North America' (p. 3). Bergson's findings certainly had an electrifying effect upon writers. Richard Lehan insists 'Bergson's influence, direct or indirect, on modern literature cannot be denied'.⁷² In particular, Modernist writers like Virginia Woolf,

James Joyce, William Faulkner, and Eliot interpolated Bergson's theories of time (mingled with James's concept of 'stream' of consciousness) into their narratives. W. B. Yeats read 'widely in Bergson'. Scottish writers like the Muirs read Bergson (one can detect his influence in *Imagined Corners* and *An Autobiography*).⁷³ Marcel Proust – Bergson's distant cousin by marriage – found in Bergson 'a guiding light'.⁷⁴ There is no evidence that Angus or Jacob read his work, but, as Stevenson notes, Bergson's work appealed to and was discussed by the literate public; as women involved in literary debates, Jacob and Angus at least might have heard of his work. As with Freud, the British public learned about Bergson in part through articles published in *The New Age* (Martin, p. 136). As Gillies reveals, *The New Age* was not alone: between 1909 and 1911 'over two hundred articles' about his work appeared in English media (Gillies, p. 28).⁷⁵ Bergson gave public talks in Oxford, London, and Birmingham in 1911 (Gillies, p. 29) and in Edinburgh in 1913-14 (where he, like James, delivered the Gifford lectures).⁷⁶ His theories for many explained how memory connects past and present, and how inner time exists independently of the then newly standardized clock-time.

Space

In Jacob's and Angus's work, the self's relationship to time is complicated by close connections between time and geographical space. In some poems, like Angus's 'The Green Yaird' (LC) or Jacob's 'Craig Woods' (SA), memory binds the self's relationships to time and to space together.⁷⁷ As will be shown later, space in their work has both geographical and psychological components; the self's relationship to space thus depends upon the particular manifestation of space in the poem. The poets' interest in space, like their focus upon time, is paralleled in the wider context by a general public fascination with space; space, like time, 'occupied a peculiar position' in the popular imagination (Stevenson, p. 11). Part of this relates directly to scientific innovations in time. Einstein's theories of relativity, for example, hypothesized that space and time are relative to the speed of motion; space is distorted by 'the act of observing' it from a 'moving reference system' (Kern, p. 135). Space and time fuse into 'space-time' (Lewis, p. 409) and the boundaries between the two disappear. The self, consequently, experiences 'places in time' and moments of space, simultaneously.⁷⁸

Other factors altering public understanding of space include improvements in rail travel and wireless communication, and increased popularity of the telephone, which 'collapse[d]' distances into 'uncannily intimate proximity'.⁷⁹ Stevenson notes that technological changes like these 'contributed to new conceptions of the fundamental co-ordinates of experience, space and time' (p. 9). Furthermore, innovations in photography in the 1910s and 1920s allowed film makers to manipulate space in new ways; double exposures, for example, allowed for the simultaneous depiction of events normally separated in space (Kern, pp. 70-72). Through these developments, the self's understanding of space and distance is made relative to visual and aural cues received, in new ways, from the outside world.

One of the most significant developments in the public conception of space in the inter-war years is the increased interest in inner space – with the popularity of psychoanalytic theories, there was a noticeable shift towards conceiving of space as cerebral, rather than geographical. The 'visible, tangible, object world' became less significant, in Stevenson's understanding, 'than what is invisible and dwells within' (p. 21). Viewing the external world as a 'wasteland' scarred by war and poverty, writers turned their attention inward to investigate the 'inner world of unique and isolated individuals' (Carter and McRae, p. 393). Fuelled by Freudian (later Jungian) forays into the 'invisible' world 'within', experimental writers in particular probed the self's inner spaces to find either an 'empty, windswept place' or a dazzling projection of the self's 'nerves in patterns on a screen'.⁸⁰ The writer's task becomes describing what Woolf calls the 'unknown and uncircumscribed spirit' of life.⁸¹ In a specifically Scottish context, writers like Angus and Jacob examine the self's psycho-geography – what MacDiarmid calls the 'howes o' Man's hert' (*A Drunk Man Looks at the Thistle*, l. 507) – through the use of innovative language and narrative devices. In Angus's and Jacob's work (as shown in the next section), older models of the self's relationship to space, coupled with new attitudes towards private and public space, produced a dynamic environment in which to articulate the self's inner space.

¹ Adrienne Rich, 'Diving into the Wreck', in *Diving Into the Wreck: Poems 1971-1972* (London, 1973), lines 52-63, 87-94.

² Joy Hendry, 'Twentieth-Century Women's Writing: The Nest of Singing Birds', in *The History of Scottish Literature*, edited by Cairns Craig (Aberdeen, 1987), IV, 291-310 (p. 291).

- ³ Dorothy Porter [McMillan], 'Scotland's Songstresses', *Cencrastus*, 25 (Spring 1987), pp. 48-52 (p. 48).
- ⁴ Catherine Kerrigan, 'Introduction' in *An Anthology of Scottish Women Poets*, edited by Catherine Kerrigan (Edinburgh, 1991), p. 1.
- ⁵ The Renaissance will be discussed in the introduction's second half.
- ⁶ Kate Flint, "'As A Rule, I Does Not Mean I': Personal Identity and the Victorian Woman Poet', in *Rewriting the Self: Histories from the Renaissance to the Present*, edited by Ray Porter (London, 1997), pp. 156-166 (p. 157). Carol Anderson, 'Tales of Her Own Countries: Violet Jacob', in *A History of Scottish Women's Writing*, edited by Douglas Gifford and Dorothy McMillan (Edinburgh, 1997), pp. 347-359 (p. 352). Nan Shepherd, 'Marion Angus as a Poet of Deeside', *Deeside Field Club*, 2 (1970): pp. 8-16 (p. 15).
- ⁷ Marion Angus, 'A Small Thing', l. 1, *The Turn of the Day* (Edinburgh, 1931), p. 9. Porter [McMillan], p. 49. The connection between poem and psychological portrait will be discussed in part two.
- ⁸ Randall Stevenson, *Modernist Fiction: An Introduction*, revised edition (London, 1998), p. 116.
- ⁹ Particularly in earlier critical work, like Maurice Lindsay's *Modern Scottish Poetry: An Anthology of the Scottish Renaissance*, 2nd edition (London, 1966) and Alan Bold's *Modern Scottish Literature* (London, 1983).
- ¹⁰ Janet Caird, 'The Poetry of Marion Angus', *Cencrastus*, 25 (Spring 1987), pp. 45-47 (p. 47).
- ¹¹ Review of *The Singin' Lass*, *TLS*, 10 October 1929, pp. 798-799 (p. 799). Review of *Northern Lights*, *TLS*, 17 November 1927, p. 843. Review of *Two Poems*, *Glasgow Herald*, 18 December 1924, p. 4. Review of *Sun and Candlelight*, *TLS*, 2 November 1927, p. 795.
- ¹² John MacRitchie, 'Arbroath's Singin' Lass', *Arbroath Herald Annual*, 1996 (Arbroath, 1996), n/p.
- ¹³ Porter [McMillan], p. 49; Janet Caird, 'The Poetry of Violet Jacob and Helen B. Cruickshank', *Cencrastus*, 19 (Winter 1984), pp. 32-34 (p. 33).
- ¹⁴ Christopher Whyte, 'Marion Angus and the Boundaries of Self', in *A History of Scottish Women's Writing*, edited by Douglas Gifford and Dorothy McMillan (Edinburgh, 1997), pp. 373-388 (p. 387).
- ¹⁵ Colin Milton, 'Modern Poetry in Scots before MacDiarmid', in *The History of Scottish Literature*, edited by Cairns Craig (Aberdeen, 1987), IV, 11-36 (passim).
- ¹⁶ Carol Anderson has contributed most of the published information on Jacob's life.
- ¹⁷ Family tree, in *The Lairds of Dun* (London, 1931), n/p.
- ¹⁸ Anderson in 'Tales of Her Own Countries: Violet Jacob', passim; Sarah Bing, 'Autobiography in the Work of Violet Jacob', *Chapman*, 74-75 (Autumn / Winter 1993), pp. 99-109 (p. 101). Letters of James Christison, Montrose Library.
- ¹⁹ 'A Manor House in Brittany', *Country Life*, 22 May 1920, pp. 685-686 (p. 686).
- ²⁰ *Diaries and Letters from India, 1895-1900*, edited by Carol Anderson (Edinburgh, 1990), passim. Papers of Violet Jacob, NLS, MSS 27411-16.
- ²¹ The portrait of Jacob as a young woman appears in Bing's article. The portrait reproduced in the appendix originates in *Current Literature* from 1904.
- ²² Letters of Marion Cleland Lochhead, NLS, MS 26109, folio 245.
- ²³ Carol Anderson, 'Spirited Teller of Tales from a Beloved Country', *Glasgow Herald*, 9 May 1998, p. 12; Anderson, 'Violet Jacob', DNB, Oxford University Press, forthcoming.
- ²⁴ Susan Tweedsmuir, *The Lilac and the Rose* (London, 1952), p. 55.
- ²⁵ Letters of Charles Graves, NLS, MS 27477, folio 71.
- ²⁶ Maurice Lindsay, 'Introduction', *The Selected Poems of Marion Angus*, edited by Maurice Lindsay (Edinburgh, 1950), pp. ix-xiv (p. xiv). Helen Cruickshank, *Octobiography* (Montrose, 1976), p. 76.
- ²⁷ Colin Gibson, 'They Sang of Angus', *Arbroath Herald Annual 1984* (Arbroath, n/d), n/p. Gibson quotes W. S. Mathews as saying that Angus's play was 'accepted by the BBC, but they had already accepted a play for the Centenary, and said they would broadcast her's [sic] at a later date. She asked for it to be returned, and burned it in the furnace! The Centenary or nothing!' (n/p). Papers of Nan Shepherd, AUSC, MS 3036, folio 8; in one letter Angus asks for advice about historical plays for children for the BBC.
- ²⁸ 1865 is her birth year, not 1866 as commonly recorded. Census returns for 1871, Sunderland; 1891, Arbroath. I can find no information about Annie after 1902. Her name recurs in Angus's work - 'The Blue Jacket', 'Annie Honey', 'Links o' Lunan', 'Ann Gilchrist', and 'Green Beads'.
- ²⁹ Catriona Burness, "'Kept some steps behind him": Women in Scotland 1780-1920' in *A History of Scottish Women's Writing*, edited by Douglas Gifford and Dorothy McMillan (Edinburgh, 1997), pp. 103-118 (p. 111). MacRitchie, passim.
- ³⁰ Margery Palmer McCulloch, 'Fictions of Development 1920-1970' in *A History of Scottish Women's Writing*, edited by Douglas Gifford and Dorothy McMillan (Edinburgh, 1997), pp. 360-372 (p. 366).

- ³¹ 'Death of Rev. Henry Angus, D.D', *Arbroath Herald*, 22 May 1902, p. 5. *University of Aberdeen Role of Graduates, 1860-1900* (Aberdeen, 1906), p. 188. I have no proof of letters between Angus and Henry. As he returned to Aberdeen to finish his thesis one can assume they spoke about his travels.
- ³² In *Christabel's Diary*, Angus alludes to Wilde's contemporaneous *The Critic as Artist* when Christabel notes, 'indiscretion is the better part of valour' (p. 38). She makes almost no reference to women's writing - whether by choice or lack of texts available to her.
- ³³ Papers of Nan Shepherd, AUSC, MS 2737, folio 47. Helen B. Cruickshank, 'A Personal Note', in *Selected Poems of Marion Angus*, edited by Maurice Lindsay (Edinburgh, 1950), pp. xv-xxi (p. xx).
- ³⁴ Bold, *Modern Scottish Literature*, p. 25. Papers of Mairi Campbell Ireland, NLS, MS 19328, folio 133, 13 April 1931.
- ³⁵ 19328, folios 94, 20, circa 1930.
- ³⁶ Alexander Cruden, *Cruden's Complete Concordance to the Old and New Testaments*, edited by A. D. Adams, et al. (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1968). Angus writes, c. 1930, 'I was forced to clear up my papers and letters before I left [Zoar]' (MS19328, folio 105); Ethel's trauma could have contributed to the breakdown that kept her in hospital until her death in 1936 (private correspondence).
- ³⁷ MS 2737, folio 42 (excerpt from *The Bulletin*, c. 1946). William Hamilton notes Angus lectured on 'Scottish Poetry Old and New' to that group in 1927-28. MS 2737, folio 44. Through the society she could have met poet Alice Stuart, founding member of the group (Kerrigan, p. 359).
- ³⁸ 'In Memoriam: Marion Angus', *Glasgow Herald*, 23 August 1946, p. 3.
- ³⁹ Personal interview with the late Nancy Cant, Arbroath, 1999. Nancy was a teen-ager when she met Angus and recalled with delight Angus's irreverence. Private papers of John MacRitchie, Kirriemuir. *Christabel's Diary* meditates upon bicycling and smoking, c. 1899.
- ⁴⁰ P. W. L., 'Miss Marion Angus: An Appreciation', *Arbroath Guide*, 31 Aug. 1946, p. 6.
- ⁴¹ Letters of Helen Cruickshank, Stirling University Library, February 13th (no year).
- ⁴² Gibson, n/p. Matthew recalls, 'one day in her last year of life, she said to me - "I'd like my ashes scattered on the sands at Elliot."' MS 2737, folio 35.
- ⁴³ Howard Nemerov, 'The Blue Swallows', in *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*, third edition, edited by Alexander W. Allison, et al. (London, 1983), pp. 1216-1217 (p. 1216): 'Seven blue swallows divide the air / In shapes invisible and evanescent, / Kaleidoscopic beyond the mind's / Or memory's power to keep them there'.
- ⁴⁴ Clive Bloom, 'Introduction' in *Literature and Culture in Modern Britain, Volume One: 1900-1929*, edited by Clive Bloom (London, 1993), pp. 1-29 (p. 1). Liz Yorke, *Impertinent Voices: Subversive Strategies in Contemporary Women's Poetry* (London, 1991), p. 4. Elaine Showalter, 'Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness', in *The New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature, and Theory*, edited by Elaine Showalter (London, 1986), pp. 243-270 (passim).
- ⁴⁵ Ronald Carter and John McRae, *The Routledge History of Literature in English: Britain and Ireland* (London, 1997), p. 349.
- ⁴⁶ Carter and McRae, passim; Bloom, passim; Peter Keating, *The Haunted Study: A Social History of the English Novel, 1875-1914* (London, 1989), passim; Roderick Watson, *The Literature of Scotland*, MacMillan History of Literature Series (London, 1984), passim.
- ⁴⁷ 'Milk-Wort and Bog-Cotton', line 10 (c. 1932) in *Selected Poems*, edited by Alan Riach and Michael Grieve (London, 1992), p. 153.
- ⁴⁸ Michael Lynch, *Scotland: A New History*, rev. edition (London, 1997), p. 411.
- ⁴⁹ T. M. Devine, *The Scottish Nation: A History, 1700-2000* (London, 1999), p. 485.
- ⁵⁰ Trevor Royle, ed., *In Flanders Field: Scottish Poetry and Prose of the First World War* (Edinburgh, 1990), p. 13.
- ⁵¹ Sheila Rowbotham, *A Century of Women: The History of Women in Britain and the United States* (London, 1999), p. 85.
- ⁵² The publication date is deceiving; the poems refer to the Spanish Civil War.
- ⁵³ Hugh MacDiarmid, *A Drunk Man Looks at the Thistle*, l. 669 (Edinburgh, 1926).
- ⁵⁴ Hugh MacDiarmid, *Contemporary Scottish Studies*, reprinted from the 1926 edition (Edinburgh, 1976), p. 10.
- ⁵⁵ Adrienne Rich, 'Blood, Bread, and Poetry: The Location of the Poet' (1984), in *Adrienne Rich's Poetry and Prose: Poems, Prose, Reviews and Criticism*, edited by Barbara Charlesworth Gelpi and Albert Gelpi (London, 1975), pp. 239-252 (p. 248).
- ⁵⁶ Catherine Reilly, ed., *The Virago Book of Women's War Poetry and Verse* (London, 1997). Martin Gray, 'Lyrics of the First World War', in *British Poetry 1900-1950: Aspects of Tradition*, edited by Gary Day and Brian Docherty (London, 1995), pp. 48-63; MacDonald Daly, 'Scottish Poetry and The

Great War', *SLJ*, 2 (November 1994), pp. 79-96; Nosheen Khan, *Women's Poetry of the First World War* (London, 1988).

⁵⁷ Jan Montefiore, *Feminism and Poetry: Language, Experience, Identity in Women's Writing* (London, 1987), pp. 22, 25.

⁵⁸ Keith Robbins, *The First World War* (Oxford, 1984), p. 16. Margaret Higgonet, *Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars* (New Haven, 1981), p. 11.

⁵⁹ Porter [McMillan], p. 48. Douglas Young, 'Foreword', *Scottish Verse, 1851-1951*, edited by Douglas Young (Edinburgh, 1952), pp. xvii-xxx (p. xxv). Anderson, 'Tales of Her Own Countries: Violet Jacob', p. 354.

⁶⁰ In the text, when I evaluate a poem's 'success', I consider the poem with regards to the following criteria (and thus these comments should be interpreted as an informed, but wholly subjective, evaluations): metrical skill, linguistic clarity, emotional intensity - characterized not by hackneyed expression, but by original observation, and the ability to fulfill its (apparent) poetic project.

⁶¹ Edwin Muir, *The Present Age from 1914*, Introductions to English Literature Series, edited by Bonamy Dobrée (London, 1939), V, 188-189, 164.

⁶² Foucault contends sexuality has always been a part of public debate. Not refuting that, the introduction of Freudian theory and Ellis's sexual taxonomies into popular debate marks a change from previous eras in Britain. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, translated by Robert Hurley, (Harmondsworth, 1990), I (passim).

⁶³ William James, *The Principals of Psychology, Volume 1* (New York, 1890), p. 292. He gave the Gifford lectures in Edinburgh in 1902-1903 on the relationship between self and spiritual belief.

⁶⁴ Keating, p. 121; Wallace Martin, *The New Age Under Oration: Chapters in English Cultural History* (Manchester, 1967), p. 139.

⁶⁵ Christopher Nash, 'Myth and Modern Literature' in *The Context of English Literature, 1900-1930*, edited by Michael Bell (London, 1980), pp. 160-185 (p. 171). Michael Roberts, 'Introduction to the First Edition', *The Faber Book of Modern Verse*, reprinted from 1936 edition (London, 1951), pp. 1-35 (p. 25).

⁶⁶ Shepherd, p. 15. J. M. McPherson, *Primitive Beliefs in the North-East of Scotland* (London, 1929), p. vi. Marion Angus, 'Heritage', l. 13, in *Sun and Candlelight* (Edinburgh, 1927), p. 28.

⁶⁷ Violet Jacob, 'Day Before Yesterday, Parish Legends from Llanigon', *Country Life*, 11 September 1920, p. 347-48.

DLI, pp. 50-51 (11 December 1896): 'It seems almost impossible to find out anything about these idols [...]Hindu mythology is so complicated to an unassisted beginner that I despair of ever knowing anything about them [...]One has to piece all sorts of things together, and never neglect a turning for fear it should lead to a blind alley'.

⁶⁸ Violet Jacob, 'Maggie', l. 21, *Songs of Angus*.

⁶⁹ Wyndham Lewis, *Time and Western Man*, edited by Paul Edwards, reprinted from 1927 edition (Santa Rosa, CA., 1993), p. 206. Stevenson, p. 115. Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space, 1880-1918* (Cambridge, MA, 1983), passim. Jerome Hamilton Buckley, *The Triumph of Time: A Study of the Victorian Concepts of Time, History, Progress, and Decadence* (London, 1967), pp. 2-13.

⁷⁰ Philip Turetzky, *Time*, The Problems of Philosophy Series, edited by Tim Crane and Jonathon Wolff (London, 1998), pp. 146-150. Albert Einstein, *Relativity: The Special and General Theory*, trans. by Robert W. Lawson, repr. from the 1920 edition (London, 1988).

⁷¹ Mary Ann Gillies, *Henri Bergson and British Modernism* (London, 1996), p. 11. Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*, translated by F. L. Pogson (London, 1910), p. 100. Chapter four discusses Bergson's work.

⁷² Richard Lehan, 'Bergson and the Discourse of the Moderns', in *The Crisis in Modernism: Bergson and the Vitalist Controversy*, edited by Frederick Burwick and Paul Douglass (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 306-329 (p.323).

⁷³ Woolf denied knowledge of Bergson's work, although critics argue *The Waves* and *Mrs. Dalloway* reflect his influence. James, p.297, passim; Stevenson, p. 109. Richard Ellmann, *Yeats: The Man and the Masks*, reprinted from 1948 edition (London, 1979), p. 265.

⁷⁴ Stevenson, p. 109; Joseph Chiari, 'Vitalism and Contemporary Thought', in *The Crisis in Modernism: Bergson and the Vitalist Controversy*, edited by Frederick Burwick and Paul Douglass (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 245-273 (p. 252).

⁷⁵ This number does not consider Scottish press figures.

⁷⁶ 'Continuity of Change: M. Bergson on Personality', *Glasgow Herald*, 13 May 1914, p. 12; 'M. Bergson's Lectures: Disorders of the Personality', *Glasgow Herald*, 15 May 1914, p.12; 'Personality Problems: M. Bergson in Edinburgh - The Gifford Lectures', *Glasgow Herald*, 22 April 1914, p. 12;

'Philosophy of Plotinus: M. Bergson in Edinburgh', *Glasgow Herald*, 29 April 1914, p. 4; 'Professor Bergson on Personality: The Closing Lecture', *Glasgow Herald*, 13 May 1914, p. 10.

⁷⁷ Marion Angus, *Lost Country and Other Verses* (Glasgow, 1937).

⁷⁸ Edwin Muir, *An Autobiography*, from the original 1954 edition (Edinburgh, 1993), p. 219. Muir's autobiography divides into geographical locations, as they parallel temporal periods.

⁷⁹ Bloom, p. 17, Kern, p. 67; Steve Connor, 'The Modern Auditory "I"' in *Rewriting the Self: Histories from the Renaissance to the Present*, edited by Ray Porter (London, 1997), pp. 203-223 (p. 205).

⁸⁰ William Carlos Williams, 'These', l. 7, in *The Collected Poems of William Carlos Williams*, edited by A. Walton Litz and Christopher MacGowan (Manchester, 1986), I, 458-459 (p. 458), c. 1938. T. S. Eliot, 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock', line 105, *Poems: 1909-1925*, reprinted from 1925 edition (London, 1940), p. 9.

⁸¹ Virginia Woolf, 'Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown' (1924), in *Modernism: An Anthology of Sources and Documents*, edited by Vassiliki Kolocotroni et al (Edinburgh, 1998), pp. 395-397 (p. 397).

Introduction: Literary Context

While situating Jacob and Angus within a social-cultural context is relatively straightforward, establishing their literary context is perhaps more problematic; over the past eighty years critical response to their work has varied so immensely that locating a stable middle ground is difficult. Mid-twentieth-century critics, particularly Maurice Lindsay, have noted how difficult it is 'to assess the poetry' of one's immediate predecessors. Because of this uneasiness, or perhaps due to what Douglas Dunn calls the era's 'conspicuously male-centred' perspective, Jacob's and Angus's work is largely neglected in anthologies and critical commentary in the 1940s and 1950s.¹ By the 1980s and 1990s, however, critics began to reassess their work, arguing for a more inclusive vision of Scottish literary history. What follows is a brief survey of selected aspects of twentieth-century Scottish literary history, and an equally condensed presentation of key issues of debate in the 20s and 30s; with an understanding of the wider literary context we then can turn to Angus's and Jacob's poetry to examine it in detail.

Twentieth-century Scottish Literature: Writing out of *Terra Incognita*

In 1906, an anonymous journalist in *The Glasgow Herald* declares, 'it is becoming ridiculously evident that the history of Scotland has yet to be written [...] As regards that fiction which is the reproduction of life in literature, Scotland is still a *terra incognita*'. The journalist claims that because Scotland lacks an accurate written history, it cannot nourish its literature. Written thirteen years before T. S. Eliot's scathing 'Was There a Scottish Literature?' and anticipating in a general way his assertions, the *Glasgow Herald* article lambasts Scottish writers for failing to write realistically. A few months later, a second *Glasgow Herald* article laments that 'the ambitious Scottish literary aspirant' must 'transplant his talents to the alien atmosphere of the English metropolis' in order to succeed.² Read together, these articles offer an insight into Scottish literary culture at the beginning of the twentieth century. Ignoring for a moment their androcentric bias, one can discern early traces of two themes in Scottish literary history: an uneasy relationship with London's 'alien atmosphere', and a desire to illuminate and explore Scotland in text.

Writing less than twenty years later, Hugh MacDiarmid makes similar connections between history and literature, concluding that Scottish literature needs to consider 'distinctively Scottish traditions, tendencies, and potentialities'.³ He claims, 'the only thing we lack in Scotland [...] is a sufficiently intense spirit of nationalism' (p. 61). Neil Gunn, likewise, expresses dismay at the failure of 'Scottish intellectuals' to 'make a concrete contribution to social reconstruction [of Scotland] in the interests of the folk'. For writers like MacDiarmid and Gunn, Scottish literature needed a complete 'reconstruction'; confronted with what Dunn refers to as a 'weariness of immediate resources' and a 'lack of [literary] predecessors', they sought new directions for Scottish literature.⁴ Part of the disgust Gunn, MacDiarmid, and others felt at the state of Scottish literary affairs had roots in changes that occurred in the late nineteenth century. One problematic factor was the gradual decline of the Scottish publishing industry; by the inter-war years Scottish publishing was in a 'bleaker age' as London, rather than Edinburgh or Glasgow, became Britain's publishing capital.⁵ The consolidation of presses in England meant a changed constituency for many writers (as more readers would be English). Scottish writers like George MacDonald moved to London to be closer to literary affairs. The emigration of publishers and authors south meant that the remaining Scottish presses produced fewer books (but more religious tracts, as Alistair McCleery maintains).⁶ Even as late as 1927, Angus wrote to Gunn praising him for publishing his new book in Scotland, adding, 'I am no believer in this craze for English publishing houses at all costs'. Tellingly, Angus's publisher – The Porpoise Press – was bought out by London-based Faber and Faber in the 1930s.⁷

McCleery associates the dearth of Scottish publishers with the 'debilitation of Scottish [literary] culture' (p. 10). One symptom of this 'debilitation', McCleery and others assert, was the popularity at the turn of the century of **kailyard** writing. According to Royle, 'Kailyard' was:

the catch-all phrase used by J.H. Millar in the April 1895 issue of the *New Review* to describe the novels of J. M. Barrie, S. R. Crockett and Ian Maclaren. Here was a well-defined arcadia of village life, a school of rural sentimentality which ignored the ills of turn-of-the-century Scotland, its industrial development, poverty and high mortality rate.⁸

Kailyard writing, exemplified for many by Maclaren's *Beside the Bonnie Briar Bush* (1894), focuses upon the 'timeless stasis of isolated rural communities' and, consequently, 'fail[s] to acknowledge the modern world altogether'.⁹ Because kailyard literature was so popular, it 'defined the social reality of Scotland, for Scots and non-Scots alike' (McCleery, p. 10). Watson claims that in prescribing a false vision of Scotland's 'reality', kailyard writers 'rechannelled' all the 'human passions which Presbyterianism was so intent on stifling' into 'vicarious grief at one fictional death after another' (p. 318). Kailyard poetry similarly 'dealt in facile emotional stereotypes'; in an attempt to produce poetry like Burns's, countless nineteenth-century poets (in the Kailyard and without) wrote verses characterized by 'degenerate sentimentalization'. Peter Keating intriguingly suggests that kailyard writing's popularity demonstrates a backlash against realist novels of authors like Zola; kailyard writing preserved a vision of pre-industrial Scotland, eschewing *fin-de-siècle* doubt for conservative morality.¹⁰ As Dickson and others observe, however, the key issue underlying the rejection of kailyard literature was the tension between the 'new phenomenon of popular literary culture' and the Scottish literary establishment. Seen as both popular (in Oliphant's words, 'silly') and sentimental, kailyard writing became for many a scapegoat on which to blame the perceived degeneration of Scottish literature.¹¹

Vernacular Writing and the Scottish Renaissance

The troubled state of Scottish literature at the beginning of the twentieth century, among other factors, provided the impetus for change during the inter-war years. Looking to nurture 'distinctively Scottish traditions, tendencies, and potentialities' (MacDiarmid, p. 61) in Scottish literature, writers like MacDiarmid, Gunn, Gibbon, Jacob, and Angus rejected 'simplistic' images of Scotland to embrace the 'human passions' many believed Victorian literature omitted (Donaldson, p. 146). The work of these writers, along with that of their contemporaries, came to be associated with what was called the **Scottish Literary Renaissance**. Like the writers in the wider **Modernist** movement (of which, one can argue, the Scottish Renaissance is a part), Renaissance authors grappled with similar themes: dissolution of culture, societal fragmentation, and a mingled fear of and appreciation for the increasing

thing that is not yet dead scarcely requires to be re-born' (Acc. 5756). His cantankerous comment serves as a necessary reminder that the Renaissance did not spring fully formed from MacDiarmid's head. Numerous critics (including Milton, Dorothy Porter McMillan, Anderson, Wittig, and Joy Hendry) have shown that the Renaissance had *distinct* precedents in the vernacular writing flourishing in the years previous to, and concurrent with, the Renaissance. It is worth considering what Watson indicates as 'signs of revival in culture and politics' that 'can be traced to the beginning of the century' (p. 325).

Vernacular Writing in the Early Twentieth Century

As Saunders observes, vernacular writing in Scotland was 'not yet dead' in the 1910s and 1920s. Successful vernacular poetry and prose existed, concomitant with an academic interest in Scots literature; at the University of Aberdeen, for example, Professor Grierson (who also re-introduced the work of Donne and the Metaphysicals to Britain in the 1910s) taught courses on Scots literature. Tom Leonard's *Radical Renfrew* offers a glimpse of the vitality of Scots poetry before WWI.²³ Prose, too, flourished: Scots prose was a key component of popular broadsheets pre-WWI (Donaldson, p. 35); although not linguistically or thematically complex, it provided a precedent for the blended Scots / English diction in works like Gibbon's *Scots Quair* (1934) and his short fiction, and Jacob's *Flemington* (1911) and *Tales of My Own Country* (1922). More significantly for this argument, Scots poetry was not 'lost to serious use', despite Watson's belief that it was not viable after its 'sentimental rustification' in nineteenth-century poetry (p. 346). Before *Sangshaw* (1925) and *Penny Wheep* (1926) appeared, a wide variety of Scots poetry already existed, including Charles Murray's popular *Hamewith* (1909); Pittendreich MacGillivray's *Pro Patria* (1915) and *Bog-Myrtle and Peat-Reek* (1922); John Buchan's *Poems, Scots and English* (1917); Lewis Spences's *The Phoenix* (1923), and *Plumes of Time* (1926); Jacob's *Songs of Angus* (1915), *More Songs of Angus* (1918), *Bonnie Joann and Other Poems* (1921), and *Two New Poems* (1924); and Angus's *The Lilt* (1922) and *The Tinker's Road* (1924) (not to mention the poetry of John Davidson, Robert Louis Stevenson, William Soutar, Jessie Annie Anderson, Mary Symon, and others publishing in journals). Much of the Scots poetry (including Angus's and Jacob's) originates in north-east Scotland; Milton attributes this to the region's 'relative

Scots – specifically in relation to English – creates what Cairns Craig refers to as a ‘doubleness’ of vision in Scots literature that is:

not a disabling ‘dissociation’ but a dialectic in which ‘the dialect of the tribe’ plays a crucial role. The standardisation of English in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries – driven first by the Oxford English Dictionary (which exiled ‘dialect’ words) and then by the efforts of Daniel Jones et al to create a standard of pronunciation – produced a linguistic climate in which speech innovation was minimised.²¹

The push for standardised vocabulary and pronunciation did influence early twentieth-century Scottish literature, as Grieve’s pre-1922 commentary upon Scots (and Muir’s break with MacDiarmid) reveal. The ramifications of this have not disappeared; Corbett indicates ‘non-standard Scots varieties’ must ‘defend themselves against the prejudices’ associated with ‘political, economic and artistic “peripheries”’ (p. 10). The polysemous nature of Scots, informed by its continual negotiations with English – and with different dialects – invigorates it as its boundaries are in constant debate.

For poets like MacDiarmid, the linguistic variation within Scots and its historical connection to an autonomous Scotland made it a fundamental (and, in his eyes, innovative) component of the Scottish Renaissance. In 1929 he argues (*contra* Spence):

The Scottish Renaissance movement [...] is a complex movement, affecting every aspect of Scottish arts and affairs, and its relation to Scots poetry – that is to say, poetry in the Scots vernacular, and not the work of Scottish poets in other languages – cannot be properly appreciated unless this is clearly understood.²²

MacDiarmid implies that the use of Scots relates directly to Scotland’s ‘political and economic situation’, post-WWI (p. 535). His wide claims for the vernacular’s importance to the Renaissance, however, succeed at the expense of Scots literature already extant at the time of his argument (and, indeed, before he first wrote in Scots). By definition, for literature to need a ‘rebirth’, it perforce must have experienced some kind of death. In 1924, William Saunders sceptically remarks, ‘a

has always been a hybrid language - a mixture of Old English, Old Norse and French, with lesser borrowings from other languages such as Gaelic. It shares a common core of vocabulary and grammar with English, particularly northern English.¹⁷

As a 'hybrid language', Scots has richly varied linguistic influences, from the Scandinavian sounding 'bairn' (child) to the Germanic 'nicht' (night). The mixture of several Romance languages - in conjunction with words borrowed from non-Romance languages like Gaelic - allows for what some may argue is a wider sound spectrum. Wittig suggests that 'strong consonants' give Scots 'directness' and a 'tight-lipped brevity'. Here Wittig refers to balladic Scots, but his commentary is useful in describing general aural characteristics of Scots. Contemporary writers are equally adamant about the linguistic variety in Scots. Duncan Glen calls it the 'psychological language of the Scottish people', finding as Edwin Muir does an emotional register in contradistinction to the received pronunciation English taught in schools. James Robertson, similarly, finds in Scots the ability to 'articulate things which, for whatever reason, English cannot, or which writers and speakers *feel* are beyond English'.¹⁸ Scots, like any language or dialect, varies across geographical region, and therefore words acquire multiple regional nuances or what Emma Letley calls 'meanings beyond those which words alone convey' in addition to their various emotional connotations.¹⁹ Some 'meanings' derive in part from the associations Scots has with traditional literature like the ballads. Angus's work incorporates the balladic resonances of Scots to add further depth to her poems. She, like other poets, consciously used Scots for its 'enormous vocabulary of words for which there are no [...] precise equivalents, in English' (Spence, p. 541).

Corbett reminds his readers that Scots is not standardized: 'few speakers of Scots now confine themselves to one variety of language. It is more likely that individuals move between available varieties [anglicised, rural, urban or literary] according to social context and desired effect' (p. 21). Altering one's language with regard to 'social context' is not a solely Scottish phenomenon. Nevertheless, because Scots tends to be compared unfavourably to English, palpable tensions animate Scots: anglicised Scots seems inauthentic to those who reject English influence, while urban or rural Scots each have their own specific context.²⁰ This network of stresses within

mechanization of human life. Like their Modernist counterparts, Scottish Renaissance writers tried to 'explain mankind's place in the modern world, where religion, social stability and ethics' are questioned.¹² On one hand rejecting the sentimentality of derivative nineteenth-century literature, and on the other hand engaging intensely with tradition, Renaissance writers found new ways to capture the interplay of emotions in a 'fierce', 'bricht' time.¹³

It is almost impossible to pinpoint the start of the Renaissance; there are as many origins as definitions for what 'Renaissance' entails.¹⁴ (Even a movement as well-documented as Modernism is uncertain in its periodization; although Woolf authoritatively selected December 1910, recent critics suggest WWI's aftermath or the 1922 publication of Eliot's *The Wasteland* as more useful origins.¹⁵) Despite the task's complexity, one can constellate a few significant dates in the Scottish Renaissance's evolution: in 1919, G. Gregory Smith published *Scottish Literature: Character and Influence*, his dissection of the relationship between the Scottish psyche and literature; he coined the term 'Caledonian antisyzygy' – a juxtaposition of 'two aspects which appear contradictory' – to describe Scottish character. C. M. Grieve's dramatic introduction of alter-ego MacDiarmid in 1922, and the literary anthology *Northern Numbers* (1920-22) and periodical *Scottish Chapbook* (1922-23) also contributed to what Watson calls the Renaissance's 'remarkable outpouring of cultural activity'. By the late 20s and early 30s, periodicals as diverse as *The Nineteenth Century* and *Scottish Musical Magazine*, as well as papers like *The Glasgow Herald* and *The Scots Observer* devoted critical attention to Renaissance writers.¹⁶

Scots

An important component of the Scottish Renaissance is its engagement with the Scots vernacular tradition. While a general dissatisfaction with what they conceived of as a stagnant literary scene prompted many Renaissance-era authors to write, a complementary interest in Scotland's languages fuelled innovative literary projects; in particular, the use of the Scots **vernacular** became one of the 'distinctively Scottish traditions' many sought to revive (*Contemporary Scottish Studies*, p. 61). Scots, John Corbett explains,

conscious of language variety and in particular cases
probably experienced conflicting dialect claims which
provided part of the stimulus to literary activity. (p. 29)

Jacob might have benefited from the Education Act of 1870 but, as she was educated at home, these reforms (which instituted English as language of instruction) would have had negligible effects upon her knowledge of Scots. Despite one reviewer's belief that 'the tongue of her native Forfarshire' was 'the only tongue spoken' by Jacob in her youth, Jacob acquired Scots from childhood interaction with Scots-speakers at Dun.³⁴ Jacob's letters to Montrose's librarian indicate she double-checked words before including them in poems; in one undated letter she asks, 'will you read this and just send me a line to say if there's anything you think not right in any part of it. Also, particularly - have I spelt the following word[s] right?'. She defends her use of words remembered from childhood, stating in one case, '[I] used it because I liked it so much'. Jacob's use of Scots in some ways becomes an evocation of voices left behind in childhood. Caird concurs that Jacob was not 'driven by strangely nationalist feelings to use Scots' as perhaps MacDiarmid or Spence were.³⁵ For Jacob, the choice of Scots was less political than poetic - it offered a medium for describing the 'secret inner life' of the 'individual' (Wittig, p. 277). Although Jacob's comments suggest her use of Scots is fuelled by nostalgia, Caird surmises that Scots offered Jacob the freedom to discuss tabooed subjects; Scots thus becomes a distancing device between poet and reader, or, as Caird maintains, 'a means to hand in adopting her disguises' ('The Poetry of Violet Jacob and Helen B. Cruickshank', p. 32). Jacob explores the self's 'duality' of mind' (Spence, p. 25) in her poems by employing Scots for two purposes: firstly, to give her speaker a discernible Scottish identity, and secondly to establish a linguistic distance between herself and the poem's sentiments. Scots provides a bridge between her life and the self's life to traverse when she chooses, while maintaining poetic distance. Although Porter McMillan associates Jacob's use of Scots with some instances of 'mere *noblesse oblige*', emphasizing the difference between some of Jacob's (male) poetic selves and her aristocratic background, it is worthwhile to note that Jacob in her personal life often resisted the rigid class - and gender - roles she critiques (p. 48); her use of vernacular voices can be seen as a way to diffuse rather than highlight economic privilege.

Kerrigan underscores the difference between the Scots poets like Jacob and Angus use, and the Scots associated with the 'less positive legacy of Burns', noting that the former allows for far more incisive images. Too often – as MacDiarmid well noted – Scots has been associated *not* with the medieval Makars (including Dunbar) whose work represents to many the apotheosis of Scots writing, but rather with derivative poetry written in the style of Burns. MacDiarmid's contempt for the fossilized Scots of 'croose London Scotties' in Burns Clubs (*A Drunk Man Looks at the Thistle*, l. 45) is one of the main reasons he forged 'braid' or 'plastic' Scots out of contemporary speech, archaic sayings, and words culled from *Jamieson's Etymological Dictionary*. He believed the richness of composite Scots could 'bring Scottish culture into the mainstream of contemporary modernism'.³¹ Because MacDiarmid allied himself so profoundly with Modernist tendencies in literature, those poets writing in more traditional Scots by comparison appear less 'modern' and innovative. This phenomenon in part explains why Jacob and Angus tend to be viewed unfavourably in comparison with MacDiarmid. Unlike MacDiarmid at his most experimental, Jacob and Angus use literary Scots – a language rooted in written, rather than oral, transmission – as their linguistic medium.³² Literary Scots per se is not experimental, rooted as it is in tradition. Nevertheless, in their best Scots work, they highlight the vernacular's rich aural texture, using it to convey complex images. Furthermore, their decision to use literary Scots did not arise out of an unwillingness to consider other Scots forms. Although MacDiarmid is attributed with the maxim 'Dunbar, not Burns!' it is worth noting that Jacob published an article in 1921 urging others to read Dunbar's work, identifying in his work 'that beating human pulse which must always be heard throbbing through the true poetry'.³³ For both Jacob and Angus, the vernacular becomes a way to translate the 'beating human pulse' into poetry.

Why Scots, though? Jacob and Angus also wrote in English, suggesting their choice of Scots is not dictated by necessity. Milton provides one hypothesis: he contends poets like Mary Symon, David Rorie, Angus, and Jacob had a linguistic awareness of Scots particular to north-east writers who:

belonged to the first generation of Scots to be affected by the major educational reforms of the time and so were more

traditional elements (culled from ballads and eighteenth century folksongs) and modern strands (psychologized selves, subversive narratives), one can see their work as part of a Renaissance characterized not by uniformity, but by multiplicity and internal tensions. Schenck's directive to pay 'greater attention to comparison among women writers, especially across the Modernist barrier[s]' (p. 243) of form and canonicity underlies this thesis's consideration of how Jacob and Angus, in fusing traditional and modern (and in Angus's case, proto-Modernist) elements into compelling lyrics, contribute to a more diverse Renaissance poetry.

Modern Voices, Modern Dilemmas: The Poetry of Jacob and Angus

Scots in the Work of Jacob and Angus

In her analysis of the work in MacDiarmid's early periodicals, Kerrigan examines in some depth what Dunn calls the 'transformation' process in pre-Renaissance poetry.³⁰ She maintains that by the mid-1920s, Scots poetry expresses a distinctly modern outlook:

The work in Scots [in *Northern Numbers*, Second Series] in particular shows that these poets had begun using the vernacular less for its nostalgic colouring than as a direct and viable means of expression in the present. The obsession with a simple but idealised past which had been part of the less positive legacy of Burns was being discarded and modern voices dealing with modern dilemmas were beginning to be heard. (p. 75)

Jacob and Angus are some of the 'modern voices' Kerrigan observes in the vernacular movement. Kerrigan, like Wittig, emphasizes their focus upon the self's inner world; Wittig claims that Jacob's work addresses 'the individual with his secret inner life' (p. 277) while Angus's poetry 'fully emancipate[s]' the individual so she is 'seen not as a member of society but as an individual' (p. 278). Both critics draw attention to the importance of the 'individual' self in the poetry of Jacob and Angus. It is in their insistence upon autonomous selves that Jacob and Angus are at their most modern. By exploring the poetic self in isolation (although often with an implied community around it), both poets tackle issues of subjectivity that are at their heart 'modern'.

movement. They 'fell off the edge of the cultural map drawn by men' and 'their works literally disappeared'. Palmer McCulloch similarly recognizes that women novelists in the inter-war period wrote 'outwith the predominantly male Scottish Renaissance movement, in a way which reflected the marginalisation of women in a society still strongly patriarchal'.²⁶ Is it possible to imagine a more inclusive vision of the Scottish Renaissance? As Celeste M. Schenck notes, terms like 'modernism' impress a binary framework upon a literary period, separating writers into two groups: Modernist or not. Literary history is more complex than this; consequently a broader, more fluid definition of what constitutes a literary movement needs to be considered, particularly with relation to the work of Scottish and women writers, who as Porter McMillan, Hendry, and Cairns Craig note, frequently are omitted from the canon.²⁷ Schenck asks her readers to consider the 'more traditional' writers working outside the boundaries of modernism; it may be salutary to do so in the context of the Scottish Renaissance. Writers like Shepherd, Willa Muir, Lorna Moon, Oliver Fraser, Angus, and Jacob occupy a strange position in Scottish literary history. Not Victorian, yet not considered Modernists, they are in a funny way 'whaur / Extremes meet' (*A Drunk Man Looks at the Thistle*, line 141-142), in the contested borderland between Renaissance and non-Renaissance writing. Their names 'do not appear' in the Renaissance canon, and yet their work clearly engages with the same issues tackled by their male counterparts.²⁸ The definition of what constitutes the Renaissance movement has changed, thanks to the scholarship of critics like Anderson, Palmer McCulloch, Porter McMillan, Glenda Norquay, and Kerrigan, but there is still more work to be done.

In the case of Jacob's and Angus's work, one can consider their poetry in relation to observations Edwin Muir makes in 1918. He argues that if a modern movement is to be 'vital', it 'must needs have roots in the past and be an essential expression of humanity, to be traced, therefore, in the history of humanity: in short, it can only be a tradition'.²⁹ Muir chastizes those who 'live so complacently' in the 'provincial present' without understanding the past (p. 355). By highlighting the significance of tradition in modern (literary) movements, Muir foreshadows Eliot's 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' (1919). More importantly, however, Muir here offers a model for situating the work of poets like Jacob and Angus within a broader understanding of Renaissance literature. By emphasizing the connection in their work between

cultural stability', while Anderson emphasizes the significance of the north-east's rich folksong and ballad traditions.²⁴

In the volumes listed above, the kind and quality of Scots varies. Nevertheless, the best work appearing before 1925 arguably contributes to the development of modern Scots poetry. Noticing a 'depth' in Angus's and Jacob's work, Wittig insists it offers 'an important step towards the claim that Scots still has poetic validity' (p. 279). He concludes that Angus, Jacob, Murray, together with Cruickshank 'foreshadow the coming of the Scottish Renaissance' (p. 279). Dunn is less laudatory, although he begrudgingly admits 'poets like Violet Jacob and Marion Angus at least helped to keep the Scots language alive' during the 1910s and 1920s (p. xix).

Scots writers in the 1920s saw their poetic project in proactive terms – they did not imagine themselves as nurses to a dying language, but rather considered their use of Scots as integral to their literary endeavours. Spence is perhaps the most outspoken. For him, Scots expresses the 'duality of the Scottish mind' and the 'protean and almost thaumaturgical leaps and changes of mood' in Scottish culture (p. 25). Moreover, it articulates experiences inexpressible in other media. Spence's reference to the 'protean' Scottish psyche is vital – it points to a general shift from nineteenth-century focus on setting, to the early Modernist fascination with the psychology of the self.²⁵ Wittig also discerns this, arguing that poets like Jacob and Angus use 'traditional matter', but 'develop it creatively' (p. 279). Wittig's focus upon the link pre-Renaissance poets make between 'traditional matter' and modern work is important, in that it constructs a far more useful vision of literary history characterised by connections, rather than by irruptions. As Dunn notes, the revitalisation of Scots during the Renaissance is not a rediscovery as many imagined but a process of 'transformation in the crucible of modern sensibility' (p. xix).

Re-evaluating the Renaissance?

Perhaps, then, it is time to re-evaluate the definition and parameters of the Scottish Renaissance. As Aileen Christianson observes, women like Nancy Brysson Morrison, Nan Shepherd (and by extension, Jacob and Angus) were 'part of the intellectual current' at the time of the Renaissance, and yet are not considered part of the

For Angus, Scots serves more as an inter-textual tool. Educated initially in England, her relationship with the vernacular must have had its roots in *written*, rather than oral, literature. Her use of Scots, like Jacob's, is not overtly political; she rejects association with any specific political body. In a 1930 letter she regards the embryonic Scottish National Party with some scepticism: 'I sometimes wonder if there is any real staunch endeavour in the movement at all or if it is just a cliché'. Against this, in one appearance in the often overtly nationalist *Scottish Chapbook*, she brackets her Scots poem 'Mary's Song' – here 'So Soft She Sings' – with English glosses.³⁶ Fundamentally, Angus considered Scots not as a literary or political tool, but as a natural linguistic medium. In a letter to her editor at Porpoise Press, Angus comments, 'I am afraid my Scots spelling is giving you a lot of trouble [...] About the spelling of 'your' when it means 'you are' I have in corrections put ye're and when 'your' I think yir is most like my Scots tongue'. The possessive 'my' indicates the degree to which Angus considered literary Scots *her* language. At the same time, although Scots frequently was her chosen 'tongue', she could examine it from the perspective of a non-Scots speaker; in *Christabel's Diary*, the English protagonist claims that 'terms that are almost contemptuous in England can sound quite endearing in kindly Scots'.³⁷ Ultimately, Angus associates her 'tongue' with both the lyric impulse and, significantly, innovation. In a 1930s letter to Shepherd, Angus asks (regarding Shepherd's trip to Norway): 'will you find any lyric poets there I wonder. I mean singers of today! It would be so interesting to know too if any of them write in dialect – there should a revolt from the Ibsenish tradition by this time'.³⁸ Angus's conflation of 'singers of today' with 'dialect' poetry is interesting, in that it identifies the use of the vernacular as a 'modern' choice *contra* an older (but resolutely proto-modern) 'tradition'.

Jacob and Angus wrote in English, as well as in Scots. Their English poetry is often as accomplished as their Scots verse – indeed, Charles Graves considers Angus's English poetry 'more modern' and possessing 'greater restraint' than her Scots verse, so that her English poems appear to be 'chiselled rather than sung' (p. 97). Jacob's English *oeuvre* is less successful, often, but nevertheless still contains memorable poems (including poems like 'Winter Phantasy' (BJ)) that are not included in her 1944 selected volume.

The following chapters examine primarily the Scots poetry of Jacob and Angus, in part to suggest a broader understanding of the poetry of the Scottish Renaissance, and in part to highlight their place between tradition and modern innovation in Scottish literary history. In general, however, the poems examined here represent a portion of each poet's most accomplished work. Consequently, in Angus's case, that body of work includes both English and Scots poems, while with regard to Jacob's *oeuvre* the balance swings in favour of her poetry in Scots.

Self in the Poetry of Jacob and Angus

The Modernist Self in Literature

One of the most compelling reasons for considering Jacob and Angus as Renaissance poets lies in their portrayal of self. When one examines their representations of the self, it becomes clear that their evocation of voice and illumination of the self's psychological composition is far more modern than past critics have been willing to accept. Their poems explore moments of psychic trauma, when the poem's speaker finds itself isolated from those around it and often unable to communicate with others. As Kerrigan proclaims, they are perhaps at their most modern in the manner they fuse together myriad influences – both traditional and innovative – into their individual poetic styles ('Introduction', p. 9). Consequently, the following section considers three of the main influences upon their conception of self.

The interest Jacob and Angus take in the self has roots in several traditions, both within and without Scottish literature. Drawing from dramatic monologue traditions, the ballads, and eighteenth century folksong, they commingle this material with a modern understanding of self. The 'individual' lives recorded in their poems emerge out of this dual engagement with old and new. Before examining the traditional roots of self in their work, it is useful to consider a brief précis of the Modernist self, to indicate the direction towards which their selves evolve. Arising in response to large-scale philosophical and socio-historical changes, the Modernist concept of self (as described in works like Woolf's *To The Lighthouse* (1927), Eliot's *The Wasteland* (1922), Gertrude Stein's *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* (1933) and *Lectures in America* (1935), and Wallace Stevens's *Harmonium* (1923))

is fluid, fragmented, and plagued by doubt. With time and space no longer fixed, and humans exposed as irrational blends of conflicting desires and unconscious motivations, Modernist writers struggled to find something secure onto which to hold. 'Caught in the drift' between tradition, and denunciation of tradition, Modernist writers like Eliot, Pound, and H. D. created selves with fractured consciousnesses.³⁹ Pound particularly observed how logopoeic writing – characterized by mixed registers, vocabularies, and voices – illustrates the Modernist self's inability to speak in an unbroken voice. In poems like *The Wasteland*, for example, unidentified, polyphonic voices speak continually about the 'nothing' in their 'head[s]'.⁴⁰ At the poem's centre is the solitary speaker, trying vainly to hold his fragmented self together. Carter and McRae explain that 'lexical fragmentation' in Modernist writing 'encodes a kind of fragmentation of the self, a profound psychological disturbance and dislocation which a conventionally unitary and harmonious 'poetic' diction [...] could not possibly capture' (pp. 356-7). The Modernist poet thus constructs fractured selves in unruly lexicon. In analyzing the self's 'psychological disturbance and dislocation', Modernists eschew the symbiosis of self and landscape espoused by their Romantic predecessors (and in the American tradition, by poets like Emily Dickinson and Walt Whitman); instead, they explore inner space as it reflects outwards onto a sterile landscape of 'nothing that is not there and the nothing that is'.⁴¹

Earlier Models of Poetic Self

The Ballad Self

With this image of the fragmented Modernist self in mind, one can consider how the conception of self in older traditions also informs the work of Jacob and Angus. As many critics have noted, both poets integrate imagery and language from the Scottish ballad tradition into their work.⁴² David Buchan defines ballads as 'narrative song[s] transmitted by tradition, that is, by word-of-mouth rather than print'. Emerging from a larger oral tradition, with connections to Scandinavian, Gaelic, and other European traditions, Scottish ballads chronicle historical battles, supernatural encounters, and domestic dramas of love and revenge. Characterized by narrative lacunae and a tenuous association with time and geography, ballads may

relate an actual occurrence, but often, evoke specific names and events only as a narrative structural device.⁴³ Ballads like 'Sir Patrick Spens' have discernible historical connections, while in others, like 'The Twa Sisters', the original incident is lost. Mary Ellen Brown wonders if the ballads provided a medium for discussing domestic problems in a fictionalised context; ballads like 'Wee Messgrove' could have offered a concealed analysis of events familiar to the audience. Significantly, women (most famously Anna Gordon / Mrs. Brown) were often creators and transmitters of ballads;⁴⁴ Brown finds 'ample evidence' to suggest that 'gender - and more particularly, gendered life experiences' influenced a singer's repertoire and audience (p. 51). Particularly for Angus, but also to some extent for Jacob, the ballads' 'gendered' voices provide a specifically female-oriented model of interiority. What Palmer-McCulloch identifies as the importance of 'everyday passions and their consequences' in ballads by women is also vital for Angus's work, particularly in her analysis of female desire.⁴⁵ Moreover, the balladic tension between 'what is said and what is not said' also informs their conception of self, as both make use of strategic narrative elisions to demonstrate how the self's vision can be fragmented by rigid gender roles (e.g. Jacob's 'Donald MacIane').⁴⁶

Another aspect of the ballad tradition Jacob and Angus adapt in their work is its engagement with the supernatural, what Buchan calls the 'Otherworld' of 'glamourie' (p. 78). In many ballads, the self interacts with the supernatural through either 'dreams and prognostications' or an accidental foray into the 'Otherworld' (Lyle, p. 13). In ballads like 'The Demon Lover' or 'Tam Lin', the boundary between the human realm and Elfinland becomes ambiguous. This blurred border affects the self, as some acquire the ability to see Elfinland, or the future. Jacob, in poems like 'The Northern Lights' (NL), adapts the standard ballad metrical form (4 / 3 / 4 / 3) to evoke the 'eerie voices' of supernatural ballads (l. 14). In poems like 'The Cross-Roads' (NL), she employs the ballads' 'stylized' landscape (Buchan, p. 76) and dialogue form to explore the interaction between the speaker and what he discovers is a ghost. The 'frisson' of terror Caird recalls in reading this partially relates to its controlled integration of ballad language, form, and ambiguous setting with a close consideration of the selves contained within (p. 32). In her most successful supernatural poems, like 'The Neebour' (SPVJ), Jacob highlights how the line

between human knowledge and what lies on 'the dairk side o' the windy-pane' is fluid (l. 36).

The ballad tradition closely informs Angus's conception of self. Shepherd calls the ballads the 'very stuff of her art', recalling that 'her reading of them aloud was astonishing, an incantation of power. She was aware always of the mystery and terror of living'. In Shepherd's analysis, ballad language for Angus is synonymous with 'power'; in lines like 'barley breid and elder wine' and 'hands as white as faem', Angus suffuses her work with the 'power' of these iconic ballad images.⁴⁷ She even interpolates lines from the ballads into her poems (for example, in 'Alas, Poor Queen!' (TR), Mary sings an excerpt from 'The Drowned Lovers'). This power is closely related to what Charles Graves calls the 'atmosphere' of Angus's poems; taking from the ballads the eerie conjunction of supernatural and actual (as in 'The Wife of Usher's Well'), Angus reinterprets this 'atmosphere' in *psychological* terms.⁴⁸ The self in Angus's poems is haunted by its proximity to the supernatural 'land o' dreams and Dreid';⁴⁹ in poems like 'The Eerie Hoose' (SL) and 'The Blue Jacket' (TD), Angus internalizes the supernatural world so that the self's 'dreams' become reflections of its 'protean' inner life (Spence, p. 25). Milton maintains that Angus's use of 'supernatural elements' reveals 'moments of contact with the numinous' that are 'beyond the routine, rational and explicable' (p. 33). These 'moments of contact' can bring the speaker great self-knowledge, but, as in the ballads, at an extreme price. As Shepherd adroitly observes, Angus's speakers stand 'on the very borders of the uncanny' where their 'power' comes paradoxically from their own awareness of the 'mystery and terror of living' (pp. 15-16).

The Self in Folksong

Closely related to the ballad tradition, the Scottish folksong tradition arises out of the gradual transition in the eighteenth century from an oral to a literate culture. As Kerrigan notes, this move is paralleled by the shift from orally transmitted ballads to written music as people like Robert Burns, Allan Ramsay and later William Motherwell, Walter Scott, and Francis Child, collected ballads and folksongs (pp. 4-6). As with the ballads, women were often the original composers and performers of folksongs, and consequently many of the songs transcribed by collectors like Burns

record a specifically female perspective. Thomas Crawford cites a letter in which Burns (circa 1793) relays material he has 'pickt up, mostly from the singing of country lasses'.⁵⁰ The 'country lasses' from which Burns and others learned songs remain anonymous, but the voices of some eighteenth century women are preserved in songs they collected and wrote themselves. According to Kerrigan, eighteenth century 'aristocratic women' participated in 'collecting and preserving many of the traditional songs and ballads'. Women like Joanna Baillie, Carolina Oliphant, and Dorothea Ogilvy also wrote their own songs. In songs like Anne Hunter's 'My Mother Bids Me Bind My Hair', Jean Elliott's 'The Flowers of the Forest', and particularly in the songs of Baillie and Oliphant, one can trace the emergence of selves acutely aware of their subjectivity, attuned to their position as outsiders (whether because of gender, economics, or unexplained grief). In many one can discern what McCue identifies as an 'independence of mind' regarding expected female behaviours (p. 61).

Many critics see Jacob's work as part of the continuum stretching from eighteenth century women songwriters like Nairne.⁵¹ Their songs certainly are important to the development of self in Jacob's *oeuvre*, for they offer examples of the subjective self informing Jacob's best poems. The *gendered* vision of some eighteenth century women's songs in particular influences her late work (in poems like 'Donald Maclane' (NL) or 'The Guidwife Speaks' (NL) that critique oppressive gender roles). By calling her poems 'songs', Jacob purposefully connects herself with these folksongs.⁵² It is perhaps most significant to note that as part of the 'long and honourable line of women poets and songwriters' Jacob also contributes to the larger corpus of work in female voices (Anderson, p. 352); her finest work – poems like 'The Jaud' (NL) or 'The End O't' (BJ) – express an 'independence of mind' (McCue, p. 61) that acknowledges, and builds upon, the work of her predecessors.

Angus's poetry draws upon the lyricism and emotional compression of the folksong tradition. Like Jacob, Angus acknowledges a close relationship between poetry and song; her poems are often 'songs': 'The Lilt' (TL), 'Mary's Song' (TR), 'A Breton Woman Sings' (TD). Others – 'By Candlelight' (TL), 'Alas Poor Queen!' (TR), 'Annie Honey' (TR) – make specific reference to music. She considered herself a 'singer', calling her ability to write 'small (yet to me precious) springs of song', and

referred to poetic rhythm as 'lilt and croon'.⁵³ Like Jacob, her poems were set to music. Critics also link her with song: Spence calls her one of 'Scotland's finest singers' (p. 262), while others name her 'the sweetest singer of them all'.⁵⁴ Unlike Jacob, perhaps, Angus internalized the language and rhythms of folksongs so acutely that references to ballads and song punctuate her prose. Writing to Shepherd, for example, she remarks, 'I have been house-bound so long that I have forgotten the "feel" of sun and wind and "were'na my hert licht I wad dee"', citing Lady Grizel Baillie's song of the same name. In another letter, she tells Shepherd, 'I hope the boots for "Noroway ower the faem" will carry you safely [...] home again', here referring to 'Sir Patrick Spens'.⁵⁵ Similarly, in *Christabel's Diary*, Angus weaves lines from ballads and Burns through Christabel's stream-of-consciousness. Like her use of ballad phrases, Angus's interpolation of song lines into her work suggests these citations become a kind of encoded emotional shorthand. By referring the reader to a different source, Angus incorporates that work into hers, and yet deflects the reader from associating that particular emotion solely with Angus.

The Self in Dramatic Monologue

For Jacob's work in particular, an important influence upon her representation of self is the dramatic monologue tradition, in both Scottish and English literary history.⁵⁶ In general, dramatic monologues are poems featuring a speaker who 'is clearly not the poet', whose utterance is situated within a 'specific', discernible 'moment'. Within the poem, the speaker 'addresses and interacts' with his allocuter, revealing to the reader key aspects of his character.⁵⁷ In her poetry, Jacob employs of a range of poetic 'mask[s]' or 'persona[e]' that indicate a distance between her and the speaker. Jacob's use of personae relates to two literary source: the Burns tradition, and the nineteenth-century tradition of Alfred Tennyson and Robert Browning. In the context of Scottish literature, poets like Burns used dramatic monologues to reveal the self's 'human failings', desires, and motivations, whether petty or noble.⁵⁸ In poems like 'Lament of Mary Queen of Scots, on the Approach of Spring', and 'Death and Dr. Hornbook', Burns consciously employs an assumed voice. The speaker reveals facets of its personality of which it is unaware; in 'Holy Willie's Prayer', for example, the reader recognizes Willie's hypocrisy in condemning the 'misdeeds' of others, while excusing his own.⁵⁹ Jacob was well-acquainted with

Burns's work; at times one finds echoes of his work in hers. In poems like 'Bonnie Joann' (BJ), 'The Tramp to the Tattie-Dulie' (BJ), and 'The Twa Weelums' (MS), Jacob, like Burns, creates a self unaware of its flaws. The reader discerns the self's psychology, but the speaker cannot. Jacob's Burns-inspired poems are often not her strongest; 'When Mysie Gaed Up the Stair' (BJ) is a good example of what Porter McMillan disdains as Jacob's inability to 'transform, or even domesticate' a 'male' model of writing (p. 48).⁶⁰ Nevertheless Burns's monologues do offer examples of how to combine narrative impulse and an interest in the self-revealing speaker. In addition, Burns's model of the libidinous 'rantin' rovin' Robin' become a challenge for Jacob, who in poems like 'The Deil' (NL) or 'Donald MacIane' (NL), struggles to articulate a woman's response to the sexual freedom possessed only by men. Jacob's 'The End O't' (chronicling an unmarried, abandoned, and pregnant woman's grief) becomes a rebuttal to Burns's disingenuous 'The Rantin' Dog, the Daddy O't' (relating a woman's joyous acceptance of both 'rantin' lover and child).⁶¹

Jacob also draws upon the English dramatic monologue tradition associated primarily with Alfred Tennyson and Robert Browning. Jacob knew Tennyson's work (and probably Browning's and Elizabeth Barrett Browning's); some of her 1905 poems (including 'The Ballad of Hakon' and 'An Immortelle') recall Tennyson's lush imagery and elegiac diction.⁶² The most obvious difference between Burns and Victorian monologues is the latter's greater emphasis upon exposing the poetic self's 'psychological processes' in detail, revealing its 'motivations and secret thoughts'. While Burns's poetry does examine his speaker's psychology, the Victorian monologists *dissect* the self's darker impulses; rapacious, mendacious, or tormented, the self in poems like Robert Browning's 'My Last Duchess' is exposed completely so the reader witnesses its turbulent 'psychological states'; the self may gesture to the world outside the poem, but the focus remains upon its inner life. Tennyson's 'Ulysses', for example, scrutinizes an 'idle' king's restlessness, contrasting his glorious past with his hollow present. According to Joseph Bristow, the Victorian poets show that the self is '*subjected* to language'; that is, 'the monologue indicates how *language* speaks over against the speaker'.⁶³ In this way, the Victorian monologue not only psychologizes the speaker, but it also wrestles with how language ultimately limits both speaker and poet.

Paradoxically, monologues also allow poets to conceal their opinions behind personae. Kate Flint claims that for women poets in particular dramatic monologues sanction the expression of unpopular opinions, providing opportunities to reject 'the identification of women with the purely subjective, the personal, the sensual, the incapacity to grasp the wider vision'. Moreover, by traversing 'the borders of the self', the poet can 'explore the possibilities of identification with others' and 'establish selfhood not as a form of isolation, but as something grounded in a perpetual dialogue between similarity and difference'.⁶⁴ Flint's commentary sheds light upon Jacob's use of dramatic monologue, both as inherited from nineteenth-century practitioners like Tennyson, and as adapted from the Scottish tradition. According to Flint, the dramatic monologue in women's writing forges a bond between different (particularly female) selves that erases crude gender polarities by revealing a wider spectrum of women's and men's lives. Using a 'multiplicity of voices', the poet can tackle difficult subjects (the 'wider vision') and *conjoin*, rather than splinter, selves (Flint, p. 165). Moreover, monologues also counteract the easy conflation of 'woman' and 'the personal' by concealing the poet's opinion. In Jacob's work, personae, as with her use of Scots, create a distance between poet and reader, allowing her to 'explore the possibility of identification' with marginalized 'others': isolated 'auld wife[s]', poor labourers, travellers, and children.⁶⁵ Taking from the eighteenth century Scottish song traditions a model of strong women's voices and from the Victorian tradition a keener understanding of psychologized self, Jacob transforms these elements in what Kerrigan identifies as a 'modern' approach to vernacular writing.⁶⁶

Some Notes on Structure

The following chapters expand upon the points raised briefly here to investigate how Jacob and Angus represent self in their poetry, taking care to explore the distinctions between each writer's specific project. Writing during an era when even the most fundamental attributes of self – memory, spatial existence, and relationship to others – were questioned, both poets found some stability in a blend of traditional and modern literary techniques. Specifically, this dissertation addresses the ways both poets represent the poetic self as it negotiates the passage of time, its position in geographical and emotional space, and its relationship with other selves. In Jacob's

poetry, the poetic self exists not in isolation, but as a part of a larger community of people; the self's experience as a member of a group necessarily influences its perspective, including its understanding of time and space. When the self's needs are in conflict with those of the community, Jacob explores how the dynamic between both demands shapes the self. For Angus, the self traverses a frequently dangerous border between the need for self-protection and a desire for connection with others. The poetic self internalises elements of the outer world in order to understand them, and in doing so often fragments itself in time and space; existing thus as a constellation of selves, the self constructs a circular, self-reflexive universe governed by taboos and rituals.

As befitting the mosaic of old and new influences in both poets' work, this dissertation draws from a broad and perhaps unexpected selection of critical theory, archival material, and close readings of poems that at first glance may seem surprising. Without suggesting that Jacob and Angus are post-Modernists (as is the trend in contemporary revisionist literary criticism) or even Modernists, the following chapters employ the theory of late-twentieth-century writers like George Perec, Roland Barthes, and Gaston Bachelard in conjunction with contemporaneous sociological and historical sources to challenge the conventional classification of Jacob and Angus as simple vernacular writers enjoying a somewhat belated recognition by academics. Wallace Stevens describes the unexpected revelation that comes from seeing a blackbird thirteen different ways; likewise, the French photographer and painter Henri Cartier-Bresson urged his acolytes to bend their knees just a bit before taking a photograph to get a slightly different perspective than usual. With these two examples as a model, I hope the next six chapters offer an analysis of the work of Jacob and Angus that defies their earlier classification as 'shrinking Violet and home-made Marion' and reveals their critical contribution to modern literature.⁶⁷

¹ Lindsay, 'Introduction', in *The Selected Poems of Marion Angus*, p. ix. Douglas Dunn, 'Introduction', in *The Faber Book of Twentieth Century Scottish Poetry* (London, 1992), pp. xvii-xlvi (p. xlv). Lindsay, ed., *Modern Scottish Poetry: An Anthology of the Scottish Renaissance*. Kurt Wittig's *The Scottish Tradition in Literature* (Philadelphia, 1958) offers some useful commentary on their work, although his analysis relies upon a strangely conceived notion of Scottish identity.

² 'Scotland as Terra Incognita', *Glasgow Herald*, 14 July 1906, p. 9. T. S. Eliot, 'Was There a Scottish Literature?', *Character and Influence, Athenaeum*, 1 August 1919. 'Scottish Literature and Arts', *Glasgow Herald*, 22 November 1906, p. 6.

³ MacDiarmid, *Contemporary Scottish Studies*, p. 61.

⁴ Neil M. Gunn, 'Scotland A Nation', in *Left Review*, 2 (1935-36), reproduced in *Modernism: An Anthology of Sources and Documents*, pp. 539-542 (p. 540). Dunn, p. xviii.

