Deeley, Norman (2021) Scottish presence in the Australian fiction of Catherine Helen Spence (1825-1910) with specific reference to 'Mr Hogarth's Will' (1865) and 'Gathered In' (1881-82). MPhil(R) thesis.

https://theses.gla.ac.uk/82192/

Copyright and moral rights for this work are retained by the author

A copy can be downloaded for personal non-commercial research or study, without prior permission or charge

This work cannot be reproduced or quoted extensively from without first obtaining permission in writing from the author

The content must not be changed in any way or sold commercially in any format or medium without the formal permission of the author

When referring to this work, full bibliographic details including the author, title, awarding institution and date of the thesis must be given

Enlighten: Theses
https://theses.gla.ac.uk/
research-enlighten@glasgow.ac.uk

Deeley, Norman (2020) *Scottish Presence in the Australian Fiction of Catherine Helen Spence (1825-1910) with Specific Reference to 'Mr Hogarth's Will (1865) and 'Gathered In' (1881-82)*. MPhil thesis.

Copyright and moral rights for this work are retained by the author

A copy can be downloaded for personal non-commercial research or study, without prior permission or charge

This work cannot be reproduced or quoted extensively from without first obtaining permission in writing from the author

The content must not be changed in any way or sold commercially in any format or medium without the formal permission of the author

When referring to this work, full biographical details including the author, title, awarding institution and date of the thesis must be given

Scottish Presence in the Australian Fiction of Catherine Helen Spence (1825-1910) with Specific Reference to 'Mr Hogarth's Will' (1865) and 'Gathered In' (1881-82).

Norman Deeley

M.A. (Hons)

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Philosophy in Scottish Literature

School of Critical Studies

College of Arts

University of Glasgow

October 2020

Abstract

Catherine Helen Spence (1825-1910) is acknowledged in Australia as an important feminist author, journalist, Unitarian preacher and advocate of political and social reform. Spence's fiction is increasingly being read as a radical alternative to the traditional male-oriented Australian literary canon. The claim of this dissertation, however, is that Melrose-born Spence's fiction should be revaluated from a Scottish perspective, based on the premise that her novels are significantly imbued with a pronounced Scottish presence. The dissertation aims to make a contribution to existing critical commentary about Spence through a re-reading of her texts from this standpoint because previous studies of Spence's fiction have not presented a Scottish-nuanced critique in relation to her artistic intentions. The methodology includes a close analysis of a representative selection of Spence's novels, reference to relevant literary criticism and recognition of the importance of the British colonial environment in which she lived and worked. It also considers the significance of a range of Spence's non-fiction writing. Spence's absence as a female writer from the Scottish literary landscape is explored, as are the changes which have occurred with respect to her reputation in the Australian literary canon. In examining Spence's texts, the challenges relating both to the ascription of national identity and to contextualisation for nineteenth-century Scottish writers are addressed. To support the aim of the dissertation, the Scottish framework of Spence's fiction is interrogated; in particular her use of Scottish settings, characters, language and cultural reference points. The centrality of Scottish tropes to the realisation of Spence's artistic intentions is highlighted in a detailed examination of *Mr Hogarth's Will* (1865) and *Gathered In* (1881-82). Spence's focus on the topics of marriage and religion is foregrounded and her reliance on Scots law and Scottish Presbyterianism to achieve her literary goals is emphasised. The dissertation concludes that there is a valid case for re-assessing Spence's fiction from a Scottish viewpoint. Its findings are that Spence should not be read solely as a proto-feminist Australian writer but should be recalibrated as a Scottish-accented author who argued for gender equality within a

British imperial context. Finally, the implications for contemporary readings of Spence and also for future studies of her works are opened out for consideration.

CONTENTS

Introduction: p.5

Chapter 1: Absence and Reputation in the Novels of Catherine Helen Spence: p.19

Chapter 2: The Scottish Framework of Spence's Australian Fiction: p.41

Chapter 3: The Centrality of Scotland to the Marriage Plot in *Mr Hogarth's Will* and *Gathered In*: p.69

Chapter 4: The Centrality of Scotland in Spence's Representation of Religious Matters: p.97

Conclusion: p.118

Bibliography: p.123

INTRODUCTION

In Scotland, if Robert Burns (1759-96) and Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832) are taken as examples, the esteem in which a writer is held is signalled by public statuary, imagery on banknotes and academic commentary. In Australia, Catherine Helen Spence (1825-1910) is honoured by a public statue in Adelaide, she appears on the five-dollar note of 2001 commemorating the Centenary of Federation, her image is on a postage stamp of 1975, a wing of the State Library of South Australia is named after her and she was Australia's first female political candidate in 1897 yet, as a writer, she warrants at best a marginal literary status in the land of her birth. In a world of semiotics, this disparity merits some examination. This dissertation asks why Melrose-born Spence, author of eight works of fiction and a prominent female public figure in a Victorian Australian environment, finds herself largely unrecognised and unappreciated in Scotland.

In the process of ascribing national identity to an author and questioning Spence's absence from Scotland's literary map, even at a regional level, the dissertation asks a number of relevant questions in relation to how fiction deemed to be Scottish can be differentiated from that understood as, for example, English or Australian, and what some of the defining markers of Scottish writing might include. In a modern context of synergised literary theories one core problem remains the attempt to apprehend the meaning of a text, and in Spence's particular case to argue why her writing is worthy of literary consideration in Scotland. This dissertation argues that, despite the shifting historical and societal pressures which exist from one generation to the next in any attempt to validate what constitutes significant literature, Spence should be revaluated as an important Scottish female writer of the nineteenth century working within the wider context of the British imperial project.

The issues of the absence of women from studies of Scottish literature and the allocation of Scottish literary identity, particularly in the case of writers who have

left Scotland, have proved to be historically problematic. In recognising that there are competing priorities in the establishment of any literary canon and in acknowledging that it is a process rightly under continuous negotiation, the observation by Douglas Gifford and Dorothy McMillan nevertheless appears apposite in Spence's case when they suggest 'Scottish literature presents a terrain which has not hitherto been mapped in a relief which shows where its women came from, and the real contribution they make to Scottish culture and culture generally'.[1] The lack of mapping referred to is appropriate to this dissertation's aim in its attempted partial reclamation of Spence given that she was a Scot involved in one of this country's many diasporas, arriving in the uncharted British colony of South Australia in 1839 aged fourteen. Thus Spence was not only a female writer, proportionately militating against possible academic consideration, she was also a Scottish emigrant which according to Gerard Carruthers places her in a literary cohort who 'tend to be little noticed in Scotland'.[2] In relation to the question of national identity, it is accepted that there are significant caveats to be borne in mind. Robert Crawford reflects in detail on the factors which, when agglomerated, contribute to the idea of any writer presenting as Scottish. Important in his analysis is the influence of Scottish cultural inheritance, the languages of Scotland, larger political forces, how educational establishments operate and the place of history, religion, gender and class. Crawford urges the avoidance of stereotyping when any assignation of identity is attempted and argues 'what is needed is a wide-angled view of Scottish literary history'.[3] In synthesizing the negativity implicit in the observations by Gifford, McMillan and

---

[1] Douglas Gifford and Dorothy McMillan, eds., *A History of Scottish Women's Writing* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997), p.ix.
[2] Gerard Carruthers, *Scottish Literature* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd., 2009), p.172.
[3] Robert Crawford, *Scotland's Books: The Penguin History of Scottish Literature* (London: Penguin Group, 2007), p.19.

Carruthers, and in attempting to adopt Crawford's 'wide-angled view', this dissertation attempts to redress the apparent disadvantages of gender, provenance and exclusion by arguing that Spence's Scottish-inflected writing justifies a fresh examination from a Scottish perspective. In the process it is hoped that this both highlights and explores a knowledge gap in the current field of studies about Spence, especially since she has hitherto been understood only in an Australian context.

There is a space to be investigated, then, between Spence's reputation in Scotland and her reputation in Australia, and there has to be a compelling reason why this examination should be undertaken. Clearly some biographical details are required to assist in the process of familiarisation with a writer whose literary coordinates include Edinburgh, the Lothians and the Scottish Borders.

*In her lifetime, Catherine Helen Spence was a teacher, a writer of fiction and non-fiction, a journalist, a preacher and a political activist. Some of these roles overlapped and many of the themes which emerge in her writings are closely interwoven but they can often be traced back to Spence's formative influences during her Scottish childhood and early teenage years. Spence was born on 31 October 1825 to David Spence and Helen Brodie, the fifth of eight children, and raised and educated in Melrose in the Scottish Borders. In *An Autobiography* (1910), Spence is refreshingly frank when she describes her aspirations: 'I was a very ambitious girl at 13. I wanted to be a teacher first, and a great writer afterwards'.[4] Unfortunately, Spence's early hopes of being sent from Melrose Parish School to an advanced school for girls in Edinburgh were dashed when her father, who had speculated on the price of foreign grain from 1837-1839, lost everything. However, in July 1839, with a gift of five hundred pounds from Helen Brodie's mother which allowed David Spence to

[4] Catherine Helen Spence, *'Ever Yours, C.H. Spence': Catherine Helen Spence's* An Autobiography *(1825-1910), Diary (1894) and Some Correspondence (1894-1910)*, ed. Susan Magarey with Barbara Wall, Mary Lyons and Maryan Beams (Kent Town: Wakefield Trinity Press, 2005), p.29.

purchase eighty acres of land in Adelaide, the family emigrated to South Australia, arriving in November of that year. They overcame early hardships and Spence embraced the new colony enthusiastically, commenting ‘we took hold of the growth and development of South Australia, and identified ourselves with it’.[5] Aged seventeen, Spence found paid employment as a governess and she was to make good use of this experience in her novels. In 1846, the year her father died, a short-lived attempt at running a school failed, and at the age of twenty-five Spence gave up teaching and turned her mind to making a living from writing novels.

Spence made a conscious decision not to marry, turning down two proposals. Spence wrote ‘it is always supposed that thoughts of love and marriage are the chief concerns in a girl’s life, but it was not the case with me’.[6] The institution of marriage and the legal issues surrounding it are key themes across all of Spence’s novels. Spence lived with her mother until her mother’s death in December 1887 in a household which was largely female. Over the years Spence took responsibility for several families related to her who had fallen on difficult times. Religious belief played a significant part in Spence’s life and aged thirty she moved from what she referred to as the ‘gloomy religion’[7] of Scottish Presbyterianism to the more liberal Unitarianism. Spence said that Unitarianism allowed her to emerge ‘into more light and liberty’[8] and discourse about how religion manifests itself in society is evident in the portrayal of many of her characters. Eventually she became a preacher in her own right, one of the first women in Adelaide to do so.

[5]Spence, *Autobiography*, p.49.
[6]Spence, *Autobiography*, p.45.
[7]Spence, *Autobiography*, p.28.
[8]Spence, *Autobiography*, p.37.

From an early age, Spence took a keen interest in economics and politics and used her knowledge to good effect in her public life. She devoted a significant amount of time to promoting the idea of proportional representation as a means of electoral reform, a fact also reflected in her fiction. Widely read, Spence developed her skills as a journalist and as a literary critic and through family ties managed to secure a foothold in the male world of the main Australian newspapers of the day. Spence's articles were regularly published, albeit anonymously at first because of the gender bias in the profession. In many ways Spence was an idealist, remarking 'we felt that we were in an expanding society, still feeling the bond to the motherland, but eager to develop a perfect society, in the land of our adoption'.[9] Spence blended this sense of vision with a pragmatic desire to work hard for the benefit of society and she made an immense contribution to public work over the years, both in a voluntary capacity for charities and as a government adviser in areas such as state provision for orphans and accessible education for all. She travelled when the opportunity arose, visiting Britain, Europe and the United States, and commented on the kinds of societies she observed as she journeyed. The main concerns in her life of politics, religion, education and equality for women provided the intellectual scaffolding for her fictional works with the Scottish presence in them a significant feature.

The Scottish presence is arguably of importance when Spence is reconsidered as displaying a literary awareness absorbed from other writers raised in geographical proximity such as Allan Ramsay 1684-1758), Sir Walter Scott, James Hogg (1770-1835) and Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-94). *In her autobiography Spence, one of whose earliest memories was of watching Sir Walter Scott's funeral procession, comments on the enduring impression Scott's works had made on her imagination and remarks that she was able to envisage from her own personal experience local landmarks mentioned in texts such as *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, *The Monastery* and *The Abbot*. In her fourth novel *The Author's Daughter*, for example, the main character

[9] Spence, *Autobiography*, p.60.

Amy Staunton is introduced into aristocratic society by having a key part in a *tableau vivant* based on Scott's *Kenilworth*. Moreover, in *Handfasted*, one of the few texts to survive in the establishment of the new country of Columba is Ramsay's *The Gentle Shepherd* which is acted out as a play for the entertainment of the inhabitants. Spence visited Samoa in 1893 and she notes that her familiarity with the writings of Stevenson had helped prepare her for the admirable qualities she was to find in the Samoan people. Again Hogg, raised in the Ettrick Forest barely twenty miles from Spence's Melrose, was, like Spence, influenced by the Border Ballads and Robert Burns, used Scots dialect for a purpose and interrogated Calvinism in his key works. Although this thesis does not have as its central concern the detail of these influences, they are apparent throughout her writings.