⁵ William Donaldson, *Popular Literature in Victorian Scotland: Language, Fiction, and the Press* (Aberdeen, 1986), pp. 159-160.

⁶ Alistair McCleery, *The Porpoise Press, 1922-1939* (Edinburgh, 1988), passim.

⁷ Papers of Neil Gunn, NLS, Deposition 209, box 17, folder 1, c. 1927. Angus mentions *Grey Coast* (1926).

⁸ Royle, p. 16. Beth Dickson usefully notes that W. E. Henley, not Millar, invented the term as an insult. 'Annie S. Swan and O. Douglas: Legacies of the Kailyard', in *A History of Scottish Women's Writing*, pp. 329-346.

⁹ Watson, *The Literature of Scotland*, pp. 315, 319.

¹⁰ David Daiches, *The Present Age After 1920* (London, 1958), pp. 68, 78. Keating, *The Haunted Study: A Social History of the English Novel*, p. 339.

¹¹ Dickson, p. 331. Manfred Malzahn, 'Between the Kailyard and the World Revolution: Configurations of Scottish Culture', *SLJ*, 2 (November 1996), pp. 54-68.

¹² Ronald Carter and John McRae, *The Routledge History of Literature in English: Britain and Ireland* (London, 1997), p. 350. The term 'mankind' demonstrates the often androcentric vision of the Modernist (and to an extent, the Renaissance) movements. Ezra Pound famously defines 'woman' as 'the conservator, the inheritor of past gestures [...] not inventive, always the best disciple of any inventor' in *Modernism: An Anthology of Sources and Documents*, pp. 379-382 (p. 381). The purpose of this thesis is not to analyse the finer points of Modernism. Consequently, a certain amount of knowledge about the Modernist movement is assumed.

¹³ Nan Shepherd, 'Caul' Caul' as the Wall', l. 4, in *An Anthology of Scottish Women Poets*, p. 242.

¹⁴ The canonical understanding of Renaissance excludes numerous writers, many of whom are women, who despite successful publication records, were overlooked by literary historians until recently. This is discussed later in the section.

¹⁵ Virginia Woolf, 'Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown' (1924), reproduced in *Modernism: An Anthology of Sources and Documents*, p. 396. Carter and McRae, p. 349.

¹⁶ References to Renaissance appear in many periodicals, including: Lewis Spence, 'Scots Poetry To-Day', *The Nineteenth Century and After* (August 1929), pp. 253-268. Papers of Roderick Watson Kerr, NLS, Accession 5756, excerpts from the *Scottish Musical Magazine*, c. 1924, on Scottish Renaissance. W. H. Hamilton, 'The Poetry of the Year', *Scots Observer*, 5 December 1929, p. 12. 'The Case for Dialect', *Country Life* 10 December 1921, p. 783. 'Synthetic Scots: National Renaissance Movement', *Glasgow Herald*, 20 February 1926, p. 11. 'Scottish Renaissance', *Glasgow Herald*, 29 October 1927, p. 3. Hugh MacDiarmid, 'Contemporary Scottish Poetry', *The Nineteenth Century and After* (October 1929), pp. 534-542.

¹⁷ John Corbett, *Language and Scottish Literature*, Scottish Language and Literature Series, edited by Douglas Gifford (Edinburgh, 1997), p. 5.

¹⁸ Wittig, p. 146. Glen, *Hugh MacDiarmid and the Scottish Renaissance*, p. 28. Edwin Muir, *Scott and Scotland: The Predicament of the Scottish Writer* (London, 1936), pp. 4-5 and passim. James Robertson, 'Introduction', in *A Tongue in Yer Heid: A Selection of the Best Contemporary Short Stories in Scots*, edited by James Robertson (Edinburgh, 1994), pp. vii-xvi (p. xv), his emphasis.

¹⁹ Linguists debate whether to call Scots a language or a dialect. For the purposes here I consider it a language. Emma Letley, *From Galt to Douglas Brown: Nineteenth-Century Fiction and Scots Language* (Edinburgh, 1988), p. xxi.

²⁰ This is changing (witness the recent move towards regional accents in telesales and on national news programmes). Nevertheless, as even popular fiction like Iain Banks's *The Bridge* illustrates, particularly urban Scots is considered uncouth in comparison to English.

²¹ Cairns Craig, *Out of History: Narrative Paradigms in Scottish and English Culture* (Edinburgh, 1996), pp. 187-188.

²² 'Contemporary Scottish Poetry', p. 534.

²³ Tom Leonard, ed., *Radical Renfrew, Poetry from the French Revolution to the First World War* (Edinburgh, 1990)

²⁴ *Ten Northeast Poets: An Anthology*, edited by Leslie W. Wheeler (Aberdeen, 1985). *Poetry of Northeast Scotland*, edited by James Alison (London, 1976). Milton, 'Modern Poetry in Scots before MacDiarmid', p. 29. Anderson, 'Tales of Her Own Countries: Violet Jacob', p. 352.

²⁵ The concept of self will be addressed later in the introduction.

- ²⁶ Aileen Christianson, 'Imagined Corners to Debatable Land: Passable Boundaries', *Scottish Affairs*, 17 (Autumn 1996), pp. 120-134 (p. 131). Palmer McCulloch, 'Fictions of Development 1920-1970', p. 360.
- ²⁷ Celeste M. Schenck, 'Exiled by Genre: Modernism, Canonicity, and the Politics of Exclusion', in *Women's Writing in Exile*, edited by Mary Lynn Broe and Angela Ingram (London, 1989), pp. 227-250. Porter [McMillan], 'Scotland's Songstresses', p. 49. Hendry, 'Twentieth-Century Women's Writing: The Nest of Singing Birds', p. 291. Craig, pp. 172-206.
- ²⁸ Rich, 'Diving into the Wreck', l. 94, p. 94. See Palmer McCulloch, *passim*; Margaret Elphinstone, 'Willa Muir: Crossing the Genres' in *A History of Scottish Women's Writing*, edited by Douglas Gifford and Dorothy McMillan (Edinburgh, 1997), pp. 400-415; Roderick Watson's "'To Know Being": Nan Shepherd' in the same (pp. 416-427).
- ²⁹ Edwin Muir, 'What is Modern?', in *We Moderns: Enigmas and Guesses* (1918), reproduced in *Modernism: An Anthology of Sources and Documents*, pp. 354-357 (p. 355).
- ³⁰ Catherine Kerrigan, 'MacDiarmid's Early Poetry', in *The History of Scottish Literature*, edited by Cairns Craig (Aberdeen, 1987), IV, 75-86 (p. 75).
- ³¹ Alan Bold, *MacDiarmid: The Terrible Crystal* (London, 1983), p. 60.
- ³² Caird, 'The Poetry of Marion Angus', p. 47. Kerrigan, p. 32.
- ³³ 'William Dunbar', *Country Life*, 19 March 1921, p. 350.
- ³⁴ 'The Case for Dialect', *Country Life*, 10 December 1921, p. 783.
- ³⁵ Cruickshank, *Octobiography*, p. 135. Letters of James Christison, Montrose Public Library, Montrose. Caird, 'The Poetry of Violet Jacob and Helen B. Cruickshank', p. 32.
- ³⁶ Papers of Mairi Campbell Ireland, NLS, MS 19328, folio 34. Marion Angus, 'So Soft She Sings', *Scottish Chapbook*, 1 (August 1923), p. 16.
- ³⁷ Papers of Charles Graves, NLS, MS 27476, folio 55 (10 April 1929). *Christabel's Diary*, p. 8.
- ³⁸ Papers of Nan Shepherd, AUSC, MS 3036, folio 3.
- ³⁹ H. D., 'Sea Rose', l. 8, in *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*, pp. 978-979 (p. 978).
- ⁴⁰ Ezra Pound, 'How to Read' in *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*, edited by T.S. Eliot, tenth edition of original 1918 volume (New York, 1968), pp. 15-40 (25). 'Logopoeia' foreshadows MacDiarmid's descriptions of 'braid' Scots. T. S. Eliot, *The Wasteland*, l. 126, in *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*, pp. 1000-1012 (p. 1004).
- ⁴¹ Wallace Stevens, 'The Snow Man', l. 15, *The Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens* (London, 1955), p. 9.
- ⁴² Anderson, p. 352; Whyte, 'Marion Angus and the Borders of Self', p. 383; Kerrigan, 'Introduction', in *An Anthology of Scottish Women Poets*, p. 8; MacRitchie, 'Arbroath's Singin' Lass', n/p; Leslie W. Wheeler, *Ten Northeast Poets: An Anthology*, p. 1.
- ⁴³ David Buchan, *The Ballad and the Folk* (London, 1972), p. 272. All future references to Buchan are to this book. David Buchan, *Scottish Tradition: A Collection of Scottish Folk Literature* (London, 1984), pp. 6-7.
- ⁴⁴ Mary Ellen Brown, 'Old Singing Women and the Canons of Scottish Balladry and Song', in *A History of Scottish Women's Writing*, edited by Douglas Gifford and Dorothy McMillan (Edinburgh, 1997), pp. 44-57, (p. 51). Kirsteen McCue, 'Women and Song 1750-1850' in *A History of Scottish Women's Writing*, edited by Douglas Gifford and Dorothy McMillan (Edinburgh, 1997), pp. 58-70 (p. 59).
- ⁴⁵ Margery Palmer McCulloch, 'Women and Love: Some Thoughts on Women's Love Poetry', *Chapman (Women's Forum)*, 74-75 (Autumn / Winter 1993), pp. 46-52 (p. 48).
- ⁴⁶ Emily Lyle, 'Introduction' in *Scottish Ballads* (Edinburgh, 1994), pp. 9-22 (p. 15).
- ⁴⁷ Nan Shepherd, 'Marion Angus as a Poet of Deeside', pp. 15-16. 'Mary's Song', l. 3, *The Tinker's Road*; 'The Can'el', l. 6, *The Singin' Lass*. 'Mary's Song' reads as a response to the male speaker in 'The Gay Goss-Hawk.'
- ⁴⁸ Charles Graves, 'The Poetry of Marion Angus', *Chapbook*, 6, (1946), pp. 97, 107 (p. 97).
- ⁴⁹ 'Barbara', l. 12, *Sun and Candlelight*.
- ⁵⁰ Kerrigan, 'Introduction', p. 6; *Burns: A Study of the Poems and Songs*, p. 263.
- ⁵¹ Anderson, p. 352. Kerrigan, 'Introduction', p. 8. Hugh MacDiarmid, 'Violet Jacob', in *Contemporary Scottish Studies*, from the 1926 edition (Edinburgh, 1976), pp. 7-9. Porter McMillan, p. 48.
- ⁵² In recent years, her poem 'The Wild-Geese' has been set to music by Jim Reed as 'I Saw the Wild Geese Flee' (Springthyme Records, 1984).
- ⁵³ MS 3036, folio 4; MS 19328, folio 32.

⁵⁴ Isobel Dunlop wrote music for 'The Lissome Leddy' (TD) in 1938 (Papers of Isobel Dunlop, NLS, Accession 9121, folio 11). H. J. C. Grierson and J. C. Smith, *A Critical History of English Poetry*, 2nd revised edition (London, 1947), p. 515.

⁵⁵ MS 3036, folios 6, 4. Joanna Baillie, 'Were Na My Heart Light I Wad Die' in *An Anthology of Scottish Women Poets*, edited by Catherine Kerrigan, p. 157. 'Sir Patrick Spens' in *Scottish Ballads*, edited by Emily Lyle (Edinburgh, 1994), pp. 50-54.

⁵⁶ Although Angus occasionally assumes masks - in poems like 'Mary's Song' (TR) or 'The Widow' (LC) - mainly hers is a lyric impulse; consequently this section touches only briefly upon her work. Angus was familiar with Burns's work - she quotes from it in *Christabel's Diary*.

⁵⁷ Tom Furniss and Michael Bath, *Reading Poetry: An Introduction* (London, 1996), p. 175.

⁵⁸ 'The Poetry of Violet Jacob and Helen B. Cruickshank', p. 32. Carol McGuirk, 'Scottish Hero, Scottish Victim: Myths of Robert Burns' in *The History of Scottish Literature*, edited by Andrew Hook, II, 219-238 (p. 221).

⁵⁹ Robert Burns, 'Holy Willie's Prayer', l. 84, in *Selected Poems: Robert Burns*, reprinted from 1946 edition (London, 1996), pp. 86-89 (p. 88).

⁶⁰ 'Domesticate' is curious word choice - it implies a certain acceptance of a binary gender models.

⁶¹ Robert Burns, 'There Was A Lad', l. 8. 'The End O't', *Bonnie Joann*. Thomas Crawford contends Burns wrote 'The Rantin' Dog, the Daddy O't' in response to an event in his own life in 'Lowland Song and Popular Tradition in the Eighteenth Century' in *The History of Scottish Literature*, edited by Andrew Hook (Aberdeen, 1987), II, 123-139 (p. 125).

⁶² Jacob compares the sound of Indian brass to 'the horns of Elfinland', citing Tennyson's 1847 poem 'The Princess' in her *Diaries and Letters from India: 1895-1900*, p. 148. *Verses* (London, 1905), pp. 29-32, 14. Angus was familiar with Tennyson and Browning. In one letter she remarks, 'I have just been reading Tennyson's life written by his son. Say what one will about present day culture and cultivation, I am certain nowhere in the country does there exist now a group of such men as surrounded Tennyson. Men and women I should say.' (MS 19328, folio 127). As a whole, comparing Angus's work to Tennyson or Browning is not particularly illuminating.

⁶³ Barbara Melchiori, *Browning's Poetry of Reticence* (Edinburgh, 1968), pp. 190, 191. Richard Simpson, review of *The Ring and the Book* (1869), reprinted in *Victorian Scrutinies: Reviews of Poetry 1830 to 1870*, edited by Isobel Armstrong (London, 1972), p. 274. Alfred Tennyson, 'Ulysses', l. 1, in *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*, pp. 704-705 (p. 704). Joseph Bristow, 'Introduction', in *The Victorian Poet: Poetics and Persona*, World and Word Series (London, 1987), pp. 1-26 (p. 5). His emphasis.

⁶⁴ Flint, "As A Rule, I Does Not Mean I": Personal Identity and the Victorian Woman Poet', p. 165.

⁶⁵ 'The Jaud', l. 1, *The Northern Lights*.

⁶⁶ 'Introduction', p. 9.

⁶⁷ Bold, *Modern Scottish Literature*, p. 25.

Thrang o' the Years Ahint Me: Self and Time in Jacob's Poetry

Writing in the wake of the socio-cultural and historical changes discussed in the previous chapters, Jacob and Angus were keenly aware of distinctions between the century of their birth and the century in which they were writing. Both poets – who lived half their lives in the nineteenth century, half in the twentieth – occupy a peculiar threshold space between centuries. By writing in Scots, they consciously or unconsciously associated themselves with the older Scottish vernacular tradition; in contrast, by exploring in their poetry 'modern dilemmas', they tackled some of the issues and concerns of the present moment.¹ Perhaps in part as a consequence of this Janus-faced perspective across two centuries, one of the dominant themes evident in their work is **time** and its effects upon the poetic self. Change, memory, loss – all these aspects of the passage of time affect the self in their poems. Their poetic selves struggle to reconcile an inner sense of time, and the memories contained within it, with the changes indicating their movement through clock-time.

In Jacob's poetry, in particular, personal loss inevitably accompanies the passage of time. Her understanding of loss is shaped by her absence from her 'own country' left behind when she married.² Many poems reflect this longing for lost places; in poems like 'The Gangrel' (BJ), 'Cairneyside' (SPVJ), and 'The Wild Geese' (SA), the self compares its present to the past, grieving the absence of loved ones and places. Loss preoccupies the self in Jacob's poems, producing a tension between its memories and its present reality. Absent figures or landscapes in the poems acquire a spectral presence as the speaker layers memory images onto the gap left by the absent entity. As the self moves through time down the 'road that has ne'er an end', the distance between remembered past and lived present grows;³ the self in poems like 'Montrose' (MS), 'The Kirk Beside the Sands' (MS), and 'Donald Maclane' (NL) wrestles with the desire to go home, and the knowledge that it cannot, for it is impossible to move backwards in time. Past memories offer the only connection the self has to what is no longer. The self's internal time, consequently, chafes against the continual forward propulsion of clock-time.⁴

Sense and Sentimentality

Because Jacob in many poems focuses upon the exile's longing for home and the past, she is accused of expressing an uncritically sentimental vision of Scotland.⁵ Critics note that in poems like 'The Howe o' the Mearns' (SA), 'The Neep-Fields By the Sea' (NL), 'Kirrie' (BJ), and 'Rohallion' (BJ), Jacob evokes images of Scotland that are overly nostalgic, even hackneyed. With their unchanging 'braes o' heather' and 'ghaisty gloom', poems like these, critics argue, err toward kailyard writing.⁶ The 'indirection' and authorial distance Dorothy Porter McMillan recognizes in Jacob's work seems to falter in these poems, and perhaps Jacob's own longing for home - for 'curlew-haunted braes' and 'tangled ground' - unduly cloud her narrative vision.⁷ Even her staunchest supporters concede that some of her poems rely upon clichéd images of Scotland. Janet Caird, for example, acknowledges that 'some of [Jacob's] nostalgic poems are sentimental and trite'. Similarly, Carol Anderson admits that some of Jacob's poems are perhaps too nostalgic, while Joy Hendry emphasizes that only her 'poorer' efforts 'descend' into pure sentimentality. It is worth noting that part of Jacob's nostalgia could be traced to a wider presence of nostalgic literature flourishing after WWI. Randall Stevenson notes that the war 'made memory and nostalgia more than usually important' to writers because 'the ache of unrest in the years after 1914 offered a particular incentive to let down the ropes of memory into more orderly times, untroubled by the explosions of contemporary history'.⁸ This certainly seems to apply to Jacob's work, in that it her earliest poetry, written just before and during WWI, that is the most nostalgic. As critics point out, however, Jacob's sentimental poetry is redeemed by the relative strength of her other poems. Hendry observes:

her finest poetry balances sentiment on a knife edge to create a statement of sometimes heart-rending poignancy: 'The Wild Geese' is on the well-worn theme of exile, but seldom has the longing for the country left been so well expressed. (p. 293)

Wittig concurs, suggesting that although 'she is loath to see the old order disappear' she nevertheless 'is not whimsical about it'. Leslie W. Wheeler notes that Jacob's 'native wit' salvages her 'wistful' verse from dangerous sentimentality.⁹ Jacob's best work thus transcends the tendency in her 'poorer' work to linger unquestioningly on the past, and instead looks incisively at the self's tendency to idealize the country it left behind. Specifically, Jacob shows that the self's desire to preserve its home

outside of time cannot coexist with an awareness of loss. In many of her best poems, consequently, she analyses how the self tries to reconcile memories of home with a recognition of the passage of time. Thus in poems like 'Back to the Land' (MS), Jacob juxtaposes the speaker's love of the Angus landscape with its realization that the land does change – the 'bare bones of the country' (l. 5) persist, but they are just that: bones, markers of something no longer alive. The self-in-time in Jacob's best work struggles to acknowledge that the landscape, and the self along with it, move relentlessly forward through time.

Visions of the Self-in-Time

Explanations and A Few Disclaimers

To examine Jacob's treatment of time more fully, it is useful to foreground the discussion with some contemporaneous critical commentary; this secondary material provides a basic vocabulary for the examination that follows of the (poetic) self-in-time. Although Jacob's time poems are relatively straightforward thematically, read as a corpus they do suggest a sophisticated understanding of how time affects the self. Consequently, examining these poems with reference to a broader understanding of the self's relationship to time will illuminate some of their subtleties. By considering her work in the context of contemporaneous beliefs of the self-in-time, I do *not* claim that she consciously responds to philosophical innovations of the period; in fact, I have little proof that she would have read any of the work referred to below. Rather, I suggest that examining her work in context can elucidate ways in which her poetry contributes to the body of literature on time that emerges in the inter-war years. Moreover, a context-based evaluation can provide evidence of how Jacob's best poetry delves into and critiques humans' longing for the lost past, often rejecting the simple sentimental instinct for which critics long have condemned her.

'Saddle-back' Vision: Seeing the Past and Future

In her poetry, Jacob considers three different aspects of the self's relationship to time: how the self defines past, present, and future; how it experiences loss as part of its movement through time; and how it conceives of the difference between past and

present as mediated by memory. To begin, it helps to examine Jacob's work with reference to a basic understanding of what constitutes the present before venturing into more complex issues. William James, in *The Principles of Psychology* (1890), defines the present moment as a fluid, changing entity:

[it] is no knife-edge, but a saddle-back, with a certain breadth of its own on which we sit perched, and from which we look in two directions into time. The unit of composition of our perception of time is a *duration*, with a bow and a stern, as it were – a rearward- and a forward-looking end.¹⁰

According to James, moments in time flow into one another; time is fluid. James's image of the self as 'perched' upon the 'saddle-back' of the present moment provides a vital illustration of how the self-in-time negotiates the tension between 'rearward' and 'forward-looking' tendencies. Reading Jacob's work with this in mind allows one to discern the dominant conflict in her poems between memory – looking 'rearward' – and the necessity of moving forward through time. One can also borrow James's metaphorical representation of the present moment to describe how Jacob (and Angus) combine an understanding of tradition (or, as Wittig calls it, 'heritage') with a forward look at 'modern dilemmas' (Wittig, p. 278; Kerrigan, p. 75).

'Recognisably Different': Loss and the Self-in-Time

In Jacob's poetry, the tension between the self's conflicting 'rearward' and 'forward' looking tendencies results, ultimately, in a sense of loss as the self struggles to reconcile antithetical perspectives. In poems like 'Craig Woods' (SA), for example, Jacob reveals that loss emerges from the self's desire to compare a memory of the past with the present. To gain a clear understanding of how the self's movement through time generates loss, it is useful to consider Jacob's work with reference to Bertrand Russell's essay 'On the Experience of Time'. In this essay, published in the same year as *Songs of Angus*, Russell offers an indispensable set of definitions for discussing the relationship between the self and time.¹¹ When read in conjunction with Jacob's poetry, it helps throw into relief the loss expressed in the poems. Although time theory is not a central component of Russell's philosophy, this essay is illuminating because Russell articulates his understanding of the self's experience

of time cogently, without excessive jargon. (Consequently, this section draws upon his *vocabulary* rather than upon the wider implications of his work). Russell asks, 'how do we know whether an object is present or past or without position in time?' (p. 215). He answers:

Since there can be no *intrinsic* difference between present and past objects, and yet we can distinguish by inspection between objects given as present and those given as past, it follows [...] that the relation of subject to object must be different, and recognisably different, according as the object is present or past. (p. 215, his emphasis)

Here, Russell argues that the self's ability to perceive the difference between two objects lies in its capacity to discern changes in the relationship between subject (the self) and object (what the self sees). He calls this ability 'sensation' (p. 214), highlighting the degree of individual agency involved in the self's construction of 'mental time' (p. 212). According to Russell, the *individual self* processes subject / object relationships without reference to an external, standardised time system. The self creates its own version of time based upon 'sensation' and perception. This 'mental' time exists independently to scientifically constructed clock-time.¹² In Jacob's poetry, the self shapes its understanding of time, relying upon 'sensation' to order its progression through time. Consequently, unlike the cyclical time described in Angus's work, one finds in Jacob's poetry primarily a linear, forward-moving time scheme. What is past is 'for ever gone' and one cannot return to it.¹³ In many poems, Jacob reveals the passage of time through a comparison of events, often in the same landscape: two interactions between the poetic self and its environment divided by an interval of time. Within time, the speaker can reflect back upon previous events but these instances are *irreconcilably* divided by what Jacob refers to as 'the thrang o' the years': physical and mental time spans dividing past and present, present and future.¹⁴ The landscape and the people within it age; one discerns the passage of time by comparing earlier selves (past) to later ones (present).

Memory: Connecting 'Two Points of Time'

In Jacob's work, memory becomes the key element linking the self's understanding of the passage of time and its recognition of loss. The self's memory of past events

triggers its eventual awareness of loss, by reminding it of how a landscape or person was once. Building upon the definitions provided by readings in Russell and James, we turn now to the work of French phenomenologist Eugène Minkowski who, in his 1933 study *Lived Time*, brings into the study of time a deeper engagement with psychological implications of the self's movement through time.¹⁵ Because Jacob invests the selves in her poems with complex psychological motivations, it is useful to draw upon Minkowski's findings; in particular, his conception of 'remembrance' sheds light upon moments in poems like 'The Gean-Trees' (SA) or 'The Field by the Lirk o' the Hill' (MS) when a memory of the past haunts the speaker's present. He writes:

Remembrance always bears on an event which happened 'some time ago'; and however short this 'some time ago' may be, it nonetheless constitutes a lapse of time [...] an open interval during which the past event has not been present to consciousness in any way.

Remembrances thus juxtaposes, in an immediate way and by itself, two points of time, in the form of the present and of a point in the past separated from each other by an empty interval with respect to the event in question. (p. 518)

Like Russell, Minkowski claims that the self senses the passage of time through the juxtaposition of two different versions of the same subject / object relationship. Minkowski expands upon this, however, by maintaining that it is 'remembrance' that emerges from a conjunction of past and present moments. The amount of time between each event is insignificant. Rather, the important point is that in the 'open interval' between the moments, the first event is *all but forgotten*.¹⁶ In Jacob's poetry, the 'lapse' between 'two points of time' occurs beyond the scope of the poem. The poem thus becomes the locus of juxtaposition of past and present; in the 'empty interval' – off-stage and often absent from the text – the speaker changes and ages. In the poem, the speaker reflects upon the changes that have unfolded during the 'interval'. The rate to which the points in time *do not correspond* is the degree of change wrought by the 'empty interval'. The human 'sensation' of this interval becomes, as Russell concludes, the measure 'by means of which time-relations' are described (p. 215).

According to Minkowski, the difference between past and present moments reveals not just the presence of the 'open interval' of time between the points but also the

complete and irrefutable break between the two states. The 'open interval' becomes a distinct reminder of the gulf between past and present. From this he concludes that remembrance 'tells us not only that an event of the past has been but, further, that *it is no longer*' (p. 518, my emphasis). Therefore, comparing two 'points of time' yields evidence of the passage of time ('lapse'), but also reveals the *loss* emerging out of that 'interval'; Minkowski implies loss in the phrase 'it is no longer', where 'it' is both the past and the events contained with the recalled moment. The act of remembering simultaneously recreates an event in memory and then points to its actual absence from the present: remembrance consequently both creates and destroys.

Loss as a Presence: Ghosts and Loss-Lines in Jacob's Work

Minkowski articulates in philosophical terms the same connection Jacob explores in her poetry between the self-in-time and loss. As her poems suggest, concomitant with the self's movement through time, and indeed indicative of it, is the emotional or physical loss distinguishing two temporal moments. Jacob's speakers gauge the passage of time by the loss it entails – both abstract (youth and dreams) and concrete (people and possessions). Her exiles pondering home and lost youth, her female and male voices contemplating their distance from an idyllic past – these selves muse upon the material elements absent from their present lives. For them the past contains familiar landscapes of home, and loved ones; the present, in distinction to this, holds only the holes left by the absence of these missed entities. The difference between subject / object relationships in the past and in the present reveals itself in the *palpable lacunae in the present moment of the poem*. Remembrance – in Jacob's work the poem itself – contains the numinous evocation of the past and a reminder of its absence.

In Jacob's poetry, the absent allocuter or object becomes, ironically, the tangibly-felt presence at the poem's centre. The missing entity haunts the speaker's present; the ghosts populating Jacob's work (in poems like 'The Brig' (MS), 'Back to the Land', and 'Steenhive' (NL)) serve as spectral reminders of the lost past.¹⁷ In these poems, the speaker's actions and utterances create a space around an absent centre, exploring it, exposing it, fleshing out its hollows. Minkowski's 'empty interval' serves as an excellent metaphor for the ghostly fullness held by blank spaces in Jacob's poems;

although one cannot see the passage of time, one can distinguish its effects in what is lost between past and present. Carol Muske observes that in the work of some poets, 'time takes on an almost physical quality; like an element in transformation at an altered temperature, it seems to acquire form'.¹⁸ Although not commenting upon Jacob's work in particular, Muske's observation is illuminating in the context of Jacob's time poems. In poems like 'The Water-Hen' (SA) or 'Donald MacLaine' (NL), time does acquire a 'physical quality' – structurally it shapes the poem (chronologically, in the temporal order of the events) and then, in doing so, it highlights the loss anchoring the poem. Jacob transforms time by shaping it around the blank spaces in the poem; time becomes the intricate margin separating missing elements of the poem from their surroundings – a metaphorical gilt edge drawing attention to the poem's gaps. The 'form' time in her poetry acquires emerges as a fine lattice of loss encircling and containing the voice(s) of the poem, stretching between the present and past; this network of loss-lines becomes as important – if not more so – than the 'two points' in time she compares.

'Thrang o' the Years 'Ahint Me': The Self-in-Time

The Water-Hen

To provide a closer look at how Jacob explores the self's relationship to time, and how loss inevitably emerges out of this, the following section examines Jacob's treatment of the self-in-time in three different poems: 'The Water-Hen', 'The Gean-Trees', and 'Hallowe'en'. The poems are discussed chronologically to suggest an evolution in Jacob's understanding from the dark self-reflexive vision of 'The Water-Hen' to a more holistic acceptance of loss in 'Hallowe'en'. In her early Scots poem 'The Water-Hen', from *Songs of Angus* (1915), Jacob chronicles how loss experienced through time impresses itself upon the self and its surroundings. The poem details two interactions between speaker and the landscape separated in time, and comments upon the difference between the two. In a gesture characteristic of many of her self-in-time poems, the 'open interval' separating the locuter's past and present is absent from the poem (Sherover, p. 518); its non-appearance in part symbolises the greater absences in the poem. In 'The Water-Hen', Jacob describes the speaker's interactions with a particular landscape and how it serves as a dramatic reminder of what he

lacks. Interestingly, the 'twa mill dams', like many geographical elements in Jacob's poetry, is a poetic echo of two actual dams in Angus. In a 1920 letter her friend Helen Friedlander writes:

I was so enchanted to hear about 'the twa mill dams'. Not that I had ever questioned them for a moment – because, like everything you write, they just were [...] But what makes it lovely to hear about the poem's connection with your old home is that 'The Muir Hen' is my supreme favourite.¹⁹

Clearly written in response to a letter from Jacob, this excerpt suggests that in 'The Water-Hen' Jacob interpolates a once-familiar setting into the poem. Jacob's subsequent reinterpretation of this landscape into a palpable reminder of how loss permeates the self-in-time is significant, as it situates the narrative within an intimate space in Jacob's memory.

In 'The Water-Hen', the speaker goes to sea after arguing with his lover, returning later to find everything changed. Jacob parallels the speaker's movement through time in the poem's structure; it mimics the speaker's obsessive focus upon the passage of time by recreating (unobtrusively) the temporal transition from morning to night.²⁰ In the first two verses, it is 'mornin' (l. 1) and the dew is 'lyin' in the fields (l. 6). By the fourth verse, however, time has passed and day is 'springin' (l. 16); the hum of activity on the shore indicates mid-day. Finally, when the poem concludes, the speaker finds himself with 'dim' eyes, and repeats the word 'late' twice to emphasize the lateness of the day and his life both (l. 25). The 'dew' from the morning becomes the uncontrolled 'lade in spate' (l. 22); the fields turn to 'weeds' (l. 22). The poem's structure thus suggests the linearity of the self-in-time as it parallels the natural progression from day to night. As Jacob describes it in 'Maggie', another poem from *Songs of Angus*, 'time drives forrit' (l. 21) relentlessly, regardless of human activity within time. Significantly, although the pattern of natural time is cyclical – morning becomes night, night becomes morning – Jacob in 'The Water-Hen' focuses upon one half of the rotation, flattening the cycle out into a non-repeating, 'forrit'-directed line. The human speaker can neither regress in time to an earlier point in his life, nor follow the natural cycle through to another beginning. His end thus is not a beginning but an ineluctable conclusion.

Like many of Jacob's poems – 'The Jaud' (NL) and 'The Cross-Roads' (NL) among others – this poem includes a ballad-like dialogue between two voices: the male locuter and a series of different anthropomorphized features in the landscape. The second voice, from a different source in each stanza, acts as chorus, annotating the speaker's decisions or enticing him into action. Jacob draws attention to the second voice's importance by placing it in the short, indented lines. The utterance of each second voice thus creates a meta-structure to the poem in that each response reveals a different aspect of the self-in-time. Recalling Jacob's other dialogue poems, voice in 'The Water-Hen' emerges as its key focus; here Jacob continually probes the nature of expression – not just who speaks, but how and why. First, the speaker interacts with the water-hen ('her voice cam' through the reeds wi' a sound of warnin'", l. 3), then his lover, followed by the mill wheel, the ship's rigging, and ultimately, the water-hen again. Ironically, the lover's words are omitted. We have instead the noise of the wheel that replaces her voice. Like many of the female voices Jacob chronicles, the lover here is silenced; her words – 'the ill words said yest're'en' (l. 12) – are only mentioned obliquely.²¹ By contrast, the main voice speaks both the poem and within that, separate statements set off by quotation marks in response to the water-hen and the silent lover. (Notably, the speaker's quoted statements alternate stanzas, appearing in the first, third, and final stanzas of the poem.) Yet against this, the speaker insists, in the poem's core stanza, 'It's no for me to speak' (l. 15). He believes it is inappropriate for him to speak to his lover; nevertheless, he speaks continually, without understanding. Moreover, in his egoism, he hears in sounds of the external world (non-human) voices speaking directly to him, although he does not heed their admonitions. It is the speaker's ultimate failure to speak – to forgive his lover – that destroys any possibility of reconciliation with her. As Anderson concludes, the speaker's love is 'denied and lost through silence' ('Tales of Her Own Country: Violet Jacob', p. 354).

In 'The Water-Hen' Jacob emphasizes the close link between voice and motion. In comparison to the silenced lover in the poem, the speaker possesses the freedom of both expression and movement. He may 'gang free' (l. 19) without fear of public opprobrium (unlike many of Jacob's female speakers) because going to sea is a viable option for men. His restless motion parallels his continual speech; the repetition of the phrase 'as I gae'd doon' beginning each stanza emphasizes the range of the

speaker's movement from mill to 'toon' (l. 16) to sea and back again. Moreover, Jacob uses sound to evoke the speaker's continual movement – the poem's use of sprung rhythm captures the restless, jaunty movement of the poem's speaker.²² Lines like 'and my het he'rt drowned the wheel wi' its heavy beatin'" (l. 13) propel the reader swiftly through the poem at a rapid, although often unsteady, rate. Finally, unlike in many of her poems in the voices of exiles, this speaker's journey comes full circle: the asterisks between stanzas four and five, as in her early poem 'An Immortelle' (V), efface the voyage out and back again so that his adventures aboard one of the 'Baltic brigs' (l. 17) take place off-stage; the poem resumes after the 'empty interval' in the original setting. Like the man's cluttered, egocentric utterances, however, his voyage away solves nothing. The poem's conclusion – 'it's late – late' (l. 25) – echoes the form of the water-hen's admonitions; here, however, Jacob suggests that the speaker has not learned to follow the bird's lesson. He still focuses upon the sound of his own voice, refusing to listen to others.

The tension between entities in the poem the speaker ignores – the lover, the effaced voice of the wheel, the water-hen's advice – and his own presence reveals the uneasy mixture in the text between absence and presence. Even those elements in the landscape that occupy a palpable place – the water-hen, for example – are strangely insubstantial. The water-hen is 'like a passin' wraith' (l. 2); the simile 'like' interjects a degree of ambiguity into the image, one that is amplified by the incorporeality of its comparison – it is *like* a 'passin' wraith', a shifting, drifting ghost. The speaker's 'ain love' (l. 7), too, lacks a convincingly tangible presence. The non-human elements around her display the anthropomorphic vitality she lacks. Jacob emphasizes this with the dynamic verbals associated with inanimate objects – 'lyin'" (l. 6), 'rowin'" (l. 8), and 'cryin'" (l. 7) – in contrast to the monosyllabic, static verb 'stood' describing the lover. In comparison, those entities absent from the poem at particular moments nevertheless achieve a kind of spectral presence. When the water-hen chastizes the speaker to keep faith, he replies that 'tho' ye see but ane ye may cry on baith' (l. 5); in other words, he urges her to speak to 'baith' his lover and him although the lover is not visible, and in fact, not even present at this moment. He imagines he represents them both and therefore her *physical* presence is unnecessary. Finally, when the speaker returns to the familiar landscape at the poem's conclusion, he feels there is 'naucht to see' (l. 22) – the landscape empties out

and becomes only the 'weeds' and the 'lade in spate' (l. 22); yet within this landscape, the speaker clearly is troubled by the emotional 'load' he was not able to 'skail' at sea (l. 20). The images from his past acquire a vexingly tangible presence in the empty 'naucht' space he occupies in the poem's conclusion. The emptiness of the blank space indicated by the asterisks spreads out into the poem itself, erasing the physical elements of the landscape – but not its ghosts.

In this juxtaposition of absences and presences, Jacob suggests that loss is inextricable from the passage of time; the absences created by the speaker's evolution in time paradoxically become so charged with emotional import that they achieve a tangibility that mimics presence. Minkowski refers to a similar phenomenon when he maintains that awareness of the past as passed creates a 'negation' – a gap or space – that in its lack of presence is distinctly physical: '[w]ith poignant acuity a new element penetrates the past: the past not only has been but *is no longer*.

Remembrance is born. Negation has penetrated time' (p. 517, his emphasis).

'Remembrance' to Minkowski is 'born' from the sense of 'has been' / 'is no longer' separating moments in time. In 'The Water-Hen', 'remembrance' is 'born' when the speaker compares his past and present experiences by the 'twa mill dams' (l. 1); with 'remembrance' comes a realisation of his deprivation – of youth, home, and love. His absence from home (and, for the space of time indicated by the asterisks, from the poem itself) is a 'negation'; the 'naucht to see' (l. 22) he finds in the poem's final stanza reminds him of the palpable, paradoxical presence of 'negation' in his life.

In 'The Water-Hen' Jacob draws attention to the relationship between the poem's 'negation[s]' and the self's movement through time by highlighting the dialogue's second voices. As time passes, the second voice changes to reflect or, more precisely, to challenge, his progress: beginning with 'keep faith' (l. 4), he passes through 'forget' (l. 9), 'think shame' (l. 14), and 'gang free' (l. 19) before he reaches the final caveat, 'hope – wait!' (l. 24). Significantly, the water-hen's voice is the only one to recur; her voice brackets the poem's opening and conclusion. Jacob's decision to title the poem after her further draws attention to her pivotal role in the poem.²³ Her gender is significant – as a female she echoes the only other female in the poem, the speaker's lover, and thus serves as an ironic commentary upon the lover's noticeable lack of expression. Because the bird appears twice, she emphasizes the difference

between the speaker's original and final states; as Russell's theory suggests, the sensation of change in the relationship of subject (in this case, the speaker) to object (second voice) points to the time interval between them, and, consequently, the loss made evident by their comparison. In the poem, the water-hen's voice symbolises time as a force structuring the speaker's life. Because her presence, unlike that of the speaker, remains relatively unaltered, she draws attention to how the speaker has changed. When the speaker finds the formerly vital landscape clogged with 'weeds' (l. 22) and the mill wheel running unchecked, Jacob suggests both his own stagnation (his inability to forgive his lover) and the relentless flow of time in the face of his failure. The mill wheel, like the medieval wheel of fortune, continually replaces its apex with its nadir, and vice versa. 'Time drives forrit' indeed ('Maggie', l. 21). The water-hen's cry thus becomes a plea for both forbearance ('wait!') and hope when confronting the irrevocable forward movement of time. The water-hen thus serves as an external reminder of the speaker's silenced conscience.

Notably, the water-hen's presence marks not only the speaker's losses but also his psychological response to change. The poem's final line – 'aye, bird, but my een grow dim, an' it's late – late!' – is the speaker's response to, and rejection of, the bird's appeal for patience. Moreover, it encapsulates the poem's dominant emotional thrust: the speaker's regret for his past actions. The 'load' he attempts to 'skail' (l. 20) at sea remains as present in his mind as it is when he first leaves because of his regret for past mistakes. Minkowski's theory, when read in conjunction with 'The Water-Hen', elucidates the speaker's response to returning home; according to Minkowski, of all the emotions, remorse most potently revives the past in the present. He writes:

Remorse concerns the past and can only concern the past. But further, it cuts out and isolates a fact in that past, a precise event; it fixes it and makes it survive. One might even say that this is the most natural way of isolating a precise fact in the past, which is primitively only the shadowy 'mass of the forgotten'. (p. 511)

Minkowski's conception of remorse resonates with the manner in which the self in 'The Water-Hen' 'cuts out and isolates' the events leading up to his departure from home. In the poem, time marks the speaker's final exclamation with traceable loss-lines; the disjunctive 'but' in the poem's final line reinforces his ultimate turn away

from the water-hen's conciliatory message of 'faith' and 'hope' and towards his own bleak pessimism. He thus turns away from 'hope' as he earlier turned away from his lover despite the wheel's warning to 'turn, man, turn, for ye ken that ye lo'e her yet' (l. 10). Remorse fails to motivate him to change his actions but ironically does fix in his mind the moment when he *could have altered his life*. As Minkowski claims, 'it is remorse that then opens the door through which the past penetrates life' (p. 513). Regrettably for the speaker, the door between the past and 'life' – symbolically represented by the asterisks – remains open only enough to let the speaker recall his past but not change his future. The speaker thus loses not only his past but also the potential future that reconciliation with his lover might have brought. As Iain Crichton Smith describes it, 'to gain one future / is to lose another'.²⁴ The present this speaker gains, one characterised by 'weeds' and alienation, is hardly the one he would have wished for before leaving.

Critics have largely ignored 'The Water-Hen' in their analyses of Jacob's writing, with the notable exception of Anderson in 'Tales of Her Own Countries: Violet Jacob'. The poem is not as well known or widely anthologized as the contemporaneous 'Tam i' the Kirk' or 'The Wild Geese'. It does not seem to fit into the same category of male voice poems Porter McMillan dismisses as those characterised by an 'indecorous feel of a woman trying to be one of the boys, operating with a discourse that can be mastered but not mistressed' (p. 48). Is it too nostalgic to be a good lyric poem? As a poem about time, 'The Water-Hen' magnificently encapsulates one self's struggle to reconcile inner time with relentlessly forward-moving external time. Unable to utter a few redemptive words of forgiveness, the speaker loses everything – even hope – as he turns his back on faith and forgiveness in favour of the chance to 'skail' everything at sea (l. 20). As he learns, however, the one load that cannot be lost is the double burden of remorse and time. What Anderson calls a 'deceptively simple poem' (p. 354) is just that: apparently quite straightforward, but written in metrically-sophisticated sprung rhythm; thematically basic but exploring complex psychological tensions underlying the self-in-time. Ultimately, the poem rejects an easy nostalgia, one that would lovingly reproduce the 'lands left long ago' ('To H. M. C', l. 12), and reflects upon the 'naucht' left now that everything is gone from the landscape ('The Water-Hen', l. 22).

The Gean-Trees

From the relatively grim conclusion of 'The Water-Hen', Jacob moves to a slightly more positive note in 'The Gean-Trees', another poem from *Songs of Angus*. It is not one of her strongest – in fact, its nostalgic tone strays perilously close to the sentimental exile poetry of her contemporary Charles Murray. Despite its occasional lapse into nostalgia, 'The Gean-Trees' is notable for offering a different perspective of self-in-time that provides a useful contrast to the representation of self in 'The Water-Hen'. Moreover, it demonstrates Jacob's technical skill, revealing how poetic structure contributes to meaning. In the poem, another of Jacob's exiled speakers recalls his youth in the 'Vale of Strathmore' (l. 7), reflecting upon its distance from his present location. Unlike in 'The Water-Hen', where the moment of loss linking the two points in time is a specific, discernible event – the speaker's refusal to forgive his lover – in 'The Gean-Trees' loss is of a more abstract nature. One does not know why the speaker is estranged from his homeland and furthermore cannot discern from where in time or space he speaks the poem. Jacob instead focuses upon the past moment as it bleeds into and ultimately overtakes the poem's present. Notably, the speaker reconstructs his absent past in dreams ('I mind, when I dream at night', l. 1). Richard Jackson argues that many poets when writing about time do so in poems that relate dreams or visions, as both have fluid temporal structures. One can upset the otherwise unalterably linear movement of time in dreams. Jackson maintains 'the dream strategy is a way to subvert the spatiability of time, and yet achieve a sort of transcendental, spatialised vision'.²⁵ The 'spatialised vision' Jacob employs here recreates the titular 'gean-trees' and their surroundings in the dream space; simultaneously, however, this vision points to the landscape's illusory nature: the speaker only sees the past landscape when he dreams, at night, far from the actual place – thrice removed from the origin; this is Minkowski's 'negation' exemplified. The speaker's reflections upon the past, the poem reveals, become merely a 'vision', not a real engagement with the past.

According to Minkowski, the transition from past to present generates loss, and yet also blends together two distinct moments in time. The 'intelligible connection' between present and past, he argues:

doesn't come from the fact that we see the present become past but because, on the contrary, the past eats into the present, just as it does with regard to the future. In other words, if in general we come to unite the three forms of time, it is because we introduce the past into the present and into the future. We do it precisely in distinguishing isolated facts or events in them. (p. 516)

In 'The Gean-Trees', Jacob's speaker experiences the past as it 'eats into the present' in that the 'white hoose' (l. 10) and the 'gean-trees' (l. 9) of his youth in the 'vale of Strathmore' (l. 7), although absent from his present surroundings, seem manifestly present to him in his dreams. His 'thochts o' youth' 'roll back' (l. 5) to the past, but in fact, the past creeps forward to meet him in his age and infirmity. The blooming gean-trees and the 'white house door' (l. 9) become the 'isolated facts or events' joining the separate times together, if only ephemerally.

As in 'The Water-Hen', Jacob reveals how loss-lines arcing into the present from an abstracted view of the past both define and constrain the speaker. In the third stanza, Jacob draws sharply back from the dream vision of the previous stanzas to expose the speaker in the present; she indicates this abrupt turn from his 'vision' of the past with the single disjunctive 'but' in 'but I'm thrawn wi' the blasts o' time' (l. 23). 'But' embodies the 'empty interval' between past and present, signalling the shift from one to the other. This disjunction represents the absence of the beloved landscape and, in particular, the 'gean-trees' (l. 8). Jacob reinforces this in the poem's title, which evokes the geans in order to highlight their complete absence from the speaker's present.

The poem turns further into itself, moreover, with a second disjunctive 'but' in line twenty-five. Just two lines after the earlier disjunction, this second turn shifts the focus away from the speaker's 'white' head (l. 24) and 'thrown' body (l. 23) to an oddly disjointed, self-reflexive moment in which he describes himself in the third person: 'but an old man aye thinks lang / O' the haughs he played amang / In his brow youth-tide' (lines 25-27). The shift from first to third person has two effects: it distances the speaker from the 'negation' of his present state by labelling him a generic 'old man' instead of a particular self, and secondly, it reinforces the 'open interval' (Sherover, p. 518) between his current state and his 'brow youth-tide' (l. 27). By surveying his situation from the third person, he effectively undercuts the

emotional response of the previous lines by implying that *all* old men dream of their youth, regardless of where they grew up; in doing so he temporarily deflects the focus outwards. The second 'but' emphasizes that the speaker's past is irrecoverable – it may 'eat' into the present, but it is 'for ever gone'.²⁶

Jacob further emphasizes the loss at the poem's centre in her manipulation of tense. By blending tenses together, she both magnifies the distance between the 'two points' in time and their differing relationships between subject and object, and stresses that the speaker's past is, in Minkowski's language, 'no longer' (p. 518). According to Muske, each tense has a particular emotional valence, which, when used in poetry, establishes a particular 'psychological setting' for the poem:

The past tense, for example, is used in poetry as much to designate a finished act as to impose the pathos of the irrevocable, the irreversible, and it is from this fixed illusion of defined time that we begin to recount ('Once upon a time'). (p. 72)

In 'The Gean-Trees', Jacob alternates between the speaker's present ('I'm thrawn', l. 23) and his childhood ('the haughs he played amang', l. 26). Curiously, the past exists in both past and present tenses: the 'bonnie Sidlaws *stand*' (l. 2, my emphasis) where the 'autumn leaves are turnin' (l. 8) and yet, 'there *was* scarce a blink o' the wa's' (l. 13, my emphasis). The commingled tense reflects the 'spatialised vision' of a dream, in that in the speaker's dream the scene exists continually, regardless of whether it does in reality. It also implies the landscape's resilience: as in 'The Water-Hen', the landscape *persists* while the humans within it age and change.²⁷ Yet more potently, the mingled tenses unbalance the sense of the past as 'irreversible' (Muske, p. 72). The 'fixed' past the speaker recounts thus contrasts with his fervent insistence upon its eternity: he continually is 'yearnin' (present) for the 'hoose whaur the leaves are turnin' (present).²⁸

Francis Berry, in *Poet's Grammar: Person, Time and Mood in Poetry*, associates particular tenses with the kinds of temporal experiences they encode. His conclusions are useful in that they expand upon the kind of 'psychological' aspects of tense Muske illuminates in her essay, and, when read beside Jacob's work, offer enlightening ways to consider the self-in-time. He claims that 'grammatical Tense [sic] registers human

knowledge of time and its effects', arguing a 'knowledge of the truth of Tense can be only derived from experience of time, experience in time'.²⁹ Berry's conjectures, when applied to 'The Gean-Trees', expose how the combination of tenses reinforces the distinction between the speaker's two temporal 'experience[s]'. The speaker's 'knowledge of time and its effects' - his awareness of his ageing body - contrasts with his somewhat deluded insistence upon the unchanging nature of home. The poem consequently concludes with an ambiguous blend of the speaker's acceptance of the 'blasts o' time' (l. 23) and his own wishful dismissal of the loss brought about by the 'interval' between the past and the present (Sherover, p. 518). Like the voices of exiles in poems like 'The Wild Geese' and 'The Gangrel' (BJ), the speaker in 'The Gean-Trees' experiences the full significance of his estrangement from home 'in time'; in other words, unlike the adage's promise, time does *not* heal all wounds. Rather, it draws attention to the gaping wound of loss itself.

Muske's reference to 'pathos' raises an important question to a reader of this particular poem (although of course Muske is not writing in reference to Jacob's work). Is 'The Gean-Trees' an effective portrayal of the self-in-time, despite its nostalgic theme? Certainly, it is not one of her strongest poems. The images of home - the 'white hoose door' (l. 10), 'bonnie' hills (l. 2), and 'pairl' blossomed trees (l. 19) - are largely conventional; the speaker's thoughts about ageing appear to be relatively straightforward. What is surprising, however, is how Jacob treats these nostalgic images. She complicates the poem's sentiments by reinterpreting the emblems of house and home as *memento mori* - symbolic reminders for the speaker of his mortality. In the first stanza, for example, the vision of the trees standing in the 'dark'nin' land' (l. 3) is unusual. Jacob could have used 'darkened' or another similar word, but instead chooses the gerund 'dark'nin', which suggests an *active* transition between one state and another, thus capturing the passage of time underlying the poem. As Jacob makes clear in poems like 'The Last o' the Tinkler' (MS) and 'The End O't' (NL), the movement from day to night has obvious symbolic parallels to human life; in 'The Gean-Trees' the speaker sees in the loss of daylight a reminder of his own transience. The images of the gean-trees at each stanza's conclusion also reveal a greater symbolic complexity. Initially, the speaker recalls the trees in 'autumn' when their 'leaves are turnin' (l. 8). Like the 'dark'nin' land, the autumnal trees with their 'burnin' leaves symbolically parallel to the man's

own season. Moreover, his awareness of the 'blasts o' time' (l. 23) impinge upon the more conventional imagery of the blooming geans; when he compares their spring blossoms to 'a lang white drift' (l. 19) of snow, he tinges his memories of spring with an acknowledgement of loss – he recalls the blossoms *when they have fallen off the tree*. Their colour reminds him of his own 'white' (l. 24) head, reinforcing the loss-lines joining his 'youth' (l. 5) to his present. The speaker's longing for 'the haughs he played amang' (l. 26) thus is intertwined with his gradual awareness of his mortality. The loss of home cannot be reversed and it is only through dreams (or, as Jacob suggests in later poems, death) that one can return to lost places and people. The poem's conclusion recalls Robert Louis Stevenson's 'To the Tune of Wandering Willie': 'Fair shine the day on the house with open door; / Birds come and cry there and twitter in the chimney – / But I go for ever and come again no more'.³⁰ In Jacob's poem, the speaker's constant 'yearnin' to 'come again' home chafes against the irreversible movement away from the past. The 'white hoose door' (l. 9) that beckons the speaker also suggests a gravestone, the ultimate *memento mori*.

Although 'The Gean-Trees' is not as subtle as 'The Water-Hen', its technical structure is quite sophisticated and merits examination. In 'The Gean-Trees', Jacob uses a rigorous rhythmic structure that combines both anapestic passages with occasional spondaic phrases to keep the poem's momentum moving. Several lines end in an incomplete foot, with a 'feminine' or short-accented syllable hanging into space – 'burnin' (l. 9), 'turnin' (l. 8), and 'fa'in' (l. 18) to name a few, but because the poem is structured by the number of stressed syllables per line, an uneven numbers of syllables in a line does not disrupt the poem's flow. Nevertheless, their inclusion does add to a feeling of unsteadiness. Moreover, the poem's strong underbeat sometimes compels the reader to read through the line break to find metrical resolution. In the first stanza, for example, a sense of metrical closure does not come until line seven, despite the semicolon in line four. In general, although the lines fall phraseomorphically, Jacob uses the occasional enjambed line to further disrupt the rhythm. For example, the reader may expect line six to identify where the 'thochts o' youth roll', but finds a simile instead.

Jacob keeps the poem's momentum moving forward with anapestic phrases. As if mimicking the movement of the 'turnin' leaves, the anapests propel the narrative

ahead between short spondaic outbursts (like 'lang white drift', l. 20) and pulsing unstressed syllables ('wi' their' (l. 3), 'ye could' (l. 16) and 'and there's' (l. 28)). Moreover, the anapestic phrases create an inexorable rolling motion that enacts the poem's entwined motifs of falling and turning; in lines like 'but I'm thrawn wi' the blasts o' time / And my heid's white as they; / But an auld man aye thinks lang / O' the haughs he played amang' (lines 23-26) the poem coils in upon itself. Jacob's use of internal rhyme - 'thrawn', 'auld', and 'haughs' - and the rich aural quality of her language add to the sensation of curling inward as the poem seems to coil into itself. Yet while anapestic phrases maintain the momentum of the poem, clusters of monosyllabic, often spondaic words - like 'white hoose door' (l. 10) and 'braw youth-tide' (l. 27) - disrupt the sound flow with their sharp finality, forcing the reader to focus upon key images punctuating the poem's rolling, falling momentum. Jacob groups these spondees so they beat out the rhythm most strongly just before each stanza ends.

The poem's most disruptive moment, however, occurs at the conclusion where Jacob includes an unexpected extra line (line 30). In the previous stanzas, Jacob has two rhymed phrases - 'turnin'" and 'burnin'" and 'fa'in' and 'snawin'" - but in the last verse of the poem she adds a *third* rhymed line: 'yearnin'", 'turnin'", and 'burnin'".³¹ As she does in 'Inverquharity' (BJ), Jacob uses the third line to accentuate a moment of intense emotional crisis. For a poem detailing an 'auld' man's longing for his past, why this complicated (and easily overlooked) metrical construction? The extra line in some ways embodies the speaker's obsessive reflection upon the past; the extra word 'yearnin'" thus enacts its meaning by prolonging his recollection. Moreover, as a structural anomaly it dramatises his sense of how the 'blasts o' time' (l. 23) have disrupted his life. The man's lost home becomes the poem's absent core; once he has lost this physical and emotional centre, he (and the poem) become unstable. Jacob here demonstrates at a structural level the psychological trauma she explores more abstractly, and perhaps more effectively, in poems like 'The Kirk Beside the Sands' (MS) or 'The Water-Hen'.

Hallowe'en

In many of her post-war poems Jacob returns to explore in greater depth how 'human knowledge of time and its effects' influences the self-in-time (Berry, p. 6). The period of time between 1915, when she published the enormously successful *Songs of Angus*, and the publication of *Bonnie Joann* six years later was a tumultuous one for Jacob: it saw the death of her son, the failing health of her husband, and the devastating years in which Scotland and the world at large struggled to make sense of WWI's brutality. Consequently, the poetry in this later volume captures a darker vision of the self, even in its nostalgic pieces. 'Hallowe'en' in particular reveals how the self's memories of the past blur the boundary between what has happened and what is to come, irrevocably changing the self's vision of the future. In this poem Jacob returns to the soldier persona so prevalent in the 1918 *More Songs of Angus*, but with a critical distance absent in these earlier war poems. She highlights the degree to which the lost past 'eat[s]' (Sherover, p. 516) into the present in her inclusion of the poem's ghostly allocuter, the speaker's friend Lachlan. Lachlan ultimately emerges as the poem's most powerful presence, despite his definitive absence (dead, buried in France).

The titles Jacob gives her poems tend to be straightforward indicators of the speaker's identity ('The Gudewife Speaks', 'The Tramp to the Tattie-Dulie', 'The Helpmate'), allocuter ('Whustlin' Lad', 'Bonnie Joann', 'Heid Horseman'), or the location upon which the speaker reflects ('Kirrie', 'The Field by the Lirk o' the Hill). The poem 'Hallowe'en' hails from a slightly smaller body of poems whose titles identify the occasion of the poem's utterance - another example is the relatively insignificant poem 'On a Flesher, Overturned in a Ditch During a Frost' (NL). In 'Hallowe'en', Jacob draws upon the holiday's symbolic significance for two reasons - initially, she makes reference to it as a holiday marking the harvest season; she later makes the implicit, grim connection between this productive agricultural harvest and the destructive man-made harvest - war - the speaker recalls. Secondly, she alludes to Halloween's folk significance as a liminal moment between seasons to suggest an equivalent threshold between the speaker's past and present. According to James Frazer,

Halloween, the night which marks the transition from autumn to winter, seems to have been of old the time of year when the souls of the departed were supposed to revisit their old homes in order to

warm themselves by the fire and to comfort themselves with the good cheer provided for them in the kitchen or the parlour by their affectionate kinsfolk.³²

When the speaker in Jacob's poem mentions 'the auld fowks' tales' of ghosts who 'come hame on Hallow nicht' (lines 21-22), he makes specific reference to this belief. Moreover, F. Marian McNeill reveals that Halloween serves as a threshold space not just between seasons but between worlds:

it was not only the souls of the departed that were abroad on Hallowe'en. It was believed that at the end of each quarter the Other-world was temporarily upset; but at Hallowe'en there was more than an upsetting - there was a complete upheaval, and all the denizens of that world were released for the night.³³

Halloween's significance as a holiday characterised by shifting boundaries in time and space provides a highly symbolic backdrop for Jacob's exploration of the self-in-time. The speaker, caught between his memory of Lachlan alive, and his knowledge that he is buried far away, struggles to reconcile past and present, home and France in a way that parallels the day's tradition of 'complete upheaval'. The speaker's anguished rituals stand out in high relief in comparison to the children's mirthful Halloween activities he narrates.

Jacob uses variations in tense to capture the sense of how the self's grief manifests itself in a paradoxical desire to linger over memories of the past, and simultaneously to project these events into the future. In his desire to re-engage with Lachlan, the speaker rejects the present moment characterised by his absence (symbolised by the presence of the new farm worker's kist) in favour of a revised vision of their past. To represent this, Jacob divides the poem into two distinct geographical areas (the farm and France) and four separate time 'zones' ('irrevocable' past, continual past or perfect tense, present, and possible future). Often, as in several other poems (for example 'The Licht Nichts' (NL) and 'The Road to Marykirk' (MS)) the division between tenses becomes ambiguous. In the first stanza, for example, the speaker uses what appears to be the present tense in his descriptions of the harvest: 'The tattie-liftin's nearly through / They're ploughin' whaur the barley grew' (lines 1-2). The harvest exists in the context of a cyclical natural time scheme; farm labourers plough where 'barley grew' in the past, and, one can conjecture, they will plant barley again

at seeding time. Jacob complicates this with the subtle inclusion of the future tense – ‘Ye’ll see the horsemen stand an’ crack (l. 4) – that stands in direct opposition to the past-focused ‘O Lachlan, but I mind o’ you’ (l. 5). As she does in ‘The End O’t’, Jacob draws upon the dual meaning of ‘mind’: the Scots meaning ‘to remember’ (CSD) and the English meaning the locus of ‘memory’ itself (OED). Jacob in this passage ‘introduce[s]’ (Sherover, p. 516) the past into the future, revealing the element missing in translation from one to the other: ‘you’ – Lachlan, the poem’s absent allocuter. The speaker’s grief over Lachlan’s absence infects his understanding of both his present and future life.

In the second stanza Jacob introduces the perfect tense into the poem and in doing so exposes more thoroughly the speaker’s desire to project the past into the future. The perfect tense denotes an ‘indefinite’ period of time in the past and consequently indicates only ‘vaguely’ the length of a recalled period of time.³⁴ Thus in ‘Hallowe’en’, when the speaker remarks ‘foo often we hae seen / Ten thoosand stars’ (lines 6-7), he refers to a moment in the past whose temporal duration is unspecified. The speaker’s recollection of his life with Lachlan persists in an ‘indefinite’ state, much as the landscape does in the speaker’s dreams in ‘The Gean-Trees’. The speaker’s memory of Lachlan in ‘Hallowe’en’ exists in a strangely undefined hybrid of past and present; unable to free himself entirely from this continually recurring past, the speaker persists in a state of limbo. Muske argues that each tense ‘becomes associated with a particular tone’ that influences what one can write in that tense; the past, she concludes, is ‘authoritative, if only by virtue of its finality’ while the present ‘implies a continuous epiphany’ (p. 74). In Muske’s understanding, the perfect tense’s inconclusive nature by definition evokes neither the ‘pathos of the irrevocable’ nor the ‘finality’ of true past tense (p. 72). Moreover, because the perfect tense extends action for an undetermined amount of time, it lacks the sense of conclusion characterising the past tense. Lodged somewhere halfway between past and present tenses, the perfect tense seems to exhibit characteristics of both categories. In Jacob’s poem in particular the perfect tense tempers the ‘pastness’ of the speaker’s memories of Lachlan with a sense of continual but indefinite renewal. His memories as contained within the perfect tense are both tinged with ‘finality’ and yet laced through with renewed ‘epiphany’: ‘hae seen’ (l. 29), for example, offers a profoundly different understanding of the past than the true past form ‘saw’. The

image of the two men, the 'we' of 'we hae seen', consequently lingers on in the speaker's memory as a past event that nevertheless is not finished entirely.

Jacob continues to blur tenses in the third and fourth stanzas when she moves from the vision of children playing Halloween games to an imagined image of the future ('ye'll hear the skreichs', l. 13) constructed from past experience. As in the previous stanzas, the difference between remembered past and lived present emerges not in Lachlan's presence, but in his tangible absence. The poem's most significant moment occurs in stanza four, where Jacob reveals the gaping hole at the poem's symbolic centre: the absent 'kist' (l. 34) of clothes in the bothy. Jacob here plays with the polysemous nature of Scots, for 'kist' means both chest of drawers and the thorax – its English cognate, of course, is 'chest'. The word's double meaning connects the absent chest of clothes with Lachlan's absent body. By evoking both Lachlan and his belongings, the speaker heightens the separation between past and present. Although the 'new heid horseman's kist is set / richt's o' the lum' (present tense, l. 17), the speaker insists he 'canna thole to see it' (l. 18) for in his mind, the 'auld ane' belonging to Lachlan still retains its place 'by the blaze' in the corner (perfect tense, l. 20). As illustrated in 'The Shadows' (BJ), the palpable presence of what in fact 'is no longer' points to the gulf between the past and the present moments (Sherover, p. 518). Lachlan haunts the speaker's surroundings although bodily he is not in either the present geographical location or time scheme. He becomes the embodiment of what Minkowski calls 'negation' (Sherover, p. 517); everything associated with him achieves a keen sense of negative presence. The speaker even includes him as part of the wider community in the description of Halloween rituals in a desperate attempt to overwrite the blank his death has left. The 'ye'll' of 'ye'll see the horsemen stand an' crack' addresses both the whole community (like the ambiguous, multivalenced 'you' used throughout Gibbon's *Sunset Song*) and also, it can be argued, specifically Lachlan himself. The space where Lachlan's trunk *used to be* becomes more real than the actual trunk occupying the same position; Lachlan himself becomes more substantial in his death than in life.

The speaker's inability to 'see' (l. 33) the new worker's kist and his determination to draw Lachlan into the present relates to his difficulty in reconciling memories of Lachlan with a knowledge of his actual whereabouts ('awa in France' (l. 26), 'lyin'

wi' the lave' (l. 30)). Setting the scene for Lachlan's re-appearance, the speaker highlights the 'loupin' het' bothy fire (l. 16) as if to attract Lachlan to 'revisit' the bothy 'in order to warm [himself]' (Frazer, p. 634). Jacob draws a direct correlation here between spirits of lost loved ones who emerge in the 'upheaval' (McNeill, p. 13) of Halloween and the self's tendency to project absent figures *forward into linear time*. In 'Halloween', the self tries to alter his present by reinterpreting the past as an open, indeterminate time scheme; in doing so, he invites the ghosts of his past – unfixed as they are in the perfect tense – to 'revisit' him. Essentially, the speaker struggles to use his 'remembrance' (Sherover, p. 518) of Lachlan to *replace* his lost friend. He grants the 'remembrance' of Lachlan an almost tangible existence, such that he imagines feeling him 'rax' his 'hand' (l. 24) to meet him. The speaker's belief in Lachlan's presence is so profound he can see both 'the licht o' Halloween' (l. 35) where his friend is buried and the space in the bothy where the 'auld kist used to be' simultaneously (l. 34).

How does the speaker accept Lachlan's absence from his present life and yet insist upon his strangely corporeal presence? Muske's analysis of the self-in-time provides a possible explanation for how the use of multiple tenses in a poem complicates the notion of the self-in-time; in general, varied tenses in a text infuses it with multiple, palpable presences. Muske argues, 'if our motion through time is described variously as completed, ongoing, anticipated, then a sense of ourselves forms around each of these places in time, not *Zeitgeist*, but *time-flesh*' (p. 2). Muske here draws a direct relationship between tense and the self-in-time, suggesting that each particular tense contains a different embodiment of the same self. Her correlation between time and flesh (or bodily presence) has particular relevance when read in conjunction with a poem like 'Hallowe'en' in that it gives a partial explanation for the strangely corporeal presence of Lachlan. By remembering how Lachlan responded to Halloween on the farm in the past, and extending this 'remembrance' into the future, the speaker attributes to his image of Lachlan a solidity that mimics a 'real' presence. The 'sense' of Lachlan emerging from the poem becomes embodied in the speaker's perfect tense recollections and then imaginatively superimposed onto the future tense (Muske, p. 72). The speaker's sense of Lachlan thus 'forms around' both the past memory of the farm and his present reality there. Lachlan's numinous presence, like the past itself, 'eats' into the present and ultimately the future. Jacob

makes this clear in stanza four and five where Lachlan's 'time-flesh' grants him and his possessions presence despite their actual distance from the poem's setting. 'Time-flesh' in reference to Jacob's poem consequently becomes another expression of Minkowski's 'negation' penetrating time (Sherover, p. 518).

As she does in 'The Brig' (MS), Jacob focuses upon the moment in which the speaker and ghostly allocuter touch hands.³⁵ In both poems, Jacob's use of tense complicates the interaction between speaker and 'time-flesh[ed]' allocuter; in 'Hallowe'en', instead of the present or perfect tenses used previously, in the fifth stanza one finds the *subjunctive* 'gin' – 'gin the auld fowks' tales are richt' (l. 21); this time-specific gesture places the moment of reconciliation between the two men in the impossible future. The hypothetical 'gin' and the phrase 'what wad I gie' (l. 23) reinforce the artificiality of Lachlan's presence in the poem. Their reunion *cannot* exist in time; the 'time-flesh' with which the perfect tense clothes the missing-space-that-is-Lachlan is illusory. As Berry defines it, 'the subjunctive is the Mood of that which lies outside time' or, more explicitly, 'the "time" of the Subjunctive is an unreal time' (p. 7). In other words, the subjunctive mood records what *has not, cannot, and will not happen*. In 'Hallowe'en', the gulf between the speaker's past and present – the 'empty interval' separating his past with Lachlan and his future without him – is insurmountable. His only contact with Lachlan, consequently, exists in the 'unreal' subjunctive.