Because of publication difficulties facing a Scottish writer based in Adelaide in the nineteenth century, the full oeuvre of Spence's own writing has not been readily accessible until comparatively recently and this is possibly another reason underlining her relative anonymity. *Clara Morison* (1854), for example, was not re-issued until 1971, *Gathered In* (1881-82) not published until 1977, *Handfasted* (1879) not available until 1984 and *A Week in the Future* (1888-89) not until 1988. In Spence's era London was the dominant publishing centre and four of the novels published in her lifetime were by London publishers. Her attempts to make a living as a female writer of fiction were characterised by occasional rejections and disputes over payment. As Douglas S. Mack notes when discussing Scotland's place within the Union after the failure of the Darien Scheme, Scotland 'had to settle for a significant (albeit distinctly junior) partnership in a British Empire in which the real power lay in England, in the Imperial capital, London'.[10] Mack's comments underscore the problematic commercial reality for Scottish writers in relation to marketing an imagined version of their own national identity and the cultural challenges of working within a Victorian British imperial environment where literary influence was London-centric. Even in Australia Spence

[10] Douglas S. Mack, *Scottish Fiction and the British Empire* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), p.6.

faced publishing barriers, evidenced when the manuscript for her novel *Handfasted* was rejected for a literary competition as being subversive because it offered a radical and seemingly-threatening analysis of the major social institution of marriage. It was eventually published by Penguin Books Australia in 1984.

While not central to the argument of the dissertation, Spence's non-fiction works are of equal importance in gaining an understanding of her approach to literature, ranging as they do across the role of women in politics, how civic society could organise itself more profitably if equality of the sexes were to be established in legislation, the need for electoral reform and the treatment of orphans and the dispossessed. *There is an identifiable connection between the main works of her non-fiction and her fictional output. *A Plea for Pure Democracy* (1861) allowed Spence to apply the main points of Thomas Hare's proposals on proportional representation to the political situation in South Australia at the time. She includes aspects of the need for voting reform in the character of Francis Ormistown in *Mr Hogarth's Will* (1861). In addition, Spence was commissioned at government level to write *The Laws We Live Under* (1880) for use in schools in the colony and elsewhere to educate young people in civic duties. In *Handfasted* significant stress is laid on how a community should both construct and conduct itself with an emphasis on the rights and responsibilities of all its citizens. As part of her extensive journalistic output *The Register* newspaper published *Some Social Aspects of South Australian Life* in 1878 where the focus was on the benefits associated with colonial life in Australia. These sentiments are reflected throughout her fiction and are particularly exemplified by the material advancement of the Scottish Lindsay family in *The Author's Daughter* (1868). Spence's *State Children in Australia*: *A History of Boarding Out and its Developments* (1907) is concerned with Australia's approach to the welfare of those orphaned, neglected or otherwise marginalised. This same concern is reflected across her works where Clara Morison is an orphan, Francis Ormistown is an orphan and orphans as a group are accorded pride of place in the new country of Columba in *Handfasted*. In addition, Spence's published literary criticism, particularly about George Eliot, is

referenced in her fiction as is the fact that Spence wrote over one hundred sermons for use in Unitarian preaching. Clara Morison spends some of her private time writing sermons and in *Gathered In* the itinerant Scottish evangelist David Henderson's sermon is presented in its entirety.

It is quite understandable given this considerable output why Australian feminist critics have identified her as a key figure in countering the Australian masculine-inflected literary canon. Despite the intention to read Spence solely as an Australian proto-feminist pioneer there are some paradoxes which emerge when she is too readily allocated to this locus. On the one hand Spence herself rejects the use of Australian stereotypes in her fiction and on the other her portrayal of women is often critical to the point of negativity. Additionally, some feminist critics have challenged Spence's essentially middle-class view of a society stratified along the lines of class, religion and race.

What the dissertation sets out to demonstrate, however, is the crucial artistic importance of the Scottish framework of her fiction in her efforts to achieve her literary goals. To return briefly to the issue of what might constitute markers of a Scottish writer, Spence relies heavily, for example, on Scottish settings. Spence has specific imaginative intentions in mind when she chooses Scotland as a literary location. The different Scotlands she presents to the reader also raise intriguing questions about her own perception of the Scottish people when viewed through the prism of empire from the other side of the world. Spence's portrayal of Scottish characters is another indicator of the Scottish bedrock evident in her writing. *The Scottish historian T.M. Devine[11] and the Australian historian Malcolm D. Prentis[12] estimate that Scots made up certainly no more than 15 per cent of the Australian population by 1900. Most of Spence's significant characters are Scottish, however, a fact which highlights the centrality of Scottish inflection in her writings. Spence's

---

[11] Thomas M. Devine, *Scotland's Empire 1600-1815* (London: Allen Lane, 2003; Penguin Books, 2004), pp.272-3

[12] Malcolm D. Prentis, *The Scots in Australia: a Study of New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland 1788-1900* (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1983), p.68.

focus is on Scottish free settlers with sufficient capital to buy eighty acres of land in South Australia in line with the colonising theories of Edward Gibbon Wakefield (1796-1862). Spence's narrow, even self-censored, imaginative representation has no room for transported Scottish radicals or Scottish recidivist prisoners. Her Scottish characters are largely the wholesome progenitors of Australia's future colonial stock in a way in which her English and Irish characters are, in general, not.

Yet another marker of the ascription of national identity to Spence is her extensive use of Scots language in intruded dialogue across her texts. Crawford, in an examination of the processes which lay behind the establishment of English Literature as a university subject, asserts that while 'major literary theorists have tended to avoid issues of cultural identity' small cultural groups need 'an awareness of a cultural tradition which will allow them to preserve or develop a sense of their own distinctive identity, their constituting difference'.[13] This dissertation argues that in any attempt to understand Spence holistically it is important to discuss Crawford's idea of 'cultural identity', of which language is a key component. It should be noted that Graham Tulloch expresses a degree of hesitancy in interpreting Spence's familiarity with and use of Scots, particularly because of her middle-class background and her awkwardness in rendering insular Scots, but he recognises ultimately that 'her knowledge of written Scots allows her to produce Scots dialogue which adequately meets the needs of a realistic novel'.[14] In defence of her linguistic background, it should not be overlooked that Spence spent her entire life living with her mother Helen Brodie Spence who came from Whittinghame in East Lothian and who provided the model for the Scots-speaking grandmother of Dr Hugh Victor Keith in *Handfasted*. Many of Spence's Scottish cultural reference points are derived from knowledge of both her mother's and father's family histories, as well as from the Scottish literary

---

[13] Robert Crawford, *Devolving English Literature*, 2nd edition (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), p.5.
[14] Graham Tulloch, 'Styles of Scots in Literary Texts', in Kirk, John M. and Iseabail Macleod, eds., *Scots: Studies in its Literature and Language* (Amsterdam, New York: Rodopi, 2013), 'Scottish Cultural Review of Language and Literature', vol. 21, pp.211-28, p.218.

legacy which her mother passed on to her, and which can be carefully plotted in all her works.