The speaker grapples with this realisation in the poem's final stanzas, in which he again compares the indefinite past of the perfect tense ('you an' me their lowe hae seen', l. 28) with the future ('ye'll mebbe hae yer Hallowe'en', l. 29) and finally, with the empty present ('the place I see / Is whaur the auld kist used to be', lines 33-34). Unlike in previous stanzas, however, the speaker here admits to Lachlan's actual physical location: 'yont, whaur ye're lyin' wi' the lave' (l. 30). His delayed recognition of Lachlan's death recalls similar gestures in Jacob's other war poems. In 'The Road to Marykirk' (MS), for instance, the speaker ultimately accepts her allocuter is 'lying deid in Flanders' (l. 15), while in 'Glory', the speaker admits the 'mools o' France' lie 'o'er' her allocuter (l.17). In 'Hallowe'en', Jacob uses a deictic gesture to stress the separation between the poetic self and the allocuter. Deictic expressions 'have the function of pointing to aspects of the utterance's particular environment' – such as temporal and spatial context (Leech, p. 183). They 'can only

be interpreted if the context of items to which they refer are already known to the reader (e.g. context dependent phrases).³⁶ Words like 'here' and 'there' are deictic in that they reveal the speaker's position in relation to his surroundings and indicate direction. In 'Hallowe'en', the word 'yont' (there) clearly – and in this poem, for the first time – establishes Lachlan's location in specific contradistinction to the speaker's. Furthermore, this moment has particular emotional resonance as well, for, as Keith Green maintains, deictic expressions 'relate the outside world to the inner world of perception'.³⁷ With the single word 'yont', the speaker in 'Hallowe'en' demarcates the spatial, temporal, and, significantly, the emotional distance between himself and Lachlan. In doing so he finally acknowledges the complete absence of Lachlan from the present moment. Whereas in previous stanzas he turns away from the present tense 'reality' (if one can use this word innocently) to focus upon the Lachlan-shaped gaps therein, here the speaker discerns the 'ye' he imagines is *not* present with him. Jacob reinforces the disruptive force this epiphany has upon the speaker with the unexpected stress placed on 'yont'; in the poem's regular iambic tetrameter, the sudden inclusion of a stressed first syllable naturally draws attention to the emphasized syllable. Jacob reveals that Lachlan has a presence in the speaker's life but – and this disjunction appears again in the poem's final stanza – ultimately Lachlan's real presence is 'wi' the lave' in France (l. 30).

The speaker's hesitant evocation of Lachlan's Halloween in France ('mebbe'), separate from their communal one in the continual past tense, reveals his awareness and in a small way his acceptance of the loss left in the wake of time (l. 29). The speaker's revelation in the poem's final stanza gains a greater poignancy when considered in conjunction with James's interpretation of the self's understanding of loss through time. In *The Principles of Psychology* he claims that an '[a]wareness of *change* is thus the condition on which our perception of time's flow depends' (p. 620, his emphasis). Critically, according to James 'the change must be of some concrete sort – an outward or inward sensible series, or a process of attention or volition' (p. 620). In 'Hallowe'en', the locuter's ultimate recognition of Lachlan's death and his own retreat into the past – to what 'used to be' (l. 34) – exposes his 'awareness of change'; this alteration is 'concrete' in that it makes real the gulf between two different versions of the same subject / object relationship. Nevertheless, the speaker *retains* his belief in Lachlan's absence as a kind of presence even into the poem's final lines;

despite the merriment in his present surroundings, and his acceptance of Lachlan's death, he still focuses upon 'whaur the auld kist used to be / And the lights o' Hallowe'en in France' (lines 34-35). Jacob once again relies upon metrical disruption to dramatize the speaker's turbulent emotions: she adds an extra syllable in the poem's final line, substituting an anapestic phrase ('and the lights', l. 35) for the expected iamb. This metrical stutter enacts the speaker's desire to linger over the past in the face of the troubling juxtaposition of past and present, present and wished-for future. Similarly, it recalls the extra rhyme ('yearnin') in 'The Gean-Trees'. Finally, the odd grammatical structure of the final lines exhibits the speaker's discomfort with his 'saddle-back' (James, p. 609) position in time. The awkward conjunction of 'whaur the auld kist used to be' and 'the lights o' Hallowe'en' rests uneasily after 'place I see' - 'place' is singular, and so the additional image in the poem's final line is unexpected, and moreover, 'lights' does not represent a place (as the parallel structure would suggest) but a phenomenon.

Come Again No More: Loss-lines and the Self-in-Time

In the poems discussed here, Jacob explores how the self negotiates the passage of time; ultimately, in her comparison of two moments separated by time, she reveals that what emerges from the self's movement in time is an inexorable sense of loss: of self, youth, home, or loved ones. If one substitutes the word 'loss' for 'change' in the James quotation cited above, one discovers a concise description of the self's relationship to time in Jacob's poetry: 'awareness of *loss* is thus the condition on which our perception of time's flow depends'. In Jacob's poetry, loss-lines, whether in the form of ghostly figures and landscapes or merely in recollections that preoccupy the speaker, join the past to the speaker's present; these loss-lines create a profound tension in the speakers' lives, pulling against the forward-leaning motion of time.

In Jacob's time poems, when confronted with the difference between past and present moments, the poetic self repeatedly cannot bear to listen to or see the 'change' concomitant with time. In 'The Wild Geese', for example, the speaker cries, 'haud yer whisht, for I daurna listen mair' (l. 16); in 'Glory', the speaker admits, 'I daurna ask, I maunna' seek to ken' (l. 22). In 'Maggie', the speaker reverses the

relationship by admonishing his lover's ghost, 'dinna look and see yer lad that's sittin' / His lane aside the fire' (lines 15-16). Witnessing the evidence of change is too much for the self – it must either retreat into grief or learn to accept the changed environment. The familiar disjunctive 'but' found in 'The Gean-Trees' and other poems indicates the speaker's abrupt retreat from loss. In essence, the poetic self's fear of acknowledging the loss generated by the 'open interval' relates directly to its difficulty in confronting its own mortality (Sherover, p. 518). The speaker in 'The Water-Hen', for example, realizes that his awareness of 'the thrang o' the years' (l. 21) makes it impossible for him to regain his youthful ignorance of death. Similarly, in 'The Gean-Trees', the speaker retreats from his 'thrawn' body into the relative sanctuary of dreams – in part because he can push away the 'blasts o' time' only in dreams (l. 23). In 'Hallowe'en', Jacob shows another way of coping with mortality; here she demonstrates how the speaker, in confronting his own fragile humanity, finds some consolation in the possibility of reconciliation with his past. The gesture Jacob describes in 'Hallowe'en' – the imagined moment when Lachlan and the speaker clasp hands – is purely speculative and cannot exist in real time, but nevertheless it provides the poem with a powerful depiction of what the speaker lacks: a *future component*. What Jacob hints at here is the necessity of a *future-focused vision of time*, one that can see beyond what she calls the 'outworn verge of time'³⁸ and into the afterlife. Such a vision cannot exist in human life, but it can appear momentarily in particular visionary moments; Jacob describes one such incident in 'The Brig', and another in her late poem 'The Last Ane' (NL). In 'The Last Ane', Jacob's speaker, upon meeting the heavenly 'Ane' (l. 21), understands he has already 'kent him lang!' (l. 24). Jacob here and in poems like 'Hallowe'en' suggests that her speakers, in their 'saddle-back' (James, p. 609) position halfway between the past and the future, insist upon viewing and reviewing the past when instead they should be focusing upon the future.

Because time moves forward relentlessly and without regard to human need, Jacob suggests that the self takes solace in the past as it is recorded in memory because there the past *seems* to exist without the loss and change characterising the present moment. In nostalgic poems like 'The Gean-Trees' or 'The Wild Geese', the speaker roots itself in a particular time and place that will exist continually in the mind, even if it does not persist outside of the mind. Jacob does not condemn this, but

shows in poems like 'Hallowe'en' how the past, ultimately, is elusive. It may possess a tangible presence and look alluringly real, but it is divided from the present by what Jacob in 'The Bird in the Valley' (MS) calls 'a world of years' (l. 21). Ultimately, the self must cope with its own mortality while recognizing that the end of the self-in-time is in fact the beginning of the self-outside-of-time – the immortal self that exists beyond the 'verge' of human time in the afterlife. Against this, Jacob suggests that on the page, the poetic-self-in-time persists and will ever grapple with the same issues of mortality and loss. For Jacob, the self-in-time cannot reconcile its inner time with the outer, public clock-time – and it is out of this eternal tension that the self evolves and changes, and, most significantly, acquires a sense of the beautiful, albeit ephemeral nature of human life. What would the speaker's narrative in 'The Gean-Trees' be without his recognition of the transient 'prime' (l. 22) of the geans? Where would the poetic self in 'Hallowe'en' focus his attention if there were no 'lichts o' Hallowe'en' to jar his memory of the past (l. 10)? Jacob suggests that out of an awareness of time and loss comes a simultaneous awareness of beauty, and a deeper understanding of how the human self changes through time.

¹ Kerrigan, 'MacDiarmid's Early Poetry', p. 75.

² *Tales of My Own Country* (London, 1922).

³ 'Donald MacLaine', line 22, *Northern Lights*.

⁴ By comparison, in Angus's work – discussed in chapter four – the past exists *continually* in the mind; multiple versions of the self coexist. The loss expresses itself, as in Jacob's work, in the gulf between selves. Time recurs; the poetic self moves backwards and forwards in time without barriers. Consequently, different avatars of the same self can meet unexpectedly. The self's memory haunts multiple temporal moments simultaneously.

⁵ In this dissertation, 'nostalgia' is considered to be the act of focusing backwards onto one's past, centring one's emotional energy on events, people, and places in the past. Nostalgia of itself should not be denigrated as a negative pastime; the distinction between sentimentality – an uncritical view of the past that consciously or unconsciously overlooks uncomfortable aspects of past experience – and nostalgia is significant, in that it draws attention to the author's varying intent in each case.

⁶ 'The Lang Road', lines 1, 6, *Songs of Angus*.

⁷ Porter [McMillan], p. 48. 'Airlie Kirk', lines 3, 1, *Verses*.

⁸ Caird, 'The Poetry of Violet Jacob and Helen B. Cruickshank', p. 32. Hendry, 'Twentieth-Century Women's Writing: The Nest of Singing Birds', p. 293. Anderson, 'Tales of Her Own Country: Violet Jacob', pp. 347-359. Stevenson, *Modernist Fiction: An Introduction*, p. 143.

⁹ Wittig, *Tradition in Scottish Literature*, p. 278. Leslie W. Wheeler, 'Violet Jacob', in *Ten Northeast Poets: An Anthology*, pp. 73-74 (p. 73).

¹⁰ James, *The Principles of Psychology*, p. 609. His emphasis.

¹¹ Bertrand Russell, 'On the Experience of Time', *The Monist*, 2 (April 1915), pp. 212-233 (p. 215). This section does not imply that the thinkers cited represent stages in the development of a single strand of thought. On the contrary, each developed his own version, although with some reference to earlier thinkers.

¹² This echoes *certain* conclusions in Bergson's thinking. Russell denies the possibility of recurrence, however, which makes him on most points antithetical to Bergson (and also makes him an inappropriate person to consider in an analysis of Angus's work). See chapter four.

¹³ 'To H.M.C.', l. 14, *Verses*.

¹⁴ 'The Water-Hen', l. 21, *Songs of Angus*.

¹⁵ Eugene Minkowski, *Lived Time: Phenomenological and Psychopathological Studies*, translated by Nancy Metzel (Evanston, 1970); due to the difficulty of obtaining this book, the passages cited here derive from 'The Presence of the Past', in *The Human Experience of Time: The Development of its Philosophical Meaning*, edited by Charles M. Sherover, pp. 504-518. Page numbers cited are to Sherover edition. Jacob probably did not read his work; it post-dates her. I evoke his conclusions *not* to imply lines of influence between the two but to suggest other ways of interpreting the self-in-time.

¹⁶ Chapter four pursues this idea, using Bergson's theory to explore the events that 'trigger' remembrance.

¹⁷ In distinction from the ghosts in Angus's work, which relate to the self's ineffable desire for other and consequently are not related to the spectral allocuters in Jacob's poetry. See chapter six.

¹⁸ Carol Muske, 'The Habit of Time (Or Fleshing Out the Zeitgeist)', in *Women and Poetry: Truth, Autobiography, and the Shape of Self*, pp. 72-80 (p. 72).

¹⁹ Friedlander may have the title wrong; a muir-hen, or moor-hen, is also called a water-hen. Papers of Violet Jacob, NLS, MS 27416, folio 73, c. 15 January 1920

²⁰ For comparison, see 'The End O't', (Chapter 3).

²¹ Although the female voice remains silent in this poem, in 'The Mill-House' (from *Verses*) the silenced female takes drastic action against her oppressor:

Like some slim beast, some snake or stoat,
She meets her teeth upon his throat,
Her fingers grasp his leathern coat.

[....]

The mill-race runs till it nears the moat,
What thing does the water raise and float?

- A drowned dead man with a mark on his throat. (lines 26-28; 32-35)

²² Nineteenth-century poet Gerard Manley Hopkins described sprung rhythm originally as a kind of metrical structure wherein one counts stressed syllables as the beat, rather than counting iambs, trochees, and spondees.

²³ The symbolic use of a bird as soothsayer prefigures Jacob's 'Bird in the Valley' (MS) in which the bird is a voice of reconciliation.

²⁴ 'The Tape Runs', lines 8-9, *Collected Poems* (Manchester, 1992), p. 367.

²⁵ Richard Jackson, *The Dismantling of Time in Contemporary Poetry* (London, 1988), p. 9. Although Jackson here writes with reference to post-WWII poets, his comments do apply to earlier poets like Angus and Jacob in that both (Angus in 'Barbara', (chapter six); Jacob in 'The Banks o' the Esk', (chapter two)) exploit the freedom dream poems permit in narrative devices, setting, and structure.

²⁶ Sherover, p. 516. 'To H.M.C.', l. 14, *Verses*.

²⁷ As in 'The Water-Hen' or 'Back to the Land', the landscape *does* change in time but at a less perceptible rate in comparison to humans.

²⁸ Chapters two and five address the spatial relationship between self and house.

²⁹ Francis Berry, *Poet's Grammar: Person, Time and Mood in Poetry* (London, 1958), p. 6.

³⁰ Robert Louis Stevenson, 'To the Tune of Wandering Willie', lines 23-24, *Songs of Travel* (1895), in *Robert Louis Stevenson: Collected Poems*, ed. by Janet Adam Smith (London, 1950), p. 256.

³¹ Jacob uses a triad of rhymed 'feminine' words in 'The Last O' The Tinkler' (MS) but the effect is different as she uses triads throughout. In 'Inverquharity' (BJ) like 'The Gean-Trees', she includes an additional rhymed line in the final stanza to accent a moment of emotional crisis.

³² James Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion*, abridged edition, reprinted from 1922 edition (Ware, Hertfordshire, 1993), p. 634.

³³ F. Marian McNeill, *The Silver Bough: a Study of the National and Local Festivals of Scotland* (Glasgow, 1958), p.13. McNeill concludes her Halloween section with excerpts from 'Hallowe'en', calling it a 'vivid little picture of Hallowe'en' in Jacob's 'native Angus' (p. 30).

³⁴ Geoffrey Leech, *A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry* (London, 1969), p. 195

³⁵ 'The Brig' is discussed in chapter two. Angus similarly makes use of this gesture, although chiefly in love poems where linked hands could symbolize sexual union.

³⁶ Corbett, *Language and Scottish Literature*, p. 128.

³⁷ Keith Green, 'Deixis: A Revaluation of Concepts and Categories', in *New Essays in Deixis: Discourse, Narrative, Literature*, edited by Keith Green, Costerus New Series #103 (Amsterdam, 1995), pp. 11-25 (p. 19).

³⁸ 'The Lost Track', l. 2, *Verses*.

Tales of Her Own Country: Self and Space in Jacob's Poetry

It is difficult to examine Jacob's treatment of the self-in-time without discussing in turn how that self relates to the space around it. Space and time in Jacob's poetry are closely related; in poems like 'The Water-Hen' (SA), Jacob reveals how the self's recollections of a particular time are inextricably connected to the specific space in which the events occurred. The speaker layers memories of past times upon the landscape around it; in their intensity these mental associations, like the ghostly memories of the past discussed in the previous chapter, acquire an almost physical presence. Jacob's concern with space runs throughout her *oeuvre* – space both as the actual geographical area inhabited by the self, and as the imaginative region occupied by the self in dreams or visions. Space in this sense encompasses more than 'place', a word that indicates a bounded geographical location. Carol Anderson observes that space in Jacob's work 'evokes physical place but also location in other senses'.¹ That is, although Jacob often sets her poems in Angus, space in the poem involves more than the self's geographical location – the self's specific spatial positioning (by a river, in the woods, in a dream) is vitally important to an understanding of the poem. In her poetry, Jacob illustrates how the self occupies a space, but simultaneously that space shapes the self within it.

Jacob's interest in space is not original; countless poets contemplate landscape and the self's position within it. Jacob has numerous predecessors within the Scottish canon, most notably Robert Burns. At the time in which Jacob wrote, many poets within the Scots tradition focused specifically upon landscape: Charles Murray, Lewis Spence, Marion Angus, and in the later years of Jacob's career, Helen Cruickshank (and before them, Robert Louis Stevenson). Outwith the Scottish tradition, one has the English Romantics poets or Americans like Walt Whitman and Ralph Waldo Emerson as models for the linguistic treatment of space. Although the theme is not unique to Jacob, she does offer an interesting perspective on the *self-in-space* – the self as described within an identified landscape. As a well-travelled woman she brought to her writing a familiarity with different landscapes, but as someone who lived outside Scotland most of her adult life, Jacob also imbued her images of Scotland with the intensity of one eager to preserve an absent landscape. Writing at a time

when the 'lang road' to the city threatened to empty the landscapes she describes, Jacob looks closely at how the self envisions a return to the familiar space of home.²

It is no accident that three of Jacob's books – *Songs of Angus* (1915), *More Songs of Angus* (1918), and *Tales of My Own Country* (1922) – specifically invoke the landscape of Angus, her 'own country'. Her repeated use of the possessive phrase 'of Angus' or 'of my own country' confers an authenticity³ on the books' contents, as though the volumes belonged to the landscape. Jacob's poetry consciously refers to geographical elements like the river Esk, Craigo Woods, the Sidlaws, the Howe of the Mearns, and the 'woods o' Dun'.⁴ For Scottish readers outside Scotland, Jacob's poetry deftly described 'hame'; her papers at the National Library of Scotland contain letters from readers – writing from locations as diverse as Montrose and Chittagong, Bengal – praising her depictions of Angus. An anonymous reviewer in *The Aberdeen Journal* concludes that Jacob's 'devotion for [sic] the land and the people' imbues her poetry with 'many fine touches suggestive of a delicate appreciation of nature in all her varying moods'. Echoing the same sentiments, another anonymous reviewer claims 'she is inspired by the genius of that delectable land which stretches along by the spurs of the Grampians'. John Buchan wrote to Jacob, remarking that her writing captures the 'true feeling of Scotland and Scots people [...] the right air of austerity, a homeliness mingled with a wild poetry and a strange quixoty'.⁵ These commentators highlight the same point: Jacob's poetry reflects and reconstructs Angus on the page. The 'delectable land' inspires her, and she in return breathes life into a textual version of the landscape.

Significantly, however, these reviews date to a time when Jacob was not in her 'own country' but outside Scotland. Sarah Bing cites Jacob's letter to an unidentified friend in which she describes mixed feelings about the continual 'moving and homelessness of their army life' but then 'confides that, being a "nomad," she rather enjoys it'.⁶ Certainly, the necessary nomadicism of Arthur's army life – and later trips abroad for his health – coexisted with a determination to make their residence, wherever it was, a home. In another letter, Jacob writes:

You will see [our house] for yourself I hope one of these days and you shall have a good bed (our guest-bed is a good one!) and nice pictures on the walls and Lord! Such a welcome! We are not going abroad

this spring even for a few weeks and are keeping our pence to pay the [progress] of our possessions to these parts (some alliteration, isn't it?).⁷

Jacob's focus upon domestic particulars contrasts markedly with the sense of relentless movement one discovers in her other letters. Although a self-declared 'nomad', Jacob nevertheless brings something of 'home' with her. Her extensive correspondence (little of which is now preserved in public archives) testifies to the strong links she nurtured with Angus as a geographical and emotional space.

Visions of the Self-in-Space

Word as World: Textual Country, Lexical Selves:

Many of Jacob's poems address how the self simultaneously negotiates different kinds of space – community, psychological, and geographical – and explore how these spatial relationships influence each other. In 'The Cross-Roads' (NL), for example, Jacob dissects the self's roles in different co-existing contexts (community, interpersonal, spiritual). Similarly, in poems like 'The Brig' (MS), Jacob looks at parallels between internal and geographical spaces. In comparison to the discourse on self emerging in the latter half of the twentieth century, the inter-war dialogue on the self-in-space falls short in providing a comprehensive articulation of how *multiple* kinds of space coexist. Stephen Kern's study *The Culture of Space and Time, 1880-1918* argues that the widespread popular fascination with time theories in the inter-war years did not extend to include theories of space, claiming '[t]he proliferation of geometrical and physical spaces [during the twenties and thirties] had a great effect on mathematics and physics but did not generally influence thinking in other areas'.⁸ Kern acknowledges that spatial theory interested anthropologists but stresses that this, like the psychoanalytic interest in mental space, remained within the context of specific disciplines (passim). In a Scottish context, the growing interest in nationalism during the inter-war years encouraged a wider public interest in national – and regional – spaces, but again this tended to remain within a political framework. Thus *disparate* discourses on space in its various avatars – inter-relational, internal, and geographical – flourished during the inter-war years, but they existed individually and within specific disciplines for selected audiences.

Consequently, although the previous chapter used contemporaneous philosophical and historical texts to contextualize Jacob's writing, this chapter will draw upon modern (and post-modern) spatial theories to elucidate key lines of tension within Jacob's poetry. I have turned to more recent critics, whose work analyzes the self as it exists within a network of different kinds of spaces. Gaston Bachelard (1884-1962), George Perec (1936-1982), and Roland Barthes (1915-1980) each offer ways of examining the self-in-space that build upon an understanding of the close relationships between self and space, poet and language. It may seem surprising to apply the critical approaches of these cultural theorists to a poet like Jacob, whose work is thematically straightforward and distinctly *not* post-modern. Clearly, these writers probably never read Jacob's work; she could not have read their work – it post-dates hers. Discussing Jacob's work in the context of work of these and other recent critics is fruitful for several reasons. Firstly, the theories of self-in-space spelled out by these writers offer both a vocabulary and a means of analysis for tracing how the self relates to space in Jacob's work. Perec in particular shows how 'there isn't one space' surrounding the self, but instead a matrix of spaces that 'have multiplied, been broken up and have diversified' so that 'to live is to pass from one space to another' continually.⁹ This affirmation of 'multiplied' spaces is useful when analyzing how the self in Jacob's poems exists within conflicting spaces. Secondly, examining Jacob's treatment of the self-in-space through the filter of critical theory offers the reader the opportunity to examine the dominant themes in her work. Finally, applying theory that connects the structure of the self-in-time to its relationship with language helps to elucidate how Jacob uses language to shape the self.

'To Describe Space': Self, Space, and Language

In poems like 'Craig Woods' (SA) and 'The Gangrel' (BJ), Jacob demonstrates a recurrent dynamic in her work between self and landscape: *in extremis*, the self takes refuge in the belief that the distant landscape of home is 'changeless' ('The Gangrel', l. 22). The speaker's narrative represents its attempt to record the existence of that 'changeless' space and often, its desire to return there. In Jacob's case, as her India diaries and letters suggest, producing narratives of longing preserved to some degree a landscape and a way of life she knew could not resist change. Perec in this instance

offers an insight into how the self-in-space and language interrelate. In 'Species of Spaces' (1974), Perec argues that writing is one way to preserve one's memory of a space, and, by extension, the space itself:

My spaces are fragile: time is going to wear them away, to destroy them. Nothing will any longer resemble what was, my memories will betray me, oblivion will infiltrate my memory [...] Time bears it away and leaves me only shapeless shreds: to write: to try meticulously to retain something, to cause something to survive; to wrest a few precise scraps from the void as it grows, to leave somewhere a furrow, a trace, a mark or a few signs. (pp. 90-91)

For Perec, memory is fallible; it 'betray[s]' one by forgetting or mis-remembering the past. Writing, by contrast, actively 'retain[s]' elusive memories and maintains otherwise 'fragile' spaces by preserving them in 'a few signs'. The writer's lexicographic instinct shapes space. As the following chapter argues, Jacob's poems – her 'songs of Angus' – both record 'a few precise scraps from the void', and construct a more enduring lexical landscape.

Writing preserves not only a particular space, but also one's vision of that space. Perec accentuates the connections between conceptions of space and one's vision, arguing that space 'begins' in one's articulation of it:

This is how space begins, with words only, signs traced on the blank page. To describe space: to name it, to trace it, like those portolano-makers who saturated the coastlines with the names of harbours, the names of capes, the names of inlets, until the end of the land was only separated from the sea by a continuous ribbon of text. Is the aleph, that place in Borges from which the entire world is visible simultaneously, anything other than the alphabet? (p. 13)

In Perec's view, how one sees relates to the sense of space one has created. With written space, 'the entire world is visible simultaneously'; that is, textual (or narrated) space allows a brief panoramic view of the written wor(l)d. For Jacob, writing in dramatic monologue form, this is a particularly important concept; her poems scrutinize the space itself, and how the self *describes* that space. The speaker's narrative becomes the 'continuous ribbon of text' containing the familiar landscape within it.

Roland Barthes reaches similar conclusions in *Writing Degree Zero* (1967); linking language and writing, Barthes maintains that language inscribes the boundaries of space on the page:

Language enfolds the whole of literary creation much as the earth, the sky, and the line where they meet outline a familiar habitat for mankind. It is not so much a stock of materials as a horizon, which implies both a boundary and a perspective; in short, it is the comforting area of an ordered space. The writer literally takes nothing from it; a language is for him rather a frontier, to overstep which alone might lead to the linguistically supernatural.¹⁰

Language in Barthes's conception is a margin between 'familiar habitat' and the 'linguistically supernatural', and a 'perspective': literally, *a way of seeing*. Barthes's metaphors of demarcation – language as 'horizon', 'boundary', and 'frontier' – recall Perec's 'signs traced on the blank page'; in both interpretations, *how and what one sees* is closely related to one's interaction with space.¹¹ Barthes's understanding of the associations linking self, language, and vision is helpful for a reading of Jacob's work, for Jacob, in several poems, emphasizes the degree to which space *constrains* the self's vision. When reading her poems, one can extend Barthes's idea of language as a 'horizon' to describe not only the reaches of self-made space but also the limitations on the self's vision within space. The indeterminate edge of language in this way becomes the outermost reach of the self's vision. The self-in-space in Jacob's poetry cannot see beyond the 'frontier' into the 'linguistically supernatural' except perhaps in brief, unsustainable glimpses.

'What Space is For': Space, Self, and Memory

The self's relationship to space is mediated not just by language, but also by its memories of the past. In Jacob's work, memories haunt the self and its landscape; the way the speaker narrates space reveals its desire to 'preserve' its memory of that space and its concomitant desire to persist within it. In *The Poetics of Space*, Gaston Bachelard – like Barthes and Perec – establishes a close tie between self and language as shaped by spatial memory.¹² At the root of the self's relationship to language, Bachelard insists, is the memory of 'things past':

At times we think we know ourselves in time, when all we know is a sequence of fixations in the spaces of the being's stability – a being who does not want to melt away, and who, even in the past, when he sets out in search of things past, wants time to 'suspend' its flight. In its countless alveoli space contains compressed time. That is what space is for. (p. 8)

The phrase 'sequence of fixations' Bachelard uses to describe one's memory has applications to many of Jacob's poems. Poems like 'The Blind Shepherd' (MS) and 'The Water-Hen' (SA) narrate a 'sequence' of events the speaker has preserved in memory; Jacob suggests that the self's 'stability' is rooted in these recalled 'fixations', but she also shows how memory's 'compressed time' can overrun the space that contains it. The line between 'fixation' (or self-destructive obsession) and stagnation (or sentimentality) is a dangerously indistinct one.

Because she spent so much time away from 'hame', and perhaps because she travelled frequently, Jacob was acutely aware of how the self relates to place, and beyond that, to more generalized space. Consequently, informed by her own experience, her poetry explores how the self views its spatial setting, how it considers itself, and finally, how these two separate visions coexist with the 'horizon' of language (Barthes, p. 31). Her project can be seen as an analysis of often marginalized community voices and a literary evocation of a disappearing landscape. Her poetry constructs a 'comforting area of an ordered space' (Barthes, p. 31) yet simultaneously reveals the dark fissures in this 'ordered space' and the lacunae that exist because of the self's flawed vision. Jacob's textual Angus contains both the sentimental view of 'hame' as 'comforting' and the darker realisation that beneath this apparent order, one finds continual proof of human fallibility. Within the written landscape, Jacob's selves trace the 'boundary' and 'perspective' of the language that both animates and contains them (Barthes, p. 31).

Looking For 'Lands Unseen': Vision and The Self-in-Space

Craig Woods

Buchan's introduction to Jacob's *Songs of Angus* claims that 'in every song there is the sound of the east wind and the rain'.¹³ His commentary draws attention to how Jacob's evocation of Angus obscures the distinction between the 'real' Angus and its

textual representation. What is the difference between the two? Elena Semino's work on the relationship between landscapes and their poetic correlatives provides a illuminating model for reading Jacob's poems. In *Language and World Creation in Poems and Other Texts*, Semino analyzes the degree to which 'text world[s]' parallel the real world upon which they are based, observing that in some poems 'the text world overlaps exactly with the actual world; it contains the same objects, and these objects have the same properties as their actual counterparts'.¹⁴ In poems where text and real worlds overlap, Semino reasons 'the world of the poem is "anchored," as it were, to a specific actual setting, and involves objects, situations and thoughts that could accurately reflect a specific real experience' (p. 95). With the poem 'anchored' in reality, the poet then may layer new meanings upon the geographical components of the 'text world', radically reinterpreting situations unfolding within it. In Jacob's poetry, one finds the 'actual world' recreated in verse; onto these 'real' landscapes, Jacob adds symbolic laminae of meaning as she scrutinizes the exile's longing for home, analyzing the effect this desire has upon its vision. Jacob's poem 'Craig Woods', from *Songs of Angus*, offers an early (slightly flawed) version of this dual vision. Here Jacob uses a 'specific actual setting' - Craig Woods in Angus - and reinterprets it as a symbol of the speaker's longing for home. In her autobiography, Cruickshank reveals, 'I now feel Craig Wood is sacred to Violet Jacob and I have never used the name in my own verse, although this was our nearest and dearest woodland Sunday walk'.¹⁵ Cruickshank's mental link between Jacob's literary Craig Woods and the actual woods highlights the potency of Jacob's 'text world' for her readers. The 'signs traced on the blank page' here become equivalent to the real space itself (Perec, p. 13); the textual world is as 'sacred' as the actual geographical space.

According to Janet Caird, 'Craig Woods' is 'remembered in the rain and mist of autumn' and ends 'like Stevenson's "Blows the Wind on the Moor," with the hope of return at the moment of death'.¹⁶ Caird's evocation of Stevenson's poem is useful, for it points to the dark imagery Jacob includes in her otherwise 'nostalgic' poem (p. 32). Like Stevenson in the poem Caird mentions, Jacob, beneath the thin veneer of nostalgic longing, includes unexpectedly negative images of home. For comparison it is useful to make brief reference to a roughly contemporaneous poem, John Buchan's 'The South Countrie'. In it, the speaker recalls:

the hills that my hert kens weel,
 Hame for the weary, rest for the auld,
 Braid and high as the Aprile sky,
 Blue on the taps and green i' the fauld:
 At ilka turn a bit wanderin' burn,
 And a canty biggin' on ilka lea -
 There's nocht sae braw in the wide world's schaw
 As the heughs and holms o' the South Countrie.¹⁷

In Buchan's poem, the 'south countrie' is 'the Promised Land' (l. 9); the speaker finds only positive images in his idealized vision of 'hame'. By contrast, Jacob in 'Craig Woods' (and indeed, Stevenson in 'To S. R. Crockett, on Receiving a Dedication') does *not* evoke particularly sentimental images of Scotland. There are no idyllic 'wanderin' burn[s]' and no 'canty biggin[s]' in her landscape. Instead, Jacob associates 'hame' with negatively-valenced images: 'cauld rain' (l. 1), 'greetin'" (l. 3), and 'chilly dew' (l. 6). In the first stanza, every image relates specifically to sorrow or loss: clouds freighted with tears; violent winds; and broken trees decomposing in the autumn dew (unlike May dew, autumn dew carries with it the premonition of winter, suggesting killing frost rather than renewing moisture). This negative imagery undermines a straightforward nostalgic reading of the poem. Furthermore, her diction emphasizes the poem's ominous subtext and 'heavy, brooding atmosphere' (Anderson, p. 354); 'splash' 'cauld', 'beatin'" (l.1), 'back end' (l. 2), 'laigh', 'weicht', 'load', 'greetin'" (l. 3), 'ghaists', 'blast', 'cleft' (l. 4), 'rot', and 'chilly' (l. 6) conjure up images of decay and death. The harvest imagery of a poem like 'Hallowe'en' (BJ), with its positive inventory of 'bairns wi' guizards' (l. 11) and festival merriment is completely absent here. Instead, one finds repeated images of brokenness and loss. Even in stanza two, where the imagery is slightly less negative, one still finds an uneasy conjunction of abundance (harvest) and death (smothering brambles, 'sleepin'" light)(l. 9). The landscape, populated by 'wraith[s]' (l. 16) and 'ghaists' (l. 5) haunts the speaker. So preoccupied is he¹⁸ by his absence from it, he suggests that the *actual* Craig Woods can 'rot i' the chilly dew' (l. 6) but he cannot stop fixating upon the way the woods were when he left.

The vital reference point for the speaker thus becomes not the woods themselves – as the title would suggest – but rather the *moment he leaves the woods*. When the speaker leaves, he internalizes a vision of the landscape; this image, rather than the actual

landscape, animates the poem. Although time may 'wear' the woods away or 'destroy' them, and 'nothing will any longer resemble what it was' (Perec, p. 90), the speaker nurtures an image of the woods as they were. Consequently, the poem has *two* Craigo Woods: the 'real' mapped woods, and the 'wraith' version in the speaker's memory. The poem's title may refer to either. With the repetition of 'mind' – 'but when will I mind on aucht [...] like I mind on you' (lines 7-8) – Jacob draws attention to the speaker's internalisation of the landscape. As in 'Hallowe'en', 'mind' has numerous connotations: 'mind' is both memory (Scots) and its physical location (English), as well as a verb meaning to remember or to have in mind (Scots), and to be concerned with (English). In 'Craigo Woods', the woods inhabit the speaker's 'mind'; he hopes for the moment when this relationship will reverse and he once more can inhabit the woods. Similarly, the word 'mind' also highlights the degree to which the speaker's self is a *mental* construct based upon his belief in the 'wraith' landscape. The phrase 'mind on you' could be read as suggesting the speaker's emotional engagement with his vision of the woods and as marking how closely his sense of self is linked to this vision. Thus when the speaker splits Craigo Woods into two separate versions, he similarly *divides himself* as one part of him remains fixed in his memory version of the woods ('since the day I left ye', l. 7), while the other continues on in the present moment, speaking the poem ('As I see', l. 6).¹⁹

Jacob reinforces the parallel between divided self and divided landscape in the second stanza, when she indicates the speaker's present location. Unlike in 'Tam i' the Kirk' (SA) or 'The Rowan' (BJ) where Jacob identifies the space in which the self speaks, in 'Craigo Woods' she holds the reader in suspense until the end of stanza two. Here, the reader discovers the speaker 'lyin' and thinkin' in 'the lang nicht' (l. 14). 'Lyin' suggests that the speaker is prone, prefiguring his (imagined) prostration at the poem's conclusion, and yet also subtly implies his image of the woods is untruthful. Because he dates everything from the moment he left the woods, his entire life is based upon that past incident. By preserving the woods in memory, the speaker wants to 'suspend' (Bachelard, p. 8) the movement of time dividing him from the woods, while by calling his image of the woods a 'wraith' (l. 16), he admits his existence is based upon something with no palpable reality. (The 'blast' he imagines reveals the landscape in fact may no longer exist.) He becomes as numinous as his vision: his only present-tense manifestation is both passive ('lyin', l. 15) and

tormented by the distant past ('when will I mind on aucht', l. 7). The loss of this landscape is acute as the 'plangent' repetition of the last two syllables in the final line of each stanza emphasizes (Caird, p. 32). According to Geoffrey Leech, a repeated phrase in poetry accentuates a 'simple emotion with force'. Moreover, 'it may further suggest a suppressed intensity of feeling – an imprisoned feeling [...] for which there is no outlet but a repeated hammering at the confining walls of language'.²⁰ In Jacob's poem, the repeated refrains indicate the speaker's 'suppressed intensity of feeling'; furthermore, they emphasize his distance from the woods – he is so far away that his cry echoes in space.

Jacob highlights the distance between the speaker and Craigo Woods with her use of tense. In the first stanza, the speaker notes 'ye *may* stand like ghaists, ye *may* fa' [...] / But when will I mind on aucht' (lines 5, 7; my emphasis). The ambiguity of 'may' heightens the speaker's plaintive 'when'; 'may stand' and 'may fall' suggest the actual forest's unpredictable and therefore precarious future, which in turn implies that the speaker's own future is as unknowable. Moreover, the adversative 'but' joining the two lines reinforces his distance from the woods. The actual landscape remains in a time frame unrelated to his unchanging vision of them – he alone occupies the present moment. In the poem's second half, however, Jacob complicates the relationship between speaker and woods with the use of the speculative subjunctive mood. The speaker claims that *if* he finds 'woods o' fir an' the licht atween them', he will not 'speir its name' but instead throw himself onto the ground in recognition of his return 'hame' (lines 22-23). This vision is disturbing for two reasons: firstly, the speaker imagines that death offers the only return to Craigo Woods, and secondly, this afterlife version of Craigo Woods is *not* the literal woods. Instead, it is yet another facsimile: a *third* Craigo Woods. The final stanza's frequent disjunctions ('but' twice – lines 20, 23) and temporal adverbs ('when' (l. 23), 'gin' (l. 21), and 'yet' (l. 20)), in conjunction with the subjunctive mood indicate that the speaker's imagined return is tenuous. Unlike the happy return envisioned in exile poems of some other poets²¹ (e.g. Charles Murray's 'Aiberdeen Awa' or Pittendrigh MacGillvray's 'In Exile') here Jacob creates a self with a precarious hold on his home landscape. Even death does not guarantee a return home. The speaker, like Odysseus in the Underworld, finds only shades, 'wraiths' (l. 16), and 'ghost[s]' (l. 5). Furthermore, the way in which he describes this third Craigo Woods reveals his

surprisingly dark vision of the 'far-aff land' (l. 17). 'Woods o' fir an' the licht atween them' (l. 21) evokes a gloomy northern landscape; although firs as evergreens suggest a kind of eternal life, the intermittent light implies only *partial* illumination. This recalls the direct correlation Jacob makes in her late poem 'The Northern Lights' (NL) between the northern landscape and death: the north is an 'eerie land' (l. 13) where 'the ghaists o' deid men stand / Wi' their feet amangst the snaw' (lines 15-16). Whereas the speaker in 'Maggie' (also from *Songs of Angus*) can imagine heaven as a place where one is 'happ'd in glory' (l. 1) and 'licht' (l. 4), the speaker here finds only a shadow landscape that is half-lit, half-seen, and 'far-aff' (l. 17).

Ultimately, Jacob contemplates the speaker's sense of vision. When the speaker leaves Craigo Woods, his vision splits into a kind of *di-vision*: one focusing ever backwards upon his departure, one aimed forward to a hypothetical return in death. His sense of vision, literally and figuratively, does not exist in a real present tense. The reader finds little visual evidence of the speaker's present - he seems to return endlessly to the 'compressed time' of departure (Bachelard, p. 8). One could read the poem's haunting refrain 'on you - on you' (l. 8) as an aural parallel to the speaker's double (then treble) vision of Craigo Woods. Just as the 'wraith' (l. 16) landscape is a fainter version of the original landscape, so too is the repeated phrase a paler echo of the first utterance. Jacob notes that the speaker in his imagined return *relies on sight alone* - he concludes, 'I winna speir its name, / But I'll lay me doon by the puddock-stules when I've *seen them*' (lines 22-23; my emphasis). Here, he expresses no interest in the space's 'name'; rather, he trusts his sense of vision - which is, by definition, 'limited' to the space in front of him (Perec, p. 80) - to identify it. For Jacob, the strict reliance upon the way space *appears* belies an insufficient vision. She does not indict the speaker, for she acknowledges the longing for home underlying his visions, but she does suggest - with words like 'ghaists' and 'wraith' - that he fails to distinguish between possibilities and improbabilities. He exhibits a sense of vision that is too focused upon elements of the landscape that 'reign in the past' (Bachelard, p. 188) and consequently dangerously unaware of his own presence in (present) space. The speaker's desire to return 'hame' - even in death - does recall the Romantic longing for death as an ecstatic unification of self and nature (e.g. Keats's 'Ode to a Nightingale', Shelley's 'Ode to the West Wind'). The speaker in

Jacob's poem wills a blissful union with nature in death upon himself, but ultimately, she implies such a vision of the afterlife is both speculative and spectral.

The Brig

In *More Songs of Angus* (1918), Jacob struggles to articulate a response to WWI with the same poetic distance she employs in previous works. As Dorothy Porter McMillan and Caird have argued, Jacob's work in this volume frequently falters – her son's death only a year before meant her material is often too raw to be formed into enduring poetry.²² Despite this volume's comparative weakness, one can find within it effective poems. Many of these continue to explore the self-in-space, but the written space Jacob creates here is divided in its preoccupation between France and Scotland; the grim war landscape is never beyond the range of sight. The self is haunted by the unrecognizable, unnatural space created by war – both as a concrete entity, embodied in the 'haughs o' Flanders', and as an abstract recognition that 'hame is no for' those who have died in battle ('The Kirk Beside the Sands', lines 9, 18). As a result, the speakers' visions in these war poems obsessively return to the duality of 'hame' space and battle space, struggling to see in the 'load of grief, of faith, of wrath' a 'glimpse of peace' ('Fringford Brook', lines 33, 38).²³

'The Brig' is one of the more accomplished pieces in *More Songs of Angus*. As in 'Craig Woods', the speaker contemplates the inevitability of mortality. In 'The Brig', however, Jacob configures the afterlife as a certainty, rather than an elusive possibility. The woman speaking the poem mourns the loss of her loved one – whether he is a lover or son it is not clear. The references to roses and clasped hands could be read as indicating an amorous connection between the speaker and allocuter, because the poem is thematically similar to some of Jacob's other war poems, most notably the contemporaneous 'Seasons', 'To A. H. J.' (both English) and 'Glory' (Scots), which all record a mother confronting her soldier-son's death, one also can interpret the locuter and allocuter in 'The Brig' as mother and son. Although in each of the mother-son poems mentioned the mother is alive and the son dead, speaker and allocuter reverse their roles; in each, the speaker connects the dead son with another, better life simultaneously believing, 'it's mysel' that's deid' ('Glory', l. 4). In 'To A. H. J.', 'Glory', and 'The Brig', the mother paradoxically

assumes the role of soldier in the son's absence. Compared to 'Craig Woods', poems like 'The Brig' offer a far more positive conception of the afterlife. The speaker's reunion with her child seems inevitable, rather than merely possible. As the speaker concludes in the lesser poem 'To A. H. J.', 'Our souls are those / Nor time nor death can part' (lines 17-18).

The manner in which Jacob configures space in 'The Brig' is markedly different from in 'Craig Woods'. Here she presents not multiple shadow versions of the same landscape, but rather two distinct geographies separated (or, alternatively, joined) by the eponymous 'brig'. The self in 'Craig Woods' endlessly duplicates a familiar space to comfort himself, but the self in 'The Brig' finds solace in the promise of an as-yet-unseen landscape waiting across the 'brig' in death. As in 'Craig Woods', however, the landscapes in 'The Brig' do have physical correlatives. Jacob creates a metaphorical template based upon the 'actual' landscape: Angus symbolizes the speaker's human life, the sea represents the gulf between life and death (what she elsewhere calls the 'verge of time'),²⁴ and France – presumably the land 'oot owre yon sea' (l.13) – becomes the afterlife (and, significantly, the probable site of the allocuter's actual death).

Jacob distinguishes between the actual landscapes and their psychic counterparts in her use of imagery. The 'real' mappable landscape that is 'anchored' in reality (Semino, p. 90) contains vividly described elements: the briar rose, the particular 'wide' light (l. 3), the stone dyke. Jacob links these entities with the active verbals 'grows' (l. 5) and 'burns' (l. 8).²⁵ These elements exist in relation to each other in a discernible space; the deictic specificity of phrases like 'past the briar tree' (l. 2), 'alang the road' (l. 3), 'ower Angus' (l. 4), 'agin the stane' (l. 8), and 'on to the brig-side' (l. 17) establishes a concrete rather than abstract context with the speaker serving as 'origo' – or point from which all elements take their bearing.²⁶ The speaker, situated in this visually conceived context, negotiates the 'actual' Angus landscape (or rather, the *textual* version of the actual space).

Within the literal landscape, however, the concrete elements (as in Angus's poetry) are freighted with symbolic meaning.²⁷ The briar rose suggests both love – like the 'reid rose' in 'Tam i' the Kirk' (l. 5) – and strife; with both 'leaf an' thorn', (l. 6) the

briar rose combines generative energy and protective barbs. Moreover, It 'burns' not with the erotic intensity of Tam's red rose, but 'saft[ly]' (l. 8) with the gentle power of the speaker's love for her son. Its flame also suggests the biblical burning bush that indicated the presence of God in the wilderness (Exodus 3: 2). The tree's position 'in by yon dyke' (l. 5) suggests it, like the speaker herself, is solitary, 'lane' (l. 6) and yet tenacious, flourishing in the lee of a stone wall. The relatively compact presentation of these images contains the poem's metaphorical content within two stanzas so that the concrete solidity of the 'real' Angus landscape does not blur into the descriptions of the abstract, internalized 'brig-side' (l. 17) that follow.

Jacob balances her evocation of the concrete, literal Angus with her exploration of the metaphorical geographies mirroring the mappable ones; the 'real' Angus of the first two stanzas corresponds to the speaker's emotional landscape, while the 'actual' land across the sea becomes the metaphorical 'fields o' life' (l. 15). While she associates the literal Angus in the first two stanzas with active, descriptive images, she accents the intangibility of the speculative geography 'owre yon sea' (l. 13) with her use of ambiguous deictic indicators and negations. Using intentionally imprecise language, the speaker indicates her son's actual presence only as 'oot owre yon sea' (l. 13), across the 'brig atween us' (l. 27) in 'the fields o' life' (15), and in a brief moment of proximity, 'on by me' (l. 9). Unlike the specificity of the language employed to describe the physical space around the speaker, Jacob here offers inconclusive gestures to dramatize the ineffable location of 'the fields o' life'; moreover, she indicates how the very vagueness of the allocuter's whereabouts allows for the memory of his presence to saturate the landscape completely; because he cannot be placed conclusively in one discernible space, he haunts the greater space in which the speaker moves.

As she does in poems like 'Hallowe'en' (BJ), Jacob here utilizes negations to evoke absences, which in turn acquire a kind of phantom presence. In Barthes's understanding, absence depends upon a relationship between two people, for it 'can exist only as a consequence of the other: it is the other who leaves, it is I who remain'.²⁸ Absence in 'The Brig' thus emerges because the allocuter has gone 'owre Angus an' the sea' (l. 4). The speaker's continued belief in his presence embroiders the empty space with paradoxical impulses: she feels him 'treid [...] on by' her (l. 9),

so he is not absent from her; contrarily, as she 'mauna hear' him beside her (l. 10), he must be absent. The speaker reconciles these antitheses with the conclusion that '[t]her gangs na' ane, but twa' (l. 12). This recalls the biblical story of Jesus' mysterious post-resurrection appearance among his followers on the road to Emmaus (the same image Eliot later adapts in *The Wasteland*), for here Jacob's speaker senses her son walking with her but cannot explain his appearance.²⁹ Similarly, this configuration also recalls the final stanza of Jacob's early poem 'Time and Space' in which the speaker reassures the other that throughout time he will be: '[s]o near that you [...] shall feel my shade between you and the cold'.³⁰ In both instances, the observing self senses the presence of a 'shade' as though it were tangible; in 'The Brig', although the speaker's son seems to be with her, his presence is undetectable; 'mauna' here suggests the physical impossibility of his presence and simultaneously her attempt to prevent grief from tricking her into imagining he is there.

Bachelard, in his analysis of what he calls 'intimate' space (p. 200), or the self's internalized space, implies that in moments of extreme 'solitude' the self grants a physicality to the 'countless presences' (abstract, often spectral entities) surrounding him in 'invisible space':

this coexistence of things in a space to which we add consciousness of our own existence, is a very concrete thing [...] In this coexistentialism every object invested with intimate space becomes the center of all space. For each object, distance is the present, the horizon exists as much as the center. (p. 203)

In Jacob's poem, the 'coexistence' of the speaker and her sense of her son's presence seem 'concrete' because the speaker's 'consciousness' of both her and her son's existence saturates the poem's 'invisible space' with a strange vitality. The dead son is 'invested with intimate space' in that he becomes the focus of the speaker's emotional energy and allocution. This phenomenon erases the distance between them, truncating the 'horizon' dividing them. In a strange move, the speaker seems to lose physicality: the pronomial dislocation of 'na' ane' (l. 12) replaces her first person 'I' with the generic 'ane'; in her distress, she becomes almost as ghostly as her son. Jacob here mingles absence and presence together so closely that one can barely distinguish between the real figure and the 'shade' ('Time and Space', l. 12).

Bing observes the speaker's insistence upon the son's presence parallels Jacob's own feelings for Harry after his death. She cites one of Jacob's 1917 letters which reveals:

He is so near me often. Last night I was made so happy by feeling him beside me – I never know when it is going to happen and sometimes I expect him to come I am disappointed and again, when I don't expect it, suddenly he is there tho' I cannot see him – but I feel it so strongly. (p. 109)

The insistence upon a visceral sensation of proximity in both 'The Brig' and Jacob's letter stresses the absent son's palpable presence. In each, the son is intangible ('I cannot see him' becomes the poem's 'I mauna hear' (l. 10)) but nevertheless granted a distinct presence. In Jacob's case, the unexpectedness of 'feeling' her son's presence heightens its emotional power; because she, like the poem's speaker, cannot predict it, the sudden feeling of proximity is acutely poignant. By converting this elusive moment of coexistence into poetry, as she does in 'The Brig' and 'The Licht Nights' (NL), Jacob perhaps helped 'retain something' of her memory of her son, and 'cause[s] something to survive' on the page, if not in life (Perec, 90).

In the fourth stanza of 'The Brig' Jacob uses negations in a slightly different way to emphasize the son's spectral form. When the speaker tells her son 'through dule an' strife, / Ye tak' yer road nae mair' (lines 13-14) Jacob evokes him 'tak[ing]' his 'road' and then immediately undermines it with the added 'nae mair'. The one sentence thus contains both his presence and a refutation of that presence simultaneously. Moreover, in the poem's second half, the clustering of negations – 'ne'er' (l. 21), 'nor' (lines 22, 30), 'niver' (lines 22, 25), 'nae' (lines 23, 30), and 'no' (l. 31) – becomes, ironically, a kind of incantatory charm against loss. With this lengthy list of negations, the speaker builds a wall of loss to protect herself from further grief. Like the portalano-makers Perec mentions, who divide the land and sea with a 'continuous ribbon' of reassuring text (p. 13), the speaker here labels the outline of the unknown with language to protect herself from that which is out of her control. Moreover, she reassures herself 'there's ne'er a nicht but turns to day, / Nor a load that's niver cast' (lines 21-22) as if to console herself that that 'day' will come soon. The afterlife and its concomitant reunion with her son becomes the positive 'day' that will emerge out of the densely packed negations and absences. In both examples

cited above, the son's absence and the mother's grief – two hollows or negatives in the poem – become paradoxically full with numinous presences.

Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space* includes an analysis of the relationship between presence and absence in memory that, when read in conjunction with 'The Brig', illuminates the interaction between self and landscape in Jacob's poem. Bachelard observes how memory captures only a blurred version of the original person or space; this 'unreal' version of the past forces one to question what is real, what is imagined (p. 58). In trying to discern the 'facts' of recalled events, the self stands 'on the threshold of our space', and 'hover[s] between awareness of being and loss of being. And the entire reality of memory becomes spectral' (p. 58). Bachelard's emphasis upon the 'unreal' and the 'spectral' in conjunction with the idea of threshold space helps one to read 'The Brig' as an attempt to understand the 'borderline between our own personal history' – life – and the afterlife. In 'The Brig', the speaker, longing for the time when she can 'cross' the brig to the 'fields o' life' (l. 15), occupies a threshold space that is both actual and metaphorical. The fluid boundary between 'awareness of being' and 'loss of being' – emphasized in Bachelard's analysis by 'hover' – allows her to substitute one for the other: her son acquires physicality, the afterlife tangibility. Memory, which keeps her at the 'brig-side' (l. 1), becomes 'spectral' while her death ('whaur ilka road maun cease', l. 18) by contrast becomes a 'fact' (Bachelard, p. 58). The brig becomes a *memento mori*, but also a soothing symbol of the speaker's eventual reunion with her son.

Jacob focuses not upon the grim prospect of crossing the 'Brig o' Dreid' but rather on the reassuring possibility that the speaker will find her son's hand outstretched to meet her. In the ballad 'The Lyke-Wake Dirge,' one finds the 'Brigg o' Dread' at the border between life and purgatory:

From Whinny-muir when thou mayest passe,
Every night and alle;
To Brigg o'Dread thou comest at laste;
And Christe receive thye saule.

From Brigg o' Dread when thou mayest passe,
Every night and alle;
To purgatory fire thou comest at laste;
And Christe receive thye saule.³¹

Jacob draws upon this chilling ballad to indicate her speaker's great faith in the power of love to protect her from 'purgatory fire'. In one of several versions of this gesture in Jacob's *oeuvre* ('Hallowe'en', 'The Lost Licht' (SA)), outstretched hands represent the human connection between life and death – the human 'brig' between one world and the next. The presence of a familiar human on the other side of the bridge is comforting, and serves as a reassurance that 'Christe' will 'receive' her 'saule'. Drawing a parallel between the 'treid' (l. 9) of the spectral son in the third stanza and the speaker's own future 'treid' (l. 29) in the final stanza, Jacob emphasizes how the 'fields o' life' (l. 15) in some ways mirror the imperfect human world of the first section of the poem. Although she cannot discern the specific geography of the 'fields o' life', Jacob's speaker can imagine a human connection linking the living and the dead. In the poem, moreover, Jacob creates a 'continuous ribbon of text' (Perec, p. 13) that becomes a line of connection between the 'text' of the human life portrayed and the unwritten text of the afterlife surmised.

As in 'Craig Woods', Jacob slips into the subjunctive 'gin' mood in the poem's second half, effectively postponing the mother's reunion with her son until an undetermined date. Unlike in 'Craig Woods' and 'Hallowe'en', however, Jacob's diction reflects a more positive outlook; her word choice cancels most of the doubt tingeing the subjunctive 'gin' (l. 26) as the assertive tone of 'aince' (l. 26), coupled with the imperatives 'come' (l. 27), 'bide' (l. 28), and 'will be' (l. 32) indicate that their meeting is inevitable; the operative word for the speaker is less 'gin' and more 'will'. In this interpretation, Jacob implies a far more reassuring vision of the afterlife; the afterlife brings reunion with loved ones, rather than the solipsistic return to an ambiguous 'hame' found in 'Craig Woods' (l. 23). Moreover, unlike the speculative afterlife in 'Craig Woods', life after death in 'The Brig' seems assured by the very presence of the bridge itself. Because 'ilka road' – every road – 'maun cease' at the 'brig-side' (l. 18), eventually, *all* humans will cross from the 'fields of home' into the 'fields o' life'.³² The question becomes not if, but when, one will cross.

This shift in consciousness perhaps reflects Jacob's response to the tragic circumstances in her life and in the wider community life during the war years. One

cannot interpret the speaker as merely a version of Jacob herself, though, as that would deny the separation between the poem's 'I' and the author that is necessary to lyric poetry (and dramatic monologue) (Semino, p. 30). Nevertheless, in this poem, one feels as Caird does that 'the mask is slipping' a little to reveal the author beneath (p. 33). One can also discern how the more positive vision of the afterlife reveals some engagement with Christian beliefs of the afterlife. Certainly, the movement towards seeing the afterlife as a *different kind of life* is significant as it alters the way Jacob approaches the relationship between humans and landscape in her later work. In Bing's analysis, the conception of death and reconciliation explored in 'The Brig' reveals Jacob's insistence upon a positive, future-centred vision of the afterlife:

Jacob's vision of the afterlife is best expressed by the quotation from Bishop Brent she had carved on her husband's memorial stone: 'And life is eternal and love is immortal and death is only an horizon and an horizon is nothing save the limit of our sight'. (p. 109)

In Brent's words, life continues after death, and it is only flawed vision – real and metaphorical – that prevents one from seeing across the 'threshold of our space' from 'being' to 'loss of being' (Barthes, p. 58). Jacob's speaker in 'The Brig' argues for a similar inter-relation between 'brig-side' mortal life and the 'fields o' life' in that she implies her son has 'eternal life' – he 'walk[s] for iver' (l. 16) – and acknowledges his ghostly presence beside her though she lacks the vision to see him clearly. Death, in Jacob's poem, and in Brent's words, becomes only a point of reference, much as the speaker's departure from Craigo Woods serves as his ultimate reference point; beyond the 'verge' of time and space, death becomes the act of the crossing over into another life ('The Lost Track', l. 2). The poem 'The Brig' itself consequently serves as a poetic bridge across the gulf of secular doubt to a point of reassurance that 'deith canna kill' ('Glory', l. 17).

Brent's conception of death as the 'horizon' at the limit of human sight relates closely to Jacob's investigation of vision and how it relates to the self-in-space. As one finds in 'Craigo Woods', in 'The Brig' vision is of paramount importance; in 'The Brig' she contrasts the difference between human vision – flawed, partial, and limited, as revealed in poems like 'Craigo Woods' – and the omniscient vision characterizing the divine, of which the speaker in 'The Brig' has a brief taste when she senses her dead son as one of 'twa' figures in the landscape (l. 12). Because this

kind of vision is 'no for seein' ('Glory', l. 15) by human eyes, Jacob as poet struggles to articulate her critique of vision within the bounds of human understanding. As she indicates in her contemporaneous English poem 'Presage', one needs 'spirit-eyes' to see 'that splendour of the end' (lines 22, 23). Thus in 'The Brig', the self finds comfort in the *conception* of an undefined space rather than an engagement with a familiar space. In contrast to the detailed deictic descriptions of Angus in the poem's first half, the amorphous 'fields o' life' (l. 15) remain open to interpretation as Jacob provides few details of their nature and appearance. Fusing the Protestant, chiefly New Testament vision of the afterlife with the geographical co-ordinates of her 'own country', Jacob envisages a landscape of 'peace' (l. 20) *beyond the range of human sight* – for 'yon licht' of the afterlife 'wad [...] blind' human eyes ('Glory', lines 3, 16). Ultimately, this is a space within reach.³³ In the contemporaneous English poem 'The Bird in the Valley', Jacob describes the afterlife as 'the land that is the spirit's goal, / The land that none may see but with his soul' (lines 22-23). Because the 'fields o' life' are just beyond the 'horizon' of human vision, Jacob cannot describe them in detail; consequently, the self in the afterlife remains half-seen and hazy. Likewise, in 'Glory', the speaker (also a mother mourning her lost son) cries, 'I canna' see ye, lad, I canna' see ye, / For a' yon glory that's about yer heid, / Yon licht that haps ye, an' the hosts that's wi' ye' (lines 1-3). The presence of divine 'licht' prevents human eyes from seeing through it. In 'The Brig', the poem's speaker, waiting at the 'brig-side' (l. 17) and looking at the sea, enacts Jacob's own poetic stance at the 'threshold of our space' gazing into the unknown (Bachelard, p. 58). Ultimately, in poems like 'The Brig', Jacob concludes that the poetic self-in-mortal-space becomes only a 'weary' (l. 19) shadow of the self who 'walk[s] for iver' in peace (l. 16). Jacob reinforces her belief that the self's moment of 'glory' comes not in mortal life, but in crossing the 'brig' (l. 15) into the 'land' of the afterlife ('The Bird in the Valley', l. 22). One may see only to the 'horizon' of human vision (Barthes, p. 31); beyond that, one must look with one's 'soul' ('The Bird in the Valley', l. 23).

The Banks o' the Esk

Although Jacob's third volume of Scots poetry, *Bonnie Joann and Other Poems*, appeared only three years after *More Songs of Angus*, the two volumes are profoundly

different in character and content. With her war poems for the most part behind her, Jacob expands her subject matter in *Bonnie Joann* to include more dramatic monologues like those in *Songs of Angus*, written now with more developed poetic skills. The intensity of loss and the often raw emotional response to that loss in her 1918 poems diffuses in *Bonnie Joann*, allowing for a wider emotional range. Having resolved to some degree questions of the self's relation to the afterlife, Jacob focuses her gaze less obsessively upon the 'the land' ('The Bird in the Valley', p. 22) after death and instead explores other possible interactions between self and space. In doing so Jacob foregrounds the question of how the self's vision of the landscape around it shapes its self-concept. With frequent references to 'blurred' images ('A Winter Phantasy', l. 18), the poems in this volume and those that follow emphasize the difficulty of seeing 'plain' ('Charlewayn', l. 31).

In 'The Banks o' the Esk', Jacob returns to familiar geographical territory covered in 'Craig Woods': a poem titled after a recognizable location in Angus, and chronicling an exile's yearning for home. To say that 'The Banks o' the Esk' is a merely a restructuring of 'Craig Woods', however, would be to overlook the fundamental differences between the two. While 'Craig Woods' only hints at the connection between the exile's imagined return home and death, 'The Banks o' the Esk' makes that association absolutely clear. Furthermore, the poem exposes how the speaker finds stability not in his own present moment, but by imagining that his home landscape in the past has not changed. In this and other self-in-space poems from her post-war books, Jacob intensifies her interrogation of the self's vision so there is little question of intent: the poetic self in these works emerges as one who layers absent spaces on top of (and to the exclusion of) the actual landscape surrounding him. Speaking through the voice of an exile, Jacob in 'The Banks o' the Esk' reveals the fissures and flaws in her speaker's Romanticized vision of reintegration into the 'hame' land. Unlike in 'The Brig', in this poem there is no distinction between literal and metaphorical geography; Jacob sets the entirety of the poem in the subjunctive mood, creating a hypothetical landscape based only tenuously upon the actual Esk riverbanks. Consequently, this poem thematically relates more to poems like 'The Gangrel' (BJ) with its multiple versions of the same space; here, however, Jacob critically *omits* any evidence of Esk upon which the exile speaker may 'anchor' his narrative (Semino, p. 95). Imagining his return to Angus,

the speaker 'dreams' (l. 6) the landscape of 'hame' without reference to the real place itself. The self-in-space thus becomes nothing more than a wraith in his self-created landscape.

From the beginning, through her subtle manipulation of tense, Jacob encourages her reader to question the speaker's narrative. As she does in 'The Gean-Trees', she accentuates the speaker's distance not only from his home, but also from a real conception of self when she begins the narrative with the subjunctive phrase 'gin I were' (l. 1). Francis Berry, in *Poets' Grammar: Person, Time and Mood in Poetry*, argues that the subjunctive can indicate many moods, including: 'possible' situations, 'hope', 'despair', 'frustrate desire', or 'morality'.³⁴ Fundamentally, however, it signifies one thing: 'that which is not' (p. 7). Jacob in 'The Banks o' the Esk' uses the subjunctive to imply a mood of both the speaker's 'frustrate desire' for home and his 'hope' of returning to the familiar landscape. Most significantly, however, she uses it to indicate *what is not*; in the poem's opening lines, the subjunctive 'gin' draws attention to the fact that the speaker *is not* at the banks of the Esk: the subjunctive 'I'd' (l. 3) splits the speaker so that he is both speaking the poem in the present moment and, simultaneously, standing at the banks in his imagination. Unlike the divided speaker in 'Craig Woods', however, the speaker here has no discernible present location; the almost complete absence of present tense in 'The Banks o' the Esk' emphasizes this. As Berry argues, in a general sense, the use of the subjunctive reports 'a no-deed in a no-time' (p. 8). Jacob's speaker in 'The Banks o' the Esk' iterates an entire narrative of 'no-deed[s]'; the utterance records entirely imagined action.

Barthes analyzes a similar kind of divided self in *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments* (in his context, the division emerges from erotic tension, rather than nostalgic yearning, although the phenomena in both are not dissimilar). His terminology is helpful in this instance – he refers to the divided self-in-space as a 'singular distortion' that 'generates a kind of insupportable present' (p. 15). The divided self is 'wedged between two tenses, that of the reference and that of the allocution' (p. 15). As in 'The Wild Geese' (SA) or 'The Neep-Fields by the Sea' (NL), the speaker in 'The Banks o' the Esk' splits – or perhaps doubles – himself to occupy two distinct landscapes simultaneously: his actual location ('reference') and his 'allocution'

location, the Esk shores.³⁵ Unlike in the poems previously discussed, where the speaker *temporarily* divides when speaking in the subjunctive – ‘gin there’s woods’ (l. 20) and ‘[g]in aince my step’ (l. 22) – here, because the poem remains almost entirely in the subjunctive mood, the speaker’s ‘distortion’ remains constant. He occupies two landscapes simultaneously, but in both, he is more ghost than real as the reader has no sense of him as a physical presence in either landscape; he remains only spectrally present in the imagined geographical space of the poem and spectrally absent (‘unsupportable’) in the poem’s present (*A Lover’s Discourse: Fragments*, p. 15).

At a key moment in the poem, Jacob complicates the subjunctive mood with a momentary intrusion of the present tense; the resulting hybrid combines the speculative, hypothetical quality of the dream poem with the energy of a straightforward narrative. In the first stanza, Jacob blurs the subjunctive into the present with ‘the rowan trees abune me *shiver*’ (l. 4, my emphasis); this suggests that the speaker cannot distinguish between dream vision and reality. ‘Shiver’ dramatizes the rowans’ movement rather than merely implying it. At the poem’s conclusion, the speaker declares that ‘tho’ the waters rase to droon / A weary carle’ he would not object (lines 15-16). Although the statement is still in the subjunctive mood, Jacob omits the word ‘would’ which, when coupled with the word ‘rase’, would place the action in the hypothetical subjunctive. By omitting ‘would’ as understood, she implicates the speaker’s own muddled logic; his desire for his homeland obfuscates the boundaries between his current existence (unidentified) and the imagined one. Moreover, because the speaker’s constructed vision of home is false, his actual existence perforce also must be because it rests upon his belief in the imagined homeland. Like the speaker in ‘Craig Woods’, the self in ‘The Banks o’ the Esk’ is a construct based upon the speaker’s imagined vision of the ‘hame’ from which he originated.

This mixture of tenses has the reverse effect to that in ‘Craig Woods’ and ‘The Brig’, however. Because the present tense in ‘The Banks o’ the Esk’ is bracketed *within* the subjunctive (rather than the other way around), the speaker’s ‘distortion’ – or distance from the present moment – is largely preserved (*A Lover’s Discourse: Fragments*, p. 14). The persistent subjunctive splits the self irreparably; most of him inhabits the dream ‘gin’ vision, while some portion of him remains within the

elusive, 'insupportable' present moment. When the present tense intrudes into his narrative, he cannot discern *where* he is.

In 'The Banks o' the Esk', the eerie manner in which the exile construes his return to Scotland draws attention to the chasm between actual and imagined much in the same way that the use of the subjunctive mood does. The speaker's choice of symbols augments the surreal quality of his narrative; although the images are explained as dream visions, the odd juxtaposition of elements disorients the reader. For example, in the first stanza, Jacob uses enjambment and homophonic language to draw attention to the speaker's strange vision; in the first line, the line break after 'hang' inverts the image of the drooping trees so that, lacking an apparent referent in line one, the trees seem to 'hang' from the sky; it is only after reading through the enjambed line that one discovers it is the 'berried heids' (2) that 'hang', not the trees themselves. Moreover, the word 'berried' in this context suggests 'buried', a word whose implications of enclosure and concealment illuminate the speaker's position in the second stanza, where Jacob focuses upon the speaker's oneiric location – hidden beneath the rowans on the shore. Here the speaker believes that the 'dreams' (l. 7) of his youth in Scotland 'wad find' him in this hypothetical landscape 'tho' the rowans hide' him (l. 8). As Jacob's poem 'The Rowan' emphasizes, this tree traditionally offers protection from evil spirits; James Fraser maintains that in Scotland rowans historically are used to protect humans from witchcraft.³⁶ Does the speaker's failed attempt to hide underneath their protective cover suggest that his dreams – and, by extension, the narrative of this poem – are somehow harmful? Does the comparison between the 'berried' / buried 'heids' (l. 2) of the rowans and the speaker's own concealed state imply he, too, is 'buried' as though dead? These unsettling possibilities hinge upon the speaker's apparent acceptance of the dream 'hootlets' (l. 9); traditionally associated with night and evil, owls in this poem are instead linked to his (ostensibly positive) dreams. Furthermore, they 'licht' beside him (l. 10) – the dual meaning of 'licht' as both illumination and the act of alighting seems intentionally ambiguous.

Despite the negative imagery associated with these 'hootlets', in some ways these remind of his youth reassure him: the closer they are to the speaker, the 'aye the mair content' he is (l. 11). The image of the dreams, 'fauld[ing] their wings' (l. 10)

beside the speaker, recalls the language used in the Psalms to describe the protection of God. Psalm 36: 7 exclaims: 'How precious is thy loving kindness, O God! And the children of men take refuge under the shadow of thy wings'. Likewise, Psalm 61: 4 declares: 'I will take refuge in the covert of thy wings'. Consciously or unconsciously, Jacob in 'The Banks o' the Esk' conflates her speaker's 'dreams' of 'youth' with biblical images of protection and succour (l. 7). That these dreams in their proximity provide the speaker 'refuge' is significant, in that it implies that the speaker's sense of stability relies upon how 'close' (l. 12) they are to him. Nevertheless, Jacob complicates a simplistic reading of the speaker's dreams as merely a source of refuge in that the 'hootlets' are 'grey' and flickering – they are numinous, like the banks of the river in the speaker's internalized Scotland itself.