It is important to add here that Spence is also a literary writer working within a wider intellectual milieu, occasionally in Arnoldian terms. Spence was widely-read and continually inquisitive about contemporary scientific and artistic matters. Mary Kelley, in relation to nineteenth-century American women writers, argues that 'for a female to be educated as if she were a male was to have it impressed in her consciousness that she was merely a guest in the male realm of intellectuality'.[15] Spence would have objected vigorously to being patronised as an intruding 'guest' in any intellectual company. She is proud to show the extent of her knowledge across all her novels and she expects that her readers will be equally cultivated in their understanding of her intentions. There were certain bedrock texts like the Bible and certain writers like Bunyan, Shakespeare and Scott where Spence would have assumed an automatic familiarity with her allusions. Spence was a doughty Baconian, however, and spoke on the topic. *In her autobiography she mentions a visit on her return from America to Australia in 1894 to the house of Mr Edwin Lawrence (1837-1914) who was to publish *Bacon is Shakespeare* (1910) and *The Shakespeare Myth* (1912). Amongst many others, Milton, Carlyle, Dickens, the Brownings, Tennyson and Burns are regularly quoted. Spence was familiar with American writers like Fenimore Cooper, Nathaniel Hawthorne and Harriet Beecher Stowe. The ability to translate Latin was assumed, as was a working knowledge of classical authors like Homer. Spence was fluent in reading Racine and Balzac, writing reviews about the latter in her role as a journalist. Kant, Goethe, Cervantes and Dante, as well as Adam Smith, are all mentioned in her novels. This dissertation argues that overall, however, her significant accent is Scottish.

[15] Mary Kelley, *'Private Woman, Public Stage': Literary Domesticity in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), p. 93.

In turning to the methodology of the dissertation, reference is made to extant literary criticism about Spence, particularly that of the Australian feminist critics Professor Susan Magarey and Helen Thomson. In addition it includes a close analysis of a selection of Spence's fiction specifically with regard to her artistic representation of two key topics in Victorian literature, namely marriage and religion. The differences between Scots law and English law in relation to the centrality of Scotland to the marriage plots in *Mr Hogarth's Will* and *Gathered In* are of critical importance in allowing Spence to achieve her artistic goals. Spence also uses her other novels, notably *A Week in the Future* and *Handfasted*, to articulate her viewpoint, sometimes didactically, about the institution of marriage itself. Spence is often concerned with the need for legislative change to help protect and further the interests of women and children in the event of divorce or the death of a spouse and in this sphere she can genuinely lay claim to have been a lifelong campaigner. Her 1878 newspaper article for *The Register* of Adelaide entitled *Marriage Rights and Wrongs* presents a cogent and resonant argument about the moral imperative for divorce when irretrievable breakdown has occurred in a marriage. The methodology also involves a close examination of the central position of Scottish Presbyterianism in Spence's representation of religious matters, particularly in *Gathered In*. Spence's family had emigrated to a land in which Anglicanism was already the dominant religion, both theologically and politically, and against this backdrop Spence was to make her own personal spiritual journey from Scottish Presbyterianism to Unitarianism by the age of thirty.

Nevertheless, Spence had a number of creative challenges to confront in her portrayal of both marital and religious issues. The marriage constructs she creates are compatible with her vision of a progressive and enlightened imperial colony and her preference is for white, Christian, preferably-Scottish settlers to establish roots and develop the new country. However, although South Australia was ostensibly founded on Wakefield's colonising principles centred on the core unit of the family, it quickly had to assimilate the wider prevailing economic realities, particularly the financial

problems faced immediately prior to the discovery of gold and copper in the early 1850s. Spence remains ominously silent in her novels about the fact that Britain's illegal appropriation of territory already occupied meant the concomitant destruction of an indigenous population and culture. That Spence was aware of the ongoing conflict between indigenous peoples and the imperial military forces is indisputable because, as she recounts in her autobiography, the second proposal of marriage she received and rejected came from the artist John A. Gilfillan whose own second wife and a number of his children had been killed by Maoris in New Zealand. Jan Kociumbas, in *The Oxford History of Australia* (1992), outlines the methods used to acquire territory from indigenous peoples. Kociumbas recounts how, in August 1830, every indigenous person on Van Diemen's Land was removed 'not by persuasion but by force'[16] and that by 1835 the last 123 Aboriginals had been removed to Flinders Island in the Bass Strait. In addition, Kociumbas records that the Act of 1834 establishing South Australia, intended to be a colony founded on religious principles of equity and justice for all, 'had neglected to mention Aboriginal people'[17] and that 'Aboriginal people continued to be classified as an inferior racial type.'[18] In a symbol of the distance between rhetoric and reality in South Australia in 1841, Governor George Grey organised and authorised an expedition which 'resulted in the deaths of thirty Aborigines in a single encounter.'[19] This process of systematic annihilation was carried out across the individual colonies, often against a background of evangelising religion.

With respect to her representation of fictional religious figures, Spence is consistently hostile to conventional clerics. The two male characters she creates to present both a more pragmatic, acceptable view of religion and an intellectual

---

[16] Jan Kociumbas, *The Oxford History of Australia*: *Vol. 2, 1770-1860, 'Possessions'* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1992), p.148.
[17]Kociumbas, *Oxford History*, p.188.
[18] Kociumbas, *Oxford History*, p.194.
[19] Kociumbas, *Oxford History*, p.206.

critique of Scottish Presbyterianism are Scottish. It is the Church of Scotland Spence is concerned with, and the criticism of it is largely governed by the negative impact of theological decisions on women. Again, this gendered representation foregrounds Spence's pioneering credentials, given male dominance of church matters at that time. By way of contrast, her positive depiction of female religious figures allows a different perspective in which the women's leadership qualities offer an intellectually defensible and morally desirable alternative to male assumptions. Spence never lost her own personal capacity to question her faith and *An Agnostic's Progress from the Known to the Unknown* (1884) reveals, in dissenting Bunyanesque terms, a close approximation to her private view of religion.

The dissertation concludes that a reappraisal of Spence's writings from a Scottish perspective is now timely. This accepts the limitations on the scope of the dissertation, particularly that *Clara Morison*, *Tender and True* and *The Author's Daughter* cannot be scrutinised in detail using similar terms of reference. *A limit on the space available precludes a closer study of these novels but there is a case to be argued that such an analysis would be instructive from the perspective of students of Scottish literature. Also, Spence's non-fiction writing begins with journalistic articles for the Melbourne *Argus* from 1848 onwards and lasts up until the completion of her autobiography just before her death in 1910. Likewise, for the same reason, no detailed study is made of the contribution of Spence's journalism, literary reviews, short stories or sermons. The two most prominent Australian critics of Spence are Professor Susan Magarey (Eade) and Helen Thomson, and the State Library of South Australia holds comprehensive details about her life, works and critical background.

The implications for both contemporary readings of Spence and for new research into Spence's writings are opened out for consideration. *Because of Spence's relative anonymity in Scottish literature there is a corresponding paucity of Scottish literary criticism about her works. However, in recent years a heightened interest about her significance has been in evidence. Fariha Shaikh, for example, in *Nineteenth-Century Settler Emigration in British Literature and Art* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University

Press, 2018) places Spence beside Elizabeth Gaskell and Charles Dickens in helping to formulate a literary topography which allows readers to imagine the supposed familiarity of colonised lands. Sarah Sharp, also, has explored Spence's representation of the role of women in the colonisation process in *'Your Vocation is Marriage': Systematic Colonisation, the Marriage Plot and Finding Home in Catherine Helen Spence's Clara Morison (1854)* (Dublin: University College Dublin, 2019). Future studies may bring an extended, more rounded account of her literary career when the Scottish dimension is fully included, particularly in light of the bicentenary of her birth in 2025.

CHAPTER ONE:

Absence and Reputation in the Novels of Catherine Helen Spence

OVERVIEW OF SPENCE'S MAIN WORKS OF FICTION

A detailed critique of two of Spence's novels will form the body of the dissertation but an overview of her main works at this point will give some insight into the areas Spence considered important in her writing career. *Clara Morison: A Tale of South Australia During the Gold Fever* (1854) was published anonymously in London by J.W. Parker and Son and Spence claimed it had been prompted by 'the experience of a depopulated province'[20] at a time when the altered civic structure meant the conventional roles of women no longer applied. *Tender and True: A Colonial Tale* (1856) was also published anonymously, this time by Smith, Elder and Co. of London. Spence remarked that 'the motif of the book was the jealousy which husbands are apt to feel of their wives' relations. As if the most desirable wife was an amiable orphan – if an heiress, so much the better'.[21] These comments reflect Spence's interest in representing both the institution of marriage itself and how economic forces play a part in the development of relationships. Despite the fact that Spence was not making any significant income from her writing she was determined not be deflected from her intention to become a financially-independent author and by the time her third novel was published she was writing under her own name. *Mr Hogarth's Will* (1865) was published in London by Richard Bentley and Son, the novel having already been serialised in the *Weekly Mail* in 1864 as *Uphill Work*. Spence was quite clear about her intention in writing the novel, commenting that 'it took up the woman question as it appeared to me at the time – the difficulty of a woman earning a livelihood, even when she had as much ability, industry, and perseverance as a man'.[22] Here can be

[20] Spence, *Autobiography*, p.51.
[21] Spence, *Autobiography*, p.53.
[22] Spence, *Autobiography, p.57.*

seen Spence's commitment to parity between males and females regarding economic and employment opportunities. Mutual affection between people as opposed to economic dependency by one on the other is central to Spence's fourth novel *The Author's Daughter*, originally serialised as *Hugh Lindsay's Guest* in the *Adelaide Observer* in 1867 and published in three volumes by Richard Bentley and Son in London in 1868. Another of Spence's concerns, namely how civic society responds to the plight of disadvantaged families and orphans, is significant in this novel. Spence failed to find a publisher for her fifth novel *Gathered In*, possibly reflecting the changing commercial marketplace for three-volume editions at a time when the printed word was being accessed in alternative forms, although it too was serialised in the *Adelaide Observer* and the *Queenslander* in 1881-82. It was eventually published by Minerva Publishing in 1977, signifying a growing interest in Spence's works for a new generation of readers. Here, Spence tackles the controversial topics of illegitimacy and inheritance, particularly in relation to the prevailing legal and religious attitudes of the time.

In her two final novels, Spence begins to explore different genres. *Handfasted*, originally submitted unsuccessfully to the *Sydney Mail* in 1879 as an entry for a writing competition under the male pseudonym of Hugh Victor, was rejected because of its perceived threat to the institution of marriage and was not published until 1984. While ostensibly about marriage, *Handfasted* also looks at how a community can be planned and developed in a way that is beneficial to all when it is allowed to start afresh, free from a whole range of previously institutionalised discriminatory practices. *A Week in the Future*, the last of Spence's novels, was originally published from December 1888 until July 1889 in the *Centennial Magazine: An Australian Monthly* then subsequently as a slim volume. The novel presents the main character with the opportunity to exchange a short period of declining health for the chance to record her experiences over one week in an imagined London one hundred years in the future, forfeiting her life at the end of that time. This allows Spence the literary

device of taking the reader on a tour of what she imagines the shape of a planned co-operative economy could look like in the future. While the focus of this dissertation is on two of the fictional works outlined above, other texts by Spence will be referred to as appropriate. *A Plea for Pure Democracy* (1861), *The Laws We Live Under* (1880), *An Agnostic's Progress from the Known to the Unknown* (1884), *Woman's Place in the Commonwealth* (1885) and *State Children in Australia: A History of Boarding Out and its Developments* (1907) contain a reservoir of ideas which Spence uses in her novels. However, one current logistical problem in Scotland is the difficulty in accessing the full range of her creative output. *The Glasgow Women's Library, for example, which is dedicated specifically to women's lives, histories and achievements, contains at the time of writing only *An Autobiography*, *A Week in the Future* and *Handfasted*. If the University of Glasgow is taken as an example of an academic institution, at the time of writing a library search for any of her seven main works of fiction yields a nil return. The Mitchell Library in Glasgow at the time of writing also does not hold a single copy of her works. Inter-library loans will generate single-copy returns. Searching for her works on-line to be printed on demand or purchasing from Australian sources are viable options.

NATIONAL IDENTITY FOR NINETEENTH-CENTURY SCOTTISH WRITERS

The question of national identity in the Victorian era for Scottish colonial writers like Spence is a complex one. Spence's own position was governed as much by external factors as it was by any self-declared preference. Robert Crawford asserts that many Scottish writers 'grew more aware of having to appeal to non-Scottish and, not least, London audiences'.[23] In a number of ways this is reflected in Spence's writings because no single novel is set in its entirety in Scotland, nor does any piece of fiction

[23] Robert Crawford, *Scotland's Books*: *The Penguin History of Scottish Literature* (London: Penguin Group, 2007), p.391.

deal with solely Scottish concerns. London being the heart of the global publishing industry was a critical factor in shaping Spence's quest for acceptance as a professional writer.

Spence herself makes what might be regarded as conflicting comments about the issue of national identity. In the first instance, Spence articulates the importance to her of having been born and educated in Scotland. She writes 'I must go back to Scotland for the roots of my character and ideals'.[24] This is important for later readings of Spence's works because feminist critiques increasingly focus on Spence's strength of conviction about the need for equality between males and females and on her radical ideas about reshaping society. Scotland, then, was more than just her intellectual crucible: it cocooned an emotional response to the world as well. With more than a hint of jingoistic superiority, she asserts that 'Scotchmen made their way all over the world better than Englishmen mainly because they were better educated'.[25] Whether or not this claim withstands objective scrutiny it does indicate that Spence saw part of her world through a Scottish prism and that she felt she was a member of a resourceful people whose middle-classes would be in the front rank of forging new nations. Nevertheless, she also made explicit the ambivalence in her thinking about Scotland. Spence recounts returning to Melrose in 1865 and going back to her old parish church where the familiar family members were sitting in their customary pews. With the light irony which marks much of her prose, Spence makes the following observation:

> They grieved that I had been banished from the romantic associations and the high civilization of Melrose to rough it in the wilds, while my heart was full of thankfulness that I had moved to the wider spaces and the more varied activities of a new and progressive colony.[26]

---

[24] Spence, *Autobiography*, p.19.
[25] Spence, *Autobiography*, p.86.
[26] Spence, *Autobiography*, p.74.