Because the speaker finds some kind of security in these dream images, he seems to derive his stability not from any landscape that is 'anchored' in the real world (Semino, p. 95) but instead from one fixed in a dreamlike subjunctive; the line between the self-as-speaker of the poem and self-as-prone-dreamer blurs. Bachelard suggests that in some dreams, one reaches so far into the 'undefined, dateless past' (p. 57) that the division between real self and imagined self falters and one cannot discern one from the other. He argues:

Such dreams unsettle our daydreaming and we reach a point where we begin to doubt that we ever lived where we lived. Our past is situated elsewhere, and both time and space are impregnated with a sense of unreality. It is as though we sojourned in a limbo of being. (pp. 57-58)

According to Bachelard, in dreaming (or daydreaming) of once-familiar spaces, the self revisits the 'elsewhere' – the distant past of memory – and in some cases, can become so subsumed by its memory vision of the past that it loses sight of its actual life in the present. In this situation, the self's own being is questioned as even the past seems 'unreal'. Bachelard's phrase 'limbo of being' is illuminating when used in conjunction with Jacob's poem, as it aptly limns the strangely unreal, hypothetical world in which the speaker in 'The Banks o' the Esk' imagines himself. His past is 'situated elsewhere' – in Angus, far from his unidentified present location. The vision of this 'elsewhere' he constructs, like the 'wraith' woods in 'Craig Woods', exhibits a 'sense of unreality' that can be expressed only in the speculative

subjunctive mood. In 'The Banks o' the Esk', the speaker is in 'limbo' not only because his sense of self is based upon an 'unreality' but also because he remains in a prone state while the natural (supernatural?) landscape acts around him and on him. His 'being' - his actual existence - is caught between the fervent action of his previous experience (his former 'rovin', l. 17) and his dreaming state. Jacob uses inactive words like 'were' (l. 1) and 'be' (l. 11), and words connoting a prostrate or quiescent state - 'hear' (l. 3), 'lay' (l. 13), 'mindin' (l. 16), and 'sleep' (l. 17) - to describe the speaker. By contrast, the words associated with the landscape are all active: 'hang' (l. 1), 'shiver' (l. 4), 'slip' (l. 3), 'blaw' (l. 6), 'find', 'hide' (l. 8), 'flit' (l. 9), 'cam' (l. 12), 'rase', and 'droon' (l. 15). The wind and the speaker's dreams - two incorporeal forces - act upon him with a physicality he lacks. Jacob inverts everything in this hypothetical landscape so that the spectral exerts a tangible force while the human speaker passively remains 'content' to be acted upon (l. 11).

In the third stanza of 'The Banks o' the Esk', Jacob reveals the degree to which the speaker, caught in the 'limbo of being' (Bachelard, p. 58), has convinced himself his vision is real. The first line of the third stanza - '[a]side the Esk I'd lay me doon' (l. 13) - recalls two sources: Psalm 23 and Psalm 137. The first reference is a positive one, suggesting a peaceful integration into landscape: Psalm 23: 2 reads, 'He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters'. By contrast, Psalm 137:1-7 records the Israelites' terrible longing for home when in captivity:

By the rivers of Babylon there we sat down, yea, we wept when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof for they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion. How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land? If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy. Remember, O Lord, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem, who said, Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof.

'Rowans hang / Their berried heids aside the river' (lines 1-2) in Jacob's poem echoes 'we hanged our harps upon the willows': instead of 'harps' and 'songs of Zion', however, the speaker in 'The Banks o' the Esk' hangs his dreams in the trees. Moreover, the line 'waters rase to droon' (l. 15) recalls - if in appearance rather than meaning - 'rase it, rase it, even to the foundation'; both suggest effacement and

destruction, although Jacob's uses 'rase' to connote 'rise' while the biblical version means pulling *down* a building. Finally, the speaker's undefined present location has metaphorical parallels to the 'strange land' of the Psalm. In an unidentified 'strange land', his song – although secular – must remain in the subjunctive; as the Psalm asks, how *can* one sing of home when it is both 'far-aff' and 'unseen'?³⁷ Jacob's answer seems to be that such a song is possible only when it is imagined, hypothetical, and, ultimately, completely spectral.

In the final stanza of 'The Banks o' the Esk', Jacob reveals how the exile's imagined return home ultimately means self-destruction. The speaker finds some reassurance in the thought of imagining himself Romantically reintegrated into the landscape of home – 'I'd no be mindin', he insists (l. 6). The landscape he recalls, however, does not resemble the 'still waters' and 'green pastures' of Psalm 23. Jacob's frequent use of the word 'mind' in various grammatical forms is significant, as 'no be mindin'' signifies both quiescent acceptance and, literally, a separation between body (prone) and mind (here, absent). The speaker imagines his own effacement not with the passionate intensity of Keats in 'Ode to a Nightingale' but rather with a kind of unthinking complacency.³⁸ His absence of conviction is disturbing, more so because instead of discovering the titular banks of the Esk at the poem's conclusion, he finds 'thae banks o' dreams' (l. 18). These banks – already a liminal space between the fluid river and the fixed soil – lack physicality. As banks of 'dreams', they are even more insubstantial. Jacob here indicates the extent of the speaker's flawed vision: he imagines his return to the familiar 'hame' landscape as complete absorption into the landscape, in death by drowning – but not drowning by water, however. Jacob implies a *surfeit of dreams* will destroy the speaker. Her diction accentuates the darker side of the exile's 'chastened melancholy';³⁹ a list of pivotal words in each verse reveals the extent of devastation: 'hang' (l. 1), 'shiver' (l. 4), 'find', 'hide' (l. 8), 'flit' (l. 9), 'droon' (l. 15), 'weary' (l. 16), 'rovin'' (l. 17). The ambiguously defined 'dreams' of the exile, so like the 'thochts o' youth' in 'The Gean-Trees' (l. 5), lull the speaker into welcoming what is in fact a complete obliteration of self – 'even to the foundations thereof' (Psalm 137:7). Whereas the speaker in 'The Wild Geese' stops short of self-destruction, the speaker in this poem pushes forward to erase his 'rovin'' past by the water that recalls the consuming Lethe water in Graeco-Roman mythology: he finds the waters of *forgetfulness*, not memory, offer him rest.

Ultimately, it is in forgetting – in erasing all ‘spectral’ memories of home (Bachelard, p. 58) – that the speaker imagines finding peace. ‘Weary’ like the speaker in ‘The Brig’, this self finds effacement a welcome alternative to fighting the ‘weary war’ (‘The Brig’, l. 19) with life.

The Limits of Our Sight: Vision and the Self-in-Space

In the poems discussed in this chapter, Jacob explores the self in a variety of spaces. In ‘Craig Woods’ and ‘The Banks o’ the Esk’ she examines the self as it negotiates simultaneous landscapes: the space containing the present, and the space of memory. In ‘The Brig’, she shows the self preparing to ‘pass from one space to another’ (Perc, p. 6) – from this world to the ‘fields o’ life’ (l. 15). Within these coexistent and neighbouring spaces, the self struggles to reconcile its current position in space with its memory of other spaces left behind or out of reach. The self’s continual yearning for these absent spaces undermines its own sense of stability. If the self-in-space is rooted in a hypothetical landscape, then its existence in the presence is built upon loss. Perc, musing upon how the self-in-space moves through time, remarks: ‘I would like there to exist places that are stable, unmoving, intangible, untouched and almost untouchable, deep-rooted; places that might be points of reference, of departure, of origin’ (p. 90). These ‘stable’ places do not exist in Jacob’s poetry. As she shows, even the most cherished landscape is prey to change. The woods may ‘fa’ (‘Craig Woods’, l. 5), or grow over with ‘weeds’ (‘The Water-Hen’, l. 22) and the self cannot alter that process. The point of ‘departure’ from the landscape becomes that point ‘of origin’ (Perc, p. 90) for the estranged speaker – as space, with time – seems to freeze the self’s memory at this moment.

Consequently, Jacob in her space poems shows how the self struggles to return to this ‘point of reference’ if only in death. In ‘The Shadows’, Jacob states: ‘the heart may break for lands unseen / For woods wherein its life has been / But not return’ (lines 11-13). As she shows in several exile poems, the speaker’s yearning for home is complicated by this tension between ‘lands unseen’ – not the ‘land’ of the afterlife, but rather the lands of ‘hame’ – and the life the exile imagines having there. ‘The Banks o’ the Esk’ and ‘The Shadows’, read in conjunction, serve as a rejoinder to the speaker’s unfulfilled longing in ‘Craig Woods’. Much as the speakers in the poems

discussed here would like to reintegrate themselves into their homeland again, and regardless of how meticulously they invoke the 'shaws o' broom' ('The Gangrel', l. 13) and the 'ingle-neuks o' hame' ('The Licht Nichts', l. 10), they cannot return. They become, as Jacob maintains in 'The Shadow', mere shades of their former selves: '[t]is but the shadow that on earth must lie, / The substance heavenward turns'.⁴⁰ The exiles – shadowy remnants of what they once were – 'lie' on the earth, in both senses of the word: in 'Craig Woods' or 'The Banks o' the Esk', the speakers imagine themselves prone on home ground, but they also 'lie' to themselves in that they base their sense of self upon a homeland that is a dreamscape, not a landscape. As the speaker in 'The Brig' insists, the only solution is to look 'heavenwards' across the 'brig' to the 'fields o' life' (lines 11, 15).

Jacob implies that the self's desire for what Perec identifies as 'unchanging' space influences how the self relates to space. In 'The Banks o' the Esk', images of concealment and the unstable boundaries populating the dreamscape reveal that the locuter, like the speaker in 'Craig Woods', finds comfort in the hypothetical, preferring layers of obfuscation (rowans, 'windin' river banks (l. 13), dreams) to clarity, and the numinous to the actual. The speaker's vision – focused upon what is not and cannot be – reveals a conception of self rooted in an urge to muffle and conceal the actual self in favour of a hypothetical self. Put simply, he *cannot see* in the present tense. Jacob's reiteration of 'dreams' and the speaker's descriptions of the landscape imply that his vision, too, is flawed. Unlike in 'The Brig' where the speaker experiences a brief glimpse of divine panoramic vision, here the speaker limits the 'horizon' (Bachelard, p. 58) of his own vision even more rigorously by retreating into self-obliteration. The involute banks of the river replace death as the 'threshold of our space' for the locuter (Bachelard, p. 58); his vision becomes as flickering and 'gray' as the clustering 'hootlets' around him (l. 9). Finally, as the limited rhyme scheme in the second stanza reveals (mine / me / syne / me / be / me), the speaker, so focused upon himself, cannot see beyond the narrow, solipsistic confines of the 'banks o' dreams'.

In 'Craig Woods', 'The Brig', and 'The Banks o' the Esk' – and indeed, in many other poems (such as 'The Gangrel', 'The Northern Lights' (NL), 'Steenhive' (NL), and 'The Cross-Roads' (NL) – Jacob explores the liminal spaces between being and

what Bachelard calls 'loss of being' (p. 58): between life and the afterlife, external and internal geographies. Her treatment of the self-in-space alters through time; in her earliest poems, Jacob is far less critical of the self's need for familiar space – her focus in *Songs of Angus* is more upon an articulation of longing than reprobation. In her later work, however, she exposes the limits of her speakers' self-understanding, investigating how the self nurtures a 'comforting' version / vision of space as protection from the grief concomitant with living in the 'weary' world.⁴¹ Jacob reveals how the poetic self establishes false horizons to its vision, turning ever inward into memory or the unquestioning language of 'auld lee[s]' to avoid confronting the actual consequences of its actions ('The Cross-Roads', l. 17).

In her poetry, space can be a source of 'reassurance', as Perec suggests familiar landscapes are, but it also can fragment the self. Barthes, in his analysis of the self in natural space, looks at 'fragmented space' which is 'made up of objects solitary and terrible, because the links between them are only potential' (p. 59). In the depiction of the 'fields o' life' in 'The Brig', the self finds 'reassurance' in the conception of a space beyond the 'horizon' (Bing, p. 109) of human sight. It recognizes that although this landscape may be beyond the 'limit of our sight' (Bing, p. 109), it nevertheless exists. In contrast, what Barthes describes as 'fragmented space' characterizes the landscapes found in poems like 'Craig Woods', 'The Banks o' the Esk', and to some extent 'The Cross-Roads' (NL); because this landscape is viewed through flawed human vision, it becomes faceted and 'fragmented'. The 'links' between self and space are only partially understood and therefore the self within that space becomes 'solitary' if not 'terrible'.

This is not to suggest that Jacob's depictions of the self-in-space, ultimately, are wholly negative. On the contrary, Jacob recognizes human frailty and does not indict her speakers for their flaws. Absent herself from Scotland – the land 'left long ago' – Jacob understands her speakers' ardent longing for home and does create, to some extent, a kind of reassuring space in her poetic renderings of Angus.⁴² Nevertheless, her poetic project extends beyond the evocation of a familiar space, and beyond a critique of the self-in-space. As poems like 'The Brig', 'The Cross-Roads', and 'A Winter Phantasy' (BJ) suggest, it is possible to widen one's scope of vision; *faith* becomes the ultimate antidote to human fallibility: faith in Brent's

assertion that 'life is eternal and love is immortal', faith in human potential, and ultimately, faith in love. When the speaker in 'The Banks o' the Esk' places his faith not in the divine, but rather in his illusory vision of 'hame', his resultant depiction of the afterlife is one of solitary drowning; in comparison, the human 'brig' created by clasped hands in 'The Brig' and 'Hallowe'en' and the haunting 'liltin' voice of the lover in 'The Licht Nichts' (BJ) offers a more promising embodiment of faith in 'eternal' life and 'immortal' love. The self's relationship to space can become one marked by joyful union; if one has faith that the 'fields o' life' – and not just the existential 'loss of being' – are the self's ultimate destination, then the joyful reconciliation with 'hame' the speaker imagines (albeit incompletely) in 'Craig Woods' will characterize life in the 'land that is the spirit's goal' ('Bird in the Valley', l. 22).

In each of the poems discussed in this chapter, the written world serves as a theatre in which Jacob's created selves act out different responses to the matrix of 'multiplied' spaces – the societal, geographical, and emotional landscape(s) – around them (Perec, p. 5). Ultimately, Jacob's faith in a redemptive space beyond 'the threshold of our space' (Bachelard, p. 58) balances the speakers' narratives by suggesting that although human vision is flawed, it is possible to imagine a kind of extra-human vision that blends 'sicht' and 'soond' ('The Cross-Roads', l. 6) with geographical and temporal co-ordinates to allow one to view 'the entire world' (Perec, p. 13). Such a vision would enable the self-in-space to transcend distance in time and space, and allow one to find 'hame' – true 'hame' and not a 'wraith' version of it. In writing these poems, Jacob comes as close as she can to this conception, grappling with language as it is 'perspective' and 'boundary' – both vision, and limit of that vision. She argues for a kind of vision in which one sees 'with his soul' ('The Bird in the Valley', l. 23) – where one sees 'plain', without the distraction of the 'puir concairns' of human life.⁴³ With this vision must come faith: faith to serve as a 'brig' between this world (both of text and of the 'real' world) and the afterlife, and faith to remind one of the 'substance' beyond that 'threshold' of human life ('The Shadow', l. 32; Perec, p. 5).

¹ Anderson, 'Tales of Her Own Countries: Violet Jacob', p. 347.

² 'The Lang Road', l. 1, *Songs of Angus*.

³ 'Authenticity' is a dangerously ambiguous word, one with pejorative meanings in post-colonial discourse. The word here echoes Jacob's diction in a letter circa 1930, asking whether a particular Scots word is 'authentic':

The Scottish Nat. Dictionary Association [is] inquiring about the word 'bizzar' used by me in the poem 'Kirrie'. They want to incorporate it in the Dictionary, but apparently their correspondent in Angus, and they themselves, have never heard it. I heard it about fifteen years ago and used it because I liked it so much [...] Will you tell me whether you think it *is* authentic, or a corruption of 'besom' and whether, in that case, it is, if your opinion, obsolete? Or obsolescent? [...] My nieces and nephews originally reported the word to me, as used by one of the maids at Dun' (Jacob archives, Montrose Public Library, Montrose).

⁴ 'The Gowk', l. 7, *Songs of Angus*.

⁵ NLS, MS 27416: folio 104. Review of *The Northern Lights*, *TLS*, 17 Nov. 1927, p. 843. NLS, MS 27416: folio 3, circa 1905.

⁶ Bing, 'Autobiography in the Work of Violet Jacob', p. 106.

⁷ Papers of Violet Jacob, NLS, Accession 11214, circa January 1920.

⁸ Kern, *The Culture of Space and Time, 1880-1918*, pp. 139-140. Kern notes spatial understanding influence visual arts, but this does not directly relate to Jacob's work.

⁹ George Perec, 'Species of Spaces' in *Species of Spaces and Other Pieces*, edited and translated by John Sturrock (London, 1997), pp. 5-91 (pp. 5-6).

¹⁰ Roland Barthes, 'Writing Degree Zero' in *Barthes: Selected Writings*, edited by Susan Sontag (London, 1982), pp. 31-61 (p. 31). Unless otherwise indicated, all quotations from Barthes are drawn from 'Writing Degree Zero'.

¹¹ In Barthes's understanding, language 'functions negatively, as the initial limit of the possible' (p. 34), and therefore is somewhat distinct from Perec's more holistic vision of the relationship between space and language. For Barthes, language shapes *linguistic*, rather than physical, space.

¹² Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space (La poétique de l'espace)*, translated by Maria Jolas (Boston, 1994).

¹³ John Buchan, 'Preface', in *Songs of Angus*, by Violet Jacob (London, 1915), pp. vii-x (p. ix).

¹⁴ Elena Semino, *Language and World Creation in Poems and Other Texts* (London, 1997), p. 95. Semino applies her theory to the work of Donne and Arnold but it is possible to apply her conclusions to Jacob's work.

¹⁵ Cruickshank, *Octobiography*, p. 14.

¹⁶ Caird, 'The Poetry of Violet Jacob and Helen B. Cruickshank', p. 32. Robert Louis Stevenson, 'To S. R. Crockett, On Receiving a Dedication', *Robert Louis Stevenson: Collected Poems*, edited by Janet Adam Smith (London, 1950), pp. 283-284. His poem mediates upon the 'hills of home' and the 'grey recumbent tombs of the dead' (lines 10, 5).

¹⁷ John Buchan, 'The South Countrie', lines 17-24, in *Poems Scots and English* (London, 1917), p. 32-33.

¹⁸ The speaker could be male or female, as Jacob does not identify gender. I read it as a male speaker, because he allies himself with 'a' men's hopes' (l. 18).

¹⁹ This may seem to suggest that Jacob, like Angus, creates a doubled self functioning in two time narratives. Rather, in Jacob's poetry, the self-in-past-time (in remembering Craigo Woods) is a *memory* and therefore does not relate a narrative as Angus's poetic selves do. The younger self in Jacob's poetry remains a fixture of the landscape rather than a commentator on it.

²⁰ Leech, *A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry*, p. 79.

²¹ But, as Caird notes, like some of Stevenson's exile poems.

²² Porter[McMillan], p. 48. Caird, p. 33.

²³ Jacob's response to who 'sacrificed for truth and liberty' in the war acquires a rhetorical distance by 1941 when she writes (in a sermon): 'to few generations has it been given to see as we can the significance of the trust committed to our charge. In the light of all we owe to the past and of the sacred and solemn obligations to the future, without minimising the horrors and agonies of war, let us in the spirit of the Master "take the cup and give thanks"' (Papers of Violet Jacob, NLS, MS 27413).

²⁴ 'The Lost Track', l. 2, *Verses*.

²⁵ Although *red* roses in Jacob's poems tend to indicate erotic interest, in this poem the briar rose is not coded (as it is in 'Tam i' the Kirk') as a symbol of desire for it is solitary ('lane', l.6) and burning 'saft' (l. 8) not ardently.

²⁶ Keith Green, 'Deixis and the Poetic Persona', *Language and Literature*, 1 (1992), pp. 121-134 (pp. 122, 126).

²⁷ The difference being Angus's use of natural elements as symbols suggests encoded meaning that extends across her *oeuvre*, whereas in Jacob's work the symbolic meanings tend to relate specifically to the poem itself.

²⁸ Roland Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*, translated by Richard Howard (London, 1998), p. 13.

²⁹ Luke 24: 15-16. When the two disciples fail to recognize Christ, the emphasis falls upon their failed vision – they *cannot see their companion as Christ because, perhaps, human rather than divine issues preoccupy them*: 'And it came to pass that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. But their eyes were holden that they should not know him'. Jacob adapts this dynamic in 'The Brig' to explain how the speaker's vision is insufficient to see into the 'fields o' life'. T. S. Eliot, *The Wasteland*, in *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*, pp. 1000-1012 (p. 1010), lines 360-366.

³⁰ 'Time and Space', lines 11-12, *Verses*.

³¹ 'The Lyke-Wake Dirge', stanzas 5-6, *Border Ballads*, ed. by William Beattie (London, 1952) (reprinted in 1965), pp. 176-177.

³² 'Fringford Brook', l. 23, *More Songs of Angus*. 'The Brig', l. 15.

³³ See Romans 6: 9: 'Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death no more hath dominion over him'.

³⁴ Berry, *Poet's Grammar: Person, Time and Mood in Poetry*, p. 7.

³⁵ In 'The Wild Geese', the speaker claims: 'My feet they traivel England, but I'm dee'in for the north' – the north being 'the land that's niver frae my mind' (lines 3, 2)

In 'Neep-Fields by the Sea' the speaker narrates from an unidentified location 'this side o' Tweed an' Tyne' (l. 2), but hears the 'lang sigh' of the Angus shore 'pechin' up' to him (l. 14).

³⁶ 'The Rowan', lines 11-12, *The Northern Lights*. Frazer, *The Golden Bough, A Study in Magic and Religion*, p. 620.

³⁷ 'Craig Woods', l. 16. 'The Shadows', l. 11, *Bonnie Joann*.

³⁸ See 'Ode to a Nightingale', lines 51-58.

³⁹ Buchan, 'Preface', p. ix.

⁴⁰ 'The Shadow', lines 31-32, *Verses*.

⁴¹ Barthes, p. 31. 'The Banks o' the Esk', l. 16.

⁴² 'To H. M. C.', l. 12, *Verses*.

⁴³ 'Charlewayn' l. 31, *Bonnie Joann*; 'Howe o' the Mearns', l. 6, *Songs of Angus*.

‘Kingdom that Ne’er Was Mine’: Self and Other in Jacob’s Poetry

In Jacob’s work, the self’s relationship to time and space ground it within a particular context, but as John Donne reminds us, however, ‘no man is an island’;¹ an examination of self in Jacob’s verse would not be complete without an investigation of how it interacts with others. Jacob’s speakers are fundamentally social creatures; in her poems she reveals how the community and its *mores* shape the self. Jacob, as Kurt Wittig suggests, illuminates ‘the individual and his secret inner life, against a village background’.² Indeed, in many poems, the self interacts with its social framework, rejecting or accepting the confines other place upon it. Her best poems dramatize the tension between the self’s ‘inner life’ and those people who make up the ‘village background’, revealing how this uneasy balance of power limits the potential of the self’s inner – and outer – life. Unlike Angus’s cerebralized vision of the self’s relationship with other, Jacob’s poems relate a vision of self as a grounded in a recognizable *societal* context; her narratives are rooted in the external world, although they do reflect upon the ‘inner’ world.

While geographical space in Jacob’s poetry has clear connections to ‘actual’ space; so, too, do her individuals, who inhabit a social world animated by familiar conventions. Many of her titles, in fact, highlighting the self’s social label: ‘The Helpmate’ (NL) or ‘The Shepherd to His Love’ (MS), ‘The Tramp to the Tattie-Dulie’ (BJ)). Drawing from childhood memories of Scotland, and careful research once outside Scotland, Jacob constructs selves and communities her contemporaneous readers recognized from their own experiences. Yet Jacob is no naïve copyist. Unlike those poets who sentimentalize Scottish rural life, Jacob in her most accomplished work critiques conservative social mores – intolerance disguised as moral tenets – that restrict the self. Carol Anderson claims a ‘frank exposure’ of the ‘power structures’ underlying rural society characterizes Jacob’s best work.³ Jacob focuses in particular upon those selves who are ‘marginalised by society’ (Anderson, p. 350). Her vision of the self is inextricable from her sense of social commitment; it is difficult to discuss one without the other.

Within ‘Grey Vanished Walls’: Writing the Lives of Women

As Anderson and others have noted, Jacob specifically highlights the plight of rural women, and how they are constrained by the 'power structures' shaping their communities.⁴ In numerous poems, Jacob explores women's lives as they unfold within the narrow space allowed them. Some are conventional women who seem to uphold traditional roles – for example, 'The Jacobite Lass' (SA), or 'Kirsty's Opinion' (MS). Others, however, are women whose lives are characterized by what Anderson reads as 'loss, frustration, or ill treatment' (p. 351). In 'Back to the Land' (MS), an otherwise nondescript English poem, Jacob's speaker describes the lives of her predecessors as:

Men who have tilled the pasture
 The withen thorn beside,
 Women within grey vanished walls
 Who bore and loved and died.⁵

The gender division she relates is not accidental. The men Jacob links to production and fecundity; in biblically resonant language, the men's crops prosper while the immoral 'thorn' shrivels. The land, criss-crossed with plough scars, records the men's labour even though they are no longer alive. In contrast, Jacob associates the women with a dyad of negligible virtues – forbearance and self-sacrificing love – and one inexorable fate: death. Unlike men, they leave no traces behind them – the walls that contained them are completely absent. The children and the lives they 'bore' (l. 20), too, are no longer visible. For Jacob, keenly aware of history's sinuous, alluring narrative (an awareness motivating novels like *Flemington*), the discernible absence of women in the written historical record must have been frustrating.⁶ Porter McMillan suggests that Jacob's incorporation of the 'secret narratives of women' in *The Lairds of Dun* (1931) represents an attempt to redress the general omission of women from Scottish (family) history (p. 49). In general, Jacob's interest in preserving evidence of forgotten women manifests itself in her sensitivity to women's voices in her fiction and poetry.

Jacob's devotion to the 'secret narratives of women' fuels her best poems of the 1920s and 30s; in these, she gives voice to 'vanished' selves overlooked or at best misunderstood in contemporaneous poetry: farm labourers, travellers, ageing women, and others whom Anderson, in reference to Jacob's fiction, calls 'unconventional, transgressive women' (p. 351). Poems like 'The End O't' and 'Charlewayn' from *Bonnie*

Joann, and 'Donald MacLan', 'The Deil', 'The Jaud', and 'The Guidwife Speaks' from *The Northern Lights*, among others, represent the apotheosis of Jacob's balance between social critique and lyric. As if in response to the dominance of male voices in her 1918 poems, Jacob in her post-war work shifts her focus to examine women's voices largely overlooked in the previous volumes.⁷ Despite the apparently obvious move from male to female voices in her late work, surprisingly few critics comment upon it; Porter McMillan, for example, criticizes Jacob for her reliance on parroted male voices but neglects to mention the preponderance of strong female voices found in Jacob's late work (p. 47). It is for these powerful female selves and the social critique they express that Jacob should be remembered and re-read, for these poems conjoin many of the themes from her earliest work with poetic maturity and insight.

In *Writing Beyond the Ending: Narrative Strategies of Twentieth-Century Women Writers*, Rachel Blau DuPlessis contemplates how women writers respond to what she sees as the 'social and cultural construction of gender' in Western society.⁸ Confronted by the realization that gender roles are imposed upon women (and men) from without, rather than within, women writers either can reject or accept binary dialectics (e.g. male / female, good / bad, holy / sinful). If a woman writer takes an 'oppositional stance' (p. 33) against gender dialectics, she has two options: she may conform with what DuPlessis calls the 'hegemonic' perspective (p. 41), aping the dominant (male) view, or she may reject it completely. DuPlessis notes that the writer can also engage in a 'marginalized dialogue with the orders she may also affirm' (p. 33). That is, she may disguise her 'oppositional stance' by placing her 'marginalized dialogue' in the subtext. DuPlessis's concept of 'marginalized dialogue' is useful when reading Jacob's late poems, as it explains how her female selves negotiate male-dominated society. Without taking on board DuPlessis's overt reliance on Freud, one can see how Jacob's poetry critiques power structures in rural society; in particular, Jacob focuses upon how society denies female selves self-determination by defining them solely by their male counterparts. In 'The Deil' (NL), for example, the speaker finds herself considered only as a potential 'wife': she laments, '[f]u' mony a man has speir'd at me / And thocht a wife he micht be findin' (lines 37-38). She is a 'wife' according to the male-orientated framework, not a named individual. In poems like this, speaking in the voices of 'marginalised' women, Jacob stands in opposition to the tenets upholding the status quo, presenting an alternative to the 'hegemonic' perspective that defines women solely in the context of

men. As a female poet, writing about women in women's voices, Jacob seeks to re-define women in their own terms, while simultaneously revealing the difficulty of that task.

Jacob is not alone in criticizing the social restrictions upon women, of course. Early twentieth century fiction and non-fiction by other Scottish women writers – Catherine Carswell, Lorna Moon, Willa Muir, among others – offered similar, or more pointed, reproofs of conservative conventions. Bonnie Kime Scott, in her introduction to *The Gender of Modernism*, provides one explanation for the strong oppositional strain in inter-war era women's writing. She argues that men and women both write about the 'social and cultural systems of gender' (DuPlessis, p. 33) but women 'write about it more, perhaps because gender is more imposed upon them, more disqualifying, or more intriguing and more stimulating to their creativity'. This seems an obvious conclusion, but it is worth remembering when reading Jacob's work because critics too often have seen her poetry as emerging out of, and aligning with, a 'male-dominated society' but have not paid enough attention to how she questions the highly 'traditional' frame of reference in which she writes.⁹ Although Jacob did not consider herself a feminist, and some of her poems seem to 'affirm' power structures, her best work expresses feminist sympathies in its 'oppositional stance' against limited female roles (DuPlessis, p. 33). DuPlessis claims (although not in response to Jacob's work), 'giving voice to the voiceless and making visible the invisible are two prime maneuvers in feminist poetics' (p. 41). Jacob does both – her late poems give voice to silenced women, and trace the 'invisible' but tangible limitations placed upon them. She is *not* a radical poet, but her commitment to articulating the female self is important to the development of poetry by women in Scotland.

Different Kinds of Love Poems: Self and Others

The decision to focus upon Jacob's poems in the voices of women emerges from the three-fold recognition that they (1) are some of her finest lyrics, (2) previously have not attracted the critical attention that they deserve, and (3) contain the most compelling examples of her opposition to restrictive gender roles. These poems accomplish a blend of poetic lyricism and social critique because of Jacob's skill and sensitivity to unconventional women's lives. She reveals how women are limited by unequal access to

resources, power, and authority. DuPlessis suggests that by altering traditional perspectives, women writers reveal how power is allocated in a clearer light. Calling this process 'revisionary mythopoesis', or the (often specifically feminist) re-appropriation and reinterpretation of myths and legends, DuPlessis asserts:

By putting the female eye, ego, and voice at the center of the tale, displacement asks the kind of questions that certain feminist historians have, in parallel ways, put forth: How do events, selves, and grids for understanding look when viewed by a female subject evaluated in the ways she chooses? (p. 109)

In using female voices, Jacob inverts the traditional process of meaning-construction (generally in the hands of men). Although she generally does not practice 'revisionary mythopoesis' (as, for example, her contemporary Rachel Annand Taylor does), she does use 'displacement' as a means of seeing *the difference between how the female self considers herself, and how she is evaluated by others* (what her 'role' is). From this practice emerges a depiction of how wide, and formidable, the gulf between the two perspectives remains.

By placing the female 'eye, ego, and voice' at the 'center of the tale', Jacob grants her poetry a double vision: one that perceives how gender roles (and the gendered self) are constructed, and one that tries to resist these roles. DuPlessis, like Porter McMillan and Joy Hendry, believes this double vision is a common characteristic among women writers: 'Women writers as women negotiate with divided loyalties and doubled consciousnesses, both within and without a social and cultural agreement', she notes (p. 40).¹⁰ Nowhere in Jacob's work is the tension between 'divided loyalties' and 'doubled consciousnesses' more acute than in her poems in women's voices. As Margery Palmer-McCulloch notes, in Jacob's era and before, the 'female voice' is 'either silenced or communicated elliptically and within constrained parameters as in the poetry of the ballads'.¹¹ In Jacob's love-poems, the female self remains trapped by her 'loyalty' to or participation in male-oriented frameworks, and contained with the 'constrained parameters' imposed by this 'loyalty'; yet, concomitant to this, she yearns for autonomy and self-expression. Jacob highlights the tension between the conflicting influences in the speaker's struggle to speak within a narrow frame of expression.

Some of the late poems I call love poems, although many do not resemble her more conventional love poems 'The Jacobite Lass' (SA) or 'The Gowk' (SA). In their failure to

fit into a comfortable definition of love poem, works like 'The End O't', 'The Deil', and 'The Guidwife Speaks' challenge at several levels the relationship between the female self and object of desire. Palmer-McCulloch maintains that Jacob (as well as Angus) is 'hampered by [an]unwillingness to depart publicly from woman's traditional role in poetry as love-object, the silent "other"' (p. 48); the key word here is 'publicly', as one can observe the quiet way Jacob does question the traditional image of woman as 'other'. To be sure, she does not take a feminist stance, but, in her best poems, she offers a subtly inflected *woman-centred poetic that questions rather than subverts dominant power structures*. By having a female speaker, Jacob, like countless other women poets, overturns the traditional model of male 'I' and silent female subject. Jeanne Heuving, in her analysis of Marianne Moore's poetry, notes 'the improbability of a poem addressed to a male (or even to a female) by a female, which at once elevates him and establishes her dominance over him'.¹² By giving the female self voice, and directing that voice to a (silent) male allocuter, Jacob challenges the convention of woman as the silent 'other', illustrating the terrible price women pay in being 'love-object' and not lover. Her poems reveal how the power imbalance between men and women, particularly regarding sexual expression, damages both parties. Her speakers' awareness of their relative lack of freedom creates a 'dialogue', in DuPlessis's language, between the male-dominated social order containing them and their often conflicting responses to it (p. 33). The female 'eye' / 'I' at the poem's centre consequently questions the nature of love, and the power relationship between speaker and her male subject. Jacob thus does challenge conventional power dynamics between (silent) female and controlling male by crafting poems in which female speakers struggle – however futilely – to speak within a damaged and damaging social hierarchy.

The End O't

In 'The End O't', from her 1921 volume *Bonnie Joann*, Jacob offers a seemingly conventional interpretation of a failed relationship. The poem, spoken by an unnamed woman, chronicles her despair at her pregnancy and her broken relationship with the child's father, Charlie. Throughout the poem, Jacob demonstrates how society makes different moral judgements upon men and women. Originally published in *Country Life* (1920), this poem may seem straightforward – Porter McMillan characterizes it simply as an 'unhappy story' (p. 49) – but its rich layering of imagery complicates the narrative.

The poem shows the speaker's attempts to accept she will most likely be rejected by family and community. This simple confrontation between self and community, however, incorporates within it a sophisticated commentary upon 'what the word "love" really mean[s] in a patriarchal society without female representation, financial independence, status and access to contraception'.¹³

The poem combines several kinds of symbolism. In the first stanza, the speaker interprets elements of the natural setting as symbols of her shame and abandonment. Overcome with grief, she cannot decipher between symbol and actual. In this instance, it is useful to read the poem in conjunction with Roland Barthes's *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*, his 'synchronic' exploration of desire and self, for its exposition of how the 'amorous subject' interprets the world around it:

everything which is new, everything which disturbs, is received not as a fact but in the aspect of a sign which must be interpreted [...] *Everything signifies*: by this proposition, I entrap myself, I bind myself in calculations, I keep myself from enjoyment.¹⁴

For the speaker in 'The End O't', as for Barthes's 'amorous subject', the urge to interpret natural 'fact[s]' as personal symbols snares her in a self-made web of meaning which may or may not relate to the 'facts' themselves. Jacob's speaker reads the *mise en scene* as 'proof' of her entrapment: the 'braw thistle' (l. 1) freely 'seedin' (l. 8) becomes her absent lover 'Chairlie', as Porter McMillan suggests (p. 48); more accurately, perhaps, the 'seedin' thistle is a metaphor for Charlie's sexual expression, one *result of which* is the speaker's pregnancy. The thistle is 'fine' and 'braw', suggesting it is meant to be seen; the speaker, however, feels she must *not be seen* and tries to escape notice. One can discern how the voiceless, rooted ashes (l. 2) symbolize her fixity and silence. The vocal 'swirl o' water' (l. 3) moving past the ashes dramatizes for the speaker how summer (or youth) has 'flittit' (l. 5) by her. The word 'flittit' also suggests migration, as birds 'flit', but more convincingly it implies the speaker will have to 'flit' – move house – when she is discovered. (In the contemporaneous 'Charlewayn', Jacob uses 'flittit' in this way (l. 12).) Finally, the conjunction of 'seedin' (l. 8) and 'owre' (l. 9), reveal how literally and metaphorically the speaker's life has gone to seed: her day is 'owre' (l. 9), 'past' (l. 18) and finally, 'done' (l. 27). The speaker 'entrap[s]' herself because she cannot separate her inner turmoil from the symbolic meaning she imposes upon the landscape

(Barthes, p. 63). She sees in the fall of night and summer's passing her own fall into graceless, ignominious darkness. She would rather blind herself (l. 16) than interpret in every landscape her shame.

In a second layer of symbolism, intertwined motifs of diminishment and expansion, juxtaposed with images of power and weakness, dramatize the different community responses to male and female sexuality. The priapic thistle publicly, proudly 'lifts' (l. 1) its head in the light, while the shamed woman seeks 'the dark to hide' in (l. 7). She calls herself 'feckless' - 'weak' or 'incompetent' in both its English and Scots meanings (OED, CSD) - and produces only tears; the thistle, in contrast, releases its abundant seeds into the river (l. 6), enacting a metaphorical, public conception that parallels the speaker's actual, private pregnancy. Jacob seems to associate 'feckless' with guilt-ridden female sexuality; in 'Charlewayn', for example, the speaker similarly chastizes herself for her sexual behaviour: 'o' myself I'm thinkin' shame, / Sic a feckless queyn am I' (lines 27-28). In 'The End O't', while the woman cowers in her shame, the thistle seems to expand in size.¹⁵ She fades, it flourishes. Her body expands only to accommodate her child's growth.

At a sub-textual level, these symbols reveal the different attitudes towards the expression of male and female sexuality. The thistle is 'pridefu' (l. 6), but not denounced because it is part of the 'natural' order - phrases like 'sow your wild oats' suggest the parallel between natural world and male sexual behaviour. It does not look for approval, and therefore is not associated with 'needin' (l. 7). The woman, however, *seeks* approval and forgiveness - 'grace' (l. 7) - but believes she will find only alienation. Jacob omits any expression of female sexual behaviour, but not because she was hesitant to publish sexual material.¹⁶ In contrast to the 'seedin' thistle, the woman *cannot speak* her desire. Cynthia Griffin Wolff, discussing female sexuality in Kate Chopin's work, argues that women in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were 'imagined to have no sexual feelings' and therefore, could have nothing to say about desire.¹⁷ For female speakers, to '*not speak*' would '(ironically) be the way to "communicate" this absence' (p. 189, her emphasis). In 'The End O't', the female speaker's does 'not speak' about sexual desire in order to disguise it. Similarly, in 'Charlewayn', the speaker conceals her sexual encounter in language intentionally generalized by pronomial dislocation. She appears to be *absent* from the encounter: 'Rab [...] gar'd me lairn / To see a lover's lass mair

plain / E'en than a mither's bairn' (lines 31-33). She distances herself from the scene by splitting herself into 'me' (l. 33) and the two generic phrases, 'a lover's lass' (l. 32) and a 'mither's bairn' (l. 33). Both labels define her in relation to someone else; therefore, she is 'not speaking' a desire that can be identified as hers. In 'The End O't', the speaker likewise conceals evidence of her sexual expression by not just obscuring any verbal reference to it, but also by omitting it from her narrative. She substitutes 'niver a maiden' (l. 13) for 'I', both separating herself from the idea of 'maiden' and negating her present self.

Ultimately, the speaker in 'The End O't' is diminished even into silence by what she projects will be the community response to her. Her attention remains focused obsessively upon 'what' she will 'get' when her mother discovers her pregnancy. In the *Country Life* version, the line reads: 'An what'll I *dae* when my mither kens?'¹⁸ In the switch from active 'dae' to passive 'get', the emphasis changes from a causal relationship between knowledge and action to a punitive association between knowledge and judgement. In the book version, the anticipated response from the mother represents wider community censure and, significantly, indicts the social system that opposes women against each other. Unlike Charlie, the speaker cannot avoid condemnation for she carries 'growing evidence' of her shame within her (Porter McMillan, p. 49). As Mary O'Brien points out in 'Feminist Theory and Dialectical Logic', the differences between male and female responses to pregnancy relates to the degree of freedom one has in relation to the unborn child. 'Primordially', O'Brien argues, men have had 'freedom in a double sense; they have freedom from labour, and freedom to claim or not to claim a paternal right to the child'.¹⁹ Because one cannot be sure of paternity – except with paternity tests, unknown when Jacob wrote 'The End O't' – the father carries little onus of child-rearing. O'Brien calls the 'reproductive process' a 'dialectical relation of knowledge and experience differentiated by gender' (p. 109). In other words, the relationship Jacob traces between public male sexuality and hidden female sexuality expresses the gender-based distinction between acceptable levels of knowledge, and what experiences can be described by whom. Charlie's absence from the narrative (except in the vocative) enacts his 'double' freedom – from bearing and caring for the child, and from acknowledging either speaker or child. The speaker will 'get' punished or cast out; Charlie, by contrast, can use 'paternal uncertainty' to protect himself (O'Brien, p. 109).

Jacob exposes the attitudes towards expressions of male and female sexuality most starkly in the third stanza, when she employs economic language to imply that in a male-oriented power structure, women become objects with definable values that are based upon their usefulness within that structure. Seeing with 'divided loyalties' and 'doubled' vision (DuPlessis, p. 40), Jacob's speaker recognizes her relationship with Charlie in terms of economic exchange, and yet cannot entirely reject this characterization. Barthes here provides an analytical approach that illuminates a similar tension; in *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*, Barthes's narrator concludes that the lover's essential question is 'what am I worth?' (p. 214). In other words, what *value* does the self have for its lover? In Barthes's terminology, because he refers primarily to male-centred exchanges, the economic significance of 'worth' is diminished. In Jacob's poem, however, the obvious use of economic language emphasizes the female speaker's political powerlessness.²⁰ The speaker admits 'there's little love for a lass to seek / When the coortin's through an' the price is paid' (lines 21-22). She has no 'worth' now that she is 'niver a maiden' (l. 13) with visible proof of sexual experience. 'Niver' denotes the irreversibility of her state, as well as its finality. As she remarks in the second stanza, she could blind herself and no one would care because 'wha wad hae' (l. 16) her eyes – synecdoche for self – now that she is tainted. Scots does not have the same homophonic ambiguity between 'eye' and 'I', as 'een' and 'I' are not cognates, but the comparison still remains useful when interpreting the speaker's desire to blind herself. The 'licht' (l. 17) has gone not just from her eyes, but from her entire self, leaving her in the 'dark' (l. 7) both spiritually and metaphorically. Her premature 'end' becomes the 'price' that she must pay (l. 22).²¹ The 'seedin' (l. 8) thistle, read through this symbolic filter, becomes the profligate freely spending while others pay the 'price' (l. 9) of his / their exploits: 'wha tak's tent for a fadin' cheek? / No him, I'se warrant, that gar'd it fade!' (lines 19-20). The conjunction of aphorisms in lines twenty-three and twenty-four suggests at first that the speaker has accepted her abandonment, but read more closely one realizes here she offers an ironic summary of her situation. Her 'doubled consciousness' struggles to forget the affair – 'fairly' playfully turns on the difference between 'fairly' as 'nearly' and as 'justly' – while knowing that the 'heavy' ending involves not just a heavy heart, but a full womb.

The poem contains these layers of symbolism within a wider symbolic structure: each stanza, tapering into diminishment in its final lines, represents the movement from day

to night paralleling the speaker's own decline. Read together, the three stanzas form one larger cycle from the first stanza's upward-reaching gesture (i.e. 'lifts', l. 1) to the last lines' final downward motion ('nicht's fa'en airy', l. 26). Within this, there is a parallel movement from 'licht' (l. 17) to darkness, and 'licht' (l. 24) to 'heavy' (l. 24), drawing upon the multiple meanings of 'licht'; in the speaker's eyes, its absence indicates grief, while in her cheeks, its loss suggests age and ill-health. Finally, the speaker's loss of 'licht' in a more general sense (coupled with her fear of praying, l. 14) highlights what she feels is a fall from grace. It is the 'end o't' – but what is the 'it' to which she refers? The term's ambiguity allows for a multiplicity of responses: her affair? her freedom? her life? Her pregnancy ends one type of life: she no longer finds solace in prayer or in her mother's house; she knows she will be ostracized once people (and, by extension, their conception of God) 'ken' her secret (l. 12). The specific meaning of 'it' is not given. The general parallel it makes between the waning day and the woman's life is troubling, though, as it suggests that woman's life is a brief 'day' whose value lies solely in her ability to love and bear. Jacob here emphasizes how little choice women have – she stresses how community gender roles 'entrap' the speaker. There is no room – and no language – for the speaker to express her desire. God will 'forgie' and 'keep' (l. 25) Charlie, but, the implication is, God will not deal so kindly with the poem's locuter.

At a structural level, Jacob reinforces the disparity between male and female roles in her diction and meter. She makes evident the divide between what can be spoken and what must be hidden, what is acceptable for male and for what female. For example, Jacob echoes the water's movement and the thistle's unchallenged fecundity in the dense clusters of assonant short 'i' sounds: 'thistle', 'its', 'lifts' (l. 1), 'river' (l. 2), 'swirl', 'whisp'rin' (l. 3), 'birk' (l. 4), 'simmer's', and 'flittit' (l. 5). In contrast, Jacob associates the plaintive long 'i' sound with the woman's limited opportunities: 'time' (l. 5), 'pridefu' (l. 6), 'hide' (lines 7, 15), 'I'm' (l. 7), 'tire' (l. 11), 'fire' (l. 13), 'mind' (l. 14), and 'blind' (l. 16). A comparison in connotative meaning between both word sets is illuminating; the negative valence of 'blind', 'hide', and 'tire' – referring to the speaker – contrast with the lyrical 'lifts', 'swirl', and 'whisp'rin'. Although it may be stretching the point, one could consider the short and long 'i' sounds as lexicographical shadows of Charlie and the speaker, respectively. Seen this way, the proliferation of short 'i' sounds in the first stanza linguistically demonstrates Charlie's dominance (the speaker's 'I' appears only in line 7), while the obsessive repetition of both 'I' and the long 'i'

sound in stanza two dramatizes the speaker's inability to escape from her pregnant body.

The second stanza's linguistic / grammatical structure further emphasizes the disparity between the woman's limitations and the male's unfettered behaviour. The speaker's litany of chores enacts her trapped existence; the repetitive monosyllabic verbals describing her work beat out her day's dull, unchanging rhythm: 'redd the hoose', 'meat the hens' (l. 10), 'biggs her fire' (l. 13), 'mind my prayers', 'feared to say them' (l. 14), 'hide my een' (l. 15), and 'blind them' (l. 16). In stark contrast to the 'whisp'rin' (l. 3) river that leaves everything behind it, the speaker repeats these tasks daily; the only change – pregnancy – must be hidden as she 'daurna' (l. 11) reveal her condition. At this juncture, in considering the speaker's limited self-expression, it is useful to consider how Barthes configures the relationship between passion and language. In *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*, the narrator claims it is 'inconceivable' to hide passion from another, because 'passion is in essence made to be seen' (p. 42). He concludes, 'I can do everything with my language, *but not with my body*. What I hide by my language, my body utters' (p. 44, his emphasis).²² In 'The End O't', in a distinctly physical way, the speaker's body 'utters' what she hides in her language. Jacob here denounces a society that silences women and hides their sexuality, so that the only acceptable expression of love for women is childbirth in marriage. In such a society, the 'utterance' of an unmarried pregnant woman is akin to blasphemy. Jacob compels her readers to re-evaluate this dialectic and to consider 'secret narrative[s]' lurking, unspoken, in many anonymous women's lives. Within Jacob's family history, the not-so secret narrative of her grandmother Augusta's illegitimacy (her parents were actress Dorothy Jordan and the duke of Clarence, who became William IV) may have made her more acutely aware of this disparity between male and female sexuality.²³

As Porter McMillan observes, the 'end' of 'it' for Jacob's speaker is no end, as she soon will have a child (p. 49). Keenly aware of women's position in rural society, Jacob shows how societal limitations upon self-expression place a heavy price upon compliance with these expectations. By voicing the 'secret inner life' (Wittig, p. 277) of a woman whose existence is contained by moral conventions, Jacob argues for a more egalitarian attitude towards female sexuality; simultaneously, however, she acknowledges that the disparity between the 'seedin' thistle and the abandoned speaker is too vast to

overcome easily. Interestingly, Jacob in 'The End O't' uses the thistle to connote male sexuality, and to suggest the prickly nature of the male ego, six years before MacDiarmid's *A Drunk Man Looks at the Thistle*. In Jacob's poem, however, a *female speaker* looks at the thistle and reflects upon what it means to her: pride, sexual freedom, and powerful beauty (or beautiful power). Although the poem only hints at the wider significance of the thistle's connection to masculinity (and, by extension, to male-dominated society), it does raise the issue. Moreover, by naming the allocuter 'Charlie', Jacob draws upon another mythically resonant image of Scottish masculinity: Bonnie Prince Charlie, who according to legend loved and left many women (and children). Furthermore, the poem can also be read as a rejoinder to Burns's 'The Rantin Dog, the Daddie O't', in that Jacob provides a more realistic version of a woman's response to unplanned pregnancy – one acknowledging that there is 'mair' for a woman to 'seek' than 'the rantin' man who 'did the faut'.²⁴ Ultimately, one can see that within this apparently simple poem, Jacob questions gender relations that enable men to move and love freely, while tying women to a narrow orbit of domestic chores and silence.

Donald Maclane

Jacob offers a darker vision of social restrictions upon women in her 'Donald Maclane', from *The Northern Lights* (1927). Here, as in numerous other pieces in her *oeuvre* (notably 'The Debatable Land' from 1922 *Tales of My Own Country*), Jacob examines the life of a traveller woman. This poem, strangely, has received almost no critical attention in the (small) corpus of criticism on Jacob's work, although it is one of her most successful pieces. It gives utterance to a woman who, like Jessie-Mary in 'The Debatable Land', leaves home for the 'road that has ne'er an end' (l. 22). The poem shares many characteristics with 'The End O't': both are addressed to the male lover, and both express regret commingled with grim acceptance of consequence. Finally, both explore the relationship between shame and self-expression. In 'Donald Maclane', however, Jacob pushes the dialogue further outside traditional discourse by relating the narrative of a woman who exists in the outer periphery of society. Despite the freedom this alterity seems to offer the speaker, Jacob reveals she still is limited by an ideology that defines her as subordinate.

This poem appeared in *Country Life* (1922) and *The Scottish Chapbook* (1923) as 'The Tinkler Wife'. Ronald Garden surmises the title change reflects Jacob's desire to 'emphasise the girl's abandonment of her own home and family to follow the tinker'. More importantly, it also highlights the speaker's powerlessness and lack of self-definition. In the earlier version, she is merely a type: 'tinkler wife'. Her title defines her in relation to her husband, and expresses nothing of her personality.²⁵ 'Donald Maclane', by contrast, gives her neither name nor role. It implies that the subject is a Highlander (with pipes and plaid), but gives no information about the speaker. Because she defies convention by running away with him, she (like the subject of contemporaneous poem 'The Jaud') must relinquish her identity. The cause of her current state - her love for Donald - is the only signifier attributed to her. Like the scarlet 'A' in Hawthorne's novel, the name of her lover remains to torment her.

'Donald Maclane' in some ways serves as a rejoinder to Jacob's early 'Beyond the Walls' (V), in which a female speaker offers a romanticized vision of the (male) traveller's life 'among the broom' (l. 6) watching 'the soul of the night at play' (l. 18).²⁶ The speaker contrasts the freedom of his outdoor life with her 'weary roof and crowding wall' (l. 25), so like the 'grey and vanished walls' (l. 19) Jacob describes in 'Back to the Land'. The speaker wants to go 'beyond the walls' because she imagines gypsy life is contained only by 'the great sky overhead' (l. 36):

His ceiling is the drooping bough,
 The fir-trees ragged limb,
 When from the hills the western sough
 Sings o'er the lowlands dim;
 [...]
 The green moss for a bed,
 [Oh] To roam by plain and wooded crest
 Till the rose-hips turn to red;
 And to lay me down for the last long rest,
 With the great sky overhead! (lines 19-22, 32-36)

In 'Donald Maclane', Jacob turns this image of the travelling life on end. The 'female eye' (DuPlessis, p. 109) at the narrative's centre experiences hardship, not freedom, 'among the broom' ('Beyond the Walls', l. 6) and shows how the male traveller's independence - as envisaged in 'Beyond the Walls' - is unattainable for women. Jacob emphasizes the different visions espoused in both poems by altering some of the language from 'Beyond the Walls' to reflect a harsher reality, often repeating the earlier

poem's imagery to draw attention to the disparity. For example, the romanticized image of gypsy life evaporates in 'Donald Maclane' when Jacob condenses 'his ceiling is the drooping bough' (l. 32) and 'green moss for a bed' (l. 19) to 'ling for bed and the loan for bield' (l. 1). The brusque monosyllables in 'Donald Maclane' enact the speaker's exposure to the 'wild wind' (l. 3), a sensation absent from 'Beyond the Walls'. Similarly, the Scots words economically express the gulf between Romantic visions and reality: 'loan', meaning open pasture, hardly would provide 'bield' – 'succour' or 'shelter' (CSD). The lack of 'bield' in an environment with 'lang lang drifts' (l. 4), 'wild wind' (l. 3), and 'frozen land' (l. 20) contrasts painfully with the verdant spring in 'Beyond the Walls'. Its gentle 'western sough' that 'sings over the lowlands' (l. 22) becomes almost unrecognizable in 'Donald Maclane' as the frenzied 'wild wind' (l. 3).

Critically, the speaker in 'Donald Maclane' sees the 'wild' wind as 'sabbin' (l. 3); like the speaker in 'The End O't', she interprets the landscape as a reflection of her inner life; thus the land seems to lament her current situation. The shift from 'sing[s]' (l. 22) in 'Beyond the Walls', to 'sabbin' encapsulates the difference between the poems: in 'Donald Maclane' the female speaker's self-expression – rather, how she reads her expression in the landscape – is *limited to wordless weeping*. The speaker also interprets in the setting an attempt to efface her 'rovin' life (l. 32). The 'lang lang drifts' of snow conceal their progress along the 'braes' they have 'speil'd' (l. 4) in the past as if blotting out the 'black disgrace' they represent (l. 24).

As the speaker of 'Donald Maclane' discovers, life in the 'lowlands dim' becomes a 'ceaseless thrall' when one faces the double rejection of family and community ('Beyond the Walls', lines 22, 27). While the speaker in 'Beyond the Walls' wants to join the wandering man in his travels, the speaker in 'Donald Maclane' recognises that 'the blythest gangers step aye their lane' (8); she, with her 'twā bairnies' (l. 36) is neither blithe nor alone. Here Jacob most powerfully distinguishes between male and female freedom: although communities condemn travellers for their itinerancy, male travellers, as 'The Debatable Land' suggests, bypass criticism by moving to another location; Jacob implies that the 'fu' mony' who 'trayvel' in 'sun and rain' (l. 6) are male, not female. This freedom does not extend to women; for a woman to escape domestic servitude, she must ally herself with a man (in the ballad 'Johny Faa, the Gypsy Laddie', for example, the aristocratic woman who leaves her husband must first associate herself with 'Johny

Faa' before she can abandon domestic life). The female traveller thus must make what Larry Syndergaard refers to as a 'shift in the emotional center of being' from male-dominated family, to male-identified romantic liaison.²⁷ In 'Donald Maclane', Jacob reveals that to reject home's 'grey' walls brings shame not just to the speaker, but also to her family. Her decision to 'set' (l. 21) her 'face' (l. 24) to the traveller's life becomes 'an ill' her family 'canna mend' (l. 25). Transgressive self-expression for women is inseparable from 'black disgrace' to those who represent social order.

Jacob's speaker describes her 'rovin'" (l. 32) life in sparse, imagistic language as if suppressing her existence would limit the 'black disgrace' of it. Her language simultaneously belies the fundamental absences characterizing her life. For example, the speaker – still maintaining a domestic frame of reference despite her estrangement from it – outlines her life essentials as 'crust for meat an' a curse for cheer' (l. 16). Like the monosyllabic 'ling for bed and the loan for bield' (l. 1), this passage equates entities of her peripatetic life with domestic concepts in a curt short-hand. Food becomes 'crust', conversation becomes 'a curse' (l. 16). Travelling winnows away at the essentials, she reveals, reducing them to almost nothing.

Jacob's use of synecdoche further exposes how the speaker subsists on a partial, fragmented version of her former existence. Synecdoche, by definition, replaces an object with an attribute of it and thus, as a process, favours omission over inclusion. In 'Donald Maclane', the titular character is a specific, named individual, but nevertheless he is far less tangible than his counterpart in 'Beyond the Walls'. He is a disembodied voice whose incorporeality recalls Jacob's descriptions of ghosts in poems like 'The Licht Nichts' (NL). Reduced to a few fragments, he becomes a collection of attributes: 'a dancin' ee and a daffin' tongue, / A voice' (line 11-12). (Interestingly, the speaker's reductive description of Donald resembles the male-speaker love poem tradition, wherein the female lover is described as a list of physical attributes – Shakespeare's Sonnet 130, for example – rather than as a holistic being.) In a similar gesture, the speaker condenses the public opprobrium levied at them into the 'weight' of a single 'heavy hand' (l. 17). Her former home diminishes to one 'steekit' door (l. 23), a door locked not only to that house but her entire life. Grief fragments her vision.

These synecdotical omissions dramatize the greater absences riddling the poem. Griffin argues (in reference to *The Awakening*):

This is a tale about not speaking, about disjunction – about denials, oversights, prohibitions, exclusions, and absences. It is not merely about things that are never named, but most significantly about stories that cannot be told and things that can be neither thought nor spoken because they *do not have a name*. (p. 181, her emphasis)

Although Griffin discusses the recurrent motif of silence in *The Awakening*, her comments apply equally well in a general sense to 'Donald Maclane', for both emphasize through a discussion of 'prohibitions, exclusions, and absences' the lacunae in their female speakers' narratives.²⁸ Chopin's novel hails from the previous generation, but in its groundbreaking assertion of female sexual expression, it works to find a vocabulary for elements in a woman's life that 'do not have a name'. Jacob's impetus in 'Donald Maclane' is similar, although she highlights her speaker's *lack* of vocabulary rather than creating one for her. Her speaker cannot tell her story because *she* does not have a name, and as a traveller, exists outside her family's (and community's) linguistic frame. She is, in DuPlessis' terminology, a 'muted' part of the 'hegemonic process' that associates speech with those who represent the dominant discourse (p. 41). Put simply, she lacks a model for her narrative and a language in which to express it. Consequently, her narrative is 'about *not* speaking'. For example, she cannot depict a whole picture of her allocuter – she perceives only upon those features relating specifically to his freedom to see and to say what he chooses. His 'daffin' tongue' (l. 11) – 'foolish' or 'licentious' talk (CSD) – symbolizes an ability to speak freely about sexual subjects that contrasts the speaker's inhibited speech. Her speech is characterized by a 'disjunction' (Griffin, p. 181) between her desire to express herself and her sense of responsibility for her father's 'broken pride' (l. 26). In naming her narrative after Donald, she provides her utterance with a (male-identified) structure, borrowing a degree of his self-expression. Without his name, or without reference to him, the account could neither be 'thought nor spoken' (Griffin, p. 181).

If 'Donald Maclane' is about 'not speaking', then Jacob accentuates in the distinction between what Donald Maclane and the speaker *do* in the poem. The only source of present-tense action is Donald, in the final stanza when the narrator urges him to 'play up noo' (l. 31). Although she speaks the imperative, the ability to act is his; of her

present-tense action, we have no information. The only movement she attributes to herself occurs in the past tense: the hills she 'speil'd, / O Donald Maclane, wi' you' (lines 4-5) are set in an indiscernible narrative past. Even when she has taken an active stance in the past, however, she complicates it with oblique language. In the third stanza, for instance, she refers to her decision to follow Donald with the metaphorical 'fules think lichtly when fules are young / Tae pu' the nettle and no be stung, / An' it's nocht but a fule I've been' (lines 13-15). 'Lichtly' here recalls 'licht begun' in 'The End O't'; in both, the word connotes sexual guilt. Moreover, the stinging nettles in 'Donald Maclane' echo the thistle in 'The End O't'; both imply that for women, sexual expression is dangerous. In 'Donald Maclane', the speaker distances herself from the action of 'pu'[ing] the nettle by replacing the 'I' with the generic word 'fules'. She then substitutes 'I' for 'fule', doubling distancing herself from the action (recalling similar strategies in 'Charlewayn' and 'The End O't'). Liz Yorke argues that women in male-dominated societies are shaped by what DuPlessis calls 'social and cultural construction[s] of gender' (p. 33), such that even the 'female body' is redefined in terms of its social significance. She observes that a woman's understanding of 'her own body is perpetually being shaped by the psychical and social meanings circulating in the culture'.²⁹ In 'Donald Maclane', the speaker's body is reduced to almost nothing: she does not mention a 'ling for *my* bed' or 'a crust for *my* meat'. She ceases to imagine her body as her own; she implores Donald to play his pipes because:

the wild pipes gie me a he'rt again
In a breist sae weary that while's there's nane,
The wailin' pipes and the bairnies twain
That are happit intill ma plaid. (lines 33-36)

Although the speaker identifies herself as 'me' (l. 33), and refers to 'ma plaid' in the poem's final line, she does not connect herself to the human bodies in the poem: her own 'breist sae weary' or the 'bairnies twain'. She constructs herself as the passive recipient of a substitute 'he'rt' and not as an active participant. In relying upon Donald to provide her 'a he'rt', she demonstrates how 'her own body' is 'shaped' by the 'social meanings' he represents (Yorke, p. 12).

The speaker extends the gender-linked behaviours of self-expression and action embodied by her and Donald to her parents. Her father is 'bent' by 'broken pride / And the shame' of her flight (lines 26-27); critically, he is in a position of judgement –

he refuses to 'forgie' her (l. 27). Like Donald, he possesses the unquestioned right to self-expression. The mother, by contrast, lacks self-expression and, more alarmingly, a specific presence: she appears only as the diffuse, plural 'love o' mithers' (l. 26). She becomes a *place* to 'hide' (l. 29) and the possibility of a 'prayer' (l. 30), but not a judge. Although here Jacob points out the different relationships daughters have with their mothers and fathers, she also draws attention to a microcosmic representation of how judgement lies in the hands of men, while forgiveness 'hide[s]' in the 'thochts' of women. Male judgement is visible, acceptable, and weighty; female forgiveness, in contrast, is hidden and private, yet, Jacob notes, 'deep an' wide' (l. 26).

By associating the mother with *internal* concealment rather than external display, Jacob portrays how women internalize unequal power structures so that in addition to external restrictions upon their behaviour, they also struggle against what Avril Horner and Sue Zlosknik elsewhere have identified as the 'insidiously powerful boundaries' that 'lie within the female psyche as a result of her socialisation'.³⁰ Jacob demonstrates this metaphorically in 'Donald MacLlane' when the speaker 'happ[s]' (l. 36) her children in her plaid, replacing her 'he'rt' (l. 33) with the physical proof of the 'ill' she 'canna mend' (l. 25). She internalizes other people's language as well – her narrative is punctuated by judgements others have placed upon her – 'shame' (l. 27), 'ill' (l. 25), 'black disgrace' (l. 24), and 'weicht' (l. 17). Nevertheless, the unexpected extra line in the final stanza represents some attempt to reject this 'internal boundaries' – by spilling out of the poem's form, the line enacts the speaker's 'muted' (DuPlessis, p. 41) resistance against the community's 'heavy hand' (l. 17).

One could read the poem's essential structure as a further commentary upon women's internalized restrictions. The fourth line in every stanza is a metrical twin to the preceding line and therefore an addition to the standard 4 / 3 / 4 / 3 ballad form. These extra lines, in addition to the last stanza's added line, subtly comment upon the disparity between the expression allowed men and women. Donald alone has the ability to express his sorrow fully, through his 'wailin' pipes'; her self-expression, on the contrary, can be channelled only through the silent 'bairnies' she carries. In relating her decision to leave home, and also *not* being able to speak fully about her life with Donald, Jacob's speaker balances uneasily between affirming and rejecting the social order that still governs her life despite her 'rovin' lifestyle (l. 32). The youthful passion

that lured her away from the 'place' (l. 23) she once lived has dimmed along with the 'fadin' year' (l. 19). She, too, is 'weary' (l. 34) but she has no choice but to 'awa till oor rovin' trade' (l. 32). The door to her old life is 'steekit' (l. 23); she must live with her 'shame' (l. 27) or die in the 'frozen land' (l. 20).

Colin Milton, noting the ubiquity of 'the tinker' figure in 1920s vernacular literature, attributes this to the recognition 'that in the increasingly tidy, controlled, formally-educated society of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries', people 'on the periphery of settled society' are the 'last unselfconscious representatives of folk culture'.³¹ Milton's hypothesis is certainly valid, and interesting to note with reference to poems like 'Beyond the Walls', but it would be missing a good deal to conclude that 'Donald Maclane' primarily relates a narrative of 'unselfconscious representatives of folk culture'. Jacob's poem exposes the degree to which her unnamed speaker cannot be 'self-conscious' because she largely lacks the means of self-expression. Marked by her 'black disgrace', she must continue 'rovin' because 'settled society' has longer has a place for her. She may live in the 'debatable land', but, as Jacob reveals, it has social strictures just as 'controlled' as Milton contends 'formally-educated society' is.

The Guidwife Speaks

In *The Home Plot: Women, Writing & Domestic Ritual*, Ann Romines explores the domestic space in women's fiction, revealing that the way in which women authors depict female characters in houses offers important insight into the inner lives of both character and author. The writer who focuses upon characters in domestic settings discovers what Romines calls 'a literary and psychic realm' traditionally associated with 'privileged privacy and unwritten texts'.³² By writing these 'unwritten texts', the writer records stories not usually told. In doing so, the writer also illuminates the 'psychic' lives of these unwritten women; as Romines reveals, 'the literary representation of domestic ritual allows writers to scrutinize their characters in the most social and the most inward and private of moments, which sometimes occur simultaneously' (p. 14). To extend Romines' theories further, one can see how the writer, in discovering women's hidden lives, traces not just the 'private' inner world of women in domestic spaces, but also the 'social' aspects of that world – that is, the conjunction of other 'private' lives – male and female – within the normally overlooked domestic sphere.

Although Romines refers specifically to fiction, her assertions apply equally fruitfully to narrative poetry like Jacob's, in that Jacob's evocation of selves do consider women's inner lives in much the same way longer fictional pieces do. Jacob certainly contributes to what Romines calls the 'poetics of domestic ritual' in that her poetry (and fiction) gives voice to those engaged in 'literarily unmentionable' domestic activities (Romines, p. 15). Poems like 'The Whustlin' Lad' (SA), 'The Gowk' (SA), 'Charlewayn', and 'A Widow' (SPVJ) sympathetically record the 'wark' women do 'late an' airly at the farm' ('Charlewayn', lines 9-10). Moreover, these poems illuminate the *lives* of 'literarily unmentionable' women. In her sharpest critiques of women's domestic life, Jacob deplores the power structures that limit women to endless participation in marriage, childbirth, and death described in 'Back to the Land'. She identifies how conventional gender roles infringe upon the freedom of these 'unwritten' women by regarding their domestic work as insignificant. As she shows in 'The End O't', the monotony of domestic ritual enacts the female self's entrapment; the house becomes not shelter, as the speaker of 'Donald Maclane' imagines, but prison.

In 'The Guidwife Speaks', from *The Northern Lights*, Jacob looks past the 'steekit' door of 'Donald Maclane' and the 'vanished' walls to focus upon the life of another unnamed woman. This speaker is merely 'guidwife - the 'mistress of the house' or 'wife' (CSD). As such, she is defined by her presence within the home and, more specifically, by her husband. Like 'The End O't', this poem's framework is deceptively simple, yet contains within it a multi-valenced examination of gender relations. In 'The Guidwife Speaks', Jacob's speaker compares her youthful love for her husband with her dissatisfaction with the sullen old man he has become. As Sarah Bing notes, 'love is not confined to the young' in Jacob's work;³³ the speaker in 'The Guidwife Speaks' feels distanced from youth, yet remembers it keenly. The 'soor auld deil' (p. 4) her husband has become is unrecognizable to her; she still recalls the 'dandy lad' (l. 5) that, like the speaker in 'Tam i' the Kirk', 'socht' his lover's 'ee' in church (l. 6).