For Spence Australia, and South Australia in particular, was clearly preferable to Scotland because in this new land she saw the potential for contributing to the creation of a more just society unencumbered by the prejudices of the past. Spence was not uncritical of Australia, however, and she acknowledged the cultural deficit in the young colony at that time. Spence had a preference for being in social, religious and intellectual elites and she felt their absence in the young Adelaide. In this can be seen one example of the tension surrounding national identity in emigrants who had left behind the certainties of Britain but who wanted to forge a new future in a different country. This dichotomy is underscored in Spence's retention of an allegiance to the British crown and parliament while at the same time advocating new and different forms of political representation in Australia. There is a difficulty in reconciling Spence's reputation as a radical progressive with her support for the unelected, undemocratic and privileged British royal family. The royal family provided a unifying symbol for empire and Spence, bemoaning Prince Albert's early death, writes with unrestrained feeling about the perceived loss:

> What a tragedy it was – more so than of many an epic or drama – that the Princess Royal and the husband of her choice, who had educated themselves and each other to take the reins of the German Empire, and had drawn up so many plans for the betterment of the general conditions of the people, should, on their accession to power, have met death standing on the steps of the throne.[27]

London was not serving Australia's specific political needs, however, and Spence knew the country would ultimately have to develop its own models of government. She saw the establishment of Australian political institutions as critically important in the colony's move towards autonomy and in its progress to a new national identity. However, there were many historical influences which had to be accommodated in the process, not least the argument about taxation and representation.

On occasions, Spence's preference for a Scottish approach to certain issues flares up in her writing but not to the extent that it would alienate either her British or

[27] Spence, *Autobiography*, p.84.

Australian readers. Malcolm Prentis reflects this duality when he describes the range of Caledonian societies in Australia and the stances they adopted. He claims 'however loyal to the Crown and Empire, the Caledonians could be defiantly anti-English at times. Perhaps this is best understood in a cultural rather than a political sense'.[28] There is an elusive dimension in trying to allocate Spence to any one of these Scottish, British or Australian identities, emphasising the difficulties facing a writer like her in confirming the cultural voice with which she should speak. Colin Kidd has recognised there is a gap to be explored in this area, writing 'Scottish literary scholars have done little to align what might be called "Scottish-British literature" comparatively with the Anglo-Irish tradition.' [*]Kidd argues in addition that 'Early modernists have also been alert to the phenomenon of concentric loyalties; a British political allegiance did not diminish an emotional identification with Scotland'.[29] When the idea of an uncertain emerging colonial identity is allied to this absence of a clear distinction between Scottish and British literature the plethora of artistic options available to writers like Spence is highlighted. In accepting this absence which Kidd identifies, a new reading of Spence's novels offers a thematic efficacy centred on an imagined reconstruction of a positive experience of colonial emigration within Scottish parameters and often optimistic in the possibilities potentially available to women.

Spence was therefore in the forefront of writers who owed their literary inheritance to the old world but who were pioneers in establishing a framework within which a new country like Australia could come to imagine itself. Susan Magarey, perhaps the most influential critic of Spence's works, offers a perceptive comment about this in *'Unbridling the Tongues of Women': A Biography of Catherine Helen Spence* (1986). Magarey, in recognising the problems which the European immigrants encountered, notes that Spence's determination 'to emphasise the virtues

[28] Prentis, *The Scots in Australia*, p.206.
[29] Gerard Carruthers and Colin Kidd, eds., *Literature and Union – Scottish Texts, British Contexts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), p.19.

of Scots as colonists functions well in dis-aggregating "the British"'.[30] This is an important statement in a number of ways when the issue of Spence's national identity in the imperial project is opened out. In Magarey's comment the Scots are seen at the same time as both a distinct and a distinctive group and also as part of a wider aggregate of settlers. This raises the intriguing question of what the perceived differences actually were in this entirely new setting on the other side of the world in what was, after all, supposed to be a shared imperial enterprise. For reasons which she articulates regularly, Spence sees the Scots as possessing a range of moral qualities necessary for committing long-term to such a venture. Magarey's comment indicates that there was a need to break up some notion of 'the British' into constituent parts; her use of the word 'well' hinting that in the end this explicit fragmentation served some bigger purpose which Spence herself would accept as beneficial. At the same time, however, Spence's understanding of what Magarey refers to as 'virtues' requires further consideration, because in the process some disconcerting elements inevitably surface. Uncomfortable as it might be to significant critics like Magarey and Thomson who have embraced Spence solely and unconditionally from a feminist and reformist perspective, *with only marginal recognition in their commentaries about Spence's silence regarding the unwholesome aspects of imperialism, there is no escaping the fact that Spence did not see either land appropriation or the persecution of indigenous women, children and men as of pressing concern. Spence belongs to a part of Scotland's history which colluded with racial oppression and exploitation, now increasingly being exposed to a more critical and less collusive audience. This unpalatable dimension must be included in any understanding of national identity in the imperial project, whether it is about Scottish, British or Australian writers.

[30] Susan Magarey, *'Unbridling the Tongues of Women': A Biography of Catherine Helen Spence* (Adelaide: University of Adelaide Press, 1986), p.xx.

SPENCE'S ABSENCE FROM SCOTLAND'S LITERARY LANDSCAPE

There is a need to explore Spence's absence from the landscape of Scottish literature if only to better understand why she is being increasingly recognised as a loadstone by, amongst others, Australian feminist writers. Spence will not be found in Gifford and McMillan's *A History of Scottish Women's Writing* (1997) or in Robert Crawford's comprehensive *Scotland's Books* (2007). Other than texts in the National Library of Scotland, Spence's works are, as has been noted above, difficult to find in Scottish academic institutions and major borrowing libraries. From a wide range of perspectives in a nation which prides itself on its literary achievements this situation is arguably unsatisfactory. If it is accepted that there is such a concept as a distinctive Scottish canon of literature then Spence's omission represents a matter of potential concern. Perhaps the problem lies not with Spence as such but with the creators of the canon. *Stubborn problems about canonicity and choice remain a consistent feature of academic study in this colonial area of both British and Scottish literature. Kay Boardman and Shirley Jones, the editors of *Popular Victorian Women Writers* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004) recognise the need to redefine the historical perception about who should be included but Spence is not referenced. Neither is she mentioned in Lucy Hartley's comprehensive *The History of British Women's Writing,* 1830-1880, vol. 6, (2018). Equally, Glenda Norquay, the editor of *The Edinburgh Companion to Scottish Women's Writing* (2012) does not allude to Spence in any capacity. In another Scottish context, Robert Crawford in *Scotland's Books* (2007) stresses that the concept of literature deemed to be Scottish should not be restricted only to Scotland but Spence is not included in his selection. Indeed, from a gendered perspective, the imbalance here is further reinforced when it is accepted that the ratio of male to female writers referenced in *Scotland's Books* is 85 per cent male to 15 per cent female. The recognition of Spence would go a small way to addressing some of these issues.