In 'Donald Maclane', Jacob hints at the speaker's growing disenchantment with Donald and their lifestyle, but the speaker reflects these emotions inward, blaming herself for her 'black disgrace' (l. 24). In 'The Guidwife Speaks', however, the locuter is more outspoken. She *tells* her husband she is unhappy. Perhaps he is not listening, perhaps he does not care - it does not matter; the important thing is she voices her discontent.

The title draws attention to this; it is not 'The Gudeman', as in 'Donald MacLaine'. The title contains within it more than simply an identification of the speaker, however. It also reveals how limited her self-expression is, in that the poem's title implies that *all* the guidwife speaks about is contained within the poem's twenty-eight lines. Jacob leaves the circumstances of the speaker's narrative open, as if it represents all of her conversations with her husband. As a result, although the poem records the woman's utterance, it also points to its rarity.

In the poem, the contrasts between the speaker's present and her memories reveal how her relationship with her husband has altered over time. She emphasizes this by juxtaposing images of him as a youth with descriptions of him as an 'auld' man (l. 4). In the first stanza, for example, the speaker finds her husband 'sookin' his pipe by the 'lum' (l. 2). The tableau's intimacy is deceptive, however, as his presence seems oppressive rather than pleasant. 'Doag at heel' (l. 2) implies a petty tyranny that in turn suggests the speaker's position is not vastly better; she, too, is kept 'at heel' by his demands. In the stanza's second half, however, the speaker recalls her husband as an amorous 'lad' (l. 5) whose furtive flirtation contrasts markedly to his present manner. She uses the questions 'wha'd be the waur?' (l. 4) and 'wha wad ken?' (l. 5) rhetorically to indicate the disparity between 'gudeman' (l. 1) and 'dandy lad' (l. 5). The implicit answer is 'no one': no one would recognize him as he is now. The language Jacob uses to distinguish the gudeman's two avatars communicates the gulf between them; with the present-tense allocuter, Jacob links negatively valenced words: 'sookin' (l. 2), 'dumb' (l. 3), 'soor', 'auld', and 'deil' (l. 4). On the contrary, the past self evokes more positive language: 'dandy', 'lad' (l. 5), and 'socht' (l. 6). The consonant sounds are the same in both, but the difference between 'sookin' and 'soor' on one hand and 'socht' on the other is clear. The sibilants, hard 'd' sounds, and the drawn-out long vowel sounds in the descriptions of the present-tense allocuter enact the speaker's contempt for his current behaviour.

Jacob widens the gulf between the two versions of 'gudeman' (l. 1) in the second and third stanzas by revealing how desirable the husband once was. His 'soople' (l. 9) body and vitality make him attractive – and not just in the speaker's eyes. The phrase 'nane thocht o' them gin ye was by' (l. 12) suggests that others admired him also. Well-dressed 'carles' (l. 10) pale in comparison to her 'dandy lad' (l. 5), which also intimates

that the speaker, too, was appreciated by others, but her future husband's presence diminishes them (and, perhaps, her). The words Jacob associates with the husband are active: 'dance' (l. 16), 'soople' (l. 9), 'licht o' fit' (l. 9) and 'socht' (l. 6). In contrast, his current state is characterized by images of inertia and emptiness: he sits silently emptying his pipe. The grotesque description of food disappearing down his throat like 'leaves in spate' (l. 19) indicates a slovenly nature antipodal to the graceful movement for which he was once known. The 'gudeman' becomes nothing more than a vacuity – endlessly 'sookin' (l. 2) his pipe and swallowing food without becoming full. He needs not do more as his wife's presence insures his care; where he once 'socht' (l. 6) her approval, he now feels no obligation to do so and gives her 'ne'er a word o' thanks' for her labour (l. 20). His interaction with her is limited to an occasional 'curse' in response to his food (l. 23). Interestingly, the juxtaposition of 'curse' and 'meat' (consciously or unconsciously) recalls 'a crust for meat an' a curse for cheer' of 'Donald Maclane', which appears only two pages previously in the book. Jacob implies a connection between limitations upon women within and without the home – as though the 'weicht' (l. 17) of the heavy hand in 'Donald Maclane' is in fact only a larger version of the domestic tyranny experienced by some women in the home.

As Romines asserts, the image of female self in a domestic space illuminates not just the speaker's 'inward' moments, but also her 'social' interactions (p. 14). In 'The Guidwife Speaks', Jacob exposes the way the interaction between the female self and her husband is distinctly *anti-social*. They share the same room, as they have shared their life, but their relationship is no longer reciprocal. Jacob reinforces this sense of disjunction by highlighting their separate lives within the 'grey' walls; they have moved away from the implied unity of 'twa poond ten was a' *we* had' (l. 7, my emphasis) to their current parallel solitude: the woman is 'risin' airly, workin' late' (l. 17) while the man passively consumes what she produces. 'Risin' airly, workin' late' is a refrain throughout her poems in women's voices. It appears, for example, in modified form in 'The Gowk' ('risin' 'afore the sun [...] warslin', steerin' wi' hens an' swine', lines 2, 5), 'The Whustlin' Lad' ('I'll rise, an' ye ken I'll be warkin' fairly', line 16), 'Charlewayn' ('for late an' airly at the fairm / The wark seems niver past', lines 9-10), and 'The Deil', ('it's nichtfa' sune, we're workin' airly', l. 34). This records the fact that farm women (and men) needed to work long hours but in her repeated references to physical demands on rural women, Jacob is not merely citing facts. Instead, she stresses that women's labour is, for the

most part, overlooked. In 'The Guidwife Speaks' Jacob makes this clear in the futility of the titular figure's Sisyphean labour. She works to produce the 'best' (l. 18) food her husband then wordlessly consumes – and then the process begins anew. Her labour, and his literal appropriation of the products of that labour, form the power-relationship underlying their interaction. Thus the 'social' aspect of their cohabitation has diminished from initial equality to the gross inequality emphasized by the repeatedly opposed words 'you' and 'I'. Jacob symbolizes this alteration in their relationship in her use of 'cried' and 'greet'; the words (in Scots and English) appear to be similar, but have distinctly different meanings; in aligning them Jacob points to the fundamental shift from lovers 'cried in kirk' (l. 8) to the sorrowful 'teuchats' who 'greet' at the poem's conclusion (l. 21). Private and wordless lamentation ('sabbin', as in 'Donald MacIane') replaces their initial conjugal joy.

Jacob encodes the domestic power imbalance at its most elemental in the poem's metrical structure, a rigid iambic tetrameter rhymed ababcbcd. The unvarying metrical scheme breaks at only two points when Jacob substitutes a trochaic for an iambic foot, so that the stress falls upon the line's initial word. Critically, the two words highlighted by this metrical aberration are 'dumb' (l. 22) and 'youth's' (l. 27). The first word expresses her present situation – 'dumb' occurs twice in the text, describing house and husband – and the second, by contrast, her past. Thus these structural breaks expose the essential gulf between youthful hopes and her current alienation. Against this interpretation, however, these disruptive moments can be read as a microcosmic representation of the dissension this poem represents. In speaking out, the 'guidwife' alters the atmosphere in the 'dumb' house and questions her husband's authoritarian behaviour. She thereby assumes some of the confident activity her youthful lover once possessed. Moreover, in speaking, she grants herself a presence denied in her memories of the past – in stanza two, for example, she does not appear specifically. Her presence is implied obliquely with the implication that the 'profit' (l. 11) the suitors hope to gain is her attention, and by extension, her hand in marriage (11).³⁴ She is a commodity, rather than a self. By disrupting the textual flow with 'dumb' and 'youth's', Jacob mirrors the speaker's transgressive speech to her husband. She also exposes the turbulent emotions hidden beneath the woman's role as 'guidwife'.

Jacob uses the structure of 'The Guidwife Speaks' not only to convey systemic inequality in the speaker's relationship with her husband, but also to reveal the degree to which power structures in rural society limit women's ability to see beyond these strictures. In the fourth stanza, the poem concludes abruptly after four lines. Despite the speaker's dissatisfaction with her husband and her longing for their youthful happiness, she admits:

An' yet, an' yet - I dreid tae see
 The ingle standin' toom. Oh, then
 Youth's last left licht wad gang wi' ye . . .
 What wad I dae? I dinna ken. (lines 25-28)

The repetition of 'an' yet' - although necessary for the tetrameter - represents the speaker's faltering attempts to imagine a different life. Just as the speakers in 'The End O't' and 'Donald MacLane' cannot condemn those around them for rejecting them, and yet also cannot conceive of a better life, the woman in 'The Guidwife Speaks' lacks the ability to envision life without her husband. He symbolizes 'youth's last left licht' - her youth, their youth. He defines her, giving her a purpose and an identity - she is 'guidwife' to his 'gudeman'. When she imagines losing him, she sees 'the ingle standin' toom' (l. 26), implying his loss is synonymous with an empty hearth. As Romines urges, 'consider the connection between inner life and indoor, household life. That equation is central to the idea of domestic ritual' (p. 29). In Romines' taxonomy, a 'toom' 'ingle' would represent an equally empty inner life. For the speaker in 'The Guidwife', the husband's death implicitly means the end of her usefulness, and her narrative. The unwritten four lines one expects - but does not find - serve as the invisible answer to her question, 'what wad I dae?'; she would cease to exist.

Of course, part of the reason that the speaker cannot imagine her life without her husband is that despite his surly nature, she still loves him. As Palmer-McCulloch argues in 'Women and Love: Some Thoughts on Women's Love Poetry', the 'dominant tendency' in women's love poetry is 'for the definition of love to be extended away from a concentration on the praise or blame of a love-object towards contextualisation and interactive experience' (p. 47). In 'The Guidwife Speaks', the speaker does focus her attention upon the 'interactive experience' she and her husband share even though in their current life, they are more reactive than 'interactive'. Her 'definition of 'love' encompasses both the 'dandy lad' (l. 5) and the 'auld deil' (l. 4) he has become; the

dynamic between the two shape what she 'speaks', and, by extension, what she is. In this way, the poem relates a process of dis-enchantment similar to that uncovered in 'Donald MacLlane'; the speaker in each grapples with the realization that what she imagined would be a happier life is in fact the same drudgery she might have found had she made another choice. Neither woman can 'see' (l. 25) or 'ken' what she would 'dae' (l. 28) if liberated from the domestic role. As in 'Donald MacLlane', the speaker in 'The Guidwife Speaks' has lost her 'he'rt' to her husband and no longer can think or act on her own (l. 33).

Palmer-McCulloch notes poetry by women features not just interactive experience, but also a 'preoccupation with reality' (p. 48). She observes that a keen 'concern' with the 'realities' of love replaces the more abstract 'rhetoric of love' found in love poetry by male poets (p. 48). This certainly applies to 'The Guidwife Speaks', with its evocation of the 'dumb' hoose and silent allocuter. By grounding her poem in the 'realities' of human life, Jacob validates the social critique made therein; she rejects a conventional 'rhetoric of love' in favour of a grittier 'marginalized' discourse conceived in opposition to conservative gender roles (DuPlessis, p. 33). Using a non-specific *mise en scene*, Jacob suggests that in general love relationships based upon an unequal balance of power oppress the female self. Furthermore, they damage the male self. Acknowledged, but not discussed, the decline of the 'gudeman' from vital young man to bitter 'deil' (l. 4) suggests that limiting men to two roles - 'lad[s]' (l. 5) who beguile women with 'pranks' (l. 10), and 'gudem[e]n' (l. 1) who must provide for their families despite grinding poverty - destroys them. Their self-expression is limited to guttural curses, their companionship to a servile 'doag' (l. 2). By omitting specific names in the poem, Jacob implies that inequality is not limited to one couple, but applies to a whole generation. Trapped in the 'dumb' house, both speaker and allocuter have no choices. The speaker must continue 'risin' airly, workin' late'; as Jacob reveals in 'Donald MacLlane', life 'beyond the walls' is hardly more promising. The image of the birds who 'greet' 'oot-by' the house in 'The Guidwife Speaks' serves as a reminder that abandoning the domestic construct does not solve anything. Jacob, in presenting what the 'guidwife speaks', draws attention to the necessity of speaking about the damaged relationships between men and women, and not remaining 'dumb' (l. 22).

The Jaud

In 'The Guidwife Speaks', the behaviour expected of the speaker as 'guidwife' reveals itself in her conduct; one senses the limitations placed upon her not via external commentary, but through her inability to imagine another kind of life. In 'The Jaud' (also from *The Northern Lights*), however, Jacob identifies the social structures limiting women by representing a 'marginalized dialogue' (DuPlessis, p. 33) between a female speaker and a speaker personifying social convention. Recalling dialogue ballads like 'The Gay Goss-Hawk', 'The Jaud' juxtaposes questions and answers, as two speakers – one representing a 'repressive, puritanical religious tradition' and the other defending the 'sensual side of human nature' (Milton, p. 32) – wrangle over a dead woman's identity. As Jacob indicates, the second speaker is an older woman. The first speaker's identity, however, is more ambiguous. As a generalized community voice, it judges others by their compliance with a narrow behavioural code. Porter McMillan claims the voice is male (p. 49); one could interpret it as female, however, as Jacob does not indicate the gender. If the speaker is female, she has internalized the 'insidiously powerful' hegemonic perspective so completely she colludes with it (Horner and Zlosnik, p. 11). If the speaker is male, he imposes limitations upon others as proof of his moral superiority. (For clarity's sake, this analysis uses 'he' to distinguish the two speakers.) In the dialogue, each self presents a different vision of the poem's nameless subject. By juxtaposing two interpretations of the 'jaud', Jacob reveals how the female self is restricted when defined within male-oriented contexts. As she also demonstrates, women often are omitted from the process of self-construction by those who impose judgements of 'worth' upon them from without. In 'The Jaud', Jacob makes this point more acutely by excluding the voice of the contested self from the narrative. The 'jaud' is long dead, and therefore cannot contribute to the discussion about her identity. She becomes the ultimate marginal other – a dead 'jaud' whose ignominy, but not her name, outlasts her.

Crucially, as in the poems discussed above, the speakers and subject remain unspecified. The only appellations used in the poem are derogatory: 'ye auld wife' (l. 1, *passim*) and 'jaud' (l. 18). Both terms, not surprisingly, come from the same source – the first speaker. Both titles limit his subject to a particular context – the speaker to old age and family, the 'jaud' to a life of public and private shame. Jacob's decision to bracket the anonymity of the women with labels imposed upon them by a voice representing male-

oriented social order recreates in small the self-construction process detailed in the poem (and indeed in Jacob's other late poems). Throughout the poem, the male speaker judges women according to how well they correspond to his interpretation of a woman's role. He superimposes his judgement of self-worth upon each figure using the same self-sanctioned authority with which he labels them initially. Simultaneously, he deflects any interrogation of his own character with a barrage of queries and imperatives. He names, but is not named (he has no title).

To gain a better understanding of the first speaker's perspective, it is useful to read 'The Jaud' in conjunction with Catharine MacKinnon's exploration of male and female perspectives – and the authority granted each – in *Feminist Theory: A Critique of Ideology*. MacKinnon argues:

[t]he male epistemological stance, which corresponds to the world it creates, is objectivity: the ostensibly noninvolved stance, the view from a distance and from no particular perspective, apparently transparent to its reality. It does not comprehend its own perspectivity, does not recognize what it sees as subject like itself, or that the way it apprehends its world is a form of its subjugation and presupposes it.³⁵

Without adopting MacKinnon's Marxist agenda, one can glean from her assertions an insight into the first speaker's outlook in 'The Jaud'. In Jacob's poem, the first speaker presents himself as a 'noninvolved' onlooker. He offers no information about himself, although he comments repeatedly upon the women's lives. Indeed, although ostensibly discussing the 'jaud', he reveals how he constructs an equally narrow vision of the female speaker. She is 'auld wife' to him: respectable, perhaps a trifle insignificant, and defined solely in terms of her role as mother and wife. He separates himself from the setting – establishing a 'view from a distance' – by focusing insistently upon what the 'auld woman' sees (whereas that which he sees is offered as fact, not opinion). When she describes what she sees, though, he responds by refuting her claims as 'havers' (l. 26); the female speaker and the dead woman are, in MacKinnon's words, not seen by the male speaker as 'subject[s]' like himself. Not insignificantly, then, the male speaker has twice as many lines as the female speaker. Jacob draws attention to his dominant voice by italicizing the second speaker's commentary. His text contains and controls the italicized passages on the page in a graphic demonstration of his dominance.

The poem begins with the first speaker's 'interrogation' (Porter McMillan, p. 49) of the woman, as he asks what will become a refrain in the poem: '[w]hat are ye seein'?' (l. 1). Recalling the question and answer structure of some ballads, 'The Jaud' focuses upon vision; like the self-in-space poems discussed earlier, 'The Jaud' in part concerns itself with how selves view the landscape around them. In this poem however it is not the self's attitude towards landscape that is significant, but rather how *others view the female self within a particular space*. The poem dramatizes how external viewers influence one's self-opinion; its recurring questions of vision emphasize how the female self (and self-concept) in particular are constrained by viewers who impose specific, limited expectations of female behaviour upon her. Jacob indicts the manner in which women are judged and silenced by their subordinate position as the 'subject'. She animates, too, how consequently men and women see differently. Always surveyed by the male 'eye' / 'I', the female selves in 'The Jaud' as in other of Jacob's late poems struggle to see beyond the parameters placed upon them by male-dominated social vision. Some, like the speaker in 'The Guidwife Speaks', cannot see beyond that boundary, and thus lack the ability to resist these narrow strictures completely. Others, like the female speaker in 'The Jaud', find a small space in which to inject their own vision as surveyor, knowing first-hand what it is like to be on the other end of the telescope.

In 'The Jaud', the contrasting visions of the dead woman emerge first from different interpretations of her grave, and then from diverging impressions of her life. By concentrating first upon context, Jacob highlights the extent to which one's philosophical perspective informs the act of seeing and interpreting visual information. For the male speaker, the woman's grave is 'whumml'd' – overturned (l. 7).

'Whumml'd' suggests to him divine judgement; the fallen stone represents her fallen, sinful state. His description of the grave's location – in the 'bield' (l. 2) or shelter of the wall – emphasizes his hierarchical thinking: enclosure well within the 'kirkyaird wa' (l. 2) indicates acceptance as one of 'the righteous' (l. 35); the woman's grave, by contrast, is no more than a 'cold lair' (l. 16) that although contained within the wall, exists at the fringes of the graves of the 'righteous'. Here, the word 'lair', Scots for grave, sounds like the English word 'lair'; used to similar effect in 'The Cross-Roads', 'lair' connotes an animal's den, suggesting that to the male speaker, the 'jaud' was bestial, less than human. His reference to the grave illustrates this; he says, '*it's* a jaud lies yont' (l. 18, my emphasis). The neutral pronoun construction coupled with 'jaud' denies the dead

woman both humanity and gender. Moreover, the word 'yont' (l. 18) emphasizes the woman's alterity – beyond the civilized graves, not quite outside the churchyard as heretics would be, but at the wall and thus nudging the boundary between 'righteous' and not (l. 35). Similarly, 'shaws' (l. 18) implies the plant's prickly edges: her grave is as dangerous as she was in life. Finally, his contention that the dead woman lies 'happit in shame' (l. 32) seems reinforced by the fact that her name is no longer legible beneath the 'mools' in the dark corner (l. 20). In his self-righteous manner, he does not connect the community's desire to forget her, to marginalize her completely by refusing to tend her grave, with the grave's disrepair. His vision of the grave is uncomplicated by reflection, expressing his contempt for the woman herself. As MacKinnon writes, for those with such inflexible perspectives, 'the parallel between representation and construction' is 'sustained' (p. 23). In other words, how something appears to the 'ostensibly noninvolved' viewing self becomes synonymous with how it is. MacKinnon concludes (again, with a Marxist bias): 'men create the world from their point of view, which then becomes the truth to be described' (p. 23). For the first speaker in 'The Jaud', the grave's dilapidation symbolizes his idea of the 'truth' about her lax morality. In his interpretation, the grave is 'whumml'd' and effaced because its inhabitant was immoral and therefore not worthy of eternal life.

The female speaker offers a contrasting view of the grave that redeems the subject by attributing to her an enviable tenacity. Bing glosses this, rather colloquially, as 'the old lady does not remember the girl's shame, but her beauty' (p. 105). Indeed, her narrative explores the woman's positive (albeit idealized) attributes while overlooking her faults. Her vision of the grave reinforces this: instead of mentioning the grave's darkness and decay, she notices the tall grass – indicating human neglect, not divine judgement – and the 'great black nettles' growing around the grave (l. 4). In 'Donald Maclane', nettles are associated specifically with women's illicit erotic experience; they are dangerous – yet, as the speaker in 'Donald Maclane' argues, compellingly attractive. In 'The Jaud', the nettles' resilience is part of their beauty. Like the dead woman herself, they have an exaggerated vitality: they are 'great' but 'strang' (l. 4) because they flourish in an unexpected place. Moreover, as they are 'fierce' (l. 4) they protect the dead woman's grave as she perhaps defended herself from the community's 'flee[r[s]]' (l. 29). Finally, the speaker sees the grave as 'clour'd in twa' (l. 5) not 'whumml'd' (l. 7); in her interpretation, the gravestone seems pulled apart – 'clour'd' *not* by divine judgement, but

by humans. The divided grave suggests the two aspects of the woman the speakers observe; similarly, the split stone illustrates how the female self is composed out of several imposed viewpoints that cannot hold together.

From discussing the grave the speakers turn to an analysis of the woman. In his narrative, the male speaker defines the 'jaud' in contradistinction to the female speaker. The main difference between the two for him is their commitment to family. He cannot understand why the female speaker 'glower[s]' at the grave because she has 'nae kin that are sleepin' there' (l. 8). The female speaker does not belong in the 'nettle shaws' (l. 18) but in her 'plenish'd hame' (l. 17). His desire to contain women within strictly demarcated boundaries – exemplified by the labels he imposes upon them – finds its apotheosis here. For him, there are two kinds of women: those who are 'mild an' douce' – those who live passively 'in honour' – and those who assert, even flaunt, their power over men.³⁶ His criticism lies in his contempt for the dead woman's effect upon men; he finds her threatening because she inverts the power (im)balance between men and women. Under her influence, men become passive, they 'lay fast' (l. 28); 'grip' (l. 28) suggests the taloned grasp of a bird of prey rather than the hands of a beautiful woman. Moreover, by refusing to conform to the 'honour[able]' behaviour expected of women, she disrupts conventional gender roles. The first speaker implies that her ability to bring 'reid tae the lassie's cheek' (l. 30) is damning evidence of her impropriety; in his view, the 'jaud' embarrassed even young girls and therefore truly is shameless. By contrast, he feels the 'auld woman' has lived a life of 'honour' (l. 31). 'Honour' here seems to entail producing successful children and serving a 'kindly' (l. 13) husband. Success, moreover, for a woman means being 'braw' (l. 9) and having 'a man o' her ain' (l. 10); for a man, being 'bauld', 'thriving' (l. 14), and owning property (and providing a 'plenish'd hame' for wife and children) (l. 17). In his descriptions of the 'jaud' and the 'auld woman', the first speaker's general contempt for women reveals itself. Women have no value outside of a male-defined role. As Milton notes, this limited view of women 'sees their role almost exclusively as an other-centred rather than as a self-fulfilling one' (p. 33). The 'jaud' by refusing to define herself with reference to a particular man subverts his picture of 'ilk [woman] wi' a man o' her ain' (l. 10); her sexual freedom (and apparent lack of offspring) undermines his insistence upon the importance of 'kin' (l. 8).

The female speaker, by contrast, while acknowledging the difference between the dead woman and herself, does express an interest in her. She communicates a distinctly different vision of her. Instead of reflecting upon her failure to conform to social expectations, the speaker remembers – with obvious fondness – the woman's beauty. In the process, she reinterprets the first speaker's conception of 'beauty's grip' (l. 28). As Milton observes, her descriptions of the woman's 'natural beauty and natural vitality' suggest 'that moral judgements are irrelevant' (p. 33). In stanza five, for example, the speaker describes the woman's hair as 'gowd like the gowd broom' (l. 21), her eyes 'like the stars abune' (l. 22), and her breasts 'like the flowers o' the white rose tree / When they're lyin' below the mune' (lines 24-25). The similes she uses to describe the woman reveal little about the woman's actual appearance; she sounds like the idealized lady love of the ballads. The speaker's language instead illuminates how she views the woman, and suggests the kind of self the speaker constructs for her. By describing her in terms of balladic beauty ideals, the speaker attempts to reclaim what generally is a male-dominated industry: poetry to the unattainable woman or muse. Although this appropriation of 'male' language could represent evidence that the speaker, has internalized the dominant gender ideology, it also seems plausible to interpret it in a more subversive light: by adopting 'male' poetic language, the speaker acquires the authority to contradict the first speaker's conception of the 'jaud'; clearly, he offers her so little space to speak that she must bracket her speech in language that *appears* conventional. Significantly, using balladic language, the speaker connects the dead woman's beauty with a redeeming purity – the rose tree is not red, symbolizing passion, but white, connoting purity. The 'mune', too, suggests purity (in Graeco-Roman mythology, Diana / Artemis is virgin goddess of the moon). For the second speaker, the woman's power resides in her *natural* beauty and essential purity. She counters the first speaker's trio of necessary female virtues – 'braw', 'swak', and 'fair' (l. 9) – with characteristics signifying the woman's potency: she is 'sae prood', 'lichtsome' and 'fine' (l. 23). 'Prood' here recalls the sexual freedom of the 'pridefu' male in 'The End O't'; the second speaker reclaims this as a *female* virtue in her interpretation.

For the first speaker, this rejoinder approaches blasphemy; he scolds her, 'think shame o' the words ye speak' (l. 27); five lines later, he links the word 'shame' to the 'jaud' herself. 'Shame' for him – the opposite of 'honour' (l. 31) – consists of opposing social convention. Any attempt to redeem the 'jaud' from the 'mools' (l. 20) of ignominy

represents to him a perversion of the moral order he represents. He urges the first speaker to consider how 'them that kent her will turn awa' (l. 33) at the Last Judgement, pressing her to do the same as if his judgement were a precursor to divine judgement. The final stanza, however, reveals the second speaker's 'remarkable and unexpected retort' (Garden, p. 30). Instead of acquiescing, as the first speaker perhaps expects, the 'auld woman' offers the ambiguous answer 'maybe' (l. 36), concluding:

Maybe. But lave me tae bide my lane
 At the fit o' the freendless queyn;
 For oh! wi' envy I'm like tae dee
 O' the warld she had that was no for me
 And the kingdom ne'er was mine! (lines 36-40)

Here she expresses her resistance to the first speaker's insistently binary categorizations. The 'freendless queyn' for her represents the freedom of expression she has never had; the dead woman's erotic power had nothing to do with societally acceptable children, husband, and 'plenish'd hame' (l. 17). Consequently, as Milton notes, her 'confident sensuality' and 'sexual independence' challenge 'prevailing notions of female sexuality' (p. 33). The second speaker believes the 'jaud' had access to a 'kingdom' (l. 40) denied to her - not the first speaker's pharisaical 'kingdom' of the (self) 'righteous' (l. 35) but an *earthly* one. Although in the first speaker's view the 'auld woman' would be one of the 'righteous' (l. 35) allowed into heaven, she longs for an earthly 'warld' (l. 39) where one has the autonomy and self-expression she lacks. According to Porter McMillan, the dead woman represents an 'alternative' life 'unavailable' to the second speaker (p. 48); moreover, their comparison reveals hers is a narrative of 'lost opportunity' (p. 49). The 'little eneuch' (l. 12) she lacks is just this: 'fierce' and 'strang' self-expression (l. 4). What expression she has remains limited by oppressive male-dominated convention.

In 'When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-vision', Adrienne Rich describes the process of 're-vision' - 'the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes' - here with reference to the work of women writers.³⁷ For women, re-vision is:

more than a chapter in cultural history: it is an act of survival. Until we can understand the assumptions in which we are drenched we cannot know ourselves. And this drive to self-knowledge, for women, is more than a search for identity: it is part of our refusal of the self-destructiveness of male-dominated society. (p. 167)

Reading 'The Jaud' in conjunction with Rich's image of 'looking back' with 'fresh eyes', one can interpret the second speaker's 're-vision' of the woman's life as a 'an act of survival'. In her conversation with the first speaker, she begins to 'understand the assumptions' structuring not just the dead woman's life, but also her own. She acquires a sense of 'self-knowledge' beyond what the speakers in 'The End O't' or 'The Guidwife Speaks' have, because she sees how the social order of the first speaker, with hierarchical divisions between 'righteous' (l. 35) and 'shame[d]' (l. 27) ultimately is self-destructive. As Jacob reveals in this and other poems, imposed gender roles damage both women and men, and corrupt their relationships by interpreting everything in terms of power relations. If one is a 'guidwife', or a traveller, the limitations remain the same. Garden believes poems like 'The Jaud' illustrate 'the attraction that Violet Jacob felt for the life of those who had escaped from the bonds of society', but these poems reveal more than that: they point to her dissatisfaction with 'bonds of society' that bind women within (and without) 'grey' and 'vanished' walls. No one 'escape[s]' these bonds; as 'The Jaud' shows, women who reject convention face condemnation. In 'The Jaud', however, Jacob provides a model for 're-vision[ing]' gender roles: the second speaker's defiant request to be left her 'lane' (l. 36) with the grave indicates a turn from self-destroying gender roles towards a better understanding of how the 'drive to self-knowledge' is a *communal* need, one that needs support from a network of selves. The second speaker literally gets the 'last word' in the dialogue as she asserts a tenuous connection to the 'warld' (l. 39) of the dead woman.

Out of the 'Tight Hot Cell of Their Hearts'

Jacob does not offer a solution to gender-based power imbalances, nor does she chastize women who, like the 'guidwife' and the speaker in 'The End O't', retain a conflicted love for the men who impose limitations upon them. She recognizes that the limited opportunities available to most women mean that often, they have no choice. Fighting against both internal and external societal restrictions, they find little encouragement to eke out a space 'oot-by' ('The Guidwife Speaks', l. 21) the 'grey' walls containing them. As the American poet Louise Bogan writes, in her contemporaneous poem 'Women':

Women have no wilderness in them,
They are provident instead,
Content in the tight hot cell of their hearts

To eat dusty bread.³⁸

Jacob's female voices, divided by self-sacrificing love for others and a contradictory need for autonomy, struggle against the 'tight hot cell of their hearts'. Some, like the speaker in 'The Guidwife Speaks', do not know what to 'dae' (l. 28) if freed from these cells; others, like the speaker of 'The Deil', or 'The Helpmate' know what they *would* do, but recognize that the 'cauld' walls ('The Deil', l. 31) of their father's / husband's house prevent them. While their male counterparts in poems like 'The Gangrel' project themselves into the 'wide' world, Jacob's female speakers lack the freedom to travel in the 'wilderness' and the language to articulate their 'wilderness' within.³⁹ Thus inscribed within these late poems in women's voices one finds evidence of the 'tight hot cell[s]' of women's hearts, and also the power of these cells to struggle, resist, and, ultimately, to grow 'fierce an' strang' despite the limitations pressing upon them ('The Jaud', l. 4). If, as Sylvia Townsend Warner contends, women who defy male-dominated traditions must be 'obstinate and sly' in order to survive, Jacob in her poetry adds a third characteristic to Warner's list: *connected* – to other women, to men, to themselves.⁴⁰ As the conclusion to 'The Jaud' suggests, when one 're-vise[s]' the past to discover what other female voices have been silenced, and when one begins to connect with a community of other selves, one can begin to acquire both self-expression, and a wider kind of freedom. Jacob's late poems represent an attempt to create a network of women's voices that will last beyond the 'vanished' walls that once contained them – and it is for these compassionate portraits of female selves Jacob should be remembered.

¹ John Donne, *Devotions on Emergent Occasions*, ed. by Anthony Kaspam, reprinted from 1624 edition (Oxford, 1987).

² Wittig, *The Scottish Tradition in Literature*, p. 277. Wittig's use of the male pronoun is deceptive, as women are the subjects of her most effective examinations of 'secret inner life'.

³ Anderson, 'Tales of Her Own Countries: Violet Jacob', p. 350.

⁴ Anderson, p. 350. Porter [McMillan], p. 49. Wittig, p. 277.

⁵ Here Anderson refers specifically to the female selves in Jacob's short fiction, but one can see how the analysis applies to poems like 'The Deil' (NL) or 'The Neebour' (NL) in addition to poems discussed here. 'Back to the Land', lines 17-20, *More Songs of Angus*.

⁶ In contrast to oral folk history, which includes a stronger female presence.

⁷ This is not to discount 1918 poems like 'The Field by the Lirk o' the Hill', among others; in comparison to her late work, earlier poems bracket female voices without critiquing these brackets.

⁸ Rachel Blau DuPlessis, *Writing Beyond the Ending: Narrative Strategies of Twentieth-Century Women Writers* (Bloomington, 1985), p. 33. All references are to this text, unless otherwise specified.

⁹ Bonnie Kime Scott, 'Introduction', in *The Gender of Modernism: A Critical Anthology*, edited by Bonnie Kime Scott (Bloomington, IN, 1990), pp. 1-18 (p. 3). Whyte, 'Marion Angus and the Borders of Self', p. 386.

¹⁰ Hendry, 'Twentieth-Century Women's Writing: The Nest of Singing Birds', p. 291. Porter [McMillan], p. 48.

¹¹ Palmer McCulloch, 'Women and Love: Some Thoughts on Women's Love Poetry', p. 50.

¹² Rachel Blau DuPlessis, "Corpses of Poesy": Some Modern Poets and Some Gender Ideologies of Lyric', in *Feminist Measures: Soundings in Poetry and Theory*, edited by Lynn Keller and Cristanne Miller (Ann Arbor, 1994), pp. 69-95 (p. 71). Jeanne Heuving, *Omissions Are Not Accidents: Gender in the Art of Marianne Moore* (Detroit, 1992), p. 20. Heuving, in writing about an American Modernist, does not consider works in other traditions that do include love poems by women to men.

¹³ Palmer McCulloch, p. 48. Here Palmer McCulloch comments specifically upon the voices of women in the ballads, but her observations apply to the context of 'The End O't', as many of the speaker's problems emerge from these specific factors.

¹⁴ Catherine Belsey, *Desire: Love Stories in Western Culture* (Oxford, 1994), p. 18. Roland Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*, p. 63, his emphasis.

¹⁵ This conjunction of gestures recalls Auguste Rodin's *The Gates of Hell*; Adam and Eve reflect different responses to original sin: Eve cowers, while Adam seems to rise up (Stanford Art Museum, Rodin Sculpture Garden, Stanford, California).

¹⁶ Anderson and Hendry note Jacob is 'occasionally unusually frank' about sexual matters (Anderson p. 349; see Hendry, p. 294).

¹⁷ Cynthia Griffin Wolff, 'Un-Utterable Longing: The Discourse of Feminine Sexuality in Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*', in *The Calvinist Roots of the Modern Era*, edited by Alike Barnstone et al (London, 1997), pp. 182-195 (p. 189).

¹⁸ 'The End O't', *Country Life*, 3 Jan. 1920, p. 9. My emphasis.

¹⁹ Mary O'Brien, 'Feminist Theory and Dialectical Logic', in *Feminist Theory: A Critique of Ideology*, edited by Nannerl O. Keohane, et al (London, 1982), pp. 99-112 (p. 109).

²⁰ Here, 'political' in the sense of public interactions with others in a power-based system.

²¹ C.f. Proverbs 31:10: 'A virtuous woman who can find? For her price is far above rubies'.

²² Because Barthes refers mainly to male expression, pregnancy is *not* the 'utterance' he probably means. Nevertheless, the connection between his assertions and the speaker's inevitable expression of her passion in 'The End O't' is useful in that it illuminates Jacob's point that women should not be defined solely in terms of their 'worth' to others.

²³ Carol Anderson, 'Violet Jacob', DNB, Oxford University Press, forthcoming.

²⁴ Robert Burns, 'The Rantin Dog, the Daddie O't', lines 12, 4, 5, *The Complete Illustrated Poems, Songs, and Ballads of Robert Burns*, reprinted from the 1905 edition (London, 1990), p. 324.

²⁵ 'The Tinkler Wife', *Scottish Chapbook*, 12 (July 1923), p. 330. Ronald Garden, 'The Scottish Poetry of Violet Jacob' (unpublished M.Litt. thesis, University of Aberdeen, 1976), p. 15, 16. Garden suggests that 'wife' is 'ambiguous' because in Scots it 'may simply mean "woman" and therefore may not refer specifically to the speaker's husband (p. 16); nevertheless, it remains a male-identified signifier in that it defines woman by marital status.

²⁶ 'Beyond the Walls', *Verses* (London, 1905), pp. 20-21.

²⁷ 'Johny Faa, the Gypsy Laddie', *Scottish Ballads*, edited by Emily Lyle, pp. 68-69. The ballad relates 'a fair young wanton lady' who runs away with a gypsy. Like 'Donald MacLaine', the ballad is named after the man. Larry Syndergaard, 'Realizations of the Feminine Self in Three Traditional Ballads from Scotland and Denmark', *Michigan Academician*, 20, (Winter 1988), pp. 85-100 (p. 90). Syndergaard describes this dynamic in relation to ballads like 'Johny Faa'.

²⁸ Kate Chopin, *The Awakening and Other Stories*, reprinted from the 1899 edition (London, 1995).

²⁹ Yorke, *Impertinent Voices: Subversive Strategies in Contemporary Women's Poetry*, p. 12.

³⁰ Avril Horner and Sue Zlosnik, *Landscapes of Desire: Metaphors in Modern Women's Fiction* (London, 1990), p. 11.

³¹ Milton, 'Modern Poetry in Scots before MacDiarmid', p. 31.

³² Ann Romines, *The Home Plot: Women, Writing, and Domestic Ritual* (Amherst, 1992), p. 8.

³³ Bing, 'Autobiography in the Work of Violet Jacob', p. 106.

³⁴ Jacob uses economic metaphors, as in 'The End O't'.

³⁵ Catherine MacKinnon, 'Feminism, Marxism, Method, and the State: An Agenda for Theory', in *Feminist Theory: A Critique of Ideology*, edited by Nannerl O. Keohane et al (London, 1982), pp. 1-30 (pp. 22-23).

³⁶ 'The Helpmate' line 14; 'The Jaud' line 31.

³⁷ Adrienne Rich, 'When We Dead Awaken: Writing As Re-vision', in *Adrienne Rich's Poetry and Prose: Prose, Poems, Reviews, and Criticism*, edited by Barbara Charlesworth Gelpi and Albert Gelpi (London, 1975), pp. 166-177 (p. 167).

³⁸ Louise Bogan, 'Women', lines 1-4, *The Blue Estuaries: Poems 1923-1968*, fifth printing (New York, 1988), p. 19.

³⁹ 'Come Up, Come Up, Ye Rovers', l. 4, *Verses*.

⁴⁰ Sylvia Townsend Warner, 'Women as Writers' (1959), reprinted in *The Gender of Modernism: A Critical Anthology*, edited by Bonnie Kime Scott (Bloomington, IN, 1990), pp. 538-546 (p. 540).

Living 'Backwards and Forwards': The Self and Time in Angus's Poetry

In her insightful survey of Angus's poetry, Janet Caird claims that Angus's work possesses a 'curiously timeless quality'. Caird seems to define 'timeless' in terms of the absence of modern historical markers in Angus's work. One finds no telephones, no electricity, and no perceivable trace of the industrialized world in Angus's poems. Nan Shepherd, too, discerns in Angus's work a tendency to describe 'an age already past', while Joy Hendry excuses the lack of particularly realistic material in Angus's work with the explanation that 'she led a sheltered life, which no doubt affected her poetry'.¹ Although quite unintentionally, three of her strongest critical supporters suggest in these excerpts that Angus's poetry is somehow unaware of, or unable to articulate, the self in a modern environment. If one looks closely, however, one finds that although Angus omits references to discernible markers of modernity, she does so because her poems focus not upon the movement of time in the external world but rather upon the self's experience of *interior time*. Angus examines how the self negotiates the passage of time – not a historically-ordered time dictated by the clock, but rather a *psychological* time governed by memory. In its interior world, the self marks time not by clocks or calendars but by its awareness of internal cycles of memory and experience. Angus's poetry delves into that inner world to explore the psychology of the self-in-time, rather than investigating as other contemporaneous poets have how the self responds to external time signs. In her work, history is internalized; her poetic focus intensifies to see in the intricate relationship between self and time a greater understanding of the self in general.

Like Jacob, Angus addresses how the individual self interprets the passage of time, and how the self's 'private' time is often at odds with the linear motion of clock-time. Unlike Jacob, however, Angus suggests that multiple time 'zones' exist concurrently. Instead of the self-in-linear-time Jacob creates, one discovers in Angus's work several simultaneous avatars of the self, each occupying a different but coexistent time zone. Angus's poems record **dual time narratives** – that is, concurrent cycles of experience in which the speaker both acts and observes itself acting with a kind of double vision. Within the poem one finds two (or more) separate chronologies, parallel spectra which do not overlap or meet in a predictable

way. In most of Angus's poems, these time spectra consist of a literary present the speaker inhabits and out of which it speaks, and a literary past to which it refers. In a few poems, one finds a potential future rather than a described past; in these cases the narrative of the poem remains similar although it projects *forward* rather than backwards at the conclusion of the poem. In the actual present in which the reader comprehends the poem, the two narratives temporarily fuse into one continuum; one perceives the literary past and present at the same time as though they existed simultaneously. The poetic self (the self in the poem) thus inhabits two time schemes simultaneously – past and present overlap for the brief moment contained in the poem. Compared to the self-in-time in Jacob's work, with its focus upon the gulf between present and past, the self-in-time in Angus's poetry exists in a *plurality of states simultaneously*.

The same historical factors shaping Jacob's work² – such as the introduction of standardized time and the popularity of time theories in literary circles – likewise influence Angus's poetry. Angus's interpretation of the self-in-time differs from Jacob's, however, on several key points: while for Jacob time is linear and irreversible, for Angus time is bi-directional: the self can shift between past and present, present and future without difficulty. Time moves in cycles rather than in lines. Her poetry exhibits what Yi-Fu Tuan refers to as 'cyclical' time, with its use of circular 'orbit[s]' through time.³ In Jacob's work, the passage of time reveals itself in the way the landscape registers change and in the manner in which the self acknowledges loss; in Angus's poetry, the fluid boundary between different versions of the same self alters the way the self experiences loss. As the past exists continually and can be recalled into the present as though it were still happening, an understanding of loss emerges through the juxtaposition of two *moments* in time; the past lives on continually. Thus unlike in Jacob's poems ('The Howe o' the Mearns' or 'The Gean-Trees') where a past landscape is lost through time, in poems like Angus's 'Memory' (SC) or 'Jean Cam'bell' (SL) a version of the past landscape exists perpetually without change. Because of these crucial differences between the treatment of the self-in-time in the work of Jacob and Angus, the analysis of Angus's poetry in this chapter draws upon a slightly different selection of contemporaneous philosophical theory from the parallel chapter on Jacob. Still considering Angus's work in the light of fundamental developments in the public understanding of time, this chapter scrutinizes how a

reading of Angus's dual time narratives can be enriched by drawing upon contemporaneous sources that also investigated fluid time schemes.

Visions of the Self-in-Time

Seeing 'Backwards and Forwards' in Time

In comparison to Jacob, there is more direct evidence of the influence of contemporaneous philosophical work upon Angus's poetry simply because Angus makes specific reference to time theory in some of her letters. In an undated letter to Nan Shepherd, Angus provides an insight into her personal theories of time. She writes:

I am engrossed by two other books at present. 'An Experiment with Time' and 'The New Immortality' by J. W. Dunne. I took a while to grasp the theory and even yet have only got it partially clear; yet it, I mean the idea, seems to have got an almost uncanny grasp on my mind and along with this a queer instinctive feeling that half consciously I knew all this in a vague way before.⁴

Angus's fascination with Dunne's theories post-date almost all of her publications; her belief that 'I knew all this in a vague way before', however, suggests that although she did not read his work until the late 1930s, her poetry shares some degree of correspondence with his principles. In *An Experiment With Time* (1927) and *The New Immortality* (1938), Dunne 'elaborated a whole theory of the existence of a fourth dimension, free from the ordinary passage of time'.⁵ His works were tremendously popular; *An Experiment With Time* 'remain[ed] in print almost sixty years after its first publication' (Stevenson, p. 114). Angus was not the only writer who found Dunne's work interesting, however. According to Edwin Morgan, 'this curious book, never wholly discredited but later neglected, made a strong impression, as I myself remember, throughout the 1930s and was much discussed'. Lewis Grassie Gibbon makes use of Dunne's theories in his 1934 novel *Gay Hunter*; Joyce 'knew and seems to have admired his ideas' (Stevenson, p. 114).⁶ Jorge Luis Borges owned a copy of *An Experiment With Time*, too, as a recent exhibition of his books reveals. Dunne mentions in *The New Immortality* that he lectured on his theories to 'an audience of fifteen hundred at the National Book Fair' in 1937.⁷ More surprisingly, another of his lectures was 'televised, with auditory accompaniment, by the BBC' in 1937 (*The*

New Immortality, p. 78). However 'curious' his work, Dunne's theories have a minor role in the time debate in the early twentieth century. Angus's engagement with Dunne's work thus reflects a wider societal interest in his work at the time; significantly, it encourages one to read her poetry with reference to his work – not in a prescriptive way, but as a potential introit into her complex portrayal of the self-in-time.

In his books, Dunne explains how the self in dreams or visions can turn its attention away from the relentless forward movement of the 'private self' to witness past or future events. According to Dunne, there is no *real* barrier between present and future events; because the universe is made up of separate time parts, moments can become 'transposed', allowing the individual to experience incidences of 'precognition' in dreams or waking states.⁸ Consequently, there is nothing to stop one from seeing into the future; as Morgan points out, the self in dreams (or in moments of *déjà-vu*) is freed from a sense of linear clock-time and thus can experience a glimpse of the future (p. ii). Dunne writes:

[i]magine that all the sensory impressions which you perceive in the course of your life are standing before you in a row – like a long strip of cinema film. On the back of that strip there is another picture, showing the various states of your brain which correspond to the sensory impressions exhibited upon the forward side. You, who are not your brain, have a view covering the whole of that array of sensory impressions from beginning to end. (*The New Immortality*, pp. 79-80)

He concludes that 'all states of this real world exist simultaneously' (*The New Immortality*, p. 112). Dunne's image of the self as divided in two – observing life both in linear form and with panoramic vision – is useful when reading Angus's poems, for it provides an explanation of how the self creates 'sensory impressions' and witnesses them being made concurrently. Moreover, his consideration of the self as an 'endless series' of selves that can see 'backwards and forwards in time' offers a paradigmatic representation of the self-in-time that becomes essential when interpreting the often oblique moments in Angus's poems when different versions of the same self meet (pp. 250, 69).

'Melting into Each Other': Memory and the Self-in-Time

Like many other philosophers at the time, Dunne developed his ideas from an engagement with and response to a particular theorist whose work revolutionized the public's understanding of the self-in-time: Henri Bergson. Stevenson argues that Bergson 'occupied at the time a position comparable to Roland Barthes or Jacques Derrida in the later twentieth century' in that he was 'influential within popular culture as well as academic circles' (p. 109). He was 'awarded every honor which France reserves for its intellectual leaders, and accorded international recognition by a Nobel Prize in 1928 – the first ever awarded to a philosopher'.⁹ It is not hard to imagine that Angus, as someone widely-read and active in the literary community, would have had access to Bergson's work – either through first-hand experience or through the filter of popular press. The extent to which Angus knew Bergson's work is not the focus of the argument here, however. As in the treatment of Jacob's work in chapter one, this chapter considers *not* how well Angus knew Bergson's work, but rather how Bergson's conclusions in conjunction with Dunne's theories *can shed light upon aspects of the self-in-time in Angus's poetry*. Wyndham Lewis highlights the essential importance of Bergson's work for readers of Angus's poetry: 'time, for Bergson, is *mental* as opposed to *physical*'.¹⁰ Like Bergson, time for Angus functions as an aspect of the psychical, internal life rather than of the external physical world.

Bergson outlined in his early work a theory of *durée* or 'duration', which tried to explain how the self understands the passage of time. He explains 'pure duration' as 'the form which the succession of our conscious states assumes when our ego lets itself live, when it refrains from separating its present state from its former states'.¹¹ Bergson argues that each state does not forget the ones that come before it, but rather incorporates these former states into an 'organic whole' of 'both the past and present states' together (*Time and Free Will*, p. 100). Lewis, although largely sceptical of Bergson, astutely interprets duration as a 'complete *interpenetration* of all the parts of the past' with the present (p. 411, his emphasis). The self thus carries with it a commingled sense of past and present selves simultaneously. For Bergson, memory is the force that unites the past and present 'states' of the self. In *Matter and Memory* (1911) he proposes that memory's prime function is 'to evoke all those past perceptions which are analogous to the present perception' and then, in recalling what preceded and followed the original perception, suggest a useful response to the

situation.¹² He concludes: 'by allowing us to grasp in a single intuition multiple moments of duration, [memory] frees us from the movement of the flow of things' (p. 228). In other words, the self is free to move fluidly through time, 'free' from the forward 'flow' of clock-time. The link Bergson makes between the self and memory is a significant one to consider when reading Angus's work, as his belief in the perpetual existence of the past in the present moment provides an explanation for how the self seems to live in 'multiple moments of duration' at once. In poems like 'At Candlemas' (TR) or 'Memory' (SC) Angus's speakers seem to inhabit two time zones simultaneously. Angus illustrates how a moment of recollection splits the self into two selves; the narrative similarly divides to accommodate the two different avatars of the self. Moreover, Bergson's conclusions offer a general treatment of memory's ability to transport the self from the present moment to the long-forgotten past moment that Angus explores imagistically in poems like 'Desires of Youth' (LC) or 'Once Long Ago' (LC).

Thinking 'Lang': Time and Self in Angus's Earliest Work

Angus's concern with time is evident from her earliest work. Contrary to Caird's contention that one finds little development in 'theme or technique' in Angus's *oeuvre*, one can trace how Angus's interest in time develops from her earliest work through to her last published poems (p. 45). In *Christabel's Diary* (1899), a fictional account of a young English woman's life in *fin-de-siècle* Arbroath, Angus includes a conversation the eponymous narrator has with her husband Arthur about time. Christabel writes:

Arthur says I live backwards and forwards – on the way thinking of the arrival, and arrived, looking back on the way. It's what the Queen says to Alice in 'Through the Looking-Glass'. 'Jam to-morrow, and jam yesterday, but never jam to-day'. I thought of something, and drew the window up. I called out – 'It isn't that – it's jam always, because – ' but it was lost.... (p. 4)

In this excerpt, Angus expresses a vision of time that eerily prefigures Dunne's. Time is fluidly non-linear ('backwards and forwards') and, most importantly, the self-in-time can slide effortlessly from memories of the past into expectations of the future ('on the way thinking of the arrival, and arrived, looking back'). When Christabel

replaces 'never jam to-day' with 'jam always' she constructs a present moment that includes both 'to-morrow' and 'yesterday' (in a way that structurally reminds one of William James's concept of the present moment as a 'saddle-back' position).¹³ The unexpected truncation of her narrative as it drifts into ellipses typifies the work's stream-of-consciousness style; more significantly, it highlights Christabel's inability to express the ineffable: time here is 'lost' because it is entropic, non-linear, and relative to the beholder. To borrow language from Bergson, 'language cannot get hold of [time] without arresting its mobility or fit it into its common-place forms without making it into public property' (*Time and Free Will*, p. 129). Time in this passage from *Christabel's Diary* is 'lost' in the lacunae of language; Christabel cannot express her intimate inner time in 'common-place forms'.

Angus touches upon time specifically only once in *Christabel's Diary*, but this brief example raises questions that persist throughout her work: how does the self construe time as bi-directional? what role does memory have in the self's movement through time? how does the self's sense of inner time relate to external clock-time? and finally, how does one 'get hold of' time in language? In her earliest work, Angus begins to offer some answers to these questions. In her first volume of poetry, *The Lilt* (1922), Angus explores the self with reference to a broad, historical time. In 'The Drove Road' and 'The Fox's Skin', for example, she contemplates time in 'thoosand' year cycles, wherein the self is shaped by the 'ancient ways' of earlier selves now long dead ('The Fox's Skin', lines 19, 15). The self's own personal sense of time is dwarfed by the incessant 'tread and the march of the dead' who hail from some point far in the past ('The Drove Road', l. 5). The ghostly 'dead' are anonymous, however; the present selves in the landscape lack personal memories of them and recall them only as the abstract figures of legend. In 'The Fox's Skin', for example, Angus compares the self's personal time with the epic time cycle of the landscape. The young female speaker in the poem judges time by cycles of 'wark' (l. 1) and play. By contrast, the 'wrinkled and riven' Pict who emerges from the 'dust' (l. 11) of time sees her not as a specific human self, but as part of a larger pattern of events in time. The poem concludes with his pronouncement:

The same auld wind at its weary cry:
The blin' faced moon in the misty sky;
A thoosand years o' clood and flame,

An a'thing's the same an' aye the same -
 The lass is the same in the fox's skin,
 Gatherin' the bloom o' the floorin' whin. (lines 17-22)

For the Pict, time moves in cycles of 'a thoosand years'; 'a'thing's the same' from cycle to cycle, and for him, the specific self speaking the poem is just 'the same' as the 'lass' in the 'fox's skin' (l. 21) who preceded her a thousand years before. The personal time of the poem's initial speaker means nothing to the Pict - it disappears in comparison to the 'blin' faced' (l. 18) motion of epic time. Time is bi-directional, in that both selves in the poem can see each other; ultimately, however, Angus suggests that the young girl's time is merely part of a larger cycle that is *external to the individual self*. One needs to look closely or 'listen' (l. 24), as the speaker urges in 'The Drove Road', to conceive of the enormity of epochal time cycles. Even then, time as it flows in millennial cycles is too large to 'get hold of' properly (Bergson, p. 129); the present self sees the distant past as numinous and 'wrinkled' ('The Fox's Skin', l. 13), while the past self sees the present as 'aye the same' as before (l. 20).

Not all the poems in *The Lilt* explore the kind of epic time one finds in 'The Fox's Skin'. In 'By Candle Light' and 'The Turn o' the Day', Angus begins to move towards the more personal, introspective vision of the self-in-time of her most accomplished work. In 'The Turn o' the Day', for example, one can trace the beginnings of a dual time narrative in the way she divides the self between the past ('love is fine, fine, / But it doesna bide', lines 6-7) and the future ('I'll see them a' my lane', l. 11). Nevertheless, the division is not sustainable; the focus remains upon time as it is ordered by the seasons, rather than by the self's memories. The self's recollections are important, but they are *not* the milestones marking movement through time. In 'By Candle Light', for comparison, the unnamed speaker observes (but does not participate in) an interaction between a woman and her son; the son longs for freedom, the mother anxiously, perhaps malevolently, tries to keep 'her bairn at hame' (l. 33). Angus compares the son's spoken memories (of 'the days when I counted the lambs, mother / By the bonnie green links o' Dee', lines 12-13) with the recollections he keeps to himself ('how he danced at the Castleton / In the long clear gloamings o' June', lines 20-21) to suggest two different versions of his past. The 'dowiest' (l. 28) - dullest - tunes the son plays reflect his inner dissatisfaction. Like 'The Turn o' the Day', however, this poem does not develop

two time narratives completely. Time is internalized to some extent in that the son notes the passage of time with reference to elements of his inner life, but ultimately Angus structures the poem in the context of seasonal time. The son is 'at hame' (l. 33) because it is winter, and therefore too inclement to venture out in the 'eerie night' (l. 32) as he would in summer. Angus's focus consequently remains upon the self as it is contained within external time. The self in these two poems, and in the remainder of *The Lilt*, experiences inner time as it is encompassed by the 'lang' time of historic or seasonal cycles.¹⁴

Self and Time in Angus's Later Poetry

The Fiddler

In his book *The Dismantling of Time in Contemporary Poetry*, Richard Jackson equates the 're-evaluation of the nature of Time' with 'a re-evaluation of the status of the self'.¹⁵ Jackson here considers the role of time in the work of post-WWII poets, but his assertion raises an issue which has equal resonance in Angus's work: how does her treatment of time reflect her consideration of the poetic self? In the earliest poems and fiction mentioned above, time moves in cycles that are almost too large for human discernment. The self's inner time is of less significance when compared to 'ancient' cycles. As a result, Angus's analysis of the self-in-time lacks the intense psychological insight of her later work. The selves in *The Lilt* are often distant (as in the case of Mary Forbes in 'By Candle Light') or generic (the speaker in 'The Fox's Skin') and largely abstract rather than personal. In her later poems, however, Angus scrutinizes particular selves and their internal time cycles. She explores isolated moments in the self's life in which memories of the past 'interpenetrat[e]' the present and future in an instant (Lewis, p. 411). As her skill matures, she focuses her attention ever more inward in an intense and incisive self-scrutiny. The 'thoosand year' orbit of her earliest poems narrows to one instant – or a brief collection of moments – in a single life. In her 're-evaluation' of time, she alters her conception of the self's relationship to that time. The intensified focus reveals the self in interstitial moments, almost glimpses, reflecting the general tendency in her later work to strip away any non-essentials to reveal the self at its most starkly exposed.

As she suggests in 'By Candle Light', Angus is intrigued by music's power to evoke memories. In this poem and others, specific songs trigger the self's abrupt return to an earlier moment in time; the memory of these events becomes a bridge between the self's current state and its all-but-forgotten past. In the poem 'The Fiddler', from *The Tinker's Road* (1924), Angus explores how a musician's tunes transport the speaker from the unidentified present moment to three episodes in her past. The fiddler's unnamed songs elicit a visceral response in the speaker; the speaker *relives*, rather than merely recalls, her past selves. Christopher Whyte wonders why the speaker is a 'witness rather than a protagonist' in the poem, believing she is 'entirely passive' throughout the poem.¹⁶ Instead one can see she actively *relives* the past. Bergsonian theory is particularly helpful to consider at this juncture as it offers an explanation of how recollection relates to the self's initial perception of an event. Bergson defines the past as 'that which acts no longer but which might act, and will act by inserting itself into a present sensation from which it borrows the vitality' (p. 229). In 'The Fiddler', the speaker's past is frozen – it acts 'no longer' – but when the music triggers specific memories, these previously forgotten sensations acquire the 'vitality' of a present moment. In this way, the speaker's memories each cease 'to be a recollection and become [...] once more a perception' (p. 229). Consequently, the speaker (re)lives past moments, but critically she does so from not one but *two different perspectives*: from the initial internal perspective as a child, mother, and old woman, and then from the secondary external perspective, as an older woman surveying her life. In one contained instant, the speaker processes 'multiple moments of duration' (Bergson, p. 228); she observes the entire 'orbit' of her life simultaneously (Tuan, p. 14). Thus in this interpretation she is not 'passive' but instead is an active participant in the process while also perceiving the events as a 'witness' (Whyte, p. 376).

In *The New Immortality* Dunne, recalling Bergson, examines how sensations resurrected from a remembered past often possess an intensity that mimics their original vigour. Dunne in particular explores those memories that appear in dreams, often 'fused together' artificially with other recollections separated in time (*The New Immortality*, p. 74). He notes that because the recovered dream moments occur in the fourth dimension (time), the relationship between emotion and reality is altered: 'emotions are very greatly accentuated. Pleasure is far more intense than in waking

life, and so, for that matter, is displeasure (*The New Immortality*, p. 75). In 'The Fiddler', one can discern how the poem's powerfully concentrated emotions, left largely unexplained but inferred by Angus's language, exhibit what Dunne refers to as 'accentuated' emotional content. The sensory recollections-cum-perceptions in each stanza are condensed into a few key images. The kind of imagery Angus uses relates directly to the perspective of the original perceiver. In the first stanza, for example, the imagery is almost entirely visual, reflecting a young child's immediate, unprocessed perceptions. The speaker describes the heather with reference to her own height ('at my knee', l. 2) and observes in the landscape a holistic connection between its natural elements (the 'reid rose-tree', l. 4, and the 'bonnie dryin' green', l. 5) and reminders of her domestic security (clean clothes drying on the line, open space). In the second stanza, by contrast, the imagery is primarily aural and tactile and exhibits in its concision the oppressive closeness of a domestic interior. The child's visual imagery with its focus upon open space is less applicable here as Angus evokes instead the listening ear of a mother. The sound of rain and the spinning wheel, and the feelings of warmth from 'bairn' (l. 11) and 'hearth-stane' (l. 12) are her primary sensations. In the final stanza, however, the speaker distances herself from the sensing body. Moving from the self-referential universe of the child in the first stanza ('my knee') to the mixture of detachment and intimacy in the second stanza (with its lack of possessives yet its physically intimate imagery), Angus in the final stanza focuses upon the same self grown old and 'dune' (l. 19). Significantly, the sensations in the third stanza, like the others, are 'accentuated', but here Angus draws attention to how little there is left in the landscape for this woman to sense. She finds only 'wind' (l. 21) and 'naked wa's' (l. 22) left among the obscuring heather. The old 'dune wife' lacks the sharpened senses of her previous selves perhaps because of age and infirmity, Angus implies, but more likely because of her deprivation.

Angus also explores how the 'accentuated' sensations of the speaker in each stanza reflect her own internal sense of self-in-time at a structural level. Angus reinforces her imagery through diction, using the recurring images – the 'bonnie dryin' green' (l. 5), the landscape, and the woman's voice itself – to reveal in small the changes brought about by the passage of time. In doing so, she acknowledges the woman's internal alterations as they are paralleled by external factors. In the first stanza, for

example, Angus's language reflects the child's carefree life. Unlike in Jacob's 'The Gean-Trees', Angus does not announce that these are the 'thochts o' youth' (l. 5); rather, she indicates them with her diction and imagery: the assonance 'knee' (l. 2), 'reid', 'tree' (l. 4), 'green' (l. 5), and 'clear-bleached' (l. 8) creates a lilting lightness to the poem that is reinforced by the repeated short 'i' sound. The poem's rhyme scheme curls in upon itself because of the similarity between the 'a' rhymes ('he', 'knee', and 'tree') and the 'c' rhyme ('green'). Moreover, the continual movement of the wind as it 'lift[s]' and shift[s] the clothes evokes a child's dynamism she elsewhere describes as 'licht, licht as faem'.¹⁷ The idyllic images of clean clothes, blooming trees, and an expanse of open space suggest an unfettered 'licht' life.

In the second stanza of 'The Fiddler', Angus makes slight but noticeable changes to her diction to highlight the change in perspective. The rhyme scheme remains the same but the language reflects the stanza's darker content – 'again' slant rhymes with the ponderous 'rain' (l. 11) and 'stane' (l. 12). Angus continues to use the long 'e' sound ('dreep' (l. 10), 'breist' (l. 11), 'peat' (l. 13), 'meal' (l. 14), 'wheel' (l. 16)) but here the sound is undercut with the claustrophobic confinement of the house that is embodied in the onomatopoeic verbals 'dreep' (l. 10) and 'whirr' (l. 16). One can sense immediately the difference between the open spaces and sounds of the 'wind fae aff the braes' (lines 6-8) and the cramped domestic interior where the woman serves as the imagined centre of a continual circle of 'bairn' (l. 11), 'hearth-stane' (l. 12), and 'spinnin'-wheel' (l. 16). The non-specific 'a' modifying 'bairn' both suggests that the child is one of several and contrasts with the comfortably self-referential perspective of the child in the first stanza ('my knee').

In the third stanza, however, Angus makes the woman's evolution from happy child to woebegone older woman painfully present. Here she breaks the rhyme scheme of the previous stanzas so that the lines now rhyme *abcbdefe* instead of *aabacded*. The disjunctive rupture between 'me' ('a' rhyme) and 'made' ('b' rhyme) in the first two lines of the final stanza aurally enacts the violence implied in the poem's imagery. One can interpret, as Helen Cruickshank does, the 'naked 'wa's' (l. 22) as signifying 'the whole tragedy of Highland depopulation' and the effects upon those left behind.¹⁸ The relative metrical brevity of the line 'bit aye, wae's me' (l. 17) leaves a noticeable pause as the woman moves from 'vae's me' to the implications of the

'hindmaist tune'. The speaker refers only to the drastic alteration obliquely; consequently, the literal 'wind fae aff the braes' (l. 6) from the speaker's youth becomes the metaphorical 'winds o' a the years' (l. 21); instead of drying clothes, this wind howls around the 'naked wa's'. The word 'naked' encapsulates the 'dune' (l. 19) woman's vulnerability and fragility. 'Dune', moreover, deftly combines both 'done', as in 'finished' and the Scots word 'doon': 'down' (CSD). She is both done and bent down beneath the weight of her sorrow. The long 'e' sounds so prevalent in the previous two stanzas appear here but alternate with the haunting, hollow sounds of 'dune', 'tune', and 'juist' (l. 19). This sound cries through the middle of the stanza like the wind itself. Finally, the heather – which, in the first stanza was a sign of freedom and wildness allowed the child – usurps the domestic space to 'creep' (l. 23) over the green. In a clever internal rhyme, the heather's 'creep, creepin' recalls the incessant 'dreep' (l. 10) of rain that no doubt kept the woman contained within the house. Angus thus reinforces the changes in the woman's life by employing image and sound patterns that recur; time revolves in a continual circle and the speaker follows it through, past the same landmarks each time.

Bergsonian theory offers a revelatory way of looking at the 'orbit' of the speaker's life in 'The Fiddler'. In *Matter and Memory* Bergson maintains:

[r]eflective perception is a circuit, in which all the elements, including the perceived object itself, hold each other in a state of mutual tension as in an electric circuit, so that no disturbance starting from the object can stop on its way and remain in the depths of the mind: it must always find its way back to the object from where it proceeds. (p. 104)

The fiddler's music initiates the 'disturbance' that focuses the speaker's attention upon the three vignettes. The perceptions recalled in the first stanza cannot stand on their own, despite the narrator's desire to remain within this particular scene; Bergson makes it clear that the chain of events provoked by an initial 'disturbance' *must* follow through the entire orbit of the 'circuit' – as he concludes, 'it must always find its way back to the object from where it proceeds'. In this case, the point of probable origin occurs in the final stanza in the poem. The image of the 'dune wife / Greetin' in her plaid' (lines 19-20) suggests a possible source of the earlier reflections; the speaker is closest in chronological time to this woman and therefore

shares a more immediate bond with her. In this way, one can read the poem as a 'reflective' circuit emerging from the older woman's sorrow in the now-deserted landscape. Whyte wonders whether the last verse contains a 'prophecy or a recognition' (p. 377). One cannot tell, although Bergsonian theory indicates the final stanza is perhaps a 'recognition' of the speaker's most immediate state. Although her present-tense vantage point remains unknown, the mutual tension between selves maintains the circuit's line of connection; the series of what Dunne might call 'rational knowers' in the poem – child, mother, older woman – continue to coexist although one cannot determine the temporal or spatial location of the present moment (p. 250).

In 'The Fiddler', the boundaries between the past – the site of the domestic tableaux – and the present of the poem's utterance blur, or in Dunne's words, are 'fused' together (*The New Immortality*, p. 74). Consequently, to distinguish among the numerous time 'zones' in the poem, Angus carefully manipulates tense. Dorothy Porter McMillan notes that Angus uses 'unsettling shifts in tense and in person' in her work to reveal 'women who are both themselves and observers of themselves'.¹⁹ In 'The Fiddler', as in 'At Candlemas' and 'Hogmanay', the self does witness itself from simultaneous external and internal perspectives; Angus's tense shifts allow for the self to perceive and observe at the same time. In 'The Fiddler', she combines the past tense ("twas") in each stanza with a continual, unspecified present (signified by gerundal phrases – 'liftin' and shiftin' (l. 7) and 'greetin'" (l. 20) – and other verbals). One discerns the vignette's distance in time from others preceding it through the imagery. The poem begins with the past tense – 'twas' (l. 2) – to indicate that the 'disturbance' jarring these memories into mind occurred some time in the past (Bergson, p. 104). The poem then moves into three separate incidences, each described in a non-specific past tense whose temporal relationship to the following passages is relationally determined. 'Twass', however, reveals nothing of the speaker's present whereabouts. When the poem concludes, then, one is left with an unanswerable question – what has happened to the 'dune' wife? The only place to 'go' when one reaches the white space at the end of the poem is back to the beginning of the poem again. The poem thus contains within it a continually recurrent time scheme wherein the distant past remains in a constant circle of tension with the moment identified by "twass". The fact that the poem is entitled

'The Fiddler' (like Jacob's generic 'Guidwife') suggests that the nameless speaker is not unique; the fiddler's music may conjure up similar memories for other listeners as convincingly. Angus in this way captures 'multiple moments of duration' in the life of one specific person, but extends its pertinence to an implicit community of other, unvoiced selves (Bergson, p. 228).

At Candlemas

In 'The Fiddler', Angus considers three incidents in a single narrative; the other half of the dual time narrative – that which is contained in the unspecified present – remains unspoken. Consequently, the reader does not acquire a clear sense of the speaker's entire 'orbit'; time may be bi-directional, but one cannot predict with any certainty what will happen to the speaker beyond the scope of the poem. In 'At Candlemas', also from *The Tinker's Road*, Angus shifts her focus from a succession of related selves to a direct meeting of coexistent selves.²⁰ Instead of one figure surveying and then becoming three versions of herself in sequence, as one finds in 'The Fiddler', here Angus presents the reader with two aspects of the same self in parallel scenarios. The ambiguity Angus teases out of their interaction structures the poem.

Angus's references to Candlemas are significant. Like 'All Souls Eve' (TL) or Jacob's 'Hallowe'en', 'At Candlemas' gains a greater resonance when one considers the implications of the festival day itself. According to F. Marian McNeill, the candles in Candlemas originate in pre-Christian times when Romans burned candles to honour Februa, the mother of Mars. Christians adapted this ritual for their own uses; Catholics, for example, celebrate Candlemas as the Feast of the Purification of the Virgin. In Scotland, the day is also associated with St. Bride. More significantly, Candlemas (like Halloween) is a quarter-day in the Scottish folk calendar, also falling at the same point as the Celtic festival of Imbolc.²¹ As with other quarter-days, particular rites must be followed if one is to avoid breaking supernatural law; many believed rowan branches tied over lintels of houses or carried in one's pocket or used in conjunction with red thread offered particular protection against witches.²² In addition, the weather on Candlemas offers a premonition of the weather to come:

'gin Candlemas be fair and clear, / There'll be twa winters in the year' (McNeill, p. 77).

Clearly, though, Angus is attracted to Candlemas not merely for its meteorological and liturgical associations. She also draws upon the psychic ramifications of Candlemas as a threshold space. Traditionally, Candlemas serves as the point of transition between winter (death) and spring (rebirth); Angus explores a similar dynamic in 'The Turn o' the Day', which looks at the psychic parallels to the change in seasons. Spiritually, however, Candlemas here represents the brief moment of conjunction between the mundane and extra-mundane. Improbable events may occur on quarter-days, as McNeill observes (*passim*). In the specific context of this poem, notably, Candlemas symbolizes the liminal space between one end of the 'orbit' of the speaker's life (winter and old age) and the other (spring and youth). In the poem, Angus parallels the two versions of the self – the speaker as a young woman in the first two stanzas, and the speaker as an older woman in the final three – with the unnamed young girl and old woman, the two analogous others in the poem. Angus uses the mirror meetings to suggest that particular elements in the self's life recur. Candlemas, as an annual holiday in both liturgical and folk calendars, becomes a more personal symbol of the cyclical nature of the self's movement through time.

In 'Time: Psychological Aspects', John Orme insists that the self's perception of time is rooted in an understanding of recurrent cycles. Although his arguments are biological rather than literary, his conclusions offer an interesting perspective to consider when reading Angus's work. He notes that the 'time counting systems' humans use – for example, the calendar as it divided into temporal units – 'reflect how our experience of time is basically one of continuous repetition in a rhythmic form, rather than of a linear homogeneity'.²³ In Orme's argument, the self anchors its sense of time with an often-unconscious acceptance of repetition, whether at a structural level (the seven-day week, for example) or at a physical level (sleep cycles). In 'At Candlemas', Angus discovers the 'continuous repetition' at the heart of the self's movement through time in the precise parallels between the speaker as a young girl and the 'blythe bairnie' (l. 21) she meets in the poem's final stanza. In this context, the 'continuous repetition' manifests itself psychologically as the self

confronts not just a physical avatar of herself, but a mental one as well. She inhabits both selves at once, thinking as each one does simultaneously.

The brief junctures at which the two different selves meet in Angus's poem – in the second half of the second stanza, and the last few lines of the poem – provide a glimpse of two different sections of the self's 'orbit' through time. The encounters between selves are troubling and, in linear time, impossible. To understand the nature of these meetings, it helps to consider how Bergson explains the logistics of recollection. He argues that personal recollections, which are 'essentially fugitive',

become materialized only by chance, either when an accidentally precise determination of our bodily attitude attracts them or when the very indetermination of that attitude leaves a clear field to the caprices of their manifestation. There comes a moment when the recollection thus brought down is capable of blending so well with the present perception that we cannot say where perception ends or where memory begins. (p. 106)

In 'At Candlemas', it is the 'accidentally precise determination' of the young girl's appearance that reminds the speaker of her own self as a child. Her recollection 'blend[s] so well' with the present perception of the young child on the road that she cannot discern precisely the location of her self – is she the young girl? Or the old woman? Angus emphasizes this cognitive elision at the structural level as the poem folds into equal halves: in the first sixteen lines of the poem, the speaker describes her childhood encounter with what may be 'the witch / O' the Braid Hill o' Fare' (lines 15-16); this corresponds to the young child's assertion in the second half of the poem that the speaker herself is now 'the auld witch / O' the Braid Hill o' Fare' (lines 31-32). The speaker's recollection becomes 'materialized' in the figure of the young girl as she (the speaker) both recalls herself as a girl and then, simultaneously, witnesses herself as an old woman. In combining bilaterally symmetrical events within the context of evident time passage, the poem posits a cyclical conception of time. The older woman telling the story becomes the young girl confronting the old woman on the road, who becomes the old woman confronted by the young girl . . . and the poem loops into itself again.

As she does in 'The Fiddler', Angus repeats particular words and images in each time 'zone' to connect the chronologically disparate moments. She utilizes the same

language to describe the 'stranger' (l. 5) in the first stanza and the 'blythe bairnie' (l. 21) in the penultimate stanza: 'frail as ony reed' (l. 6) becomes 'soople as a reed' (l. 22); 'a green mantle / Hapt about her heid' (lines 7-8) turns into 'a hankey / Tied about her heid' (lines 23-24); the 'whinny crookit road / Whaur the grey ghaists gang' (lines 11-12) transforms into 'the crookit road / Whaur the grey moths flit' (lines 27-28). The alternate version of each descriptive phrase contains the shift in consciousness and chronology that, like the devastating passage of time in 'The Fiddler', occurs off-stage (here in the white space between the second and third stanzas). In particular, the change from the romanticized 'green mantle' so suggestive of a childhood fascination with heroines of the ballads²⁴ to the more practical 'hankey' indicates not just an older but also a more pragmatic voice speaking the poem. Likewise, the shift from 'grey ghaists' to 'grey moths' concisely embodies the move away from a child's excitable imagination to a more matter-of-fact vision.

These comparisons, however, overlook the fact that Angus refers not to two analogous figures but rather to two dissimilar figures who parallel the speaker's own dual self. Angus thus complicates the apparently binary dyads in the poem by creating sets of paired images that appear to be comparable, but are quite different. For example, the 'first cam o' the mune' (l. 2) in the first stanza – symbolic of the speaker's own youth – fades into a 'wan deen' mune' (l. 18) in the poem's second half. Likewise, the speaker's age betrays her again when she finds in her second trip to town the town 'cauldribe' (l. 20). The road, once known for its intriguingly crookedness, is now merely tiring. The town, like the fading moon and the speaker herself, is 'wan' and 'deen' (l. 8). Finally, and most tellingly, the phrase 'een fu' o' spells' (l. 13) in the second stanza becomes 'sma'-bookit': a shift from an intimation of supernatural powers to a seemingly prosaic comment about the speaker's small stature (l. 29). Here, however, the child makes the observation. Her comment draws attention to the fact that time *has* passed – the switch from the abstract 'een fu' o' spells' to the physicality of 'sma'-bookit' reinforces time's palpable effects upon the speaker. As she does in 'The Fiddler', Angus here dramatizes the change from childhood to adulthood in her movement away from the predominantly visual images of the child speaker – the 'green mantle' (l. 7), the imagined 'ghaists' on the road (l. 12), and the magical appearance of the old woman – to the tactile sensations

of the older woman. The speaker notes her own belaboured gait in comparison to the 'limber-licht' (l. 26) bearing of the 'blythe bairnie' (l. 21), and senses not the exhilaration of a trip to town, but the exhaustion of a long day. Angus encapsulates this alteration in the shift from the speaker's speculative, unspoken belief the stranger 'nicht weel be the witch' (l. 15) to the child's confrontational query, 'er' ye the *auld* witch' (l. 31, my emphasis). The word 'auld' draws attention to the speaker's ageing process and effectively underlines her transition from observer (as she is in the poem's first half) to observed. The conclusion of the poem is deliberately ambiguous; Angus leaves the final question unanswered.

According to Bergson, the 'interpenetration' of past and present is constructive (Lewis, p. 411), for in the circular progression of time one learns from previous actions; then, when confronted with a similar situation, one has a response (p. 242). This is one of the main differences in the theories of Bergson and Dunne. Dunne's belief in a simultaneous present past and future does not allow for one to learn from past mistakes whereas Bergson insists upon the individual's ability to learn from the past. The 'organic whole' to which Bergson refers in *Time and Free Will* consequently contains not just the time circuits themselves but also what one learns from them (p. 100). The speaker in 'At Candlemas' finds that the eerie repetition in her experience reveals not that she has remained the same, but that she has aged. Her interaction with the 'stranger' she sees as a young girl springs to mind when she finds herself confronted with the other side of the issue – now it is she whose 'runkled' (l. 30) brow frightens the young girl. The poem in part represents her attempt to reconcile the part of her that still sees and feels as she did as a 'bit lassie' (l. 3) with her present 'auld' (l. 31) self. Moreover, the interaction between the speaker as a young girl and the 'stranger' suggests that the poem also dramatizes how the self can learn from its rare prescient moments, but only in time. The young self in 'At Candlemas' does not recognize that the 'stranger' is in fact a future glimpse of her own self; she cannot discern this until she has a parallel episode with which to compare it. The speaker at last discerns the meaning of her initial interaction once she experiences the same dynamic from the other side of the issue; by becoming the 'auld witch' (l. 31) she understands anew what it means to be a 'bit lassie' (l. 3).

In 'At Candlemas', although there is a tendency to blur the distinction between past and present, Angus does distinguish between the two with her use of tense. The first half of the poem, for example, blends the past tense ('fell in wi' a stranger', l. 5) with the perfect tense ('I wad haste me', l. 9), clearly situating the events in the past. By contrast, the poem's second half unfolds in the present tense ('here cams Candlemas', l. 17). According to Porter McMillan, the use of the perfect tense in the second stanza 'convey[s] a present rather than a past urgency' to the situation, 'giving the final impression that the speaker, still clinging to a sense of her reality as young, is actually afraid of herself, of the old woman she has become' (p. 50). Porter McMillan's remarks recall a similar sense of 'urgency' Angus explores in 'The Fiddler'; both it and 'At Candlemas' rely upon the mixture of past and present tenses to grammatically enact the 'interpenetration' of the speaker's past and present experiences (Lewis, p. 411). Unlike the speaker in 'The Fiddler', however, this speaker identifies the actual present of the poem – the moment in which the poem is uttered – with the self presented at the poem's conclusion. Using a deictic directive, 'here cams Candlemas', Angus's speaker positions herself in a particular moment; she walks up the road speaking the poem. The present 'urgency' Porter McMillan mentions is important to note in that Angus's use of the perfect tense (like Jacob's in 'Hallowe'en') complicates any sense of the past as over. Phrases like 'haste, I wad haste me' place the event in a continually unfolding past, and yet, the present tense *sound* of the phrase 'she micht weel be the witch' (l. 15) questions the time placement of the event. One senses that the speaker lives this remembered aspect of her life just as actively as she lives her own age. As Bergson contends, once the past has been restored to the level of perception, it can act again (whereas when still part of a memory, it is frozen and inactive). The speaker thus dually inhabits both roles; she consequently meets herself – or an avatar of herself – on the road at the poem's conclusion. As Porter McMillan summarizes it, 'there are four characters [...] but in another sense there is only one character struggling to make connections among these versions of herself' (p. 50). Angus here implies that by re-inhabiting this past self briefly, the speaker 'grasp[s]' in one profound moment what Bergson refers to as 'multiple moments of duration' (p. 228).

Hogmanay

Angus presents an even starker confrontation of selves in the poem 'Hogmanay', from her 1929 volume *The Singin' Lass*. In this poem, Angus shows more emphatically than in any of her previous ones that 'all states of this real world exist simultaneously', as Dunne puts it (*The New Immortality*, p. 122). In 'Hogmanay' there is no question that the young woman in the narrative is a younger version of the speaker's self – Angus makes this apparent from the beginning. As in 'At Candlemas', Angus situates the poem in a particularly symbolic time scheme. Hogmanay, although not a quarter-day, symbolizes the threshold between the old and new years. Scottish folk tradition places great significance upon the first person to cross the threshold after the bells ring in the new year. According to the *Encyclopedia of Superstitions*, the function of the 'First Foot' is 'to bring good luck and prosperity for the ensuing twelve months to those he visits. He comes as soon as possible after midnight, bringing gifts that symbolize plentiful food, warmth, and wealth' (p. 161). Because of the first foot's ritual significance, there are 'strict rules' dictating who should or should not be first across the threshold – the *Encyclopedia of Superstitions* stresses that the first foot 'must always be a man, since he represents the New Year itself, and a woman in that role would be exceedingly unlucky' (Radford, p. 161). Luckiest of all is for a tall, dark, and handsome male to cross the threshold after midnight. In her poem, however, Angus breaks all of these ritual rules by presenting the speaker with a younger representation of her self at the door. This first foot is female, young, and, most disturbingly, 'deid lang syne' (l. 4). In other words, Angus's speaker invites a *ghost* to first-foot, clearly suggesting the cyclical workings of time: the start of the new year and the 'stranger' across the threshold both involve a *conscious* invocation of the 'deid' past.

Bergson's discussion on what he calls 'the present moment' offers a useful way of looking at the workings of time in 'Hogmanay'. Using language that recalls James's image of the present as 'saddle-back' between past and present, Bergson notes:

what I call 'my present' has one foot in my past and another in my future. In my past, first, because 'the moment in which I am speaking is already far from me'; in my future, next, because this moment is impending over the future: it is to the future that I am tending, and could I fix this indivisible present, this infinitesimal element of that curve of time, it is the direction of the future that it would indicate. The psychical state, then, that I call 'my present',

must be both a perception of the immediate past and a determination of the immediate future. (p. 138)

In Bergson's terminology, the 'present' occupies a position of liminality between the past and the future and is thus inextricable from them. In 'Hogmanay', Angus presents a similar version of the movement of time; she dramatizes the transition between past and future in the interaction between the two selves. Here, however, Angus posits a future that focuses back upon the past: time loops back inward so that the future ushered across the threshold becomes a silent, ghostly visitor from the speaker's past. And, unlike Bergson's contention that 'it is to the future' that the self aims, Angus here suggests that the 'curve of time' arches back into a circle – the circuit becomes a loop, the orbit a circle or ellipse. Angus's speaker rejects the concept of self as what Dunne calls a 'travelling 'now-point' in favour of a self focused back upon the past but facing the future Janus-like (*The New Immortality*, p. 80). The 'determination of the immediate future' Bergson mentions manifests itself in 'Hogmanay' in the younger self's appearance at the door. As an embodiment both of the past and paradoxically of the future (as her appearance as first foot suggests) the younger self thus contains within her the past and the 'immediate future'. As A. D. Lindsay argues, with reference to Bergson's work, '[o]ur actual present as lived is consciousness of the past and looking towards the future'.²⁵ Angus's sense of cyclical internal time allows for the self to face in both directions.

A closer examination of the poem's structure reveals Angus's representation of the self-in-time more clearly. The poem is fourteen lines long, and structured like a sonnet with a slightly adapted rhyme scheme of aabb / ccdd / eeffgg.²⁶ The metrical scheme is not iambic pentameter; the lines fall phraseomorphically rather than metrically. Angus constructs what could be called an 'open' sonnet (like Elizabeth Bishop's 'Sonnet', for example).²⁷ The sonnet is normally associated with philosophical speculation about love, but here it becomes the stage for a far more internal battle, for the answer to the poem's essential mystery, 'wha' / who (l. 1). Who is the woman at the door, and if she is 'deid lang syne', then who is the woman who answers the door? As she does in 'Jean Cam'bell' and other poems, Angus looks incisively at the self as a compilation or 'series' (Dunne, p. 250) of previous selves coexisting in time. Angus's use of the sonnet as the medium in which to explore the self's dual narratives in this sense makes perfect sense; she adapts a form normally

focused upon concise metaphorical articulations of complex issues of desire (exemplified by Petrarch's sonnets to Laura or Shakespeare's sonnets to the Dark Lady) – but here turns her gaze *inwards into the self* rather than outwards onto another person.

The poem's fundamental question, then, becomes 'wha' is this woman who arrives at the door? Which self is the speaker's 'real' self? More directly than in 'At Candlemas', here Angus addresses the complexities of maintaining a sense of self in bi-directional time. Although initially the speaker identifies her visitor as a 'cannie young lassie' (l. 2), she then immediately modifies this with the recognition that the visitor has 'lips o' mine, e'en o' mine –' (l. 3). Seeing one's self from an external viewpoint is startling; the dash at the end of line three signifies the speaker's hesitation, even shock, at finding a younger version of her self at the door. Her focus upon the lips and eyes of her shadow self is not accidental; eyes suggest vision, the lips, speech. But why not 'mou' o' mine' or 'face o' mine'? Both features, in Angus's poems, are connected with erotic attraction, as a comparison reveals: in 'Invitation' the speaker lures her lover with 'lips like berries reid' (l. 6) and in 'This Woman', the speaker is beguiled by his beloved's 'young saft 'e'e' (l. 16). In one reading of 'Hogmanay', the focus upon lips and eyes could be the speaker discerning in herself a sensuality absent in her current state; Angus implies this same transition in the contemporaneous poem 'Jean Cam'bell' when she contrasts 'blin' Jean Cam'bell' (l. 1) in her 'auld green plaid' (l. 4) with 'Blythe Jeanie Cam'bell / in yir plaid sae new' (lines 19-20). In another reading, though, one could see the speaker's attachment to her younger self as a kind of displaced eroticism – like the time cycles, this sexual energy curves back upon itself rather than progressing outward. Certainly, this gesture sheds light upon Angus's use of a modified sonnet form. Moreover, the erotic tension between the two indicates one reason why the younger self seems to choose staying in the house over the prospect of 'kissin' and courtin' and dancin'-fey' outdoors (l. 7).

Angus complicates the interaction of selves in the poem's second stanza, further layering the situation with unanswered questions. As in the previous stanza, the speaker begins with a question: she asks the spectre where she has 'tint' her 'Sabbath shoon' (l. 5). Either the woman is completely shoeless, or she is not wearing

'Sabbath' or dress-shoes. In several of Angus's poems, shoes have particular symbolic significance, as they do in 'Patrick' (TR), where the speaker conflates youthful romance with walking 'on dancin' shoon, / On elfin shoon, / On fairy shoon' (lines 24-26); in 'Heart-Free' (SL), where the absence of shoes connotes poverty and social rejection – the speaker gives her shoes to 'wanton Meg / That ne'er hed hoose nor hame' (lines 9-10). In 'Ann Gilchrist' (SL) the 'clay-cauld feet' of the supposed witch – again, shoeless – signify not just her poverty but the absence of love in her life (l. 16). Finally, in 'Winter-Time', the poem that precedes 'Hogmanay' in *The Singin' Lass*, shoes suggest as they do in 'Patrick' the conjunction of fairy presences and erotic possibility: the speaker sees alluring creatures 'creepin' doon the loan' wearing 'shoon' that were 'wrocht in yon far toon / That ne'er had Cross nor kirk' (lines 13, 15-16). In 'Hogmanay', the younger self's missing 'Sabbath shoon' intimate several different meanings: if she, like the creatures in 'Winter-Time', hails from a non-Christian context, or if she is a ghost she will not wear 'Sabbath shoon'; if she is missing dress-shoes, perhaps she is not expecting to participate in the Hogmanay festivities – a strange thing in itself (indeed, the speaker expresses surprise at her younger self's lack); finally, her missing shoes could represent her *inability* to join with 'a' the toon' (l. 6) in celebration because she is 'deid lang syne' (l. 4). As the *Encyclopedia of Superstitions* indicates, shoes have 'some connexion [sic] with the life-essence, or soul, of the person to whom they belonged' (Radford, p. 307). In Angus's poem, without her shoes, the younger self lacks the 'life-essence' necessary to participate in the New Year festivities. More chillingly, the woman's lack of shoes recalls 'The Lyke-Wake Dirge' (one of Angus's favourite ballads)²⁸ wherein shoes are connected to passage through Purgatory after death; the dead are told:

If ever thou gavest hosen and shoon,
Every night and alle;
Sit thee down, and put them on;
And Christe receive thye saule.

If hosen and shoon thou ne'er gavest nane,
Every night and alle;
The whinnes shall pricke thee to the bare bane;
And Christe receive thye saule.²⁹

Here, one could read the younger self's bare feet to indicate she is 'deid', but not yet received into Purgatory – that is, at a liminal point between life and the afterlife –

and therefore able to haunt the living. The lack of 'sabbath' shoes suggests 'Christe' has not 'receive[d]' her 'saule' yet; this points to a far darker understanding of the poem, with the room wherein the two selves meet becoming a threshold space not just between the old and new years, but also between death and the trials before the afterlife.

The speaker, noting the spectral³⁰ self's lack of involvement in the celebration, interjects her version of what the younger self *should* be doing on Hogmanay; this vision comprises the third stanza of the poem: a trysting scene which may or may not be a personal recollection. The oblique narrative omits any indication of the speaker's presence in it. Angus's diction in line nine is remarkably similar to 'At Candlemas'; the 'wan' moon and the darkened sky both recall the second part of 'At Candlemas' with its 'wan, deen' mune' (l. 18). In the third stanza of 'Hogmanay', however, the language initially seems at odds with the content: stars are extinguished like candles and the moon grows pale as though it were dying; instead of signifying the onset of dawn, these images suggest death or illness. This line recalls (consciously or unconsciously) Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*; Angus's 'stars blow oot' parallels Romeo's description of the morning after his marriage: 'night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day / Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops' (Act III, Scene v).³¹ In Angus's poem, one finds no mention of any 'jocund day' after the dark night. Consequently, the tryst with the 'bonny young man' (l. 10) set so obviously in a dying setting makes one question what is happening in this exchange between selves. The speaker's vision of the 'kissin' and courtin' and dancin'-fey' (l. 7) is complicated by the fact that *it does not happen*. The younger self does not go 'ower the hills' (l. 10) and neither does the speaker herself (although she might once have). Both remain cloistered away from the 'screich o' the reels' (l. 8) in an intense circuit of tension, self-to-self.

The final three lines of the poem serve as the semi-sonnet's 'turn'; here, Angus contrasts the eternal freedom of the younger self with the speaker's relatively constrained life. Although the speaker may 'awhilie greet' (l. 12) that is, mourn *for a while*, the younger self will *always* be 'limber an' licht an' free' (l.13). Angus here as before isolates moments in time in a continuum of movement so that one aspect of the self remains perpetually young while another aspect moves through time and

ages. As in 'At Candlemas', this meeting-of-selves relies upon a continual, circular time frame in which 'multiple moments of duration' coexist (Bergson, p. 228). In 'Hogmanay' as in 'At Candlemas' the poem's final lines narrate the speaker's origins and suggest, ironically, where she begins rather than ends.

The philosophical implications of Angus's cyclical time schemes gain a greater clarity here when read in conjunction with Bergson's treatment of perception. In *Matter and Memory*, he associates perception with the ability to fix a scene outside time, to 'condens[e] enormous periods of an infinitely diluted existence into a few more differentiated moments of an intenser life' (p. 208). In other words, 'to perceive means to immobilize' (p. 208). Angus, in 'Hogmanay', offers a similar hypothesis: the speaker's *perception* of herself as a young woman lives continually on, while the speaker ages and evolves through time. The speaker re-lives her younger self when, as Bergson proposes, a chance 'disturbance' triggers the recollection of herself as a young woman (p. 104). As in 'The Fiddler', the speaker's younger selves co-exist continually, and the speaker's ability to return to these previous states of existence posits a circular time motion whose orbit – the length of a human life – is bi-directional; moments along the circuit perpetually exist in a kind of 'immobilized' state but are jolted into action or 'materialized' by events in the speaker's present (Bergson, p. 106). The word 'immobilized' is especially relevant in the context of Angus's poem as the young self seems curiously frozen; she's 'limber' and 'licht' of foot (l. 13), and yet strangely inert: she lacks shoes, does not speak, and hardly seems to move (other than to cross the threshold). Moreover, as a numinous 'deid' (l. 4) figure she is 'materialized' only in allocution; that is, she logically lacks a corporeal form until she is 'insert[ed]' into the present moment by the speaker's recollection; from this recollection, she 'borrows' the 'vitality' the speaker remembers having as a girl.³² Thus the speaker ages as she moves along the circuit but that younger self, the 'cannie bit lassie' (l. 14) remains continuously 'free' (l. 13) from the marks of time. And yet, as Angus suggests, the 'auld wife' (l. 12) will return eventually to her younger self; the young self 'aince wis me', the speaker insists ambiguously, revealing not that the speaker once was this young woman, but that this young woman once was the speaker. Now, in contrast, the younger self is 'limber an' licht an' free', even though 'deid'. Her immortality serves as a touchstone for the speaker that she can always return to her youthful self despite her age.

Getting 'Hold of Time': Memory and the Self-in-Time

In 'Hogmanay' Angus offers her most complete dramatization of the self-in-time; the New Year, as defined by the self's inner sense of time, becomes the moment at which the old self (the 'auld wife') passes away to allow the new self (the 'cannie bit lassie') to continue on in its place. Angus here replaces the traditional image of Father Time with a *female* figure; moreover, by recasting the New Year as the speaker's younger self, she wholly internalizes the epic time scales described in 'The Fox's Skin' and 'The Drove Road'. Personal time cycles replace historical time. She emphasizes this in the young girl's symbolic threshold crossing gesture – the door serves as a transition point between the external world (that which lies beyond the self) and the internal world, or the realm of what Bergson calls the 'fundamental self' (*Time and Free Will*, p. 129). In Angus's poem, the 'fundamental self' persists, while only its exterior appearance ages. Angus thus reinterprets her earlier comment that 'a' thing's the same an' aye the same' ('The Fox's Skin', l. 20) in terms of the self's internal time scale. The same lips and eyes that once belonged to the speaker in 'Hogmanay' recur in her younger self; the self thought 'deid' is revived by memory and acquires a 'vitality' that mimics actuality (Bergson, p. 229).

In Angus's work as a whole, the almost imperceptible transition between recollection and perception that underlies poems like 'Jean Cam'bell' serves as a model for how memory helps shape the self's sense of time. If, as Dunne argues, 'all states of this real world exist simultaneously' (*The New Immortality*, p. 112) then memory in this sense becomes the link between different 'states'. Or, if one reads Angus's work in terms of Bergson's theory wherein time is not serialized but fluid, memory, too, serves as the unifying thread stringing different aspects of the self together. In Angus's work, the self's memory of earlier episodes in its life re-materializes at key moments (of strife, as one finds in 'The Fiddler', or longing, as in 'In a Little Old Town' (LC)). The memory lives again – the self occupies two time zones and two narratives simultaneously, as it re-inhabits the remembered self along with its 'fundamental' self. Because the self consequently can exist in two distinct moments at the same time, its sense of time is contingent upon its memory, and its ability to learn from previous experiences.

At the root of Angus's investigations of the self-in-cyclical-time, one finds the desire to express in language the way memory allows the self to occupy dual time narratives. Because, as Bergson argues, recollections are 'fugitive' (p. 106), the ability to capture moments of time in language is complicated by the elusive nature of memory. In poems like 'Memory's Trick' and 'Once Long Ago' (both from *Lost Country*), Angus implies that some memories cannot be contained within language: in time 'all the words are vanished / Like bubbles on the stream' ('Memory's Trick', lines 11-12). As a result, poems like 'At Candlemas' or 'Hogmanay' represent Angus's attempt to 'get hold' of the way the self's memory allows backwards and forwards movements in time (*Time and Free Will*, p. 129). The parallel selves and narratives become one way to express bi-directional time. Moreover, as 'The Fiddler' and 'Links o' Lunan' (LC) indicate, although the 'sands' of clock-time 'rin doon - doon' ('Links o' Lunan', l. 13), the self's internal time recurs - by drawing attention to parallel episodes in the self's life, Angus provides one way of containing both memory and time in language. Consequently, language may not be able to hold memory permanently, but, as Angus reveals in 'The Sang' (SC), it secures it for far longer than the self can live.

'So Rough and Dark and - Splendid!': A Postscript

Angus's conception of a cyclical and recurrent self-in-time reaches its apotheosis in *Sun and Candlelight* (1927) and *The Singin' Lass* (1929). Her sophisticated portrayal of the self within multiple fluid time zones suggests that the self 'live[s] backwards and forwards' in time, recurring and meeting earlier selves along the way. Although her poetic selves recognize the presence of change, part of them can 'aye gang limber an' licht an' free' ('Hogamany', l. 13). With the publication of the 1937 volume *Lost Country*, however, Angus seems to espouse a slightly different conception of the self-in-time. The poems in this volume for the most part express an engagement with loss at a far more personal level. Although the speaker in 'Waater o' Dye' can discern the 'wings o' Deith' (l. 22) above her, she senses the distance between herself and 'death'. In poems from *Lost Country* - 'A Woman Sings', 'The Green Yaird', 'Links o' Lunan', and 'On A Birthday', in particular - Angus moves towards an articulation of acceptance that the 'wings o' Deith' are not 'fleeting, wingèd things',

as she once called them, but rather a certainty.³³ Her speakers acknowledge the past as it is integrated into the present and future, but evince a sense of reconciliation with the ultimate *end* to recurrent time, when:

The bird's sang's ended,
The pink may's deid,
The wind blows the soor leaf
O' the nettle weed.³⁴

At this point, the 'unsought guest' - change - cannot be avoided, and one must 'obey / Her will with great content' and 'abide her yea and nay / With sweet assent.'³⁵ Although Angus does not drastically alter her belief in cyclical time, she suggests that the self at last will cease to recur.

One can interpret the slight shift in her last published poems in a biographical light, only because her contemporaneous responses to her life and work are perhaps the most candid of all her extant letters. The period between the publication of *The Singin' Lass* in 1929 and *Lost Country and Other Verses* in 1937, was fraught with hardship; her sister Ethel had a nervous breakdown in 1930 which understandably badly damaged her own health. Her letters from the period are heart-rending for despite her palpable grief, she struggles to support her other sister and her friends. In a letter to Cruickshank, she apologizes for not answering her 'kind letter' adding, 'I have had so bad a shock that I cannot even see my friends yet. But I must get over this'.³⁶ Having suffered so greatly over the 'shock' and grief over Ethel's illness, and her resultant migration through a string of rented rooms, Angus perhaps felt less inclined to believe that the self recurs. As she reveals in a contemporaneous letter, her psychological burdens hampered her ability to write: '[o]ften I feel that if I could see ahead at any possibility of a resting place or a tranquil mind I could write my little poems again. This is denied at present. I never seem to alight on a branch but I must be off again'.³⁷ Her emotional and physical exhaustion perhaps alters her perspective on the self-in-time. The hypothetical 'if' she employs in her letter indicates that her ability to see anything beyond the present moment is limited by her troubled spirits. The prospect of reaching 'Forever and Ever, / With its flower and leaf unfalling' ('On a Birthday', lines 5-6) - that is, some kind of eternal stasis or rest in an afterlife - perhaps seems preferable to her continual movement. A 'resting

place' and a 'tranquil mind' cannot be found when one is eternally moving 'backwards and forwards' in time (*Christabel's Diary*, p. 4).

At this point in her career, Angus turns away from 'on the way thinking of arrival, and arrived, looking back' (*Christabel's Diary*, p. 4). Her last poems are suffused with the same intensity of vision one finds in her best work, but she admits not only change and loss, but a 'wrong beyond all tears' – the acceptance that one cannot always return in time. As her speaker laments in 'Foxgloves and Snow', 'No more I watch the last snows fade / On a dark hill above Glen Doll' (lines 4, 11-12). This serves as a direct rejoinder to the claim an earlier speaker makes in 'Heritage' (SC): the poem concludes 'But the moor shall be my comrade / And the hills my friends shall be, / Till life's last snow falls chill and slow (lines 17-19). The speaker in 'Foxgloves and Snow' discerns that her days of rambling in the hills are over, and the 'last snows' on a 'dark hill' may be her 'life's last snow'. Thus in 'New Year's Morning', the speaker symbolically grants 'lover[s]' (l. 3) the 'thoughts of days to come' (l. 4) but has 'wise folks' (l. 5) say, 'There's comfort / Though half the best be gone' (lines 7-8). Angus's last poems are not pessimistic, however, for they recognize that life cycles are filled with moments both 'rare and sweet' ('The Widow', l. 3). As she concludes 'On A Birthday', the book's ultimate poem:

And fain am I to turn again,
Before this journey's ended,
For a long, long look at the road I came,
So rough and dark and – splendid! (lines 9-12).

The poem's conclusion serves as a powerful conclusion to her last volume, one which sees in the 'rough' and 'dark' moments in the self's 'journey' a final assertion of how 'splendid' it is. The self's last 'long, long look' becomes the last gesture of recurrence the self makes before reaching 'forever and ever'.

¹ Caird, 'The Poetry of Marion Angus', p. 47. Shepherd, 'Marion Angus as a Poet of Deeside', p. 14. Hendry, 'Twentieth-century Women's Writing: The Nest of Singing Birds', p. 296.

² See introduction, part one.

³ Tuan, Yi-Fu, 'Space, Time, Place: A Humanistic Frame', in *Making Sense of Time*, edited by Tommy Carlstein et al (London, 1978), pp. 7-16 (p. 14).

⁴ Papers of Nan Shepherd, AUSC, MS 3036, folio 4. The letter is undated, but its address and contents, in addition to the publication dates of Dunne's books (*An Experiment With Time* (1927); *The New Immortality* (1938)) suggest it was written between 1938 and 1942.

⁵ Stevenson, *Modernist Fiction: An Introduction*, p. 114.

- ⁶ Edwin Morgan, 'Introduction: Lewis Grassie Gibbon and Science Fiction', in *Gay Hunter*, by James Leslie Mitchell, reprinted from the 1934 edition (Edinburgh, 1989), pp. i-viii (p. ii).
- ⁷ 'Jorge Luis Borges, 1899-1999', Museo Correr, Venice, Italy, April 1999. J. W. Dunne, *The New Immortality* (London, 1938), p. 78.
- ⁸ J. W. Dunne, *An Experiment With Time* (London, 1927), pp. 64-65, 87. Unless otherwise indicated, all references are to *An Experiment With Time*.
- ⁹ Charles M. Sherover, 'Time and Reality', in *The Human Experience of Time: The Development of its Philosophical Meaning* (NY, 1975), pp. 157-182 (p. 168). For more information on Bergson, see the introduction, part one.
- ¹⁰ Lewis, *Time and Western Man*, p. 408, his emphasis.
- ¹¹ Bergson, *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*, p. 100.
- ¹² Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, translated by N.M. Paul and W.S. Palmer, reprinted from the 5th edition of *Matière et mémoire* (1908) (New York, 1996), p. 228. *Matter and Memory* first appeared in English in 1911. All references that follow to Bergson are for this text, unless otherwise indicated.
- ¹³ James, *The Principles of Psychology*, p. 609.
- ¹⁴ 'Think Lang', l. 1, *Tinker's Road*. A small strain of this kind of time poem persists in Angus's *oeuvre*, as demonstrated in poems like 'Joan the Maid' (TD), 'Corrichie' (LC), and 'November in Edinburgh' (LC) wherein the self exists within a landscape suffused with historical presences. In comparison to the poems discussed in this chapter these are less successful.
- ¹⁵ Jackson, *The Dismantling of Time in Contemporary Poetry*, p. 38.
- ¹⁶ Whyte, 'Marion Angus and the Borders of Self', p. 376.
- ¹⁷ 'Links o' Lunan', l. 6, *Lost Country*.
- ¹⁸ Helen B. Cruickshank, 'A Personal Note', in *Selected Poems of Marion Angus*, edited by Maurice Lindsay (Edinburgh, 1950), pp. xv-xxi (p. xx).
- ¹⁹ Porter [McMillan], p. 50.
- ²⁰ For an interesting parallel about a similar theme, see Alice Stuart's poem, 'Simulacrum', reproduced in *An Anthology of Scottish Women Poets*, edited by Catherine Kerrigan (Edinburgh, 1991), p. 251.
- ²¹ McNeill, *The Silver Bough: A Study of the National and Local Festivals of Scotland*, p. 29. Ebenezer Cobham, *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*, rev. by Ivor H. Evans from 1870 edition (Ware, Hertfordshire, 1996). Emily Lyle, *Archaic Cosmos: Polarity, Space and Time* (Edinburgh, 1990), p. 79.
- ²² McNeill, p. 77. E. and M.A. Radford, *Encyclopedia of Superstitions*, edited and revised by Christina Hole, fifth edition (London, 1961), p. 289.
- ²³ John E. Orme, 'Time, Psychological Aspects' in *Making Sense of Time*, edited by Tommy Carlstein et al (New York, 1978), pp. 66-75 (p. 66).
- ²⁴ Consider Leila Redgauntlet's assumption of 'Green Mantle' in Scott's *Redgauntlet*. Similarly, see ballads like 'The Bonny Hyn' for their use of the green mantle. Of course, it is also the title of John Buchan's 1916 novel, although it is doubtful she refers to this as apparently she 'despised' his novels. Papers of Helen Cruickshank, AUCS, MS 2737, folio 47, c. 7 November 1968.
- ²⁵ A. D. Lindsay, *The Philosophy of Bergson* (London, 1911), p. 184.
- ²⁶ The English sonnet rhymes abab cdcd efef gg, while the Spenserian sonnet rhymes abab bcbc cdcd ee and the Italian sonnet rhymes abba abba cdecde (Jon Stallworthy, 'Versification' in *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*, third edition (London, 1983), pp. 1403-1422 (p. 1416)).
- ²⁷ Elizabeth Bishop, 'Sonnet', *The Complete Poems: 1927-1979*, fifteenth printing (New York, 1992), p. 192.
- ²⁸ According to Caird, 'The Poetry of Marion Angus', p. 46. See Cruickshank, 'A Personal Note', p. xix.
- ²⁹ 'The Lyke-Wake Dirge', lines 9-16, *Border Ballads*, ed. by William Beattie, reprinted from the 1952 edition (London, 1965), pp. 176-177 (p. 176).
- ³⁰ See chapter six for a consideration of spectral selves in Angus's poetry.
- ³¹ Angus while in Aberdeen was involved with The Shakespeare Appreciation Society ('Prominent Scots Poetess Dies at Arbroath', *The Arbroath Herald* 23 August 1946, p. 2).
- ³² The past, according to Bergson, is 'that which acts no longer but which might act, and will act by inserting itself into a present sensation from which it borrows the vitality' (p. 229).
- ³³ 'The Change', l. 16, *Sun and Candlelight*.
- ³⁴ 'The Green Yaird', lines 13-16, *Lost Country*.
- ³⁵ 'The Change', lines 1, 9-12, *Sun and Candlelight*.
- ³⁶ MS 2737, folio 2, c. April 10 [1930]
- ³⁷ Papers of Mairi Campbell Ireland, NLS, MS 19328, folio 101, c. 1931.

‘Dark Land, Harsh and Haunted’: Self and Space in Angus’s Poetry

Angus, like Jacob, weaves into her poems recognizable Scottish place names and geographical landmarks. A brief glimpse through Angus’s work yields a spectrum of regional references: ‘braes o’ Dee’ (‘The Sang’), ‘Corbie Linn’ (‘The Blue Boat’), ‘Cloch-na-ben’ (‘Memory’), ‘the road to Forfar toon’ (‘Chance Acquaintance’), the ‘Hill o’ Fare’ (‘At Candlemas’), ‘Corrichie Burn’ (‘Corrichie’), ‘cauld east countra’ (‘Gathering Shells’), ‘Brig o’ Feugh’ (‘Faithful Heart’), and ‘Kilbirnie’ (‘The Musician’). Angus also evokes specific aspects of an unnamed but familiar landscape with references to ‘twa burns’ (‘An Invitation’, ‘News’), ‘barren hills’ (‘Heritage’), and the ‘auld shore-heid’ (‘In A Little Old Town’). For contemporaneous critic J. B. S. Salmond, Angus’s poetry maintains a ‘close relationship’ with the ‘actual land’. In Salmond’s view, the north-eastern (in his terms, specifically Angus) landscape becomes a poetic palette, from which Angus derives ‘her colour’ and ‘language’ (p. 6). Thirty years later, Nan Shepherd, like Salmond, identifies in Angus’s work an engagement with ‘a dark land, harsh and haunted’.¹ Shepherd concludes, ‘[w]e know that this is our country and these are our people’ but, ‘we did not know they [our people] were quite like this. She has altered our eyes’ (p. 16). Salmond and Shepherd claim her for different regions – Salmond for Angus, Shepherd for Deeside – but both analyses highlight Angus’s treatment of natural spaces, and, significantly, note how she transforms these spaces on the page.

Visions of the Self-in-Space

Songs of Angus and Angus’s Songs

In Angus’s poems, as in Jacob’s ‘Songs of Angus’, poetic space reflects the wider ‘actual’ world; the selves in Angus’s poetry refer to hills, lochans, and green ‘yaird[s]’ that are mappable, traversable spaces.² One can find the ‘Waater of Dye’ or the Hill of Fare; the reader unfamiliar with Scottish countryside experiences a *frisson* of delight in discovering the ‘real’ Links of Lunan, for example. Yet while space in Angus’s poems has roots in the ‘actual’ world, it also has *psychological co-ordinates*; the self-in-space occupies an *internal* mindscape – an inner, emotional geography that

parallels the external world. Herein lies a fundamental distinction between Jacob's and Angus's representations of space: in most of Jacob's work, the self occupies – or once has inhabited – a particular geographical space even if only in dreams. In Angus's work, however, space is *entirely* within the mind; what appears to be the external world is 'haunted' by the self's inner world (Shepherd, p. 12). Often, the references to tangible geographical elements (like 'Tarland' in 'The Graceless Loon') become so layered with emotional resonances that they cease to resemble 'actual' landscapes. Janet Caird observes that 'the flowers, trees, burns are not in her verse for their own sake, as is often the case in the verse of, say, Violet Jacob. They are used more like pigment, to express, to enhance, a mood, an atmosphere'. As Colin Gibson distinguishes it, colloquially but usefully, 'The World of Marion lies on the edge of dream, while Mrs. Jacob wrote of a countryside that was vivid and real'.³ Whereas the self in Jacob's poetry reads the 'vivid' natural world as a *reflection* of its inner mind, in Angus's work the self's internal space subsumes the outer world until they are synonymous; the spectral and actual coexist. Charles Graves, Angus's publisher at Porpoise Press, recognizes that the 'landscape behind her poetry' is 'essentially Scottish', but argues that her landscapes – often imbued with supernatural presences – are 'an attitude of mind', or a 'suffusion'.⁴ Graves believes that Angus's vision of the self in a kind of inner, mental space 'makes this world [in her poetry] a different place from the workaday world so full of briars, which most of us too consistently know' (p. 107). In Graves's opinion, the 'essentially Scottish' *mise en scene* in Angus's poetry emerges as both an actual, geographical entity – Angus – and 'an attitude of mind'. Graves's phrase 'attitude of mind' hints at the dualism of influences vivifying Angus's work – on one hand an evocation of the 'workaday world', and on the other, a fascination with the poetic self's internal geography.

'Atmosphere' and 'Strange Eeriness': Balladscapes and the Self-in-Space

As Salmond and Graves (among others) observe, Angus's treatment of space emerges in part out of her engagement with the ballad tradition.⁵ Graves suggests Angus infuses her work with the 'atmosphere' of the ballads (p. 97), while Salmond declares her poetry, like the ballads, illuminates the 'strange eeriness of misty darkness and lonely places' (p. 6). Recent critic W. N. Herbert, moreover, identifies in Angus's poems a focus upon the 'personal' as placed 'against sweeping cosmic backgrounds'

that are 'amplified' by balladic references (p. 117). In the ballads, space is both concrete (a specific town, manor, or country) and abstract (ambiguous nether-space in which ballads like 'Wee Messgrove' are set). As David Buchan reveals, references to 'actual land' are often symbolic, as ballads:

have rarely any precise, geographically identifiable location, for they belong to a stylized landscape – a starker version of the Spenserian landscape – that represents both the imagined aristocratic world, and the wide world of adventure outwith the ploughman's experience [...]. Those settings that are located by name contribute to the distancing because the names are accepted correlatives for romantic far-away places.⁶

Buchan's commentary offers an insight into Angus's work in that his definition of the 'stylized' landscape – one that has been modified and reshaped by human perceptions – relates precisely to Angus's interpretation of 'the actual land' (Salmond, p. 6). The main distinction here is that in her work, the geographical locations mentioned do not become 'correlatives for romantic far-away places; rather, the 'geographically identifiable location[s]' (Angus or Deeside, usually) serve as a recognizable setting into which she can infuse the self's 'imagined' or inner world (Buchan, p. 81). Space in Angus's poems, consequently, is a 'stylized' blend of 'actual' and inner space. Geography is internalized; the poetic self speaks out of *a landscape that corresponds to its interior mind*.

Another aspect of the ballad tradition Angus draws upon in her treatment of space is the permeable border between the human realm and the supernatural 'other country'. In ballads, 'elphin knight[s]' and humans meet, and demons with cloven feet lure women away to hell.⁷ Balladic space is suffused with supernatural figures (including ones interpolated from the later Christian tradition). Portals between worlds are not uncommon; ballads like 'Tam Lin' hinge upon successful transition between one space and another. In Angus's work, the 'other country' can be a distinct, but contiguous landscape – as in 'Annie Honey' (TR), where the 'country of the Kind Folk' is 'the land beyond the hills' (lines 12-13) and in 'Barbara' (SC), where 'the land o' dreams and Dreid' (l. 22) lies beyond the scope of the poem in the speaker's dreams. Or, it can co-exist within the human realm. In most of Angus's poems, supernatural entities permeate the natural world; those with perspicacity can experience both realms simultaneously. In 'Once Long Ago' (LC), for example,

Angus's speaker discovers in a moment of revelation the 'other country' while 'climbing on Cades-Muir' (l. 1). In 'The Plaid' (LC), a 'ragged wife' (l. 5) is revealed as a witch, while 'The Stranger' (TD), with her 'e'en maist like a bairnie's e'en / New waukened frae her sleep' (lines 3-4) demonstrates a strange blend of Christian and fairy powers. In these and other poems, the border between what Graves calls the 'realm of faery' and the 'workaday world' cannot be drawn definitively (p. 107). Space, like the self in Angus's work, is fluid.

'Mental Impressions': The Landscape Within

A letter Angus wrote to Shepherd in the 1930s commenting upon Shepherd's *The Weatherhouse* (1930) offers a brief glimpse of how psychological, emotional, and geographical components of a landscape coexist in Angus's work. Shepherd's novel struck a chord with Angus; in her letter she tells her, 'I am fascinated with the mental and spiritual impressions received from night and day and spring weather and moon and stars on that familiar upland'.⁸ The 'familiar upland' – the northern landscape upon which Angus meditates in poems like 'The Fox's Skin' (TL) or 'Cambus Woods' (SL) 'possessed her imagination' (Shepherd, p. 8). The connection Angus makes in her letter between the landscape and the self's 'mental and spiritual impressions' is vitally important for it illustrates the symbiosis between self and space she explores in her poetry. In poems like 'Penchrise' (TR) or 'The Wee Sma' Glen' (SL), the self internalizes the landscape and the emotional 'impressions received' from it, so that the 'actual' landscape disappears; it is replaced by an internal landscape that is a palimpsest of associations, 'mental and spiritual impressions', and memories. Thus although the 'familiar' north-east landscape holds great personal significance for Angus, her work nevertheless focuses not upon the geographical specificities of that landscape, but upon what *emotional resonances* the setting may have. John MacRitchie acknowledges that Angus 'had a noticing eye for the beauty of nature', but insists, echoing Caird:

she was not primarily concerned with accurately observing nature. If she writes of anemones, or cotton-grasses, or burns clattering down the glen, it is because of what they can be associated with: the cotton grasses whisper 'a song too sorrowful for singing' [...] and the burns, which sing through many of her poems, may take grief away, or signal the end of winter, or wash around the body of a jilted lover.⁹

MacRitchie makes an important – and often overlooked – observation. Angus is a poet of the psyche, less concerned with ‘accurately observing’ the nature of trees and horizons and more occupied with recording the internal *human nature* of her locuters. She evokes elements of the physical world in her poetry both to ground it in what Elena Semino (not in reference to Angus’s work) calls the ‘actual world’, and to symbolically represent particular ‘impressions’.¹⁰ Elements of the physical world, as MacRitchie observes, become a kind of code for something else; the repeated gestures of sheltering from fierce weather (in ‘By Candle Light’ (TL), ‘Jealousy’ (SC), and ‘Winds of the World’ (SL), for example) and the evocation of different kinds of light – including sunlight, moonlight, and candlelight – encode specific (but often unmentioned) emotions. Moreover, material objects like doors or thresholds, items of clothing, even amber beads acquire symbolic significance.¹¹ These elements – all encompassed here in the general phrase ‘landscape’ – illuminate the interior world lurking below the surface engagement with the ‘actual’ world. The self-in-space in Angus’s work negotiates a landscape whose components, although rooted in the physical world, encode complex emotional resonances. Possible meanings of these symbols become evident if one reads across her poems and compares recurrent images. Natural elements like the solitary tree, two rivers, roses, and green hills thus can be interpreted (however tenuously) as part of a larger hieratic structure.

‘But Yet A Different / World from This’: Possible Worlds in Angus’s Poetry

Within Angus’s corpus, one finds that as the self occupies multiple moments of time, it also simultaneously inhabits several corresponding spatial locations. For comparison, while the selves in Jacob’s poetry *imaginatively* project themselves into other spaces (as in ‘The Banks o’ the Esk’) while remaining physically rooted in a definable – although not always identified – space, in Angus’s poems the distinction between places is partially effaced by the fact that all space for her is psychologized and thus universally exists within the mind. The self consequently can move from space to space without regard for distance or even possibility. In poems like ‘Most Sad is Sleep’ (TR), for example, the self readily enters a ‘different / World from this’ (lines 27-28) ostensibly in sleep, but because ‘sleep’s veil’ is so ‘thin’ (l. 5), the barriers between sleeping and waking (as between geographical regions) evaporate. In each kind of space, Angus uses coded geographical elements to represent emotional

'impressions' (MS 27438, folio 9). To gain a clear understanding of these multiple coexisting spaces in Angus's work, it is useful to consider her poetry with brief reference to possible world theory, as spelled out by Elena Semino in *Language and World Creation in Poems and Other Texts*. From logicians, Semino borrows possible-world theory, which asserts the co-existence of multiple, dissimilar logic worlds, and applies it to poetry; her approach suggests that many poems contain a variety of imagined spatio-temporal sites ('possible worlds'). These worlds coexist, but may not necessarily share the same set of 'truth-values' with the 'actual' world of the speaker's present moment (pp. 58-59). Semino explains that some poems contain 'complex modal structures in which an "actual" domain is surrounded by a number of alternative subworlds corresponding to the characters' beliefs, wishes, moral obligations, dreams, hypotheses, fantasies' (p. 88). In many poems, several possible 'subworlds' – the hypothetical, the present, the past, the wishful, the feared – coexist. For Semino, the 'force of the [poem's] argument lies in the contrast between the hypothetical and actual domains' (p. 89). That is, the disparity or gulf between 'hypothetical' and 'actual' events in the poem invigorates it, driving the self to find some resolution among disparate 'domains'. For Angus's work, the possible-world approach is useful because it offers both a way to consider the multiple, psychological spaces found in her poetry, and a means of describing the often painful chasm between 'hypothetical' and 'actual' found therein.¹² Thus, in a poem like Angus's 'The Faithful Heart' (LC), the speaker's past ('whaur I was wild and young', l. 2) commingles with the present ('I socht nae news', l. 15) and the wished-for ('named her bonnie name', l. 16); the poem returns 'like the tongue irresistibly touching the aching tooth' to the sorrow caused by the rupture between the two psychological regions.¹³ For Angus, the 'beliefs, wishes, [and] moral obligations' of her speakers create a proliferation of 'alternative subworlds' in which she can explore how the self interacts with the space around it (Semino, p. 88).

The Land Within: The Self-in-Space

The Seaward Toon

Because space in Angus's work tends to be internalized, the way the self configures the landscape(s) around (and within) it reveals a great deal about that self's emotional and mental composition. The multiple, simultaneous 'possible worlds' in

poems like 'Barbara' (SC) and 'Desires of Youth' (LC) similarly expose the self's often conflicting psychological needs. To examine the treatment of self in Angus's poems, then, one should consider the spaces around it, and its relationship to its spatial co-ordinates. Here it is fruitful to consider Angus's work with reference to Gaston Bachelard's theories in *The Poetics of Space*, for Bachelard introduces what he calls 'topoanalysis' – a 'systematic psychological study of the sites' of the self's 'intimate' life.¹⁴ By investigating spaces made 'indelible' within the self by memory, topoanalysis uncovers the emotional associations the self makes with particular spatial locations (p. 10). For Angus's work, a topoanalytic approach to the self-in-space highlights not only the symbolic meanings of spatial elements, but also the way the self configures different kinds of spaces according to emotional valence.

In her early poem 'The Seaward Toon', from *The Tinker's Road* (1924), Angus dramatizes the distinctions between contrasting psychological outlooks in a comparison of two different selves-in-space. In the poem, the poetic self chastizes the unidentified allocuter of the poem – the singular or plural 'ye' (l. 1) – for refusing to venture beyond the 'steekit' door (l. 13) of home. The poem turns on the double meaning of 'seaward toon'; it is simultaneously an actual place ('seaward toon', l. 9) and an 'attitude of mind' ('Seaward Toon', l. 32) (Graves, p. 97). Geographically, the town's location by the sea, and its 'qualet wynd[s]' (l. 28) resemble Arbroath, where Angus spent her adolescence and early adulthood. As a mental construct, however, the seaward 'Toon' located 'ayont the blawing sand' (l. 18) exists within the mind and thus is the *psychological double* to the allocuter's town. It is a numinous other world suffused, like some ballads, with New Testament and folkloric imagery. The poem divides into two halves to reflect the existence of these parallel spaces: the first four stanzas reveal the allocuter's rigid 'actual' world on both sides of the 'painted door' (l. 1), while the second four stanzas explore the psychological space the allocuter resists. As it is not clear whether the allocuter is singular or plural, the poem can be read both as a general indictment of human failure to think beyond narrow, self-imposed boundaries and as a specific critique of an individual's inability to acknowledge what Shepherd calls elements on the 'very borders of the uncanny' (p. 15), that is, the unexplained or the ineffable presences in 'workaday' life (Graves, p. 107). Colin Milton, however, considers 'ye' to mean 'most people', arguing for a wider reading of the poem's significance. The poem's ambiguity allows for both

readings; here for the sake of clarity we will assume that the allocuter is one person (probably a woman) who represents a larger group of people.¹⁵

In the poem, Angus explores the opposition between the interior space of the allocuter's house, and the wider psychologized space outdoors. According to Bachelard's topoanalytic taxonomy – his categorization of how the self relates to different kinds of space – the opposition between house and exterior space symbolically encapsulates the tension in the self's life between the need for secrecy (and self-protection) and the conflicting sense of curiosity for the world beyond the self. The house in Bachelard's terminology becomes a symbol of 'human resistance' to elements of the external world (p. 44). In Angus's poem, the allocuter's house – particularly its 'steekit' door (l. 13) – represents that person's 'resistance' to the world outside. Here, however, instead of resisting inclement weather, as Bachelard's term originally indicates, the allocuter locks herself away from everything. In her view, 'toon' is a dangerous place: every element of the landscape symbolizes a loss ('wound', l. 9) or death ('grave', l. 12), and the anthropomorphic ocean threatens to subsume her with its 'hungry wave' (l. 10). As the speaker reveals, however, the allocuter's retreat is motivated by misplaced pride ('heid and he'rt fu' hie', l. 14). The 'lily-bud' and rosemary the allocuter wears indicate that her youth (symbolized by 'bud') is lost in her pride and her preoccupation with past wrongs. Like Shakespeare's Ophelia, she wears rosemary 'for remembrance', but here, her obsession with 'sorra's weary web' threatens to destroy her. In this way, the lily-bud she wears has funereal significance (as in 'Heart-Free', when the distraught speaker gifts her 'lily-floo'ers' to the dead).¹⁶ The images associated with the allocuter indicate death and decay: 'weary' (l. 7), 'cauld', 'shroodin' sheet' (l. 8), 'ruint' (l. 11), 'grave' (l. 12), 'wound' (l. 11), and 'dreid' (l. 2). In a possible-world reading of the poem, the allocuter's world is a place of interment with the allocuter as chief mourner and yet also as the dead, in a self-made 'shroodin' sheet' (l. 8). The slant rhyme between 'toon' (l. 9) and 'wound' (l. 11) – in the first and third lines, which are not normally rhymed in ballad metrics – reinforces this. Her retreat inwards represents a rejection of both the seaward toon, and its psychological double found 'ower the bent' (l. 17).

Angus draws attention to the importance of boundary spaces in the poem by focusing her attention upon the border between house and space: the front door

(literally a threshold space). The door embodies the allocuter's resistance to the outside world: it is 'steekit sae fast' (l. 13) and 'barred' (l. 1) not merely closed. As Bachelard observes, locked doors or boxes are 'evident witnesses of the *need for secrecy*' because 'the lock doesn't exist that could resist absolute violence [...] A lock is a psychological threshold' (p. 81, his emphasis). Considering the locked door in 'The Seaward Toon' as a 'psychological' barrier between the allocuter and the outside is useful, for it highlights the allocuter's insistence upon strict mental boundaries. The speaker twice mentions that the door is 'painted' (lines 1, 29); this both exposes the door's artifice (it is embellished) and hints that the allocuter is overly concerned with *surface* appearances (the root perhaps of her pride). Unlike the numinous 'Seaward Toon', this door is 'biggit by mortal hand' (l. 20). The key word is 'mortal' – the door, like the woman hiding behind it, is mortal and therefore impermanent.¹⁷ The allocuter's rejection of what lies beyond her 'painted door' becomes an object lesson for the poetic self speaking the poem; she correlates the allocuter's refusal to look beyond her door to a self-elected spiritual deprivation. For the speaker, a closed door represents a mind closed to what Milton calls a 'fuller and more vital life' (p. 34).

The speaker, unlike the allocuter, knows what lies beyond the 'steekit' door: the shadowy 'Seaward Toon' that is 'hapt in a droosy air' (l. 23). This 'Toon', with its ambiguous spatial location ('ower the bent, an' ower the bent / Ayont the blawing sand', lines 17-18), is a direct opposite of the allocuter's sepulchral town. It, like the 'grey clachan yont the muir' an equally vaporous space in 'Waater o' Dye' (l. 6), is 'hapt' – concealed – although here by the invisible air. In contrast to the gaps in the 'actual' town – encircled by insatiable 'wave[s]' (l. 10) and marked by 'wound[s]' (l. 11) and 'grave[s]' (l. 12) – the shadow town is filled with presences: 'eident feet' (l. 22), gleaming windows, and someone's voice calling in the street. In this 'Toon', Angus creates a possible world characterized by its animation; significantly, she describes it in language she usually uses to describe Elfinland: 'eident' (l. 22), 'glimmer', and 'lowe' (l. 21). In 'Winter-Time' (SL), for example, 'a reid reid lowe' (l. 2) indicates the presence of 'elfin' creatures (l. 17). Similarly, in 'Treasure Trove' (TL), the 'wee folk' (l. 16) appear, drawn by the 'glimmer' (l. 15) of green beads. Most significantly, in 'The Stranger' (TD), a Christ-like figure holds a rose that 'glimmer[s]' in her hands (l. 11). The troublesome phrase 'never biggit by mortal

hand' (l. 20) also has a correlate – a slightly different version reappears in 'Withy Wands' (SC): after witnessing a fairy procession, the speaker in 'Withy Wands' sees in the skies a 'house not built with hands' (l. 15). While in 'Withy Wands' it is clear that the speaker's vision is influenced by the supernatural figures in the landscape, in 'The Seaward Toon', there are three possible interpretations for the phrase: 'ne'er biggit' (l. 20) suggests it is an imagined space, not built but existing in the mind, while 'mortal hand' indicates that supernatural, or immortal figures built the town. Read together, the phrase could imply both are true: this 'braw' place (l. 32) exists within the mind, but is populated by supernatural presences.

Of the three options, the last is most illuminating, for it helps one understand the blend of supernatural and religious imagery Angus employs in the poem's second half. In the version of 'The Seaward Toon' appearing in Angus's *The Turn of the Day* (1931), the poem's seventh stanza is omitted. Without it, the poem's meaning alters noticeably, for the seventh stanza contains the poem's most direct references to Christian symbolism:

Thir's ane that cries sae clear and sweet
 Three names baith kin an' kind,
 Marget, Maud'lin, Lizabeth,
 Far ben a quaiet wynd. (lines 25-28)

In this version, the reader acquires a better understanding of the oblique figure of the 'Host' (l. 31) mentioned at the poem's conclusion. The 'ane' who calls in the streets of the shadowy 'Toon' emerges as a Christ figure whose 'clear and sweet' (l. 25) voice brings the 'news' (l. 3) the allocuter – in her self-imposed seclusion – cannot hear. More important, however, is the trinity of names invoked in this stanza: Marget, Maud'lin, and Lizabeth. Listing the names of three women is deliberate. With both Scottish connotations and biblical resonances, these names evoke specific, named figures (like 'Jean Cam'bell' or 'Mary Forbes' in other poems by Angus) as well as biblical figures. In the Bible, Elizabeth is the mother of John the Baptist and kinswoman of Mary, mother of Jesus, and 'righteous before God' (Luke 1: 6). Maud'lin, or Magdalene, is one of Christ's followers, and in one Gospel, the person to whom Jesus first appears after his resurrection (John 20: 11-18). Marget has no direct biblical correlative, but could represent Mary, mother of Jesus or Mary, the mother of James (Luke 24: 10) who with Mary Magdalene went to the

tomb after the death of Jesus to attend to his body. In 'The Seaward Toon', Angus draws upon the biblical significance of these names to suggest an alternative Trinity of 'kin an' kind' (l. 26); these women who in the Bible remain at the margins of the text as those who attend and serve here become the most significant figures in the poem. Moreover, in a more subversive move, Angus practices what Rachel Blau DuPlessis calls 'revisionary mythopoesis' – the reinterpretation of cultural symbols from a different (often feminist) viewpoint: Angus leaves the gender of the 'Host' (l. 31) ambiguous.¹⁸ Instead of the biblical titles which usually announce the gender of Jesus – 'Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace' (Isaiah 9: 7), 'Son of God' and 'King of Israel' (John 1:50) – Angus selects the indeterminate 'ane' (l. 25).¹⁹ This leaves open the possibility that Christ here is *female*. Certainly, 'sweet' (l. 25) is a word Angus tends to use with reference specifically to female selves (as in 'Huntlie Hill', 'Invitation', 'Curios', and 'Singin' Waater', among others). The language used to describe 'Ane' reverberates in her later poem 'The Stranger' (TD), wherein the speaker observes a mysterious woman holding a rose that is 'like cup o' Sacrament' (l. 12). In her presence, the landscape transmutes into the 'Hills o' Paradise' (l. 8). In 'The Seaward Toon', by shifting the focus away from the traditional biblical emphasis upon men, Angus reinterprets fundamental elements of the Gospels: Christ could be female, her disciples Scottish women, and their landscape not the land around the Sea of Galilee, but a sandy Scottish 'seaward toon'. The 'Seaward Toon' in this interpretation becomes a vision of female Christian community characterized by 'qualet' (l. 28) industry and comforting presences (indicated in the susurrate diction used to describe the 'Toon': 'shinin' (l. 21), 'stir' (l. 22), 'droosy' (l. 23), 'cries', 'clear', 'sweet' (l. 25), and 'lists' (l. 4).

Read in this light, the 'Seaward Toon' (l. 32) becomes more than just a psychological construct; Milton wonders if Angus uses 'traditional Christian symbolism' to connect 'religious experience with the idea of an unconscious life' (p. 34). Although Angus's symbolism under scrutiny is not particularly 'traditional',²⁰ Milton's point is valid; in 'The Seaward Toon', Angus suggests the self has within it a spiritual core (what Milton calls the 'unconscious life') – a psycho-geographical space in which material, supernatural, and religious imagery commingle. Moreover, within this space one may find an inner vision of (female) Christian community. Redemption, in this way, *comes from within*. The self-in-space may either ignore this interior space,

as the allocuter does, or, like the speaker, explore it. Failure to discover this interior psycho-geography results not only in a life of 'dreid' (l. 2) and 'sorra' (l. 7) but also in a concomitant spiritual death. The speaker reveals this when she tells the allocuter, 'Better hae spun wi' a gowden threid / By the grey ash o' the peat / Than woven yer sorra's weary web' (lines 5-7). The 'gowden threid' of imaginative thought transports one from the pedestrian domestic scene ('grey ash o' the peat') to this alternative 'Toon' within. The poem's main thrust thus becomes a plea for imaginative vision. In *The Poetics of Space* Bachelard asks, 'Onto what, toward what, do doors open? Do they open for the world of men, or for the world of solitude?' (p. 224). Angus suggests – in this poem, at least – that the 'painted door' should not open into either the quotidian world of men or of solitude, but into the liminal spiritual world crafted by the imagination in which the supernatural and 'workaday' realms commingle. One can discover 'the Host' in town streets if only one is willing to open that mental door and cross the threshold into an inner geography. As the speaker reveals, the 'Host' can be 'h'ard' (lines 3, 31) and 'fint' (l. 19) only by those who listen and look for it.

It is not clear who made the decision to omit the seventh stanza from the version re-published in *The Turn of the Day* – whether Angus or her editor decided to print the poem without it. One can see though that without this stanza, the poem is far more conventional (perhaps Milton only read the later version, and thus sees the poem's imagery as 'traditional' (p. 34)). In a letter to a friend in 1929, Angus remarks, 'I am sometimes told my poetry is pretty pagan with no religious message in it and this I believe is true. Somehow I cannot tackle big ideas altho' [sic] I am *not a heathen*'.²¹ Angus's commentary provides an interesting counterpoint to 'The Seaward Toon' (written, of course, five years earlier). Despite her use of Christian symbols and biblical figures in poems like 'Martha's House' (LC), 'Naomi' (LC), and 'Cowslips Soon Will Dance' (SC), Angus does not remain within doctrinal borders, as 'The Seaward Toon' suggests. Although Angus is at pains to emphasize that she does have Christian beliefs, she is comfortable admitting that her poetry is 'pretty pagan' – quite unexpected for one whom critics have repeatedly suggested is overly 'sheltered' by her manse upbringing.²² In the original published version of 'The Seaward Toon', Angus's 're-vision' of Christian community as both an *internal* space, and a female-oriented space, creates a far more radical vision of the self-in-space than the

1931 version suggests.²³ To understand how Angus portrays the self-in-space throughout her work, then, it is useful to consider the 1924 version of 'The Seaward Toon' as an earlier model of how the self internalizes space (even 'unconscious' space); moreover, acknowledging that the self's inner space exists outwith Christian doctrine, but still engages with biblical symbols, helps prepare for Angus's treatment of space in later poems.

Huntlie Hill

Angus's interest in how the self relates to space opens into a broader exploration of the geography of the human mind in her later work (beginning with some material from *Sun and Candlelight*). The relationship between the self and natural space, she reveals, is bilateral; as she describes it in 'Withy Wands' (SC), 'how loud heart beat and grasses grew' (l. 6) – the two phenomena are symbiotically linked as if motivated by the same impulse. By internalizing the external environment, the poetic self finds that *the boundary between where self ends and space begins to blur*. The mental 'impressions' received from the landscape (MS 27438, folio 9), and the landscape's emotional significance eventually replace the actual physical setting, so that what the self experiences is in fact a *mental* expansion: the self, in suffusing its own set of meanings into its surroundings, projects itself into the (mental) landscape. The self's voice becomes 'the chaunt o' singin' birds', one's eyes 'bricht as the marshy floo'er' or 'starry' like the night sky.²⁴ In 'Lost Things' (TD), for example, Angus shows how the boundaries between self and space are so fluid that her subject 'borrowed roses' sweetness' (l. 1) while 'the birch and aspen tree / Lent her their grace, and little hills / Some magic glamourie' (lines 2-4). The elision of borders between self and the space around it allows the two (almost) to merge; put simply, in poems where the division between self and space is ambiguous, the poetic self *haunts* – *and is turn haunted by* – the landscape. In most poems, the speaker observes this phenomenon in other people: in 'The Bridge' (TL), for example, the speaker cannot separate her²⁵ beloved from the natural world – at the poem's conclusion, she 'haunt[s] the green waters at Little Invereye' (l. 19); in 'The Ghaist' (SL), moreover, the allocuter can 'haunt at will the glen or hill' (l. 9). In others poems, however, the self haunts the landscape itself. In 'Singin' Waater' (SC), for example, the drowned speaker joins her song into the music of the water lapping around her. The preoccupation with

ghosts or spirits in poems like 'The Ghost' (TR), 'Waater O' Dye' (SC), 'Heritage' (SC), 'Most Sad is Sleep' (TD), 'Joan the Maid' (TD), 'Lost Things' (TD), 'In a Little Old Town' (LC), and 'Links of Lunan' (LC) suggest that the symbiosis between self and space allows for selves to occupy more than one landscape at once; by inhabiting multiple landscapes, the self becomes as ghostly as those investigated in the previous chapter (especially in 'At Hogmanay').²⁶

It is worth noting that the close relationship between self and space in Angus's work is *not* a simplistic equation of woman equals landscape – it is not like in John Donne's 'To His Mistress Going to Bed', where woman becomes for the speaker 'my America! my new-found-land'; the link between gender and self-in-space is more complex than that, as gender in many of Angus's poems is undetermined or elided. Unlike the association many writers (Scottish or otherwise) make between a woman's body and the landscape (in Alasdair Gray's *Poor Things* and Lewis Grassie Gibbon's *Sunset Song*, for example), the connection between self and space in Angus's work is not a gendered one, but rather a psychological one.²⁷ The self commingles with the landscape because everything – the hills, the trees, the streams, and the sky – exists within its own mind.