This dissertation does not claim that Spence should be regarded as a great novelist, because her overall range and quality would not justify that kind of hyperbole; only that she should be given her place as an important female writer with

a Scottish presence deserving of fuller critical attention. Gifford and McMillan support the idea of 'the construction of counter-canons in the very act of adumbrating the canon itself'. They also understand that there are significant barriers to be overcome, noting that the influence of 'what gets taught in institutions of higher education is simply undeniable'.[31] The essential conundrum is that writers will not be considered by academics if they are not already widely-known and writers will not become widely-known by academics if they are not already considered as belonging to a well-established tradition. Elizabeth Waterston provides an interesting perspective from Canada, referencing two distinct groups of Canadian writers who 'transplanted and naturalized Scottish themes, techniques and topics; then they hybridized the work of the Scots by adding a female twist to stories devised by men'.[32] This description by Waterston could justifiably apply to Spence, for whom Scottish background settings are critical, both people and ideas emigrate from Scotland and a Scottish female perspective is ever-present in offering an alternative to the male-dominated narrative of civic society.

It is fair to say that Spence could legitimately be included alongside those Scottish women writers like Margaret Oliphant who, albeit belatedly, have become critically recognised. Indeed comparisons are now being made between Spence and other important Victorian British novelists. This dissertation argues that Spence's writing is qualitatively of a more progressive order than some other writers of the time. That there were structural obstacles in the world of publishing which militated against Spence making a cultural contribution to Scottish and British literature is not in any doubt but in Scotland this problem appears to be systemic. Christopher Whyte in his introductory comments to *Gendering the Nation* (1995) asserts that 'Scottish

[31] Gifford and McMillan, *Scottish Women's Writing*, pp.xiii, ix.

[32] Elizabeth Waterston, 'Scottish Women Writers Abroad: The Canadian Experience', in Douglas Gifford and Dorothy McMillan, eds., *A History of Scottish Women's Writing* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997), Chapter 20, p.309. Waterston references Susanna Moodie and her similarities with John Galt as well as Margaret Murray Robertson and Sarah Jeanette Duncan.

literature has succeeded, against all the odds, in emerging from under the shadow of English literature and establishing its own literary canon. The texts are almost exclusively by male authors'.[33] Spence's absence from any Scottish oeuvre, then, can be explained by the fact that she finds herself at the centre of a perfect literary storm. She is Scottish, female, writing as a colonist in Australia, sometimes deemed too radical, mostly unknown to academics in Scotland and often difficult to access in print.

SPENCE AND HER CHANGING REPUTATION IN AUSTRALIAN LITERATURE

It comes as no surprise then, in the absence of any significant Scottish desire to acknowledge Spence, that Australia has chosen to embrace her as a worthy pioneer in its attempt to establish its own national literary canon. The contemporary critic Frederick Sinnett in his *Fiction Fields of Australia* (1856) was conscious of the need to determine a starting point and to begin marking out distinctive Australian literary territory. He writes that 'our inquiry is into the feasibility of writing Australian novels; or, to use other words, into the suitability of Australian life and scenery for the novel writer's purpose; and, secondly, into the right manner of their treatment'. Sinnett has very prescriptive views of what the content of a novel should include and asserts that what the Australian reader wanted was 'a picture of universal human life and passion, but represented as modified by Australian externals'. He extols Spence's *Clara Morison* as 'a book deserving careful criticism and much praise' and, although he does express some reservations about Spence's lack of humour, goes on to make the following important observation:

> The novel is no more Australian than results from the fact that the author, having been long resident in Australia, having a gift for novel writing, and writing about what she knew best, unavoidably wrote an Australian novel.

[33] Christopher Whyte, ed., *Gendering the Nation: Studies in Modern Scottish Literature* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd., 1995), p.x.

This is interesting because, having already stated in his review that *Clara Morison* was 'decidedly the best Australian novel we have met with'[34] there is an ambivalence in Sinnett's final comment suggesting that the Australian dimension in Spence's first novel emerges by default as an accident of geographical circumstances rather than as any deliberate intention on her part to be understood as an Australian writer. It may also have been recognition by Sinnett that there was a paucity of suitable literary material available to begin the process of establishing an Australian canon. Just over a century later, however, one of the typical contradictions which exemplify critical vacillations about Spence is best illustrated by the comment of Grahame Johnston in his *Australian Literary Criticism* (1962): 'This, I agree, is the crucial critical task at present: a co-operative endeavour to arrive at a canon of the more valuable and enduring Australian writers'.[35] Whilst acknowledging that this was written over half-a-century ago, Spence is not mentioned even once. Given that Spence was a well-known figure in Australian political history, one interpretation of this omission could be that Johnston regarded Spence as a female domestic writer of only ephemeral consequence and therefore not worthy of inclusion in his wholly-masculine canon.

Further sampling of critical interpretations over the ensuing decades helps establish the framework by which Spence moved from relative obscurity to being regarded as a writer of some literary importance. Cecil Hadgraft, writing two years before Johnston in 1960, suggests that Spence is worthy of consideration as a writer of quality but his comments typify customary critical ambivalence towards her. Hadgraft adopts a patronising and condescending tone towards *Clara Morison*, claiming it was 'written by a woman for women, and most of the action takes place in towns, and when in towns, indoors'. Here Spence is categorised immediately in gendered terms, as if the concept of a female audience and a domestic setting are

---

[34] Frederick Sinnett, 'Fiction Fields of Australia', in *The Journal of Australasia*, Vol. 1, July-December 1856 (Melbourne: George Slater, 1856), Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, scanned for the Google Books Library Project, pp.203-04, 104, 199, 200.
[35] Grahame Johnston, ed., *Australian Literary Criticism* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1962), p.vii.

indicators that her work should, as a consequence, be denigrated. Hadgraft's focus on the idea of 'action' is also indicative of a sense of disapproval regarding Spence's plot, aligning himself as he does with the masculine-inflected outback staples. Despite this, Hadgraft concedes that *Clara Morison* has 'liveliness, humour, some small irony, much good sense, and at least superficial insight into character'[36] which at least provides some balance. Sinnett's objection that Spence lacks humour is replaced here with Hadgraft's praise that she exhibits humour; a good example of one of the inconsistencies apparent in critical commentaries.

By the early 1970s, a more measured analysis begins to emerge. R.B. Walker pays close critical attention to the importance of her Unitarian religious beliefs and her liberal political stance, particularly in relation to *A Week in the Future*, observing shrewdly that Spence's work exemplifies a different kind of polarity:

> On one hand the vision of an egalitarian, collectivist, republican society freed from the curse of poverty, class struggle, and war, related her to such secular socialists as Joseph Furphy, Bernard O'Dowd, and W.G. Spence, while on the other hand her ecclesiastical ties related her to a Protestant Christianity which was not on the whole sympathetic to socialism.[37]

Walker's summary neatly captures some of the contradictions Spence tries to reconcile in her fiction in her attempt to create a version of that 'perfect society' which she felt was achievable in the new colony. Spence somehow had to try and negotiate the waters between alienating a middle-class, Protestant audience and being rejected by radical political thinkers who were advocating a republican commonweal.