Angus offers a personal illustration of the mutuality of landscape and self in a letter she wrote to Shepherd in the early 1930s. In her letter, Angus conflates Shepherd's self with the moorlands:

I have a feeling that you are at Braemar. I seem to visualise your stepping lightly over the moorland, your golden hair blowing in the wind. I suppose you do go at intervals to a tall building in a gray street and utter words of light and wisdom but I never seem quite to realize it. For me you are a part of the wild hill country and a kind of emanation of the spirit which lives there.²⁸

Shepherd here is both physically 'part of the wild hill country' and spiritually representative of its *gestaltgeist*. In an earlier letter, Angus calls her a 'happy rare spirit'; she describes Shepherd as 'roaming in your loved haunts with your gold flecked hair about your sunburnt cheek and the light of your imagination in your dusky eyes' (MS 3036). The words 'haunts' and 'spirit' (which recurs twice in the two excerpts) both imply a numinous presence in the landscape, and suggest a model for

how the poetic self first embodies and then haunts the landscape. Shepherd – removed from the context of her Aberdeen life in a ‘tall building in a gray street’ – becomes, with ‘gold flecked hair’ and ‘sunburnt cheek’, a version of the landscape itself.²⁹ Angus concludes one letter, ‘I may see Deeside again or I may not ever but you will always be a precious part of that bit of my life in the north’ (MS 3036). As ‘happy rare spirit’, Shepherd is synonymous with Angus’s ‘life in the north’ and also closely related to the ‘moorland’ geography itself.

Angus’s letters to Shepherd (c. early 1930s) date from a period only a few years after the publication of *The Singin’ Lass* (1929); not surprisingly, one can find numerous parallels in the imagery and language Angus uses in *The Singin’ Lass* and in her letters to Shepherd. (The 1931 volume *The Turn of the Day* contains only a half-dozen new poems, and consequently is not considered in this comparison.) In particular, the conflation of self and landscape Angus imagines in her descriptions of Shepherd appears previously, in various permutations, in over half of the poems in *The Singin’ Lass*. In the poem ‘Huntlie Hill’, for example, one cannot find a division between self and landscape; the poetic self, in internalizing the geographical setting, paradoxically suffuses it with her presence. She becomes part of the ‘wild hill country’ around her.

In ‘Huntlie Hill’, the speaker indicates that after she is dead, her lover can find her presence in the natural world. The poem, ‘projected into the time after the speaker’s death’ (Whyte, p. 385), becomes a vision of how the self inhabits mental space, even after death. Within this simple structure Angus manipulates temporal and spatial images to suggest that death of the self brings not absence but what Graves calls a ‘suffusion’ (p. 97). Even when the speaker is ‘deid an’ gane’ (l. 1), her presence suffuses the landscape – she is ‘in a bonnie birk’ (l. 3), and in a ‘pipin’ bird’ (l. 9). While the contemporaneous poem ‘Invitation’ (SL) uses similes to compare the speaker to the natural world – she is ‘sweet as honey, / Wild as gouden whin’ (lines 3-4) – ‘Huntlie Hill’ employs metaphors to imply the speaker *is* a tree, rather than being *like* a tree. Self and space intermingle completely. Similarly, in several other contemporaneous poems, Angus intimates that the self is free to return to particular landscapes even after death. In ‘Cambus Woods’, for example, the speaker urges her allocuter, who has ‘learnt the paths of Paradise’ (l. 9), to make a ‘sudden, sweet, swift

excursion' (l. 14) back to the woods when the 'orchis flowers' (l. 3) bloom.³⁰ Like Persephone / Proserpina in Graeco-Roman mythology, the allocuter in 'Cambus Woods' seems to reappear on a seasonal basis. The younger 'deid' (l. 4) self in 'Hogmanay', similarly, returns at the cusp of the new and old years. She is 'free' (l. 13) to return when she wants, and thus comes by some unknown impetus back to haunt her older self. By comparison, the allocuter in 'The Ghaist' recurs 'at will' (l. 9) with a far more disturbing power; as the speaker concludes, he, like the spectral allocuter in 'Waater o' Dye' (SC), 'hauds' her 'still' (l. 11). The living seem more like ghosts in comparison.

The form the speaker in 'Huntlie Hill' claims to take after her death is symbolically resonant: a 'bonnie birk' (l. 3), which evokes multifarious folk meanings. According to James Frazer, birch trees are an integral part of May Day festivals across Europe and therefore are associated with fertility and renewal. In a similar vein, the *Encyclopedia of Superstition* contends that birch trees have 'protective powers' and are 'associated with the return of Summer'. In Scottish ballads like 'The Wife of Usher's Well', however, birch indicates the presence of ghosts; the three dead sons return home at night in 'birk' hats. Birches also represent the bodies of dead lovers – a standard balladic device (as in 'Lord Thomas and Fair Annet') is to transform two lovers who die together into intertwined birch and briar-trees.³¹ In 'Huntlie Hill', the speaker's transformation into a tree also recalls the metamorphosis of Daphne, in Graeco-Roman mythology, into a laurel tree to escape from the pursuing Apollo. Angus draws upon these different symbolic associations with birch trees to suggest that the speaker's assumption of the 'bonnie birk / Grouin' on Huntlie Hill' (lines 3-4) indicates renewal and yet also a kind of haunting presence. When 'Fair Annet' turns into a birch in the ballad, it is to indicate her eternal devotion for her lover – 'and by this ye may ken right weil / They were twa luvers deare' (stanza 30). So, too, in 'Huntlie Hill', the speaker's transformation can be seen as a testament of love for the allocuter. She tells the lover: 'gae seek me in a bonnie birk' (l. 3) and 'clasp my sweet body slim' (l. 5); recalling the beech tree spirit in George MacDonald's *Phantastes*, the speaker in 'Huntlie Hill' imagines she can offer her lover 'kisses' (lines 7, 19) as a tree. Even if she is 'gane' (l. 1), she believes her lover will be able to 'clasp' (l. 5) her yet.

As in 'Invitation', however, the speaker here keeps part of herself from her lover: her 'white soul' that 'can never' be won ('Invitation', lines 11, 12). In 'Huntlie Hill', the speaker's 'white soul' becomes a 'liltin' he'rt' (l. 11) that suffuses a bird flying from sight. This could refer to the superstition that 'the dead sometimes reappear in bird-form' (Radford, p. 50), but it seems to suggest that while the speaker's self may permeate the landscape after death, her 'white soul' will always remain, as Whyte argues, 'elsewhere' (p. 385). The possible world inhabited by her 'liltin' hert' – that place that is 'farrer and farrer' away (l. 13) – is outwith the margins of the poem. Unlike the afterlife envisioned in Jacob's 'The Brig' or 'Craig Woods', wherein the self returns to a particular landscape *but does not interact with it*, in 'Huntlie Hill' Angus constructs a picture of the self that both is interpolated into the landscape (the tree is 'grouin'', l. 4) and yet also distanced from it. The self here occupies two points in space: it intermingles with the landscape, and yet is elusive, 'soarin'' (l. 14) from sight. This dynamic underlies the way Angus describes Shepherd in her later letters – the division she finds between Shepherd in the 'gray street' of town and as an 'emanation' of the 'spirit' of the land: grounded in a particular landscape and yet fluid enough to move from it (MS 3036).

The poem's ambiguous nature raises several questions: is the poem a set of instructions delivered hypothetically, or is it a meditation upon the future emerging from the speaker's 'droosy' thoughts (l. 7) while sitting on Huntlie Hill? What is the allocuter's gender, and does it make a difference? The first question can be addressed by examining Angus's use of tense. By placing events in the hypothetical future ('when', l. 1), Angus establishes a possible-world in which speaker and lover unite; this possible-world, however, holds only tenuous connections to the 'actual' world in which the speaker exists. Angus manipulates the tense so that the relationship between speaker and allocuter *appears* to be in the future and yet simultaneously is in the present. All the actions (bar one) Angus attributes to the allocuter exist in what *resembles* a present tense moment as words like 'crave' (l. 2), 'seek' (l. 3), 'clasp' (l. 5), 'lie' (l. 6), 'tak'' (l. 6), and 'turn' (l. 17) suggest. And yet, one realizes that these actions in fact are predicated upon a future conditional: 'When I am deid an' gane / An' ye suld crave me still' (lines 1-2). The possible-world Angus's speaker creates – despite its present tense feel – is 'counterfactual'; it is, as Semino's terminology suggest, a 'wish world' that is represented by 'alternative states of the actual domain'

(p. 72). Curiously, all the active verbals associated with the allocuter are imperatives. These indicate the speaker's vitality, but open no space for the allocuter's action; the lover remains passive (prone at the woman's knee). In the poem, the only past tense verb is 'socht' (l. 12) - referring to the allocuter's *actual* actions. The speaker's actions, too, are lodged emphatically in the present tense; Angus includes verbs and gerunds which all occur - seemingly - at the moment of the poem's utterance: 'am' (l. 1), 'grouin'" (l. 4), 'moontin'" (l. 10), 'liltin'" (l. 11), 'soarin' (l. 14), and 'sings' (l. 14). Consequently, Angus grapples with three distinct possible worlds in the poem - the present in which the poem is uttered, the speculated future in which they are reunited (read as present tense), and the actual past in which the events occurred. By twisting tenses, Angus creates a complex intersection of spaces and times. This possible-world reading suggests that the speaker - seated on Huntlie Hill with her lover, musing upon their relationship - *wills the imagined future into the actual present*.³² One can read her utterance then as either sympathetic magic (speak it and it will occur) or projective desire (casting her passion forward in time). The poem concludes with an odd but tender moment of conjunction in which her beloved sleeps on her 'knee', beneath the bird and the 'birkin tree' (l. 20) she imagines inhabiting after death.

The question of the speaker's gender is as difficult to determine (in contrast to 'Invitation', 'Mary's Song', or 'The Widow', where the genders are identified). If one assumes the allocuter is male, the speaker's insistence upon her elusive 'liltin' hert' (l. 11) parallels the speaker's coy resistance to her 'lad' (l. 1) in 'Invitation'. If, however, one interprets the ambiguous gender references to imply that the allocuter is a woman, the dynamic changes significantly. Although the allocuter's attributes - 'hair' (l. 7) and 'heid' (l. 8) - are ungendered, Angus in other poems describes women (but *not* men) with reference to their hair. For example, in 'Two is Company' (LC) one woman has 'locks' like 'the corn' (l. 9); in 'The Bridge' (TL), Angus mentions a woman's 'pale hair' (l. 14); and in both 'Joan, the Maid' (TD) and 'Barbara' (SL) she describes women's hair as 'gowden' (lines 10, 4). If the allocuter is a woman, this would explain the otherwise enigmatic line, 'ye never socht tae gain' (l. 12). In this circumstance, the phrase could indicate that the allocuter *cannot* 'seek' (l. 3) her 'at ease' (l. 6), for fear of public opprobrium, and consequently must instead 'clasp' (l. 5) something which serves as an intermediary for the speaker's 'sweet body slim' (l.

5). Notably, the only possessive the speaker attributes to her lover – other than with reference to her corporeal attributes – is the word ‘yir’, associated not with the speaker, but with the ‘bonnie birkin tree’ (l. 20). The speaker encodes the allocuter’s desire for her by transferring the possessive from her own body to the tree, which represents her. Consequently, one could read the poem as the speaker’s attempt to imagine an internalized space wherein her lover may ‘crave’ (l. 2) her freely. The word ‘droosy’ here, used to describe the speaker’s ‘kisses’ (lines 7, 19), recalls the ‘droosy air’ (l. 23) of the internalized female community in ‘The Seaward Toon’; in both instances, ‘droosy’ indicates a *comfortable* liminal space (in ‘The Seaward Toon’, of temperature; in ‘Huntlie Hill’, between sleeping and waking, or perhaps between life and death).

In ‘Huntlie Hill’, the perimeter between self and the space around it disappears, so that the self, like Angus’s depictions of Shepherd, becomes an ‘emanation’ of the space around it. If one reads ‘Huntlie Hill’ as a ‘wish world’ utterance (Semino, p. 72), then one can see that the self’s desire to ‘soar’ (l. 14) to ‘farrer and farrer’ (l. 13) reaches of the landscape becomes a symbolic dramatization of its longing to reach beyond the usual confines of self (including the limits of gender). As the poem indicates, however, the ability to ‘moont [...] ower the plain’ (l. 10) can come only when the self is ‘deid an’ gane’ (l. 1). As Bachelard reveals, when one imagines oneself in a new spatial surrounding – in what he calls a ‘change[d]’ space beyond ‘one’s usual sensibilities’ – one ‘enters into communication with a space that is psychically innovating’ (p. 206). In ‘Huntlie Hill’, the speaker’s mental construction of an internal landscape that is far removed from her ‘usual sensibilities’ allows her to extend herself into a ‘psychically’ challenging space that briefly makes her ‘wish world’ real. Her ‘sudden, sweet, swift excursion’ to a dream-version of Huntlie Hill may exist only hypothetically, but, through a careful manipulation of tense, the speaker makes it seem as though union with her lover *will* occur (‘Cambus Woods’, l. 14). If only in her imagination, the speaker acquires the ability to ‘haunt’ her internal landscape, and her lover, ‘at will’ (‘The Ghaist’, l. 8).

Lost Country

When Angus published *Lost Country*, she was still recovering from her sister’s death. Writing to Shepherd in 1936, she admits that it was a ‘shock’, although she was

expecting it. She adds, 'I felt as tho' a part of myself had died with her. And yet it is strange, that along with tragedy and grief came a curious uplift and the sense of finality and also a feeling of fulfilment'. The 'uplift', however, came when she herself was 'lame and rather frail', and felt that her 'muse' was 'not a bird with a broken wing but more like a domestic hen with a crippled leg'.³³ Angus's concern for her 'broken' and 'crippled' muse, and her own continual, tiresome movement from house to house imbued her late work with an almost obsessive focus upon the fluidity of the self's relationship to space. Many poems in the volume – including 'A Green Yaird', 'When at Familiar Doors', 'Chance Acquaintance', and 'Nicht o' Nichts' – present the self within a space that is unstable, shifting between known and unknown, familiar and alien. The self in most of the poems in *Lost Country* is 'lost'; urgent to discover 'hame' or 'familiar doors' in which to find shelter, the self in these poems moves through space without direction, 'like them that dreaming go'.³⁴ The landscape often is abstract and dream-like, but filled with elements that symbolize aspects of the self's emotional life. At the centre of these poems is a meditation upon the security ensured by a 'hoose' or a familiar space in which to resist the 'tides o' sorrow' that threaten to overwhelm the self at every turn ('Two is Company', l. 11).

In poems like the titular 'Lost Country', the speaker finds itself in an abstracted geographical space laced through with symbolic elements, many of which recur in earlier poems. Unlike the self in 'Huntlie Hill', who both internalizes and suffuses the landscape with her presence, however, in 'Lost Country' the self discovers she *cannot* maintain a stable connection with the space around her. The space is beautiful, but solitary; 'wondrous' (l. 5), but ultimately elusive. The poem grapples with an image of self in a landscape that is both a dreamscape and a 'wish world' (Semino, p. 72). As both avatars, the psycho-geography explored draws its symbolic strength from encoded spatial emblems: the 'solitary tree' (l. 11), the 'mountain streams' (l. 1), and the 'cold moorland' sky (l. 13). One feels, with Caird, that Angus 'is writing in a kind of code' with her repeated use of some natural images (p. 47). Caird notes, 'the same images recur again and again – a tumbling burn, waves licking the land, thorn-trees, moors, the hidden glen, candles, rain, and lily-flowers' (p. 47). In 'Lost Country', one finds many of these images that resonate with the accumulated meaning of numerous earlier works.

Like many of the poems in this volume, 'Lost Country' first appeared in *The Glasgow Herald*. The 1935 version, called 'Lost Land', is subtly different from the book draft. A side-by-side comparison between 'Lost Land' and 'Lost Country' illuminates Angus's revision process (the earlier version is on the left):

A singing burn - tho' many such
Run among hilly lands,
No other had that friendly touch
Slipping through my hands.

A footpath had a wondrous way
Of spreading soft and sweet,
Even on a winter's day,
Wild thyme for my feet.

It climbed and climbed as if to find
High on the moorland's lift
One solitary Rowan Tree
Swept by the stormy drift.

Cold moorland, vexed by winds' alarms,
Small stream and lonely tree,
To you I'm stretching out my arms,
Lost Country!³⁵

Two mountain streams that pass
Thro' dark and hilly lands,
By secret names I named you, as
You slipped between my hands.

Footpath with the wondrous way
Of spreading sparse and sweet,
Even on a winter's day,
Wild thyme for my feet,

That climbed and climbed as if to find,
High on the moorland's lift,
One aged solitary tree
Swept by the stormy drift:

Cold moorland, vexed by winds' alarms
Lost footpath, naked streams,
To you I'm stretching out my arms,
Country of my dreams.

The alterations on the surface appear quite minor, but a closer look reveals some of the 'secret[s]' in the subtext (l. 3). In general, Angus moves from a lament for a specific space (not unlike 'Foxgloves and Snow', also from *Lost Country*), to a more open-ended vision of how an *internal* landscape can be 'lost' (l. 14) due to age and emotional isolation. The diction shift between the two poems certainly indicates this: in the earlier draft, Angus's language is softer and more lyrical, using words like 'singing' (l. 1), 'friendly' (l. 30), 'soft' (l. 6), and 'small' (l. 14) that foster an elegiac mood. In the book draft, however, she interpolates words like 'swiftly' (l. 1), 'dark' (l. 2), 'secret' (l. 5), 'sparse' (l. 6), 'aged' (l. 11), 'lost' (l. 14), and 'naked' (l. 14) into the text, to draw attention to the speaker's increasing sense of vulnerability in the face of loss.

One can discern this meaning shift through an examination of the mental 'impressions' Angus records in each poem's imagery. As MacRitchie notes, elements of the landscape are not merely decorative in Angus's poetry; they are significant

'because of what they can be associated with' (n/p). The speaker encodes the landscape around her, as well, giving 'secret names' to her surroundings in a way that appropriates Adam's responsibility for naming elements of the natural world (Genesis 2: 19-20). In the first stanza, for example, Angus changes the 1935 'singing burn' (l. 1) – with its relative anonymity as one of 'many' in a 'hilly' land (l. 2) – to the emblematic 'two mountain streams'. Although the revised version seems as abstract, it reproduces one of the recurrent geographical features in Angus's work. In the contemporaneous poem 'News' the speaker describes observing 'the warld and a' / That's haud therein, / At the back o' yon hill / Whaur *twa burns* rin' (lines 17-20). In 'Invitation' (SL), the speaker tells her lover to 'come kiss me / Whaur the *twa burns* rin' (lines 1-2). Finally, in the early poem 'George Gordon, Lord Byron: Aberdeen, 1924' (TR), the speaker is 'biddin' her bairns hame' (l. 5) to 'her ain toon / *Atween the rivers twa*' (lines 10-11).³⁶ While 'singing burn' also appears in various forms throughout Angus's corpus, the relative specificity of 'two mountain streams' makes it possible to suggest an 'actual world' correlative; one could imagine either the Dee and the Don rivers outside Aberdeen (as 'George Gordon' seems to imply) or perhaps the North and South Esk outside of Arbroath. Reading 'two mountain streams' for its symbolic significance in Angus's *oeuvre*, however, one can discern how in each of the appearances mentioned above, the streams are associated with elusive inner space: whether it is the speaker's 'white soul' ('Invitation', l. 11), the 'far roads / An' the lang roads / An' the land that's ayont them a' ('George Gordon', lines 6-8), or intimate lives of other people (in 'News'). As indicated by the shift from focusing upon the stream's 'friendly touch' (l. 3) to an invocation of the streams' 'secret names', the general mood in the 1937 draft is of secrecy, concealment, and loss. The 'two mountain streams' grant the second version a specificity and yet also an elusive quality; the reader senses there is a distinct emotional reason lurking behind the image choice, but cannot determine it from the subtext. Like the streams themselves, the image 'swiftly pass[es]' the reader by (l. 1).

The 'two mountain streams' are not the only geographical elements to suggest encoded meaning. The 'solitary tree' (l. 11) in each poem indicates another slight meaning shift between drafts. In the earlier version, the speaker finds 'high on the moorland's lift' (l. 10) a rowan tree, noted for the ability to 'ward off evil'.³⁷ In Angus's work, as in Jacob's, a healthy rowan represents security: in Jacob's 'The

Rowan' or Angus's 'By Candle Light' (TL), the absence or ill health of a rowan indicates malevolent forces at work. In the 1935 version of 'Lost Country', the rowan is 'solitary' (l. 11), 'lonely' (l. 15), and 'swept by the stormy drift' (l. 12), yet it is resilient; the speaker's gesture of 'stretching out' her arms to it indicates a desire for some kind of connection with an emblem of her own solitude. In the book draft, however, Angus elects to highlight the tree's 'aged' state, instead of indicating its protective powers. The 'aged, solitary tree' becomes not a symbol of lonely but protective resilience, but rather a representation of the speaker's own age and isolation. As in 'Huntlie Hill', 'Invitation', and 'Dream-Magic' (TR), trees in Angus's work (as well as in Graeco-Roman mythology) are closely associated with women's bodies. In the contemporaneous poem 'At Parting', the speaker describes a woman's body as 'lissom as a tree, / Its leaf wi' tempest tossed' (lines 1-2); moreover, in 'Singin' Waater' (SC), the speaker's drowned body becomes 'sweet o' the smellin' pine' (l. 6). Finally, in 'The Tree' (SC), the 'strange' (l. 11) tree 'watching' (l. 12) the speaker becomes an arboreal double for her, ageing as she does. By drawing attention to the 'aged' tree in 'Lost Country', Angus implicitly suggests that the poetic self, like the tree, is 'swept' (l. 12) and ravaged by time like the 'ancient' (l. 5) and 'hoary' (l. 17) tree in 'The Tree'. Significantly, in both drafts of the poem, the word 'tree' creates a wrinkle in the poem's abab rhyme scheme: every other line rhymes in pairs, but in the third stanza 'find' and 'tree' do not rhyme. This hardly seems accidental; Angus, unlike Jacob, does not often vary her rhyme schemes, choosing instead simple ballad forms. The disjunction between 'find' and 'tree' indicates yet another moment when the landscape 'slip[s]' (l. 4) from the speaker's fingers. This also highlights the solitary, unpaired nature of the tree (and, presumably, the speaker).

Finally, the 'footpath' Angus's speaker imagines in both drafts of 'Lost Country' has a specific symbolic meaning in each version. According to Bachelard, the 'familiar' footpaths the self travelled in youth make a 'precise' mark on the self's memory (p. 11). In Angus's poem, certainly, the speaker makes specific associations with the 'footpath' she recalls. In other poems, Angus emphasizes the connection between footpaths and the past. For example, in 'Heritage' (SC), she describes 'old tracks by the bracken sown' (l. 14) haunted by 'mystical rites' (l. 15) of a forgotten people. The footpath also reminds one of the equally enchanted 'dark hill track' (l. 1) in

'The Drove Road' (TR). More importantly, however, the wild-thyme proliferating on the path in 'Lost Country' emphasizes the connection between the speaker's life-path, and the 'lost' (l. 14) footpath. Angus does not overlook the homophonic resonance of thyme and 'time'. In previous poems, thyme seems to connote loss: in 'Moonlight' (TL), its 'fragrance' is associated with its 'dying bed' (lines 7-8), while in 'Loneliness' (TL), the poetic self connects thyme with the place where she 'sighed' her 'heart away' for an absent landscape (l. 15). According to some folk traditions, 'souls of the dead were once thought to dwell in the flowers of thyme' (Radford, p. 340); in Angus's poem, thyme contains not souls, but the *memories of lost times*. In the early draft of 'Lost Country', the thyme-covered footpath is described in the past tense: it '*had*' a 'wondrous way' (l. 5) of directing the speaker to her 'lonely tree' (l. 14). The full stop at the end of the second stanza breaks the path off – the path is truncated, and carefully situated in the past tense. In the later draft, by comparison, the footpath is 'sparse' (l. 6), and thus perhaps difficult to follow – it meanders through the body of the poem, from line five to the end, without a full stop. Thus even though the speaker has 'lost' it (l. 14), it continues to exist because of the awkward substitution of 'with' (l. 5) for 'had'. In the second draft of the poem, consequently, Angus appears to emphasize the landscape's *elusive* quality – it exists, but has 'slipped' (l. 4) from the speaker's grasp.

The most significant adaptation between the two versions of the poem, perhaps, is the change from 'slipping through my hands [...] lost country' to 'you slipped through my hands [...] country of my dreams' (lines 4, 16). Angus's definitive use of the past tense in the second draft highlights the speaker's loss, and the irrevocable nature of that loss. Not only is the landscape elusive, but it is also 'of' her 'dreams' – that is, completely ensconced in a part of the self's mental space that may be unreachable. While the speaker in 'Huntlie Hill' or 'The Seaward Toon' can locate even hypothetical areas of inner space 'at will', the speaker in 'Lost Country' feels unable to connect with this 'lost' inner country. The gesture at the end of the poem in both drafts becomes an emblem of the speaker's inability to find this 'dream' country. Unlike the clasped hands one finds in Jacob's poems symbolizing the power of human love, one finds in this poem by Angus an *incomplete* embrace. 'Naked', 'vext', and 'swept' by loss, the speaker is not sure 'if' (l. 9) she will find the

'country' of her 'dreams'. Her uplifted arms may not find the 'you' for which it reaches.

Of course, the shift from 'lost country' to 'country of my dreams' also has political connotations. Angus's speaker has lost not just an isolated space – like the 'green yaird' of a contemporaneous poem – but an entire country. The earlier draft makes a larger point of the loss of a 'country', as it ends with that exhortation. Although not a strident nationalist, Angus did express strong feelings about the state of affairs in Scotland during the inter-war years. The possibility that 'lost country' in the earlier draft has wider meanings – for example, that Scotland itself is the 'lost country' – should not be neglected. In the book version, however, Angus implies that the 'country' is *within*. In the contemporaneous poem 'When At Familiar Doors', the speaker, in her isolation, wonders whether it would be better to go:

Chartless and rudderless,
To track the ocean broad,
Like them that dreaming go,
Borne by the winds of God;

To other country where
By other journeys led,
Strangers shall light our evening fire,
Strange hands shall make our bed.³⁸

This imagined 'other country' – a spiritual realm not necessarily removed from the 'other country' of earlier supernatural poems – can be reached only by those who travel by 'dreaming' (l. 7). The strangely singular 'country' (l. 9) the speaker imagines in 'When at Familiar Doors' serves as a useful parallel for the psycho-geographical space in 'Lost Country': in both the emphasis falls upon the ultimately solitary nature of inner space. In Angus's late examinations of the self-in-space, the self's inner space is characterized by 'wild haunted places' ('Once Long Ago', l. 16); 'haunted' by memories of loss, the self struggles to grasp hold of the inner 'country' it finds in early poems like 'The Seaward Toon' but finds not the community of others indicated in poems like 'The Seaward Toon' or 'Huntlie Hill', but rather '*strangers*' ('When at Familiar Doors', l. 12, my emphasis). The poem becomes an utterance of a 'wish world' country, a poetic space created out of words to replace the inner space it cannot hang on to any longer.

Bachelard, in his topoanalytic survey of the self's relationship to space, makes a strong connection between the self's memories of a space, and the need to preserve these landscapes in the mind. He believes every self should 'speak of his roads, his cross-roads, his roadside benches; each one of us should make a surveyor's map of his lost fields and meadows' (p. 11). Read in conjunction with this, one can see how 'Lost Country' and the other poems in the volume could be seen as Angus's map of the 'lost fields and meadows' of her 'familiar upland' no longer in view (MS 27438, folio 9). As she writes to Shepherd in the mid-1930s, 'I may see Deeside again and I may not ever. I am moping here in a damp turnippy fieldy district [...] longing for the little roads above Banchory' and that 'moorland wander-road from Tarland down to Dinnet, one of the darling ways I shall never go again' (Shepherd, p. 8). When she wrote this, she believed she would not be able to return to live in a permanent location either in Angus or Deeside. Removed from the land itself, and haunted by her absence from it, she thus recreates a version of it in her poems. Nevertheless, the 'country of [her] dreams' is just that – dreamed. Her 'surveyor's map' (Bachelard, p. 11) of the lost 'green yaird' remains only speculative. Her diction emphasizes this, particularly in the third stanza of 'Lost Country' when she questions even the existence of the 'solitary tree' – the footpath and the speaker 'climbed and climbed *as if to find*' (l. 9, my emphasis) what the poet believes is 'lost'.

Elusive Country, Elusive Self

Writing to a friend in 1929, Angus observes approvingly, 'you are a lover of the intangible which is more real than the tangible'.³⁹ Angus's tendency to privilege the 'intangible' over the 'workaday' (Graves, p. 107) threads through her *oeuvre*, and informs in particular her portrayal of the self-in-space. The 'strange eeriness of misty darkness and lonely places' Salmond finds in her poetry thus can be interpreted as a wider commentary upon the selves in her work. One finds, coeval to the psycho-geographical landscapes she creates, the self: shaping, reflecting, stamping, even haunting its surroundings with its emotional associations. The 'lonely places' and eerie landscapes Angus records are palimpsests onto which the self's 'impressions' layer 'intangible' but 'real' emotional meaning. And yet because space exists wholly

within the mind, the borders between the self and its internal world shift and blur – often, space can be ‘hidden’ or even ‘lost’.⁴⁰ As poems like ‘The Seaward Toon’ and ‘Huntlie Hill’ suggest, one must actively *search out* these internal spaces in order to find them. Like the self’s ‘white soul’, these elusive interior spaces may even be impossible to locate except in dreams. The speaker in ‘The Seaward Toon’ suggests that one must venture outside ‘painted’ and ‘steekit’ doors to find the ‘sma’ green yaird’ that is ‘close faulded’ in one’s ‘hert’.⁴¹

The possible worlds Angus’s selves inhabit often simultaneously reinforce the fluid sense of space in her poetry. The mutuality of self and landscape in ‘Huntlie Hill’, for example, allows the self to exist both in the future as a tree, and yet remain as a woman. Shepherd identifies this in Angus’s work when she comments upon the ‘magical’ transformation of space into verse under Angus’s influence. Citing the poem ‘The Graceless Loon’ (TR), Shepherd remarks, ‘it is a quality of the place [Tarland] to which the poet was attuned, as much a part of it as its solid houses and sober fields’ (p. 13). In Shepherd’s interpretation, Angus senses what she might call the ‘intangible’ aspects of ‘actual’ space (Semino, p. 95), and grants them a reality as convincing as their ‘solid’ components. Thus even external space is psychologized. The self ‘suffus[es]’ (Graves, p. 95) the ‘actual’ world as well as its internal world.

The image of the self, arms upraised, and ‘stretching’ out to reach some hidden corner of its psycho-geography persists in Angus’s work (‘Lost Country’, l. 15). The grief-stricken woman in ‘Ann Gilchrist’ (SL), the ‘laughing girls’ in ‘The Tree’ (SC), the ‘lanesome lass’ in ‘Winter-Time’ (SL) – they all seek *something* in the landscape around them. But what? ‘Lost Country’, as one of her late poems, strives to answer that question, suggesting that it is an elusive space they seek, one of shelter from the ‘naked’ (l. 14), ‘swept’ (l. 12) and emotionally fraught inner world in which they exist. In searching for the ‘lost country’, then, Angus’s selves in fact seek themselves: that quiet interior core that, like the ‘Seaward Toon’, is characterized by peace. Angus’s meditations upon self and space in this instance recall the commentary of Irish poet Eavan Boland. Describing her recent book *The Lost Land* (1998) for her publishers, she claims that for her ‘the lost land’ is:

not exactly a country and not entirely a state of mind [...] the lost land is not a place that can be subdivided into history, or love, or

memory. It is the poet's own, single, and private account of the ghostly territory where so much human experience comes to be stored.⁴²

The 'ghostly territory' Boland describes is a perfect metaphor for the treatment of space in Angus's work as well, for like Boland, she explores the numinous 'lost' country that exists within the mind and yet without it, within history, and at the same time beyond it in the self's internalized time. Ultimately, Angus creates in her poems a 'surveyor's map' of 'lost fields' (Bachelard, p. 11) that captures the rare glimpses of the 'lost country' within. As Shepherd observes, once we have read Angus's work, we cannot look at the landscape in the same way again, for 'she has altered our eyes' (p. 16). We see in 'workaday' space the 'haunted' and 'ghostly territory' of her poetic selves.⁴³

¹ J. B. S. Salmond, 'An Appreciation', *Arbroath Guide*, 24 August 1946, page 6. Shepherd, 'Marion Angus as a Poet of Deeside', p. 12.

² 'The Green Yaird', *Lost Country*, pp. 20-21.

³ Caird, 'The Poetry of Marion Angus', p. 47. Gibson, 'They Sang of Angus', n/p.

⁴ Graves, 'The Poetry of Marion Angus', pp. 107, 97.

⁵ Salmond, p. 6; Graves, p. 97; Gibson, n/p; Caird, p. 47. Porter [McMillan], p. 50. W. N. Herbert, *Continuity in the Poetry and Prose of Hugh MacDiarmid* (unpublished D.Litt. thesis, Oxford University, 1990).

⁶ David Buchan, *The Ballad and the Folk* (London, 1972), pp. 77-78.

⁷ Marion Lochhead's phrase, from her book *Tales of the Other Country* - an anthology of children's fairy tales. 'The Wind Hath Blown my Plaid Away', stanza one, *Scottish Ballads*, edited by Emily Lyle (Edinburgh, 1994), pp. 71-73; 'The Daemon Lover', stanza eleven, pp. 79-81.

⁸ Papers of Nan Shepherd, NLS, MS 27438, folio 9. *The Weatherhouse* chronicles the intertwined lives of a household of women, and their different relationships with the land around them.

⁹ MacRitchie, 'Arbroath's Singin' Lass, n/p.

¹⁰ Semino, *Language and World Creation in Poems and Other Texts*, p. 95. MS 27438, folio 9.

¹¹ See 'The Eerie Hoose' (SL), 'The Blue Jacket' (TD), and 'This Woman' (SL), for instance.

¹² This chapter employs simplified 'possible world' theory - for a more advanced, semiotic-based analysis of poetry, please see Semino's book and those titles by Lubomír Doležal cited in the bibliography.

¹³ Caird, p. 45. Caird comments generally upon motives in Angus's poetry.

¹⁴ Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, translated by Maria Jolas, reprinted from the 1964 edition (Boston, 1994), p. 8. Although Bachelard uses this term to describe an investigation of human lives, he supports his claims with literary, rather than sociological, sources and consequently can be seen to apply the term to poetic selves as well.

¹⁵ Angus's acquaintance Nancy Cant insisted, in a personal interview, that the 'seaward toon' was Arbroath (1999). Milton, 'Modern Poetry in Scots before MacDiarmid', p. 33. Phrases like 'breist-knot' (l. 15) and 'better ye hae spun' (l. 5) suggest the allocuter is female.

¹⁶ William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, IV: V, lines 173-174, edited by Harold Jenkins (London, 1982), p. 359. Radford, *Encyclopedia of Superstitions*, p. 286: rosemary is 'also of remembrance, and consequently it was formerly used both at weddings and funerals'. 'Heart-Free', l. 14, *The Singin' Lass*.

¹⁷ The gesture of hiding behind a door or of refusing to open it prefigures the speaker's actions in 'The Eerie Hoose', a poem in which the opening and closing of doors takes on a distinctly erotic connotation. See the following chapter.

¹⁸ DuPlessis, *Writing Beyond the Ending: Narrative Strategies of Twentieth-Century Women Writers*, p. 109.

¹⁹ Jacob, in 'The Last Ane' (NL), calls Jesus 'Ane' as well, but clearly identifies him in the conventional sense - 'There was Ane in yonder. Oh, straicht an' fine / He stude by the cowpit thrang / And my sair he'rt loup'd as He looked on me' (lines 21-23).

²⁰ Consider her reinterpretation of the creation story in 'Waater o' Dye' (SC) or her vision of the afterlife in "In the Streets Thereof" (SC).

²¹ Papers of Mairi Campbell Ireland, NLS, MS 19328, folio 16, c. 19 November 1929. Her emphasis.

²² Hendry, 'Twentieth-century Women's Writing: The Nest of Singing Birds', p. 296. MacRitchie, *passim*. Whyte, 'Marion Angus and the Borders of Self', p. 384.

²³ Rich, 'When We Dead Awaken: Writing As Re-vision', p. 167. See chapter three for commentary upon 're-vision' in Jacob's work.

²⁴ 'Chance Acquaintance', l. 12, *Lost Country*; 'Singin' Waater', l. 7, *Sun and Candlelight*; 'Think Lang', l. 16, *The Tinker's Road*.

²⁵ The speaker's gender, as in many of Angus's love poems, is ambiguous. See chapter 6 for a discussion of gender in Angus's love lyrics.

²⁶ Chapter six discusses Angus's use of ghost figures to encode female desire; her use of ghosts in the landscape discussed here also could be read in light of the theories presented in the following chapter.

²⁷ John Donne, 'To His Mistress Going to Bed', l. 27, *The Complete English Poems of John Donne*, edited by C. A. Patrides, reprinted from 1985 edition (London, 1990), pp. 183-185 (p. 184). Tomás Monterrey, 'Gendered Territories in Twentieth-Century Scottish Fiction', in *Space and Place: Geographies of Literature*, edited by Glenda Norquay and Gerry Smyth, (Liverpool, 1997), pp. 297-306. Susanne Hagemann, 'Women and Nation', in *A History of Scottish Women's Writing*, edited by Douglas Gifford and Dorothy McMillan (Edinburgh, 1997), pp. 316-328.

²⁸ Papers of Nan Shepherd, AUSC, MS 3036.

²⁹ Similar to the way Bawbie Patterson does in Shepherd's *The Weatherhouse*.

³⁰ Particular kinds of orchis flowers are associated, in northern Scottish folk botany, with divination rites, as well as with love (and hate) potions. McNeill, *The Silver Bough: A Study of the National and Local Festivals of Scotland*, p. 82.

³¹ Frazer, *The Golden Bough, A Study in Magic and Religion*, p. 122. Radford, p. 49. 'The Wife of Usher's Well', stanza 5, and 'Lord Thomas and Fair Annet', stanza 29, in *Scottish Ballads*, pp. 118, 112.

³² Rosalie and Murray Wax, 'The Magical World View', in *Articles on Witchcraft, Magic and Demonology*, edited by Brian Levack (London, 1992), I, 183-193 (*passim*).

³³ All from MS 3036, circa 1936.

³⁴ 'The Green Yaird', l. 11; 'When At Familiar Doors', l. 7.

³⁵ 'Lost Land', *Glasgow Herald*, 7 November 1935, p. 10.

³⁶ All my emphasis.

³⁷ McPherson, *Primitive Beliefs in the North-East of Scotland*, p. 76.

³⁸ 'When at Familiar Doors', lines 5-12. This recalls Emily Dickinson's poem # 249:

Futile - the Winds!

To a Heart in port -

Done with the Compass -

Done with the Chart! (lines 5-10).

in Emily Dickinson, *The Complete Poems*, edited by Thomas H. Johnson (London, 1970), p. 114.

Dickinson's poetry was published in Britain in the early years of the twentieth century, but I have no proof that Angus would have read her work (although certainly there are numerous parallels between their poetic images). See Caird, p. 47.

³⁹ MS 19328, folio 16, c. November 19 [1929].

⁴⁰ 'The Tree', l. 13, *Sun and Candlelight*.

⁴¹ 'The Green Yaird', l. 22, *Lost Country*. 'The Prood Lass', l. 17, *Sun and Candlelight*.

⁴² Eavan Boland, written commentary for Carcanet Press, on *The Lost Land* (Manchester, 1998).

⁴³ Graves, p. 97. Shepherd, p. 12. Boland, n/p.

Liltin' in the Eerie Hoose: Self and Other in Angus's Poetry

Much of Angus's work focuses upon the interconnections between self and place, or self and time. Equally significant in Angus's *oeuvre*, however, is the intricate symbiosis of self and other. Unlike in Jacob's work, where the self exists within an implied community of others, in Angus's poetry the self struggles, often in isolation, to relate to one specific other. That other can be an earlier version of itself ('At Candlemas') or, as it is in her finest poems, another self who becomes the object of its desire. Set within its own psycho-geographic space and time, the self forms an intense bond with its desideratum – one freighted with unspoken meaning. The self is pulled by two conflicting urges: the desire to merge with other in some kind of erotic union and the pressing need to protect its autonomy. At the root of the self's relationship with the other, consequently, is its attempt to articulate its fluid perimeters. Desire in Angus's poetry is a terrifyingly potent force; it brings joy, but more frequently it damages the self irreparably. Physically and emotionally broken, the self recognizes the 'price' paid in 'courtin' is not pregnancy and community condemnation, as in Jacob's 'The End O't', but 'hairm', as often the self's desire destroys it.¹ In her poetry, Angus narrows her focus on to the claustrophobic, cerebralized space between self and other; unlike the social structure underlying the self-in-relation-to-other in Jacob's poetry, in Angus's work the self and other exist within an often uncomfortably intimate *internal* space. The self can direct its emotional energy outward towards its desideratum, threatening its inner core, or it can shut itself away from the other to protect the 'warm sheilin' of its 'hairt'. Its compulsion to allow the other to subsume or engulf it, eradicating its boundaries, coexists with the fear of losing its 'white soul' in the process.²

In Angus's work, whether or not the self's desire is reciprocated, its intense longing destabilizes it. In her early poem 'The Turn of the Day' (TL), Angus economically explores the destruction that desire can wreak. Her speaker (not unlike Eliot's initial speaker in *The Waste Land*) balks at the advent of spring because it ushers in not new life but the loss of a love affair. She laments:

Love is fine, fine
But it doesna bide.

The saft, warm April rain
 An' the clear June day,
 An' the floors o' the May
 I'll see them a' my lane.³

The speaker's disastrous desire subverts the seasonal flow: she prefers winter 'snaw' (l. 5) and 'winds' (l. 6) to a 'clear June day' (l. 10) because the frozen weather reminds her of her lover; looking ahead, she knows she will be 'a' my lane' (l. 12) in the traditional season of marriage. 'Mary's Song' (TR) spells out desire's dangerous power more chillingly. Mary, recognizing her love is not reciprocated, offers herself to her lover in a disturbing evocation of Eucharist rites:

My beloved sall ha'e this he'rt tae break,
 Reid, reid wine and a barley cake,
 A he'rt tae break, and a mou' tae kiss,
 Tho' he be nae mine, as I am his.⁴

Desire transubstantiates Mary from body into ritual, balladic wedding feast (here eerily like Communion wine and wafer). She urges her beloved to 'break' her, to consume her, to possess her even though he will not requite her love. The violence of the reiterated 'break' and the sibilant slant rhyme between 'kiss' and 'his', which forces 'his' to be pronounced more like 'hiss', emphasize the physically destructive force of Mary's desire; Angus illuminates Mary's emotional injury obliquely, focusing upon her transformation into a synecdochal collection of 'he'rt' (l. 9), 'lips' (l. 1), and 'mou' (l. 11).

Visions of the Self and Other

Elusiveness of the Other

Harriet Hawkins, describing the 'general dynamics of desire', notes that 'all human means of mastering desire seem comparably feeble and ineffectual' in response to desire's 'overwhelming power'.⁵ In Angus's work, desire's 'overwhelming' potency is heightened by a variety of factors; the self's attraction to the other exists within a network of tensions that intensify rather than diminish its desire. Hawkins recognizes that 'since desire is driven by imaginative ambition' – that is, the self's yearning to be with the other – 'the characteristic of its object [...] is always its

elusiveness' (pp. 234-235). As 'Mary's Song' suggests, in Angus's poetry the self often desires an *unattainable* other whose very 'elusiveness' amplifies the self's passion – as her English poem 'Cotton Grasses' (SC) demonstrates, un-reciprocated love attains perhaps a greater force than mutual affection could. One's unfulfilled love song becomes 'too sorrowful for singing' for it contains a reminder:

Of joyful tears unwept,
 Of tenderness unwist,
 Of lovers' lips unkissed
 And promised trysts unkept.⁶

The negated words concluding each line suggest the ferocity of the self's feeling for the 'unkept' other; 'overwhelm[ed]' by the 'elusiveness' of the 'lovers' lips', the self finds its sense of wholeness undermined as it longs to break out of its 'unkissed' constraints. Its passion for an impossible other threatens to fill it, paradoxically, with the palpable absence of reciprocated love.

Absence of Other

The other's absence, in addition to its elusiveness, underlies many of Angus's poems. The self's desideratum may be disinterested, physically or emotionally distant, or dead: the cause of absence is insignificant as neither loss nor passing time diminish the potency of the self's emotion. As poems like 'In Ardelot' (TR) maintain, the self's heart is still 'enthral[ed]' (l. 10) even after 'years' (l. 2) of separation from the lover. The effect the other's absence has upon the self, however, is tremendous: many of Angus's poems detail the speaker's inability to reconcile itself to the other's absence or loss. Charles Graves notes that the 'tragedy' of unfulfilled love drives some 'to the verge of madness'.⁷ In exploring this aspect of Angus's work, it is useful to consider Roland Barthes's *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*, as his exegesis upon the complex (often cataclysmic) bond between self and other sheds light upon how absence heightens that connection. Barthes's analysis of how the lover's elusiveness and absence influence the self's desire is unabashedly androcentric, although it is possible to adapt some of his conclusions to consider a wider selection of narrative dynamics. When read in conjunction with Angus's poetry, Barthes's understanding of 'shape[d]' absence is illuminating. His narrator suggests:

the other is in a condition of perpetual departure, of journeying; the other is, by vocation, migrant, fugitive; I – I who love, by converse vocation, am sedentary, motionless, at hand, in expectation [...] Amorous absence functions in a single direction, expressed by the one who stays, never by the one who leaves; an always present *I* is constituted only by confrontation with an always absent *you*.⁸

The 'single-direction' tension Barthes's narrator outlines offers an interesting perspective from which to consider desire in Angus's work; in poems like 'Cotton Grasses', 'A Woman Sings' (LC), and 'World's Love' (SC), the poetic self waits 'in expectation' of a 'fugitive' other who does not arrive. The poem emerges out of a real or imagined 'confrontation' between self (wondering 'will ye come at cock-crow, / Or wi' the fa' o' dew?') and 'always absent' allocuter.⁹ According to Barthes, the 'one who stays' behind, waiting for the other 'gives shape to absence' and 'elaborates its fiction' (p. 14). In this view, the self embroiders the space left hollow by the other's absence with fictional, symbolic meanings. In Angus's work, poems become shaped vessels in which the self contains and decorates the 'amorous absence' of its other. In many poems, the self, unable to 'clasp' the lover, makes in the poem a representation of that absence; that absence becomes, like the negated syllables in 'Cotton Grasses', a paradoxical, 'fiction[al]' presence.¹⁰

The Art of Doing Without

In Angus's work, the self's need for self-preservation – for secure perimeters and an unchallenged emotional centre – is primal and instinctual, but often impaired by the introduction of other into the equation. The tension between the inner-directed autonomy, and outward-focused desire for other in many cases becomes too much: the self either fragments – as in 'Mary's Song' – or it turns itself inward, cocooning into a dense self-shielding core. In Angus's fictional piece *Christabel's Diary* (1899), Christabel demonstrates one method of self-preservation that recurs in many of Angus's later poems. Christabel avows, 'There is an art of doing without, which is better than the duty of contentment'.¹¹ Christabel's 'journal' chronicles a life of 'doing without' – without satisfaction, emotional security, and intellectual freedom. In her definition, contentment becomes a 'duty' – here Angus posits *selflimitation* as preferable to sham fulfilment. In other words, 'doing without' *if self-chosen* proves less stultifying than serving someone else's (probably false) definition of fulfilment.

This **ethic of renunciation** suffuses Angus's love poems. When facing the threat of self-consuming desire, the self in some poems selects what Jan Montefiore, describing the poetry of Christina Rossetti, calls 'self-definition by renunciation'.¹² That is, it chooses 'deprivation' (Montefiore, p. 127) as a way of preserving its boundaries. Moreover, 'deprivation' – an inverted model of the 'carpe diem' trope – protects the self from the ravages of unchecked desire.¹³ Self-protection through 'doing without' the other thus demands inward, rather than outward-directed thinking. In many of Angus's poems, the focus falls upon a precarious balance between self-possession and self-denial. Self-preservation becomes the self's primary motivation; this manifests itself in broken utterances (suggesting self-censorship) and failed gestures of advance (indicating an often fear-based need to protect boundaries of identity). As Angus signifies in 'When at Familiar Doors' (LC), the self-chosen solitude of an 'other' country is better than empty familiar doors *if one goes by choice* (l. 5). The speaker's need for self-rule necessitates both renunciation of other and acceptance of the self-deprivation concomitant with that.

Critics have misinterpreted Angus's ethic of renunciation, hinting that her often oblique poems of desire represent an obsession with small concerns; Maurice Lindsay dismisses her work for having what he considers the taint of 'regretful "might-have-been" nostalgia'.¹⁴ This is not only a misreading, but also a patronizing misinterpretation of Angus's work. Her love poems reveal not a 'regretful' self, but rather a voice struggling to maintain self-autonomy in a turbulent emotional world. In some poems, Angus's speakers deny the self and the pursuit of other *to protect the self*: from regimented (societally mandated) behaviours, from rigidity that denies its fluid boundaries, and finally, from consuming desire for other. Janet Caird and Dorothy Porter McMillan offer a more sensitive reading of Angus's love lyrics in their work. Caird identifies evidence of 'deeply felt experience[s] of love and the loss of love' in Angus's poetry that are shielded from exposure by multiple layers of protective 'sheilin'; Porter McMillan, similarly, comments upon the narrative devices Angus uses to protect that 'sheilin':

Angus makes us feel that women have secret stories that cannot be simply brought to the surface without falsifying their distinctive lives. More than that she makes us feel that they should not be ferretted out, that women are entitled to hug their secret selves. The drive to

detect the covert narratives along with the sense that such a desire is tactless is what makes some of the poems truly disturbing.¹⁵

The 'secret stories' Porter McMillan mentions frequently relate a 'deeply felt' desire threatening the self's stability; the poem's 'covert narrative' conveys the precarious balance the poetic self struggles to maintain between autonomy (concealing desire) and other-centred expression (articulating desire). Angus's ethic of renunciation emerges through gestures of self-preservation that accompany the self's overwhelming desire for other. The poem becomes the site of the self's struggle to find some kind of balance between the two.

Giving 'A For Luve'

Caird contends that 'the bulk of [Angus's] poetry must be considered as poetry of love – love lost, love rejected, love refused for obscure reasons of pride and independence' (p. 45). Modifying this statement slightly sheds light upon a pressing issue in Angus's love poetry: her primary focus is not so much 'love' as *the beloved* – the self's desired other. Running contrary to the need for self-preservation in Angus's poetry, one finds an **erotic of other** in which the other – whether a beloved or a desired body of knowledge – becomes the centre of the self's attention. The self focuses its psychic energy upon the other so acutely that every aspect of the lover becomes eroticized; even the space created by the other's absence is charged with sexual tension. Whether the other is specifically addressed, or merely hinted at (even if imagined), *its existence* motivates the speaker. Instead of striving for self-containedness, the self becomes preoccupied with longing for the other; its perimeters are effaced as it allows love for the other to control, or, in some cases, to possess it. Desire leaves the self 'all a-tremble'; the speaker will resort to extreme measures 'tae pleasure' its 'licht luve'. As the speaker in 'Heart-Free' (SL) demonstrates, this can mean loss of self – desire can 'lock' one's 'hert' 'doon sae deep' in a 'kist', away from the rest of the self.¹⁶ In some poems, as 'Heart-Free' reveals, the self's passion can be violently transgressive, breaking or modifying the self's peripheries. The self loses its 'hert' and its 'croon' – both metaphors for autonomy – to the other, for it gives 'a' for luve'.¹⁷ The primary tension in the poem becomes the uneasy balance between the eroticization of this other – even in its absence – and the renunciation of desire in favour of self-protection.

Gender in Angus's Love Lyrics: The Gentleman Vanishes

In most poems, Angus omits specific references to gender. Occasionally she indicates the gender of speaker or other – as in 'The Singin' Lass' (SL) or 'This Woman' (SL) – but in many instances the gender is unknown. Unlike in Jacob's poetry, where the speaker and allocuter are clearly identified by name or title – as in 'The Guidwife Speaks' or 'The End O't' – in Angus's poetry the speaker and allocuter are not always signified. As many critics have noted, however, when Angus does identify the self's gender, it tends to be female.¹⁸ Her best work explores the emotional and physical bonds between women; men, for the most part, do not appear in her most successful lyrics. In poems like 'The Blue Jacket' (TD), for example, men are excluded from an all-female space: the allocuter claims, 'I'll never tak' up wi' lads or lovers' (l. 11). Furthermore, in poems where voices *appear* to be male as conceived according to a heterosexual model of love lyric – gender indicators are elided, indicating *these voices could be read as male or female*. In a poem like 'Penchrise' (TR), for example, the speaker as lover of 'the wild Gypsy' (l. 45), appears at the surface to be male, but closer inspection reveals there are *no* specific textual gender markers. Isolated incidents do not seem significant, but when one notices how carefully Angus's love lyrics *avoid* specifying gender, it becomes more compelling. Those poems in which Angus does define the gender of allocuter and locuter specifically are almost entirely male / female pairings; these often fall into the less-successful category of her work ('Mary's Song', (TL), 'A Woman Sings' (LC) and 'Heart-Free' (SL) are notable exceptions). Angus's most daring poems do not specify gender; in their ambiguity lies their strength and their subversive power.

There are several possible reasons for Angus's tendency to omit gender references in her poetry. Caird considers as 'daughter of a Victorian U. P. manse' for Angus 'reticence is in order' (p. 45). As Cynthia Griffin Wolff maintains, in the Victorian era the general contention in scientific and medical discourse was that there was 'no such entity as sexual feelings in the typical woman'.¹⁹ Therefore, Wolff argues, a Victorian woman would 'literally have no words for her (nonexistent) feelings' and, moreover, would have 'access to no discourse within which these (nonexistent) passions can be examined and discussed' (p. 185). Although Angus, in drawing upon

ballad and folksong traditions, had access to a 'discourse' portraying female passion, she tends to use this material for models of narrative indirection, rather than examples of libidinous self-expression (as in Isobel Pagan's 'The Crook and Plaid'). Caird believes that Angus's reticence in part stems from her age, claiming 'if at the age of fifty you begin to write love poetry, it will be nostalgic, sad, wistful, secretive, wrapped round in imagery' (p. 45).²⁰

A more general explanation for the oblique gender references in Angus's poetry can be explained in part through a consideration of a wider sociological understanding of how Scottish women writers, burdened by what Porter McMillan identifies as a threefold marginalization (p. 49) from literary politics, struggled to express themselves. Certainly, as Lindsay indicates, 'too large a share of the world's love poetry sees the love between man and woman from the male angle' (p. xii). Articulating women's passions, as Angus does in her poetry, necessarily falls outwith what Carole S. Vance calls the 'enclave of dominant culture' – in Angus's case, the chiefly male-dominated publishing world.²¹ According to Vance, the voices of 'lower-status groups' (including women poets) are often omitted from print. In response, women writers have 'created rival cultural and symbolic systems, requiring methods which tap oral tradition' to express their opinions (p. 13). Although Vance's assertions apply to contemporaneous Modernist projects (the work of Gertrude Stein or Zora Neale Hurston, for instance), elements of her argument do elucidate possible motivations behind Angus's work. Significantly, Angus's poetry does 'tap oral tradition' in order to articulate female desire within a protective framework of tradition. The violent desire uncovered in 'Barbara', for example, builds upon folk traditions in which the supernatural serves as a backdrop to conceal any provocative representations of female desire from unsympathetic readers. In her own life, Angus was remarkably elusive about the meaning of her work. She once refused to elucidate her work for a critical male reader: 'I see you think my poems [...] are incomprehensible', she writes, retorting, '*I shall never explain them to you*'.²²

Another possibility is that Angus avoids gender references because she wants to conceal the *gender* and orientation of its object. In this view, one can discern how Angus exploits the existence of what Liz Yorke (not in reference to Angus's work) calls 'gender-neutral' pronouns to conceal identities.²³ The pronomial obliquity of

Angus's love lyrics demonstrates the same ambiguity that later allows a poet like Edwin Morgan to publish love poems to men with impunity. Read in this way, Angus's use of coded language – as discussed in the previous chapter – may relate to a need to conceal the fact that her 'covert narratives' (Porter McMillan, p. 50) chronicle a woman's love for another woman. According to Judith Butler, sexuality is never straightforward – ambiguity underpins expressions of sexual identity:

part of what constitutes sexuality is precisely that which does not appear and that which, to some degree, can never appear. This is perhaps the fundamental reason why sexuality is to some degree always closeted, especially to the one who would express it through acts of self-disclosure.²⁴

Butler's assertions refer specifically to the self's expression of gender-linked traits, and consequently are not made with reference to literary depictions of these signifiers. One can borrow Butler's language, however, to consider how the self's desire in Angus's poems perhaps is 'closeted' both by the ineffability of sexuality, and by Angus's interest in keeping expressions of female desire concealed for the reasons considered above. The prominence of failed attempts at 'self-disclosure' in Angus's work (in 'The Eerie Hoose' (SL), 'The Singin' Lass' (SL), 'Two is Company' (LC), and *Christabel's Diary*) suggests that the self is eager to express its desire for other – whether that other is a person or an ideal – but instead must keep those emotional signals hidden in a 'covert narrative' (Porter McMillan, p. 50).

If one reads Angus's work as part of a 'closeted' tradition, one can find within her poetry moments when the erotic dynamic between two women erupts onto the surface. In poems like 'Waater o' Dye' (SL) or 'The Blue Jacket' (TD) the female-female bond is made absolutely clear; whether one chooses to read these relationships vis-à-vis the self's sexual orientation depends upon one's willingness to consider Angus's work outside of the heterosexual context in which critics tend to place her work.²⁵ Certainly, as Diana Collecott emphasizes, one can examine a poet's work 'beyond the biography of the writer' – that is, without forcing a direct correspondence between textual emotions and the poet's personal beliefs; one fruitfully can consider Angus's work within a 'lesbian context', that broad spectrum of literature that includes 'any writing by women that gets its energy from erotic attraction between women' regardless of the poet's own sexual orientation. Bonnie

Zimmerman, in her survey of lesbian criticism, usefully observes that changing one's 'awareness of what is *possible*' can 'transform' one's response to a poem.²⁶ Reading Angus's work within a broad-based 'lesbian context' can illuminate aspects of her work previously overlooked, offering new insight into her narrative lacunae and what Porter McMillan calls her 'ambivalence about [aspects of] female experience' (p. 50).

In the Company of Ghosts: Self and Spectral Other

In particular, by placing Angus's work in a 'lesbian context', one can explore it in light of what Terry Castle has identified as a primary narrative device in depictions of lesbian desire: the use of spectral, intangible female figures. Castle provocatively argues:

the spectral figure is a perfect vehicle for conveying what must be called – though without a doubt paradoxically – that 'recognition through negation' which has taken place with regard to female homosexuality in Western culture since the Enlightenment.²⁷

According to Castle's theory, heterosexual writers represent lesbian desire as ghostly to deny the potentially subversive concept of two desiring women (existing without men); lesbian writers use the same metaphor, paradoxically, as a 'ritual calling up' of hidden desire into bodily (albeit numinous) form (p. 46). Castle's commentary, when read in reference to Angus's poetry, elucidates the invocation of the 'eerie twain' of ghost and human women in many of Angus's poems.²⁸ Angus's juxtaposition of spectral figures and obfuscated female desire – in poems like 'Waater o' Dye' (SL) or 'Jean Cam'bell' (TR) – could represent a 'recognition through negation' of a potentially non-heterosexual desire. 'Doing without' takes on a new meaning here – this could imply that Angus's ethic of renunciation stems from an unwillingness to remain fixed in one category of (heterosexual) female desire. Similarly, Angus's use of spectral women, and her incorporation of silence and absence into poems, could represent an investigation of female-female desire within a framework of 'conventional' love narratives. The use of ambiguous gender references makes her lyrics accessible both to those who read her poems as oblique heterosexual love poems, and to those who interpret her coded language to indicate concealed lesbian desire.

Waater o' Dye

These generalisations only hint at the richness of Angus's work, however. To show the conflicting tensions in her love poetry, this section analyzes four of Angus's most significant poems, addressing the relationship between self and other, and the interaction between Angus's ethic of renunciation and erotic of other as they interpenetrate the poems. In general, poems from *Sun and Candlelight* (1927) and *The Singin' Lass* (1929) represent the beginning of Angus's mature work where her finest love lyrics originate. In the former, one finds a preoccupation with complementary pairings – sun and candlelight, supernatural and actual, desirer and desideratum – that initiates an investigation of where and how the self locates itself within these conjunctions. In 'Waater o' Dye', specifically, Angus explores the relationship between self and other in which the two are so fluid they intermingle. As in 'Penchrise' (TR), Angus presents the interaction of two women – one spectral and one human, set in a landscape with roots in the 'actual' world (Dye Water runs through north-east Scotland). The speaker's relationship with a 'lang-deid wumman' (l. 25) brings her supernatural knowledge and an awareness of her own mortality. She struggles to balance her need for self-protection with her desire for the knowledge and freedom her ghostly kinswoman represents.

Angus's erotic of other suffuses this poem. The speaker focuses upon the mysterious other so intensely that she is haunted by her presence everywhere she goes. The other, Angus indicates, is 'ane wha lauched and loe'ed and sinned / And noo gangs sheda'less as wind' (lines 3-4), her 'cry' (l. 2) concealed in the river's movement. The spectral woman's invocation parallels what Castle identifies in other texts as the ghostly 'beckoning' of hidden (lesbian) desire (p. 47), and what 'In Ardelot' (TR) Angus recognizes as the fragile convocatory utterance of secret longing: 'Yet hear in winds' call / My heart's call' (lines 21-22). In the spectral woman's summons, the conjunction of laughter, love, and sin is not accidental – Angus suggests that the speaker hears a passionate voice whose 'sins' are amatory in origin. And yet, this presence no longer has a body with which to sin: she is a ghost – 'sheda'less'. Castle maintains that the presence of ghostly women in lesbian narratives becomes a way of 'solidify[ing]' what cannot be narrated overtly (p. 47). She notes that to 'be haunted by a woman – in the magical speech of desire – is ineluctably to see her' (p. 46). A

haunting body 'returns' to corporeality, palpable, though immaterial (Castle, p. 47). In lesbian narratives, Castle insists, 'one woman or the other must be a ghost, or on the way to becoming one' (p. 34) in order to diffuse the subversive nature of female-female passion. In Angus's poem, the other's 'body itself returns' from the dead to haunt the speaker. The erotic of other in this sense extends to include the landscape around the speaker, as the 'lang-deid wumman' suffuses it with her 'cry' (l. 2).

Like the speaker in 'The Broken Brig' (TD), the self here moves through the landscape under the sway of another. In 'Waater o' Dye', however, the speaker crosses a temporal, psycho-historical bridge into the 'clachan yont the muir' (l. 6) where her ancestors once lived. The ghostly space is saturated with secrets; the speaker reads in her surroundings evidence of an unspecified lineage that has been lost, 'hapt' (l. 7) in the scrub and hidden from view. One could read this 'hapt' history as Angus's nod to the unwritten history of female (chiefly lesbian) desire in women's writing,²⁹ or, as in 'The Seaward Toon', one can consider this landscape as an internalized space; it is possible to see in that instance how repeated images of concealment – the 'hapt' village, the hidden medicinal fern (l. 10), and the 'sheda'less' (l. 4) other – suggest that it is not only the speaker's desire for other that must be hidden but also the existence of an inner geography in which one can hear (and respond to) the 'cry' (l. 2) of desire.

The speaker learns from the spectral woman strange rituals: how the unnamed fern – like the 'sweet leaf o' healin' (l. 9) craved in 'The Spae-Wife' (LC) – protects one's heart from harm; foxgloves (themselves poisonous, and unlike the fern, *cause* heart trouble) point to the 'other country'; and songs that conjure unexplained visions. Angus emphasizes these rituals by including an extra couplet in stanza three, highlighting the 'queer auld-farrand tunes' (l. 13) the women sing. This music, as in 'The Sang' (SC) or 'Courtin' (SC), perhaps represents a microcosmic account of desire. (It is tempting to read 'queer' to indicate an encoded reference to homosexual desire, although the OED indicates that this connotation of 'queer' came into use in Britain in the 1930s.) The additional lines in the third stanza are significant not only for highlighting the rituals, but also for exhibiting what Collecott, in her investigation of literary representations of lesbian desire, calls a textual 'rift'. Collecott maintains that to 'hear' what is 'unspoken' within a poem,

one must 'attend' to its 'ruptures or interruptions' (p. 105). The unexpected lines in Angus's poem could be seen as a 'rift' as these lines break the poem's regulated four-line stanzaic form. The 'unspoken' narrative of the women's relationship breaks through at a structural level, even if it cannot be expressed explicitly.

How does one characterize their relationship? Their rituals efface the peripheries between them; as the boundary between 'elfinlan' (l. 12) and 'Wirran's Hill' (l. 9) is ambiguous, so too is the border between women, as mediated by the woman's 'auncient will' (l. 16). The spirit woman's control over the speaker becomes more problematic when one considers the Scottish children's rhyme the poem recalls:

Said Tweed to Till
 What gars ye rin sae still?
 Said Till to Tweed,
 Though ye rin wi' speed,
 And I rin slaw,
 For every ane that ye droon
 I droon twa!³⁰

Read in light of this rhyme, the 'still' (l. 15) and 'clear' (l. 1) river no longer seem idyllic, the woman no longer harmless. This rhyme implies 'still' waters are dangerous; the connection Angus makes between the spirit woman and the water seems more ominous – the woman's 'still' presence 'droon[s]' the speaker with her presence. The images of drowning and possession in 'Waater O' Dye' connote the transgressive powers of desire. The speaker's self is no longer hers – she lives vicariously through the other's experience, subsumed by the 'overwhelming power' of desire (Hawkins, p. 234). As the poem progresses, the two women switch places: the speaker loses corporeality as the spectral other gains materiality.

Castle formulates a triangular model of desire (based upon Eve Sedgwick's model of male desire) to dramatize how erotic links between women radically alter the heterosexual power paradigm.³¹ Constellating the two women at either corner of a triangle, with the (absent) male at the apex / nadir, she comments, 'in the most radical transformation of female bonding – i.e., from homosocial to lesbian bonding – the two female terms indeed merge and the male term drops out' (p. 73). In Castle's triangulation, the connection between two women (even in a heterosexual relationship) is more powerful than the association between woman and man.

Reading this in conjunction with 'Waater o' Dye' sheds light upon the 'bond' between the 'two female terms' – the speaker and the spirit woman – who do not quite 'merge', although the boundaries between the two do falter. In the poem, as in Castle's formulation, the man disappears. The speaker experiences 'the feel o' babes' and the 'luve o' men' (l. 18) not through interaction with a man, but rather via the 'auncient will' (l. 16) of the kinswoman. This prefigures the fantasy female-only childbirth in 'The Blue Jacket' (TD) and 'Welcome' (SL): 'I rowed a bairn in my airms yestreen [...] In a dream o' the nicht it cam'" ('Welcome', lines 3, 5). In 'The Waater o' Dye' the speaker's association with other provides her with the sexual and maternal experiences she previously lacks. The other's 'auncient will' is potentially subversive: it eradicates the reproductive need for a man, and, in being 'auncient', grants a historical validity to female-female bonds. Moreover, it suggests that the ghostly woman's behaviour vindicates the speaker's own, by having existed since 'auncient' times.

Significantly, the erotic of other in 'Waater O' Dye' concerns not merely the 'leal luve' for the 'lang-deid wumman', but also a desire for what she represents and knows: like the speaker in Jacob's poem 'The Jaud', the self longs for the experience, laughter, love, and even sin of the woman who now possesses her.³² Hawkins notes that the 'desire for knowledge' is as potent as 'carnal desire' (p. 243), and in Angus's poem this is certainly true. The spectral woman embodies both knowledge and carnality; the speaker's conflicted longing for her as body and as symbol complicates the poem. One finds here a complex depiction of the erotic of other – is the speaker's reliance upon the other wholly negative? Barthes's speaker maintains, 'if I [as lover] acknowledge my dependency, I do so because for me it is a means of *signifying* my demand' (p. 82, his emphasis). Dependency in Barthes's understanding becomes a mark of love, rather than possession, but in Angus's work, the motives and actions in love are less straightforward. The border between possession and dependency – as between self and other – blurs. Angus emphasizes this in the repeated collocation of 'I' and 'she' in the poem. The speaker seems possessed by the spectral woman, who steers her 'straucht an' sure' (l. 5). Perhaps as a mark of her desire for the other's knowledge, the self 'acknowledge[s]' her 'dependency' upon her by attributing to the other active verbs: 'gars' (l. 9), 'p'int's' (l. 11), 'warks' (l. 16), and 'hauds' (l. 23). By contrast, the speaker passively allows the other to direct her. Even

in the anomalous fifth stanza when she appears to act alone, she in fact displays the other's influence in the way she interprets natural phenomena. Her body ceases to be her own: she sees and hears the other's presence in everything: in the 'sea-gaun bird' (l. 19), the falling leaves, and the 'clood[s]' overhead (l. 21). Recalling a similar gesture in 'Hogmanay', the speaker recognizes that the woman, though 'lang-deid', achieves the immortality she cannot. The speaker here falls – in the biblical sense – from innocence into knowledge, which unavoidably means mortality. Desire, knowledge, and grief are inextricably intertwined: if one has 'no grief', one has 'no desire'.³³ Knowledge necessarily brings with it recognition of mortality, and awareness of impending grief.

The balance between renunciation of and desire for other teeters precariously throughout the poem. In the final stanza, however, the scale tilts in favour of the speaker's longing for the power, experience, and knowledge the other represents – all at the risk of her autonomy. Angus makes this clear in the brilliant manner in which she reinterprets a biblical creation story. After God forms Eve from one of Adam's ribs, Adam responds:

This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. (Genesis 2:23-24)

Angus's version replaces Adam with the ghostly other and Eve with the speaker: 'bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh' becomes 'flesh o' her flesh, bane o' her bane' (l. 24). The resultant female-female Eden notably exists *before the Fall*; the male is completely absent, even as tempter. The speaker thus is 'taken out of' the numinous 'wumman' who gives birth to her – to invert the metaphor – and must then 'cleave' to her. The image is a rich one – Angus evokes both meanings of 'cleave': to join and to divide. The speaker as Eve has roots in the (absent) body of the dead woman haunting her, which perhaps explains the speaker's desire to 'merge' with other – they are 'one flesh'. The speaker's self-destructive desire haunts her; in acknowledging her connection to the spectral woman's 'flesh' and 'bane', she relinquishes any possibility of separation between them.

The poem's final line is ambiguous, and thus offers several possible interpretations. On one hand, the italicised utterance denotes desperation and terror. Her gasped response refers back to lines fifteen and sixteen, associating her powerless state with the woman's 'auncient' powers (l. 16). Here the other's power becomes synonymous with possession. The speaker's sense of self is completely 'overwhelmed' by the ghostly other. On the other hand, the italicised statement suggests an ironic reading – 'still' waters run deep, or, the speaker's desire for the other or what she represents (male-free erotic freedom) must be hidden ('hapt') for fear of recrimination. The use of the word 'haud' (l. 23) reinforces this: in 'The Ghaist' (SL), the speaker's dead lover 'for guid or ill' 'hauds' her 'still' (l. 11) – 'haud' clearly has erotic connotations here. In 'The Ghaist', however, because the lover is male, there is no need for secrecy. In 'Waater o' Dye', by contrast, the speaker's insistence upon clarity paradoxically serves to obscure the presence of illicit desire; the pellucid Dye actually contains the spectral woman's 'beckoning' (Castle, p. 47). Its name, too, suggests not just the obvious – death – but also indelible staining and the Renaissance punning language for orgasm. The speaker's fear that the 'sea-gaun bird forebodes' grief (l. 19) highlights what she believes is the need to conceal the nature of her desire. Desire for female-female 'bond[s]' must be 'sheda'less as wind' (l. 4) or risk opprobrium.

Barbara

Angus pushes the dyad of self and spectral other further in 'Barbara', also from *Sun and Candlelight*. Here Angus probes deeper into the ambiguous zone between passion and self-preservation. Instead of the distant 'elfinlan' (l. 12), however, Angus presents her reader with the *internal* 'land o' dreams and Dreid' (l. 12). The opposing pulls of desire and self-renunciation recur, as the speaker grapples with two different visions of her relationship with her friend. Angus divides the poem into two parts to reinforce this parallel: in the first half, the speaker imagines killing Barbara; in the second half, however, she expresses horror at this vision commingled with longing for the restoration of their friendship. The reason for her antipathy is not revealed until the poem's conclusion: Barbara has stolen the speaker's 'ain luv'e's hert' (l. 23) from her. Angus leaves the identity of the 'ain luv'e' ambiguous; ultimately, the poem's most important bond exists (as Castle's theory suggests) between the two

women. The speaker's murderous desire for Barbara exhibits how the erotic of other can consume the self.

Angus uses coded language to heighten the contrasts in the poem's two parts. In the first half, the speaker wakes from dreaming she has killed Barbara when she hears the 'cock-crow' (l. 1). The cock-crow's biblical connotations of betrayal (Matthew 26:74) are heightened by comparison to the singing robin in the poem's second half. The robin in some fables represents fidelity – according to legend its breast is red because it tried to remove thorns from Christ's crown.³⁴ The contrast between betrayal and fidelity (curiously, as both relate to Christ) underlines the tension in the women's relationship. Other coded symbols Angus uses include the 'wild rose' (l. 9) to which the speaker compares Barbara. It connotes sexual expression (as in 'Courtin' (SC) and 'The Stranger' (TD)), love ('Winds of the World' (SL)) and fragile natural beauty; its mysterious shrivelling 'fa' (l. 9) contrasts with the compressed beauty of the 'blossoms' sna' (l. 20) in the poem's second half, as emphasized by the aural connection between 'sna' and 'fa'. In addition, the 'beads o' coral fine' (l. 16) the speaker recalls Barbara wearing, like those in 'Treasure Trove' (TL), 'This Woman' (SL), 'Curios' (TD), and Angus's short story 'Green Beads', become love tokens whose loss (or disappearance) indicates the women's changed relationship.³⁵ The 'elfin dairt' (l. 21) with which the speaker imagines striking Barbara, moreover, recalls both the fatal elfshot of fairy stories and Cupid's arrow, neatly encapsulating the poem's convergence of desire and violence. Finally, by bracketing the poem with two different images of Barbara's 'gowden heid' (lines 4, 24), Angus teases out the fundamental difference between the beholder in the first stanza (the speaker) and in the last (the 'ain luvie', l. 24) that summarises the erotic tensions underlying the poem.

In 'Barbara', Angus scrutinizes the interconnectedness between self's desire for other and its need for self-preservation with the same clinical precision her speaker uses to dissect Barbara in her dream. As in 'Waater O' Dye', the self's desire for other is all consuming. Barbara's evoked presence, like that of the 'sheda'less' woman in 'Waater O' Dye', suffuses the speaker's vision. She iterates her name thrice (recalling the three cock-crows announcing Christ's betrayal), filling her narrative with images of Barbara: 'rinnin' the green hills doon' (l. 13), 'stricken' (l. 7) in the 'land of Dreid' (l.

2), and finally, 'lift[ing]' (l. 24) her golden hair. Despite her continual presence in the poem, Barbara is silent, evoked only in allocution. The speaker is 'sair' (l. 3) to see her, but in fact perceives only fragments of her. In particular, she focuses upon Barbara's 'breist sae white and saft' (l. 7); her language accentuates the *tangibility* and sensuality of Barbara's body. In the contemporaneous 'Jealousy', the speaker similarly fixates upon her rival's 'hungerry mou' (l. 17) and tear-stained eyes. In both poems, the physical details the speaker observes in the other intimate erotic attraction. Significantly, in 'Barbara' the self's attraction reaches its apotheosis when the two women 'link' (l. 14) hands. The word 'linkin' is significant, for it posits a mutuality absent in what becomes the speaker's violently transgressive desire for Barbara. This image of union recalls the lover's 'clasp' in 'Huntlie Hill' (SL) and its self-abnegating double in 'The Eerie Hoose' (SL). As the speaker's relationship with Barbara has altered irreparably, her vision of their linked hands becomes more poignant for its loss. It becomes one of the many fragmented images she has of Barbara.

Unlike in 'Waater O'Dye', however, the desire for other in 'Barbara' manifests itself less in self-annihilation and more in murderous violence toward unattainable other. Unable to maintain her friendship with Barbara, the speaker dreams she destroys her. One could read this rage in two different ways: in one understanding, Barbara has lured her lover from her, and thus betrayed their friendship. In this reading, the women's relationship is complicated by the introduction of a third character, the shadowy 'ain luv' (l. 23). As René Girard, Sedgwick, and Castle have suggested,³⁶ the presence of a third self into a relational equation necessarily complicates matters, for as Barthes argues, the self then experiences 'an obligation to share' the other with 'indiscreet neighbors': 'I am continually disturbed by intruders [...] Everything is irksome which briefly erases the dual relation, which alters the complicity and relaxes the intimacy: "You belong to me as well", the world says' (p. 110). In 'Barbara', the speaker laments the alteration in 'intimacy' between herself and Barbara with the presence of 'ain luv' (l. 23). Forced to share Barbara with 'indiscreet' others, the speaker directs her anger towards Barbara, rather than at her rival.

In a second reading, however, one can read 'ain luv's hert' to imply that Barbara has 'won' (l. 23) the *speaker's* heart. Here one finds no rival, but rather the speaker's

guilt-ridden acknowledgement of her desire for Barbara – her ‘dread’ is either self-hatred, or the fear of admitting her feelings. In this reading, her love for Barbara becomes violent in its futility, as she cannot accept her capacious desire. In *Eroticism*, Georges Bataille explores the intersection between erotic drive and invasive violence; reading Angus’s poem in conjunction with his conclusions elucidates the fragile balance between restraint and emotional ‘disorder’ in ‘Barbara’. Bataille posits:

erotic conduct is the opposite of normal conduct as spending is the opposite of getting [...] when the fever of sex seizes us we behave in the opposite way [to the dictates of reason]. We recklessly draw on our strength and sometimes in the violence of passion we squander considerable resources to no real purpose [...] consequently anything that suggests erotic excess always implies disorder.³⁷

For Bataille, ‘sexuality involves disorderly and anti-rationalistic experiences that are by turns excessive, wasteful, ruinous, even murderous’.³⁸ ‘Disorder’ emerges as the key concept in Bataille’s evaluation. Applied to Angus’s poem, one can discern how the speaker’s desire for Barbara damages their friendship, as the speaker cannot behave towards Barbara as she once did. Unable to accept the ‘obligation to share’ Barbara with another, or perhaps incapable of fathoming her desire for her, she falls into ‘murderous’ and reckless ‘disorder’; destroying whom she loves most. In the process, one of the ‘considerable resources’ she squanders is her sense of bounded self (hers and Barbara’s). When she has ‘cleft’ Barbara’s ‘heart in twain’ (l. 8) and ‘stricken’ her ‘breast’ (l. 7), she physically alters the threshold space between their bodies: she *vivisects* Barbara. Barbara’s divided heart becomes a metaphor for her own confused passion. Gaston Bachelard, in his analysis of desire, contends that the invasive ‘opening’ of bodies’ is often ‘an obvious sexual act’.³⁹ His contention that the dream image of ‘possession of bodies from within’ symbolises a sexual relationship usefully elucidates the invasive ‘disorder’ in Angus’s poem (p. 53). The speaker’s violent ‘opening’ of Barbara’s body becomes a metaphoric sexual possession of her, a guilt-ridden and forcible act of violation. The speaker’s shame for her actions expresses itself in the speaker’s longing to erase her dream and what it represents.

Angus, in a rare explanatory gesture, provided her publisher with a gloss of 'Barbara' shortly before its publication. Her commentary offers unexpected insight into the women's relationship in the poem:

In her dreams she had slain Barbara who had drawn away her lover's affections and she now repents even having dreamt such a dream for she is torn between love for Barbara and jealousy of her. In the last three verses she cries to her to wear the gown she had worn on a certain happy day before this tragedy had come between them before Barbara had taken her lover from her with a 'lift' of her gowden head'. I am afraid this is not very lucid but I thought the feeling was true to human nature of desiring to be once more happy and lighthearted with Barbara again as tho [sic] the evil dream had never existed and she had not gone thro [sic] the horrors of hate and jealousy.⁴⁰

Angus's description of the poem lends weight to the first reading offered above – the 'ain luve' in her explanation is a third self. Notably, Angus avoids gender references in her letter. The 'lover's affections' are not gendered; taking a lesbian reading to its logical extreme, there are still *no males* in the poem – the absent rival lover could just as easily be female. Angus's phrase 'torn between love for Barbara and jealousy of her' perfectly encapsulates the divided nature of both the speaker and Barbara in the poem. Unable to decide between desire for and renunciation of the other, the speaker hangs pendant between the two. The 'horrors of hate and jealousy' mingle with the desire for the erotic coupling described in 'Waater O' Dye'.

The Can'el

Angus moves from focusing upon the tension between other-directed desire and inner-focused self-preservation in *Sun and Candlelight*, with its aptly binary title, to a more intensive emphasis in *The Singin' Lass* on the desiring self *in extremis*. In this volume, her imagery sharpens, and the disparity between joy and grief deepens. The poetic richness of *The Singin' Lass* belies its stark nature: Angus exposes the self as it is driven 'recklessly' (Bataille, p. 170) to attain its lover or pulled into self-inflicted isolation to avoid 'overwhelming' desire (Hawkins, p. 234). Two of the volume's darkest poems, 'The Eerie Hoose' and 'The Can'el', face each other on the same page, presenting two diametrically-opposed visions of self and other. The former poem demonstrates most clearly Angus's ethic of renunciation; its counterpart, by contrast,

epitomises the erotic of other. Read together they demonstrate the difficulty in maintaining a balance between contrary impetuses.

'The Can'el' offers a visceral depiction of consuming desire. Unlike the speaker's murderous emotions in 'Barbara', the self here is not instigator but victim of an unfathomably eerie yearning. What could this poem mean? The lover lights a candle, removes the speaker's heart and burns it, and then, once the flame is nearly extinguished, returns it to its owner. This narrative, like the 'secret stories' (p. 50) Porter McMillan mentions, defies immediate comprehension. Like a Bosch painting it blends alchemical emblems (burning, distillation, transformation) with unexplained psychological states. The disturbing emotions also recall the ballads – the poem's use of standard ballad metre (8/6/8/6) underlies its balladic 'shifts in tense and in person' (Porter McMillan, p. 50). Beneath these intertextual references, Angus structures the poem in a rough linear narrative: its progression corresponds to the movement from nightfall to daybreak; Angus parallels this with the climax and denouncement of an erotic relationship. Onto this basic structure she overlays the 'indefinable' (Porter McMillan, p. 50) actions of the unnamed other – it is the speaker's desire for this woman that drives the self, and the poem, forward.

As in the poems previously discussed, in 'The Can'el' Angus does not indicate the speaker's gender: it could be male, as Porter McMillan maintains (p. 50), or female. The language Angus uses, however, suggests the latter. The word 'breist' (l. 7), although not gendered in Scots, is associated *specifically with female bodies* in Angus's poetry. In 'Penchrise' (TR), 'The Fiddler' (TR), 'Barbara' (SC), 'Huntlie Hill' (SL), 'The Singin' Lass' (SL), 'The Eerie Hoose' (SL), and 'Joan the Maid' (TD), among others, 'breist' refers only to women (and often, as 'Barbara' reveals, women's eroticized bodies). One could argue that that is because women figure more prominently than men in Angus's poetry. Close reading, however, reveals that while Angus's representations of women's bodies are specific and often sensual (lips, eyes, arms, breast, hair, thighs), her descriptions of men are abstracted: a 'cruik' of an 'airm' ('Courtin', l. 25), a 'heather step' ('The Faithful Heart', l. 3), and 'lamentable lips' ('Winter', l. 14). In 'The Can'el', the single encoded indicator of gender – 'breist' – allows one to read the speaker as a woman, and thus situate the poem as with 'Barbara' and 'Waater o' Dye' within a 'lesbian context' (Collecott, p. 102).

The poem's title immediately raises questions of Angus's use of symbolism. Angus's preoccupation with candlelight is notable; Caird surmises that candles were 'commonplace' when Angus was young, and thus form part of a natural background to her work. According to Caird, the 'small living flame of the candle' still 'brings overtones of tranquillity and happiness, of mysterious and the unseen'. Candles recur in Angus's work from her earliest ('By Candle Light' (TL)) to her last poems ('Nicht O' Nichts' (LC)). Cruickshank associates candles with Angus herself; in a disturbing passage from *Octobiography*, Cruickshank relates a meeting between her mother (who had senile dementia) and Angus. After Angus left the room, Cruickshank's mother reportedly commented: 'I'm glad that auld body's awa'. There was a man wi' a tray o' lichtit candles standin' ahint her a' the time, and I was feart he'd set her on fire'. Although this vignette is unrelated to Angus's poetry, it does limn the eerier aspects of candle imagery in her work. In 'The Can'el', Angus evokes the 'witchin', watchin' Flame' not merely for atmospheric effect, but also for symbolic resonance: fire, with its folkloric connections to saining rites, signifies purification.⁴¹ One could interpret the burning heart as a metaphor for an eviscerating emotional catharsis. More convincingly, however, candle-flame in Angus's poem relates to the importance of fire in folk love rituals. According to the *Encyclopedia of Superstition*, one can 'recall a faithless or absent lover' by pushing pins into a burning wick, and chanting:

'Tis not these pins I wish to burn,
But _____'s heart I wish to turn.
May he neither sleep nor rest,
Till he has granted my request (p. 267).

In 'The Can'el', one can interpret the strange treatment of the speaker's heart in the flame as part of a similar love-rite. Angus here uses candlelight to symbolize oblitative passion. The speaker's 'incomprehension' (Porter McMillan, p. 50) of the poem's events relate to the lover's ambiguous behaviour. Is this a ritual to 'recall' or destroy a lover? Angus does not make this clear. The 'hert' in Angus's poem 'burn[s]', rather than 'turn[s]'.

At this juncture it is helpful to turn to Bachelard's *The Psychoanalysis of Fire*, for a broader exploration of fire symbolism. Bachelard claims fire (chiefly in dreams) has close associations with sexual desire: it 'unites matter and spirit, vice and virtue' equitably. Tracing connections among alchemy, transformation, flame, and desire, Bachelard proposes:

after the desire, the flame must come forth, the fire must reach completion and the destinies be fulfilled. To do this the alchemist and the poet reduce and restrain the burning action of the light. They separate the sky from the earth, the ash from the sublimate, the outside from the inside. And when the hour of happiness is over, Tourmaline, the gentle Tourmaline, 'carefully gathers the heaped-up ashes' (p. 55).

Bachelard's vision of what he calls 'sexualized fire' (p. 55) usefully associates fire's 'burning action' with the nature of desire. In Angus's poem, the transformation from flame to 'heaped-up ashes' parallels the move from the speaker's 'hour of happiness' (stanza one) to the burnt-out aftermath of extinguished desire (stanza three). More clearly than previous poems (except 'The Wild Lass', perhaps) 'The Can'el' reveals devastation in the wake of desire. The self and other exist in a tense correspondence focusing upon the actions of the 'sexualized' candle-flame.

In the first stanza, Angus exhibits the initial stages of the erotic of other - the speaker's fixation upon the lover's body. Like the speaker in 'Jealousy' and 'Barbara', the self focuses upon specific attributes of the other: in this case, her hands: they are 'slim an' sma" (l. 2), 'as white as faem' (l. 6), and finally, merely enumerated, 'twa' (l. 10). The evolution of the terms mirrors their relationship's progress. The speaker's preoccupation with the lover's hands springs into relief when read in conjunction with excerpts from *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*; in one passage, Barthes's speaker considers the passionate significance of the other's body, arguing that even an 'incredibly tenuous portion' of that body - 'the way a nail is cut, a tooth broken slightly aslant, a lock of hair' falls - is saturated with erotic import (p. 20). He concludes, 'the more I experience the speciality of my desire, the less I can give it a name; to the precision of the target corresponds the wavering of a name' (p. 20). In Angus's poem, one can read the speaker's obsessive emphasis upon the lover's hands and the shifting candle-flame as evidence of her inability to give her desire a name. Her scrutiny of flame and hands at the exclusion of anything else (namely, her

emotional responses to the events) suggests that the 'precision' of her 'target' – the other – obliterates concerns for self. The eroticized other forcibly erases any boundaries between herself and the speaker.

The configuration of self, other, and candle-flame in each stanza microcosmically portrays the state of the lovers' relationship. In the first stanza, the candle 'bloom[s]' and 'floo'r[s]' (l. 3) between the women, suggesting, as in the moment in 'Barbara' when the women link hands, a moment of reciprocal desire. Both 'rose' and 'gowden' (l. 3), as 'Barbara' reveals, have sexual connotations. The active verbs 'bloomed', 'floo'ed', and 'flamed' (l. 4) indicate the ferocity of their mutual passion. Notably the candle rests 'atween us twa' (l. 4), in a position equidistant from both. Although the 'sma"-handed woman clearly controls this mysterious rite (it is 'her' candle, l. 1), both women seem equally involved – initially. In the second stanza, however, Angus shifts the power balance entirely into the other's 'slim' hands (l. 2). She alone acts – the speaker is mute and transfixed, as her 'hert' is 'pluckt' 'oot' of her 'breist' (l. 5). As in 'Mary's Song' (TR) and 'Heart-Free' (SL), the speaker's heart in 'The Can'el' becomes a physical, frangible entity. Separated from the self, it embodies the speaker's desire. The disturbing image of the speaker's vivisected body suggests (as in 'Barbara') that the desire between these women is transgressive, boundary shattering, and ultimately rooted in an eradication of divisions between self and other. As in 'Barbara', the 'breist' becomes the locus of violence; here, however, the speaker's 'breist' is opened not by supernatural elfshot but by the other's 'sma' (l. 2) hands. Angus indicates that 'sma' is a deceptive descriptor, for the woman's diminutive hands nevertheless possess exceptional power – as Angus claims in another poem, a 'small thing' can 'wear' one's life 'away'.⁴² In the second stanza, though, after the woman has 'pluckt' (lines 5, 7) the speaker's heart out, she 'warm[s]' it in the fire (l. 8). The change from 'flamed' (l. 4) to the oddly neutral 'warmed' (l. 8) reveals a dramatic reduction in the intensity of the women's interaction. After 'recklessly' breaking the boundaries between them (Bataille, p. 170), the other seems to lose interest in their relationship.

Angus explores the smouldering remains of the relationship in the poem's final stanza. The 'laigh' (l. 9) flame and 'dawnin'" (l. 11) morning symbolically should signify a new beginning but, as in 'The Turn o' the Day' (and recalling Byron's 'So

We'll Go No More A-Roving'), Angus subverts the time cycles completely: the advent of day symbolizes the relationship's end.⁴³ The beloved returns the speaker's heart; no longer 'white as faem' or 'slim an' sma", her hands are described by number - 'twa' (l. 10). The lover's 'speciality' (Barthes, p. 20) fades into generality and the other's mystique dulls with the low flame; the speaker is disenchanted. Unlike in 'Barbara' or 'Waater O' Dye', the speaker here enacts a complete cycle of desire. The fevered longing in 'Mary's Song' falls into the finality of 'Heart-Free'. The 'kist' ('Heart-Free', l. 3) or 'breist' (l. 5) is freed of its fiery passion and the women part. The understatement of the poem's conclusion - 'gi'en it me back agen' (l. 12) - contrasts with the previous stanza's ferocity. Angus intimates that the complete eroticization of other deadens the self - in embracing a desire Angus describes in another poem as 'water roarin' hie', the self loses its autonomy and cannot persist.⁴⁴ The self has its 'hert' back, but it is a badly damaged one whose encounter with fire wounds rather than sains. Excessive desire, Angus implies, brings excessive grief.

The Eerie Hoose

In 'The Eerie Hoose', Angus exhibits an entirely different response to desire: renunciation of other through self-denial. Although this poem appears before 'The Can'el', examining 'The Can'el' first prepares the reader for the kind of passion against which the speaker in 'The Eerie Hoose' reacts. In 'The Eerie Hoose', the self resists the outward pull of desire completely, shutting herself into an increasingly isolated emotional space. Like the allocuter in 'The Seaward Toon' (TR), the self in 'The Eerie Hoose' takes refuge behind a 'steekit door' (l. 17). Because her tenancy of the house is contingent upon the maintenance of two taboos, she is 'fearsome' (l. 7) that any unexpected action that might 'rock' (l. 11) or 'melt' (l. 12) the house. Unlike in the poems previously discussed, the speaker's desideratum seems completely absent from the poem. Whereas in 'Waater O' Dye' one finds the clear dyad of two women, here one cannot discern a presence outside that of the poem's speaker. The speaker's retreat into self-embrace, instead of union with another, underlies the poem's continual inward gravitation.

Angus returns obsessively to the 'I' speaking the poem, to the self's one voice. Or is this so? The answer to the query lies in the mysterious 'says she' beginning four of the poem's six stanzas. Recalling ballad convention, the phrase hints at a double

meaning in its insistent repetition. Who is the poem's speaker: the 'she' mentioned, in a self-referential move, or is it another, recalling the words of an absent 'she'? The consistent present tense problematizes the latter; one cannot recollect something while it is occurring. This uncertainty reinforces the poem's spectral quality by blurring the boundaries between allocuter and locuter. The phrase 'says she' emerges as a distancing device to conceal the unidentified speaker(s) in one of the poem's many gestures of self-protection. It also recalls a north-east child's rhyme that playfully questions the possibility of self-expression in constrained circumstances:

I'm no, says she,
 Sae braw, says she;
 Nor yet, says she,
 Sae big, says she;
 But I'll gang, says she,
 Tae Perth, says she,
 And get, says she,
 A man says she;
 And syne, says she,
 I'll be, says she,
 As guid, says she,
 As you, says she.⁴⁵

In Angus's poem, the ghostly 'she' and her *doppelgänger*, the poem's 'I', merge into the refrain; what becomes important, more than the speaker's exact identity, is the shadowy *duality* of two voices in one. The self, conflicted with an inner duality, consequently rejects any outward advance in fear of losing its fragile 'hame' (l. 2).

'The Eerie Hoose' contains an unflinching representation of the ethic of renunciation. Fearing the 'sexualized fire' (Bachelard, p. 55) of desire portrayed in 'The Can'el', the speaker in 'The Eerie Hoose' shields herself behind taboos which, as in ballads like 'The Wife of Usher's Well', must be obeyed. The woman's ritualised behaviour connects her self to the structure of the 'hoose' itself: it becomes a metaphor for her, as in 'The Singin' Lass', 'A Woman Sings' (LC), and 'Martha's House' (LC). Like Jacob, who associates 'grey vanished walls' with women's elusive lives, Angus equates domestic structures with bounded selves. The link between the two has countless biblical and literary sources, but in Angus's work the bond is particularly important. Whyte argues that 'the house functions as an image of the self' (p. 383), but more than that, in 'The Eerie Hoose' the house represents the

fragile edifice the self constructs against the 'hungry wave' ('The Seaward Toon', l. 10) of external concerns. Although the desire to invite others across the threshold of the 'hooose' / self recurs in Angus's work (in 'The Spae-Wife' and 'Hogmanay' in particular), it is balanced by an equally dominant tendency to resist the outside world ('The Seaward Toon', 'By Candle Light', 'The Prood Lass'). In 'The Eerie Hooose', Angus's descriptions emphasize the *psychological* nature of the house: it is 'stooter than the hills' (l. 3) and 'frailer than the faem' (l. 4), indicating a conjunction of qualities that can co-exist only within a mental space. One can read the restrictions upon the woman's behaviour as symbolic of inner, emotional prohibitions.

The first taboo in 'The Eerie Hooose' forbids the utterance of 'ae word' (l. 9). If spoken, the house's 'stoops' (l. 11) would tremble and disappear like 'simmer snaw' (l. 12). 'Simmer snaw' emphasizes the rarity and fragility of the 'hooose' / self; like the 'gowk storm' Nancy Brysson Morrison chronicles, 'simmer snaw' carries with it implications not only of seasonal disruption but also of a parallel, internal chaos. The speaker's movements within the house outwardly display her psychic unrest. What does her silence imply? Michel Foucault claims that contrary to conventional beliefs, 'what distinguishes these last three centuries is the variety, the wide dispersion of devices' that have been 'invented for speaking about [sex]'.⁴⁶ Angus's work *appears* to contradict this, unless one considers intentional silence as a 'device' for discussing desire. Reading the speaker's enforced silence in this light, her oblique reference to 'ae' (l. 9) unmentionable word becomes, paradoxically, a means of discussing a particular desire. What is this word? A lover's name? Names, or their absence, play an enormous role in poems like 'Mary's Song' (TL), 'Jean Cam'bell' (SL), and 'The Seaward Toon' (TR). As 'The Faithful Heart' (LC) demonstrates, *refusing* to 'name' a lover's 'bonnie name' (l. 16) signifies fidelity. Moreover, whereas in 'Naomi' (LC), speaking a name is an invocation of power, in 'The Eerie Hooose' the refusal to speak one word suggests it is too dangerous to utter. If 'ae word' is not a name, could it be desire? More specifically, lesbian desire? Angus does not reveal it – its noted absence speaks more than its presence could.

The second taboo similarly circumscribes the speaker. She walks 'wi' twa shakin' airms / Close gruppit' to her 'breist' (lines 15-16) to avoid opening the locked door.

Angus collapses the erotic embrace described in 'Waater O' Dye' as the 'luve o' men' (l. 18) (mediated by the spectral woman) onto one person: the speaker becomes both desirer and desideratum; her 'shakin' arms symbolize the difficulty in maintaining this inward-focused attention. Here as in 'Waater O' Dye' an element of fear accompanies the gesture: 'gruppit' can mean either 'grasped' or 'seized with pain' (CSD) – the difference between the two is significant, although both connote sudden, violent movement. As a protective gesture, this embrace shields the speaker's 'hert' from invasive attack ('The Can'el', l. 5). What is behind the 'steekit door'? Is it, as in 'The Seaward Toon', locked against the recognition of a wider, unknown world within? Is it a retreat from an engagement with what Angus calls 'an unsought guest' ('Change', l. 1)? The symbolism of the locked door also suggests a sexual interpretation. Unlike Joanna Bannerman in Catherine Carswell's 1920 novel, Angus's speaker does not want to 'open the door' to the possibility of sexual encounters. Instead, she posits a self-contained, undisclosed sexuality. Eschewing the transgressive violence of 'Barbara' and 'The Can'el', she turns inward to focus on her emotionally turbulent interior.

Angus hints at some of the possible meanings behind the taboos in her description of the 'eerie place' (l. 1) from which the self speaks. In the title, Angus conjoins the poem's physical and psychological aspects concisely: in Scots 'eerie' can mean 'ghostly' or 'strange' (CSD); said of people, it connotes a 'fear of the supernatural which gives rise to uneasiness or loneliness'. Thus Angus links the dwelling she calls interchangeably 'hoose' (l. 2), 'place' (l. 1), and 'hame' (l. 2) with a word whose meanings all connote the impalpable. The house is wraithlike and ephemeral (as 'faem', l. 4), and yet rooted in the 'stoot' (l. 3) external world. The 'uneasiness' or 'loneliness' that 'eerie' suggests draws attention to the speaker's ultimate estrangement from the outside world. Moreover, the house's apparitional nature perhaps represents the 'self-ghosting' mechanism Castle attributes to lesbian writers who 'camouflag[e] their sexual desires or withdraw [...] voluntarily from society in order to escape' societal hostility (p. 7). The way Angus describes the rooms in the 'hoose' (l. 1) is also significant: 'chaumer' (l. 6) means simply 'room' (CSD), but it also means, more intimately, 'private room, originally a bedroom' (CSD). The specificity of the rooms' colour evokes a range of symbolic meanings. Angus seems to attribute a particular importance to blue – although it seems a natural choice because of the

rhyme scheme, she easily could have manipulated the lines had she wanted the rooms a different colour. Blue suggests several things: in 'Curios' (TD), Angus associates it with 'sunny Southern seas' (l. 10), while in 'The Blue Jacket' (TD), the colour connotes a child's fascination with her sister's jacket as a metaphor for male-free childbirth. Its broader resonances are as varied: in Catholic iconography, blue represents purity.⁴⁷ In a Scottish context, blue has more particular sociological resonances: in the nineteenth-century, mendicants (the Gaberlunzie) wore blue robes as did prostitutes, called 'blue gowns' after their uniforms in the House of Corrections.⁴⁸ (Scott wrote about the Gaberlunzie in *The Antiquary* and as an avid Scott reader, Angus would have been aware of this connection.) In folk belief, witches purportedly wore 'blue clews' (McNeill, p. 73); using blue string in Halloween divination rites enabled one to discover her future husband's name (McPherson, p. 12). In folksong and the ballads, blue occasionally represents rarity – in one, the speaker laces her 'boddice' with blue ribbons.⁴⁹ Purity, desire, social opprobrium, and witchery – these disparate implications all contribute to the sense of unease underlying the poem.

The speaker's self-censoring gesture – her 'hand afore' her 'mou' (l. 8), conjoined with her refusal to think about opening the 'steekit door' (l. 17) – is a particularly evocative image, and one which gains a greater significance when read in conjunction with Castle's work. Castle identifies what she considers a recurrent emblem in the portrayal of lesbian desire in fiction: a hand clamped over a mouth to 'wave off' (p. 65) or prevent 'the kiss that doesn't happen, the kiss that *can't happen*' between two women (p. 30, her emphasis). The speaker's self-censoring motion in 'The Eerie House' as it is paralleled in the 'steekit door' 'wave[s] off' the possibility of an outward display of passion, preventing any chance of the self's union with another. Both taboos could be interpreted as symbolic, psychological barriers between the speaker and the means of fulfilling desire. In this reading, the 'ae word' the speaker cannot say symbolizes the (lesbian) desire that cannot be spoken, that the speaker cannot even *think* about, for it is the 'thocht' (l. 18) of opening the door, more than the actual act itself, that is dangerous.

The locked door and covered mouth could also be read in light of the folk legend of Bluebeard's Castle. In the tale, Bluebeard tells his wife there is one door in the castle

she must not open. He leaves her with the key one day and, overcome with curiosity, she opens it to find the bodies of his six previous wives.⁵⁰ The blue rooms and the locked door in Angus's 'eerie' house recall the mixture of sexuality and danger in the fairytale. One could read the door in Angus's poem as a barrier between the self and a secret repository of violent *male* desire. Not thinking about what lies behind the door becomes a way of rejecting that – the imagery of 'weeds in winter's drift' (l. 20) accentuates what the speaker imagines as the barren nature of interaction with an oppressive other. Read this way, the door becomes synonymous with *all curiosity* about sexual relationships, regardless of orientation. Keeping the door shut prevents the speaker from crossing the threshold into interaction with other selves.

The speaker's renunciation of other in 'The Eerie Hoose' is an intriguing commentary upon the consuming desire of 'The Can'el'. Yet is one to imagine that 'doing without' (*Christabel's Diary*, p. 31) is the lesser choice – that complete (emotional, sexual) abstinence is without its rewards? The speaker's conclusion suggests that it is more complicated than that:

'Twad be a dowie hoose
An' weary lang the day
Wis thir nae door I daurna try,
Nae word I daurna say.

The house would be dowie – 'dull' (CSD) – without taboos, for they define her and provide her with a sense of purpose. They literally and symbolically are the 'corner-stanes' (l. 19) of her self. Barthes's analysis of psychosexual constructs of self is useful here, for it clarifies the relationship between desire and restriction. His narrator asserts, 'in order to show you where your desire is, it is enough to forbid it to you *a little* (if it is true that there is no desire without prohibition)' (p. 137, his emphasis). By denying herself the pursuit of the desired other, the speaker in Angus's poem defines the boundaries of her 'hoose' / self and in doing so, constructs a safe space in which she can exist. The *possibility* of expressed desire is always there – behind the door, in the forbidden word. A far-fetched, but intriguing possibility is that Angus spells out the particular kind of the un-pursued desire in her phrase 'clear lichted wast an' east' (l. 14). The reciprocity of light from west and

east suggests a desire of like for like, much as Edwin Morgan's poem 'Strawberries' does with its parallel, rather than binary, imagery. The suggestion that there are two simultaneous sources of illumination implies that this desire is both equal, and also impossible (as the sun cannot shine from two locations at once). Despite this, although the taboos identify the speaker's desire, the speaker controls it by not giving in to longing, by denying the self completely. The 'eerie hoose' persists precisely *because* of the element of denied sexual possibility; without it, it would be 'dowie' indeed. The emergent self and structure are 'eerie' precisely because they exist in a state of 'fear or dread' that such taboos might be broken (CSD).

Ghosts and Shadows: The Self's Elusive 'White Soul'

In Angus's poetry, desire radically shapes the self – closing it off or opening it up. Using alchemical imagery and coded language, Angus depicts a range of responses to passion: from complete self-obliteration, as in 'The Can'el', to the total abnegation revealed in 'The Eerie Hoose'. If the self is alone, it waits 'in expectation' of the 'always absent' other, fearing that self may never arrive (Barthes, pp. 12, 14). The speaker in 'A Woman Sings' (LC) shapes a song around the absent form of the lover's body, and simultaneously weaves her own 'grave-goon' (l. 15), implying both gestures are the same: one makes a bond with other, or with death. In 'Singin' Waater', the speaker does both – for the 'sake o' a leal luv' (l. 19) she drowns herself in water she imagines caressing her as if it were her 'licht luv' (l. 10). If the self achieves some kind of erotic union with the other, as in 'Alas! Poor Queen' (TR), it is endangered by its ultimate inability to both love and preserve its autonomy. In her love poems, Angus returns repeatedly to the image of the speaker's 'hert', for it bears the burden of the self's desire for other; in love, it is broken, split, locked away, charred, besmirched, besieged, and wracked by grief.⁵¹ Removed from the body, as it is in 'Heart-Free', it becomes an emblem of the self's vulnerability: a 'free' heart is also unprotected and exposed. The word 'twine' (l. 1) Angus uses in 'Heart-Free' cleverly encapsulates the conflicting pressures on the self-in-love, for it means both 'to part company' and 'to unite in marriage' (CSD). The middle ground between the two options in Angus's poems is difficult to maintain. The self does experience joy in love – the heart is 'liltin' in some poems ('Huntlie Hill', l. 11) – but this euphoria is short-lived, for any action opening the self outward to the possibility of union

with another brings with it an often violent reaction as the self discovers the ferocity of its passion for other.

The readings provided here have situated Angus's work within a lesbian context, in an attempt to provide a more conclusive analysis of her treatment of the desiring self. As Caird and others have done, one can consider Angus's work within a heterosexual context. In doing so, however, one perhaps overlooks aspects of the poetry that do not seem to 'fit' into a heterosexual reading. As most literary criticism tends to assume a heterosexual reading (consider, for example, how Morgan's poetry and Shakespeare's sonnets have been interpreted as heterosexual love lyrics), in cases like this, the value of taking a different, perhaps more appropriate line of inquiry is useful.⁵² Porter McMillan, for example, attributes the exclusion of the 'male world' in poems like 'The Blue Jacket' to 'asexual' feelings, or 'ambivalence about female experience' (p. 50); by comparison, a lesbian interpretation can emphasize that in general, non-heterosexual passion is *not* automatically 'asexual'. The 'ambivalence' Porter McMillan perceives, moreover, takes on a profoundly different quality when one reads the poem as a rejection of binary gender roles.

It is not necessary – and certainly not useful – to impose a lesbian reading onto Angus's own life. Although her letters to female friends are characterized by their emotional intensity, it is invasive to push the question any further. As Zimmerman argues, one needs *not* have 'biographical proof' to interpret a text within a lesbian context (p. 206) – the text itself determines whether such an approach is suitable. The mysterious narratives of poems like 'The Stranger' (TD), 'The Seaward Toon' (TR), 'The Bridge' (TL), and 'Most Sad is Sleep' (TR) come into focus more sharply when one considers that the 'different / World from this' Angus's speakers imagine may be one in which the celebration of female-female union is possible. Adrienne Rich observes that when one steps out of what she considers a social paradigm of 'compulsory heterosexuality', one can 'turn the lens of vision' to illuminate 'behavior, both in history and in individual biography, that has hitherto been invisible or misnamed', to find evidence of the 'erotic sensuality which has been, precisely, the most violently erased fact of female experience'. The images of erasure and self-censorship, and the consistent use of coded language in Angus's work in

light of Rich's assertions become signifiers of what Castle calls 'amor impossibilia': lesbian desire.⁵³

'Turn[ing] the lens of vision' to examine desire in Angus's work, one can discover ways in which she reveals evidence of female-female desire by the very act of concealing it. By eliding gender indicators from her love poems, she draws attention to self's unknown sexual identity. Moreover, by repeatedly pointing to the 'steekit' door, but refusing to name what lies behind it, she highlights its importance to the speaker. Silence and half-utterances thus underscore the rare moments when the self expresses its desire for other. The unmentioned 'ae' word in 'The Eerie Hoose', its empty space embroidered by the speaker's references to it, throws into relief the rhapsodic reiteration of 'Barbara' in the eponymous poem. The 'cry' of love the speaker hears in 'Waater O'Dye', when read in conjunction with the *absence* or rejection of such invocations in poems like 'The Eerie Hoose' or 'Anemones' (SL) suddenly illuminate the frequency to which Angus's speakers refer to hearing their names called by lovers – in 'Winds of the World', 'World's Love' (SC), 'Heritage' (SC), 'Jean Cam'bell' (SL), 'A Traveller' (SL), 'Desires of Youth' (LC), among others. Furthermore, by evoking female bodies that are 'sheda'less' ('Waater O' Dye', l. 4), Angus 'call[s] up' the ghostly presence of female-female desire precisely by 'wav[ing] it off' (Castle, pp. 46, 65). The presence of female lovers in poems like 'At Parting' (LC) haunt her narratives, but they are always just out of reach, slipping 'oot' of the self's grasp (l. 6). The numinous 'white soul' ('Invitation', l. 11) the self holds back from union with other exposes the 'self-ghosting' (Castle, p. 7) instinct at the heart of Angus's love poems. If one pieces together glimpses of the self's 'white soul' in Angus's poetry, one acquires a wraithlike quilt of half-seen interactions between the self and an often spectral other.

Curiously, the proliferation of spectral figures in Angus's work seems to extend to her own self – as if lacking the words to describe her personality, commentators (even friends) turn her into a ghost. Cruickshank describes her as 'frail as a wraith, with her long grey fringe hanging over her brow' (p. 135), and confesses that in reading through Angus's work, feels as though she, like 'Tom O' Bedlam' were 'wandering in the company of ghosts and shadows'. Shepherd, meanwhile, contends that Angus's landscapes and her speakers are 'suffused with herself', as though she

were a spirit. Cruickshank and Shepherd knew Angus well, and yet find her presence somehow ineffable and numinous. Reviewers also comment upon the ghostly nature of her work: one believes her imagination 'moves most freely among unknown modes of being, in a region where the partitions between seen and unseen, present and past, melt away, where the living lover is more ghostly than the dead'. Another contends her 'chief contribution to Scottish poetry' is a 'haunting' quality.⁵⁴ In these depictions, by making Angus otherworldly, the commentators (consciously or unconsciously) 'derealiz[e]' Angus and her work (Castle, p. 34). If the passion in her work is 'ghostly' or 'haunting', it is somehow made safe because its strangeness is attributed to an 'unknown mode of being' – that is, not based upon erotic drive, but upon a disembodied, de-materialized, and ultimately de-sexualized desire: safe and 'asexual'.

The ferocity of the self's passion for other in Angus's work – regardless of whether one reads it as desire for women or for men – merits a closer look; Lindsay claims that her 'theme is almost always the same' – the 'delicately and subtly' recorded depictions of 'unfulfilled' love – but as the analysis above suggests, her poetry is *not* simply about unfulfilled love (p. xii). Her poetry records a variety of responses to the often violent and self-shattering effects of passion – there is nothing 'delicate' about the invasive interactions in 'Barbara' or 'The Can'el'; 'Waater O' Dye' cannot be dismissed as the 'plight of the sensitive girl whose love is unreturned and must go unfulfilled' (xii). Instead, her work meditates upon the self's struggle to balance self-protective impulses with its erotic attraction to other selves; what cannot be said – the forbidden 'ae word' – can be 'heard' if one listens carefully to the 'rifts' in the text (Collecott, p. 105). It is time to *listen* to her work, and to look closely through the 'lens of vision' Rich describes to discern the kinds of passion recorded (p. 220), and the reasons for keeping it 'hapt' in the text; then, perhaps, she will cease to be a 'wraith' drifting 'in the company of ghosts and shadows' and perhaps then the body of her work will acquire the solidity denied it for so long.

¹ 'The End O't', l. 22, *Bonnie Joann*. 'Courtin', l. 27, *Sun and Candlelight*.

² 'Winds of the World', l. 12, *The Singin' Lass*; 'Invitation', l. 11, *The Singin' Lass*.

³ 'The Turn of the Day', lines 7-12, *The Lilt*.

⁴ 'Mary's Song', lines 9-12, *The Tinker's Road*. See introduction for an earlier draft of 'Mary's Song'.

⁵ Harriet Hawkins, 'The General Dynamics of Desire', *Critical Survey*, 8 (September 1996), pp. 223-245 (p. 234).

⁶ 'Cotton Grasses', lines 7, 8-11, *Sun and Candlelight*.

⁷ Graves, 'The Poetry of Marion Angus', p. 107.

⁸ Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*, pp. 14, 12. His emphasis.

⁹ 'A Woman Sings', lines 3-4, *Lost Country*.

¹⁰ 'Invitation', l. 1, *The Singin' Lass*.

¹¹ *Christabel's Diary*, p. 31.

¹² This recalls what Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar call an 'aesthetic of renunciation' characterizing the work of nineteenth-century women poets (particularly Christina Rossetti); in Angus's work, by contrast, self-renunciation characterizes the emotional motivation of Angus's poetic selves rather than the poet's aesthetic philosophy. 'The Aesthetics of Renunciation' in *The Madwoman in the Attic* (London, 1979), pp. 549-75 (passim). Jan Montefiore, *Feminism and Poetry: Language, Experience, Identity in Women's Writing* (London, 1987), p. 125.

¹³ An example of 'carpe diem' motif is 'Gather ye rosebuds while ye may, / Old time is still a-flying; / And this same flower that smiles today, / Tomorrow will be dying', by Robert Herrick, 'To the Virgins, To Make Much of Time', lines 1-4, in *The Oxford Anthology of English Literature: The Literature of Renaissance England*, edited by John Hollander and Frank Kermode (London, 1973), pp. 614-615 (p. 614).

¹⁴ Lindsay, 'Introduction', *Selected Poems of Marion Angus*, p. xii.

¹⁵ Caird, 'The Poetry of Marion Angus', p. 45. 'Winds of the World', l. 12. Porter [McMillan], 'Scotland's Songstresses', p. 50.

¹⁶ 'Annie Honey', l. 27, *The Tinker's Road*; 'Singin' Waater', l. 9, *Sun and Candlelight*; 'Heart-Free', lines 3-4, *The Singin' Lass*.

¹⁷ 'The Prood Lass', lines 10, 11, *Sun and Candlelight*.

¹⁸ Whyte, 'Marion Angus and the Borders of Self', p. 379; MacRitchie, 'Arbroath's Singin' Lass', n/p; Graves, p. 97.

¹⁹ Wolff, 'Un-Utterable Longing: The Discourse of Feminine Sexuality in Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*', p. 185.

²⁰ This conclusion is interesting, but limited by its ageist assumptions – poets who write about desire in their fifties (e.g. Adrienne Rich and Denise Levertov) need not produce solely retrogressive poems.

²¹ Carole S. Vance, 'Pleasure and Danger: Towards a Politics of Sexuality' in *Pleasure and Danger: Exploring Female Sexuality*, edited by Carole S. Vance (London, 1989), pp. 1-27 (p. 13). Vance writes generally, not in specific reference to Scottish women's writing.

²² MS 19328, folio 120, 6 March circa 1931, NLS, her emphasis.

²³ Liz Yorke, 'Constructing a Lesbian Poetic for Survival: Broumas, Rukeyser, H.D., Rich, Lord', in *Sexual Sameness: Textual Differences in Lesbian and Gay Writing*, edited by Joseph Bristow (London, 1992), pp. 187-209 (p. 189).

²⁴ Judith Butler, 'Imitation and Gender Insubordination' in *Inside / Out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories*, edited by Diana Fuss (London, 1991), pp. 13-31 (p. 15).

²⁵ Lindsay, p. xii; Porter McMillan, passim; Caird, passim. Cruickshank, 'A Personal Note', passim. Whyte obliquely considers, and brushes aside, a lesbian reading of Angus's poetry.

²⁶ Diana Collecott, 'What is Not Said: A Study in Textual Inversion', in *Sexual Sameness: Textual Differences in Lesbian and Gay Writing*, edited by Joseph Bristow (London, 1992), pp. 91-110 (p. 102). Bonnie Zimmerman, 'What Has Never Been: An Overview of Lesbian Feminist Literary Criticism' in *The New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature, and Theory*, ed. by Elaine Showalter (London, 1986), pp. 200-224 (pp. 211-212). Her emphasis.

²⁷ Terry Castle, *The Apparitional Lesbian: Female Homosexuality and Modern Culture* (New York, 1993), p. 60.

²⁸ 'Jealousy', l. 4, *Sun and Candlelight*.

²⁹ See Zimmerman, p. 208.

³⁰ McPherson, *Primitive Beliefs in the North-East of Scotland*, p. 64.

³¹ Eve Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (NY, 1985), passim.

³² 'Singin' Waater', l. 20, *Sun and Candlelight*.

³³ 'The Ghost', lines 35, 36, *The Tinker's Road*.

³⁴ Radford, *Encyclopedia of Superstitions*, p. 283.

³⁵ Marion Angus, 'Green Beads: The Story of a Lost Love', *Pearson's Magazine*, 21 (May 1906), pp. 558-562.

- ³⁶ See René Girard, *Deceit, Desire, and the Novel: Self and Other in Literary Structure*, translated by Yvonne Freccero (London, 1976); Sedgwick, *passim*; Castle, *passim*.
- ³⁷ Georges Bataille, *Eroticism*, translated by Mary Dalwood (London, 1962), p. 170.
- ³⁸ Joseph Bristow, *Sexuality*, The New Critical Idiom Series (London, 1997), p. 122.
- ³⁹ Gaston Bachelard, *The Psychoanalysis of Fire*, translated by Alan C. M. Ross (London, 1964), p. 53.
- ⁴⁰ Letters of Charles Graves, NLS, MS 27476, folios 25-27. Her emphasis.
- ⁴¹ Caird, p. 46. Cruickshank, *Octobiography*, p. 135. 'By Candlelight', l. 31, *The Lilt*. McNeill, *The Silver Bough: A Study of the National and Local Festivals of Scotland*, p. 17.
- ⁴² 'A Small Thing', l. 17, *The Turn of the Day*.
- ⁴³ 'Though the night was made for loving, / And the day returns too soon, / Yet we'll no more go a-roving / By the light of the moon.' Lord Byron, 'So We'll Go No More A-Roving' in *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*, pp. 592-593.
- ⁴⁴ 'This Woman', l. 31, *The Singin' Lass*.
- ⁴⁵ Norah and William Montgomerie, *Scottish Nursery Rhymes* (Edinburgh, 1985), p. 112. The rhyme originates in Forfar, near Arbroath, so it is possible Angus may have known it.
- ⁴⁶ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, translated by Robert Hurley (Harmondsworth, 1990), I, 34.
- ⁴⁷ Angus's 'Green Beads' indicates she was aware of Catholic traditions.
- ⁴⁸ Ebenezer Cobham Brewer, *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*, revised by Ivor H. Evans from 1870 edition (Ware, Hertfordshire, 1996), pp. 146, 248. OED.
- ⁴⁹ Anne Hunter, 'My Mother Bids Me Bind My Hair', stanza one, in *An Anthology of Scottish Women Poets*, edited by Catherine Kerrigan, p. 166.
- ⁵⁰ Brewer, p. 126. Sylvia Townsend-Warner re-interprets the tale in her 1940 short story 'Bluebeard's Daughter'. The ballad 'The Gowans Sae Gay' relates a similar tale. Bluebeard appears to be a popular theme - Edna St. Vincent Millay includes 'Bluebeard' in *Renascence* (1924); Sylvia Townsend Warner publishes 'Bluebeard's Daughter' in 1940; Bartok produces 'Bluebeard's Castle' in 1911.
- ⁵¹ 'Mary's Song', l. 9; 'Barbara', (l. 8); 'Heart-Free' (l. 3); 'The Can'el' (l. 8); 'Singin' Waater': 'Oh, wad ye bit tak ma grief awa' / An' mak ma hert clean' (lines 13-14); 'Winds of the World': 'The thocht o' them it ne'er can blow / Frae the warm sheilin' o' my hairt' (lines 11-12); 'The Green Yaird': 'or a he'rt to mourn' (l. 21).
- ⁵² Shakespeare's sonnets are written both to the 'Dark Lady' and a young blond man - the first poems in the sequence are to the young man. *Sonnets* in *The Oxford Anthology of English Literature: The Literature of Renaissance England*.
- ⁵³ 'Most Sad is Sleep', lines 23-24. Adrienne Rich, 'Compulsory Sexuality and Lesbian Existence' (1980) in *Adrienne Rich's Poetry and Prose: Prose, Poems, Reviews, and Criticism*, edited by Barbara Charlesworth Gelpi and Albert Gelpi (London, 1975), pp. 203-224 (pp. 220-221). Castle, p. 36. Of course, it is reductive and essentialist to assume these characteristics apply solely to lesbian texts, as silence and self-censorship arise in numerous different kinds of texts. See Louise Bogan's *The Blue Estuaries: Poems 1923-1968*.
- ⁵⁴ Cruickshank, 'A Personal Note', p. xvii. Shepherd, p. 12. It is interesting that Angus uses the same kind of language to describe Shepherd, calling her an 'emanation' of the 'spirit' of the moorland. Papers of Nan Shepherd, AUSC, MS 3036. Review of *The Singin' Lass*, *TLS*, 10 October 1929, pp. 798-799. Papers of Helen Cruickshank, AUSC, MS 2737, folio 42 (undated off-cut from *The Bulletin*).

Conclusion

The inter-war years were a tremendously rich period in Scottish literary history – as many critics have observed, the abundance of women poets, novelists, and short-fiction writers during the 1920s and 1930s produced an impressive body of work that was vitally concerned with ‘modern issues’.¹ This dissertation suggests that to do justice to the work of inter-war writers like Jacob and Angus, one should consider their writing in multiple interlinked contexts in order to throw contrasting aspects of their poetry into relief. To understand what ‘modern issues’ Jacob and Angus tackle, one needs to examine first the historical and sociological setting in which they wrote. Too often, as Virginia Woolf reminds us in *A Room of One’s Own*, women are ‘all but absent from history’. Situating Jacob and Angus within a historical context thus becomes more important because it indicates their real presence within Scottish (literary) history. To do so becomes an act of what Adrienne Rich calls ‘re-vision’ – the ‘act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction’.² In this ‘re-vision[ary]’ light, one can restore Jacob’s and Angus’s names to the books – the anthologies, literary histories, and critical studies – in which their names, and their work, have not appeared for eighty years.

It is important to see their poems as part of the Scottish literary tradition, for both poets’ work emerges out of a close engagement with traditional literary forms. The influence of the ballads in their work is immediately obvious, while closer inspection reveals the presence of folksong and dramatic monologue techniques in their poetic treatment of voice. Moreover, as Jacob’s 1921 essay on William Dunbar implies, she also drew upon his ‘love of beauty’ and ‘economy of words’.³ More commonly noted, the connection between her work and that of aristocratic women poets like Lady Nairne is also interesting, for it identifies a precedent for her representation of women’s voices in her late poems. Meanwhile, reading Angus’s work in relation to the ballads offers an understanding of how she uses ambiguity and narrative lacunae to structure her poetry; tracing evidence of the folksong tradition in her work highlights her interpolation of musical rhythms into what she calls her ‘songs’.⁴ Examining the use of folk belief in both poets’ *oeuvre* reveals their interaction with a much older, oral tradition as well.

Situating their work within Scottish literary tradition not only identifies their position in a lineage of (female) poets, songwriters, and ballad singers, but it also emphasizes the connections they draw in their poetry between their literary heritage and 'modern issues'. Despite the tendency in the past to view them as either 'very minor' versifiers with 'narrow' ranges, or poets who produced 'nothing radically new', they did build upon Scottish tradition by introducing modern conceptions of the *psychologized* self into traditional literary forms.⁵ Their work appears 'narrow' only when viewed in the wrong context; analysing their poems with reference to wider literary and cultural histories illuminates key thematic aspects that otherwise might escape notice. How one views their poetry depends entirely upon the filter through which one looks.

Tracing 'Little Streams of Influence'

Influence upon MacDiarmid

The representations of self in the poetry of Jacob and Angus are important not only because they forge a link between traditional and modern elements in Scottish literature but also because they provide a model of self-aware speakers upon which later poets have expanded. In particular, one can trace one of the 'little stream[s] of influence' MacDiarmid (rather patronizingly) attributes to Jacob's (and Angus's) work in his own early Scots writing (p. 9). No doubt despite protestations to the contrary, one can discern distinct evidence of an unacknowledged debt to Angus's and Jacob's work in MacDiarmid's subject matter and his metrics. When his first volume of Scots poetry appeared in 1925, Jacob already had three volumes of Scots poetry and one chapbook in print, and Angus two. MacDiarmid knew both poets' work well, for he published their work in *Scottish Chapbook* and reviewed it in various periodicals - so one can imagine the abrupt switch from his English poetry in *Annals of the Five Senses* (1923) to his Scots lyrics in *Sangschaw* (1925) was facilitated in part by the Scots poetry already in existence at the time. His 1925 poems 'The Eemis Stane' and 'Au Clair de la Lune', for example, contain lines that recall Jacob's English poem 'Winter Phantasy' from *Bonnie Joann* (1921).⁶ In 'The Eemis Stane', earth is an 'eemis stane' (l. 2) that 'wags i' the lift' (l. 3); 'history's hazleraw' (l. 7) and the 'fug o' fame' (l. 6) cloak its surface; in Jacob's poem, the 'blurred earth' (l. 17) is 'burnt fervent-white with rime' (l. 18), and 'mazed with snow' (l. 22) and 'lichen' (l.

24). In 'III' of 'Au Clair de la Lune', MacDiarmid makes reference to 'Earth, the bare auld stane' (l. 2) that 'glitters beneath the seas o' Space, / White as a mammoth's bane' (lines 3-4). Jacob's poem speaks of the 'seas of Heaven' (l. 10) and the 'dim world' (l. 25) seen through 'frost-light sublime' (l. 19). Although Jacob's poem is not a particularly memorable one, the similarities between it and MacDiarmid's are compelling. MacDiarmid pushes the cosmic intimations in Jacob's poem farther in his two poems, using alliterative language to emphasize their otherworldly qualities. MacDiarmid's 1925 poem 'Crowdieknowe' (p. 14), similarly, recalls Angus's poem 'The Lane Kirkyaird,' from her 1924 volume *The Tinker's Road*. Both reinterpret the meaning of Judgement Day: in MacDiarmid's 'when the last trumpet blows' (l. 2) the 'deid come loupin'" (l. 3) over walls and 'frae the croodit clay' (l. 7); in Angus's poem, for comparison, the 'auld kith an kin' (l. 18) win 'free' from their graves 'wi' the hindmaist trumpet's blast' (l. 11). Although MacDiarmid 'redirect[s]' the Christian 'ideology' in the poem, interpreting it in a different manner to Angus, the similarity between the two is still marked. In addition, W. N. Herbert conjectures that Jacob's 1915 poem 'The Philosophy of the Ditch' (SA) provided a model for MacDiarmid's *A Drunk Man Looks at the Thistle* (1926) – if in theme alone.⁷ Indeed, a close reading of both makes it possible to imagine MacDiarmid overlaying his own philosophical material onto the form Jacob employs.

Furthermore, one can discern echoes of Jacob's work in MacDiarmid's metrics. MacDiarmid was keenly aware of her technical skill; in *Contemporary Scottish Studies*, he claims that her 'distinct contribution to vernacular verse' is 'a new consciousness of technique' (p. 8). Comparing her 1915 poem 'The Gean-Trees' to MacDiarmid's 1925 poem 'The Sauchs in the Reuch Heuch Hauch' (p. 11), for example, reveals metrical parallels between the two poems. Although 'The Gean-Trees' is not one of Jacob's strongest poems, it is metrically quite complex. Like Jacob's poem, MacDiarmid's uses irregular line lengths, repeated sound patterns, stress-driven rhythms, clusters of anapestic phrases, and tightly overlapping internal rhymes. Lines like MacDiarmid's 'like the sauls o' the damned are they' (l. 2) and 'is birlin' the lee-lang day' (l. 4) sound eerily like Jacob's 'wi' their feet on the dark'nin' land' (l. 3) and 'was like pairls frae the branches snawin'" (l. 18). There is not space here for a more in-depth analysis of the metrical echoes in MacDiarmid's early lyrics, but it is

worth noting that his familiarity with her work suggests that her metrical structures may have been one of the elements out of which he forged his 'braid' Scots poems.

The essential structural and linguistic similarities between MacDiarmid's work and that of Angus and Jacob mentioned briefly above should be considered in the light of a surprising claim MacDiarmid made in 1930. In a letter to Charles Graves, MacDiarmid asks him to consider his unpublished volume *Fier Comme Un Eccosais* for publication, maintaining his book is 'equal in voice to Marion Angus's "Sun and Candlelight"'.⁸ Reading this suggests a rather different version of literary history: here MacDiarmid places himself in the shadow of Angus's poetry, rather than the other way around. This unexpected gesture also makes one wonder whether the narrowness MacDiarmid publicly attributes to Angus's work is not a little exaggerated. In general, the salient connections between MacDiarmid's lyrics and that of Jacob and Angus indicate that it is past time to re-evaluate the significance of their work upon the development of his Scots poetry.

Contemporary Relevance

Their work is relevant beyond its connection to MacDiarmid's work, however. Despite how difficult it is to locate their books, one can see how their poetry exists as part of a larger continuum of women's writing in Scotland, one that stretches forward into the work of contemporary writers as well. For example, Jacob's critique of self-limiting gender roles finds its late twentieth-century parallel in the work of poets like Liz Lochhead, Valerie Gillies, and Tessa Ransford. The self-assured speakers in Lochhead's 'The Grim Sisters' or Gillies's 'Trick of Memory' clearly exist within the same category of voices as Jacob's 'A Change o' Deils' or 'The Deil'.⁹ Although these contemporary poets clearly have more overtly feminist poetic projects, their work nonetheless has precedents in Jacob's late poems in women's voices. Angus's work, with its evocation of the self's complex, fragmented consciousness, can be seen as Modernist in its concerns; in this way it provides a *different* model of Scots verse than MacDiarmid's. The mixture of eerie and actual suffusing her work informs the works of contemporary Scots poets like Sheena Blackhall. Blackhall remarks that she teaches the work of Jacob and Angus to schoolchildren in her current position as writer-in-residence at the Elphinstone Institute, and notes that they are fascinated by the language. Similarly, university

students exposed to their work for the first time are surprised to find how relevant poems like 'Mary's Song' or 'The Jaud' are over seventy years later.¹⁰

Treasures That Prevail

Now Jacob and Angus's names are referred to in tandem, as though their work were the same, but when they were published originally, they existed within a diverse community of writers whose work has not persisted in the literary record. Reading through Catherine Kerrigan's *An Anthology of Scottish Women Poets* makes this clear: names like Olive Fraser, Jessie Anne Anderson, Edith Anne Robertson, Bessie MacArthur, Margaret Simpson, Mary Symon, Dorothy Walton, who were once known and read, have slipped away, out of print, out of sight, lost. Once out of print, their work is rarely taught in schools (if they ever were); not taught and not discussed, their work is 'half-wedged and left to rot' until someone reads it again.¹¹ So much more must be done to restore their work to print or we risk losing sight of half our literary history. But literary history is curious – one cannot always predict what voices will be preserved, what texts lost, what writers rediscovered. Republishing the Metaphysical poets in the 1910s, for example, led to a renewed interest in their work after decades of critical neglect, inspiring then-new poets like T. S. Eliot. One wonders how re-publishing Jacob's and Angus's work – or Olive Fraser's, or Helen Cruickshank's – might affect Scottish literary history of the future. Certainly, in recent years the re-publication of Catherine Carswell's *Open the Door!* and Willa Muir's work has led to an increased interest in their work; this also points to the great disparity in the treatment of novels and poetry: novels tend to be re-published, but poems rarely re-appear in a whole volume (other than in anthologies) beyond the first printing. Jacob's *Flemington*, for example, has been re-printed twice, but as of yet no one has expressed a serious interest in re-releasing her poetry.

Re-publication of their work is not enough, though; it must be considered as part of a wider literary tradition. In compiling this dissertation, it has become obvious to me that this approach is 'one of many circles' in which one could consider the work of Jacob and Angus.¹² Within the Scottish tradition, it would be interesting to compare their work to that of fellow women writers. In particular, pairing Angus's

poetry with Nan Shepherd's, and Jacob's with Mary Symon's would be fruitful – not only for addressing different uses of Scots, but also for teasing out a greater understanding of their treatment of voice. A comparison between the exile poetry of Robert Louis Stevenson and Jacob, for example, might also broaden the understanding of the vernacular tradition; Stevenson's poetry is often neglected because of chronological constraints (i.e. in twentieth-century anthologies or studies) or because his fiction is privileged over his poetry. Outwith the Scottish tradition, there are multiple possibilities: reading Jacob's work alongside the poetry of both A. E. Housman and Thomas Hardy might illuminate their representations of the self-in-space, and highlight the relationship between memory and space in each poet's corpus. Moreover, looking at Angus's poems in the context of the Metaphysicals – in particular Donne, whose work she admired – could elucidate her mixture of religious and 'pagan' imagery.¹³ A close examination of her work in conjunction with the poetry of contemporaneous writers Charlotte Mew and Louise Bogan might yield a broader understanding of the close relationship between silence and desire in the work of all three poets.

Finding Again the World

Initially, I started this research because Angus's and Jacob's poetry intrigued me; spurred on by the general lack of critical material on their work, I was determined to unearth as much information about their lives and work as I could. Even after three years of close engagement with their work, I still find their work compelling. Angus's poetry, in particular, needs to be considered more seriously; poems like 'The Eerie Hoose' and 'Waater o' Dye', with their richly textured language, and opaque symbolism, continue to yield surprises. But as Howard Nemerov, in his poem 'The Blue Swallows' (1967), reminds us:

...poems are not
The point. Finding again the world,
That is the point, where loveliness
Adorns intelligible things
Because the mind's eye lit the sun.¹⁴

'Finding again the world' – that has become the ultimate aim of this dissertation: to explore moments in Jacob's and Angus's diverse *oeuvres* when their 'mind's eye' shines through the text, projecting however briefly an image of the world of which

they wrote. Whether it is the inner space of 'The Seaward Toon' or 'The End O't' or the external landscape in 'Annie Honey' or 'The Licht Nichts' – finding that world, echoing with voices from the 'cauld east countra', is the 'point'.¹⁵ A Scottish literary history that considers these voices will be all the better for it.

¹ Kerrigan, 'MacDiarmid's Early Poetry', p. 75. See also: Margaret Elphinstone, 'Willa Muir: Crossing the Genres' in *A History of Scottish Women's Writing*, edited by Douglas Gifford and Dorothy McMillan (Edinburgh, 1997), pp. 400-415. Isobel Murray, 'Novelists of the Renaissance', in *The History of Scottish Literature*, IV, pp. 103-118. Palmer McCulloch, 'Fictions of Development 1920-1970', pp. 360-372. Margaret Elphinstone, 'Four Pioneering Novels', *Chapman (Women's Forum)*, 74-75 (Autumn/Winter 1993), pp. 23-39. Dorothy McMillan, 'Twentieth-Century Poetry I: Rachel Annand Taylor to Veronica Forrest-Thomson', in *A History of Scottish Women's Writing*, pp. 428-443. Glenda Norquay, 'Catherine Carswell: Open the Door!', in *A History of Scottish Women's Writing*, pp. 389-399.

² Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*, reprinted from the 1929 edition (London, 1981), p. 43. Rich, 'When We Dead Awaken: Writing As Re-vision', p. 167.

³ 'William Dunbar', *Country Life*, 19 March 1921, p. 350.

⁴ Papers of Nan Shepherd, AUSC, MS 3036, folio 4.

⁵ MacDiarmid, *Contemporary Scottish Studies*, pp. 9, 62. All MacDiarmid references refer to this text unless otherwise specified. Glen, *Hugh MacDiarmid and the Scottish Renaissance*, p. 63.

⁶ 'The Eemis Stane' and 'Au Claire de la Lune' originally from *Sangschaw*, reprinted in *Selected Poems*, edited by Alan Riach and Michael Grieve (London, 1992), pp. 11-13, 14-15. All references are to this text.

⁷ Whyte, 'Marion Angus and the Borders of Self', p. 385. Herbert, p. 114.

⁸ Papers of Charles Graves, NLS, MS 27476, folio 87 (c. February 1930).

⁹ Liz Lochhead, 'The Grim Sisters', in *Three Scottish Poets: MacCaig, Morgan, Lochhead*, edited by Roderick Watson (Edinburgh, 1995), pp. 106-7. Valerie Gillies, 'Trick of Memory', in *An Anthology of Scottish Women Poets*, edited by Catherine Kerrigan (Edinburgh, 1991), p. 308.

¹⁰ Sheena Blackhall reveals that she 'was made aware of the work of Angus and Jacob as a student in Aberdeen, and subsequently read their work in *Ten North-East Poets*'. Private correspondence, c. April 2000. Observation from teaching Scottish literature to first year students at the University of Glasgow.

¹¹ Rich, 'Diving into the Wreck', l. 82.

¹² Wallace Stevens, 'Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird', l. 37, in *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*, p. 932-934.

¹³ Papers of Mairi Campbell Ireland, NLS, MS 19328, folio 16, c. 19 November 1929.

¹⁴ Nemerov, 'The Blue Swallows', in *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*, pp. 1216-1217 (p. 1217).

¹⁵ Marion Angus, 'Gathering Shells', l. 19, *Lost Country*.

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