By the 1980s Spence is increasingly being understood as an early Australian pioneer of the rights of women. While not the first critic to recognise Spence's radicalism,

---

[36] Cecil Hadgraft, *Australian Literature: A Critical Account to 1955* (Melbourne: William Heinemann Ltd., 1960), p.19.

[37] R. B. Walker, 'Catherine Helen Spence, Unitarian Utopian' in *Australian Literary Studies* (Hobart: The University of Tasmania, 1971), Vol. 5, number 1, May 1971, p.40.

Helen Thomson helps accelerate the process and begins to set Spence firmly in this location:

> Catherine Helen Spence (1825-1910) has justifiably been claimed as one of our own by contemporary feminists. Not only on the basis of her published writing, which included law reform, cultural discussions, political economy, electoral reform, child welfare and domestic, romantic fiction, but more significantly because Spence embraced public life in the latter half of the nineteenth century when her gender made that an exceptional choice.[38]

Here is evident the significant distance between Spence's unknown status in Scotland and the warm respect which Thomson demonstrates towards her. The words 'our own' refer to Spence being acknowledged both as an Australian writer and as an admired advocate of gender equality.

A slightly different reading of Spence becomes apparent by the late 1990s, possibly reflecting developments taking place in the plurality of wider feminist criticism. Miriam Dixson is more conscious of the contributions made by other nationalities to Australia's cultural development, in particular the Irish. Dixson laments the time it had taken for an articulate and intellectually-rigorous female middle class to emerge and, with few exceptions, recognises a general lack of 'originality and daring'. Dixson goes on to comment, however, 'this is less true of the South Australian Catherine Spence, but then she was Scottish-born and by no means wholly identified with the women's movement'.[39] The use of the word 'but' is intriguing in this context, suggesting implicitly that Spence's Scottishness in itself meant she could afford to be a free-thinker with the confidence to articulate radical views. As well as this, there is that caveat in Dixson's 'by no means' which is indicative of a hesitancy to place Spence as a central feminist figure. This, too, asks for closer interrogation.

---

[38] Helen Thomson, 'Love and Labour: Marriage and Work in the Novels of Catherine Helen Spence', in Debra Adelaide, ed., A Bright and Fiery Troop – Australian Women Writers of the Nineteenth Century (Ringwood, Victoria, Australia: Penguin Books Australia, 1988), Chapter 8, pp.101-115, p.113.

[39] Miriam Dixson, The Real Matilda, Woman and Identity in Australia – 1788 to the Present, 4thedition (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press Ltd., 1999), p.206.

The millennium brought another significant development in critical appreciations of Spence's works. Janet C. Myers makes a detailed comparison between aspects of Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* and Spence's *Clara Morison*. Not for the first time, Spence is being measured in terms of quality against the already-canonised work of important British nineteenth-century female writers. The importance of Spence's multi-faceted representations of Australian life is also highlighted by Sarah Sharp. Sharp explicates how crucial is Spence's alternative approach to the institution of marriage and holds that in opposition to Wakefield's assumptions Spence is responsible for 'staking out a space for women as arbiters of South Australian identity'.[40] Again, it is interesting to note that Sharp is concerned here with the idea of the ascription of 'identity' and one way in which it can be marked. From early gendered dismissal of her work as merely domestic fiction, then, to the placing of Spence at the centre of the Australian literary opus is a shift in emphasis which requires further examination. Part of this analysis includes the need to consider and reflect upon Spence's position within the context of a Scottish diaspora at a time when the British imperial project was approaching its zenith.

SPENCE AND THE CHALLENGE OF CONTEXTUALISATION

Given the range and diversity of Spence's work, and given that she was writing in different capacities for over half a century, it is not always easy to place Spence in any single context or category of writing. Indeed, the attempt to locate her raises as many questions as it provides answers. Nevertheless, Lucy Hartley's over-arching comment is of benefit in helping open out an approach to contextualising Spence:

> The division of domestic from public spheres is crucial for the history of women's writing from 1830 to 1880 because it clarifies the cultural circumstances that determined women's literary production and the tension between an expanding access to print and a limited status for writing

[40] Sarah Sharp, *'Your Vocation is Marriage': Systematic Colonisation, the Marriage Plot and Finding Home in Catherine Helen Spence's 'Clara Morison'* (1854) (Glasgow: Association for Scottish Literary Studies, Scottish Literary Review, Spring/Summer 2019), vol.11 no.1, pp. 27-45, p.42.

women.[41]

Spence contests the idea of the domestic arena being the only place where women writers can legitimately make comment and at every opportunity she engages with the world of public events. In many ways she attempts to demonstrate that the two spheres are, in fact, inextricably linked, particularly by monetary pressures, so that in this respect her work may be said to run counter to the prevailing current. Spence does not give primacy to the domestic sphere (although she never denies or denigrates it) but in her fiction looks outwards to areas of public contention like voting systems, land ownership and employment opportunities for women.

Spence is also prepared to challenge the prevailing Australian literary culture of her time, making a conscious decision not to write about the stereotypical staples of the outback or replicate formulaic travel writing for an imperial audience. In particular, Spence was delighted with Sinnett's review of *Clara Morison*. In her own words, Spence notes with pleasure that her novel has been accepted as 'the work of an observant woman – a novelist who happened to live in Australia, but who did not labour to bring in bushrangers and convicts, and especially Australian features'.[42] In her fiction Spence is a Scottish woman writing on matters of serious public concern in colonial Australia without pandering to commercially-attractive literary stereotypes about how the new country is being imagined by male writers. This goes to the heart of the empirical difficulty in assigning national characteristics to authors in any country at any time. The argument turns on the fulcrum of the weighting of critical markers, and this dissertation argues that there is sufficient Scottish presence in Spence's writings to challenge, if not overturn, her unqualified acceptance as a seminal Australian writer. Thus while Spence's writing has increasingly been lauded in Australia as speaking both for and about Australia, other readings give her a

[41] Lucy Hartley, ed., *The History of British Women's Writing, 1830-1880* (London: Palgrave McMillan, 2018), p.6.
[42] Spence, *Autobiography*, pp.52-53.

contextual identity which can be defined as an admixture of Scottish, British and imperial. Crucially, Spence's exploration in her works of the topics of marriage and religion, important themes in wider Victorian literature, draws heavily on Scottish tropes. Any revaluation of her fiction, therefore, has to take full account of the centrality and importance of Scotland in her creative output.

THE CASE FOR REVALUATING SPENCE'S FICTION

In a sense the literary absence of Spence in Scotland is not unique, merely another illustration of one end of a spectrum pertaining to Scottish women writers over the years. Margaret Oliphant, as a Scottish woman writing furth of Scotland trying to make a professional living from her fiction and also like Spence with deep religious convictions, provides a potential comparator, especially given that Spence said of Oliphant 'her life tallies with mine on many points'.[43] Crawford in 2007 includes Margaret Oliphant in his canon and observes:

> her work became for three-quarters of a century a lost continent in Scottish literature. In recent years a small international band of scholars has explored her prodigious oeuvre, but almost all of her 125 or so books are out of print. At the very least, Oliphant is a missing link in Scottish history; at her best, she is a brave and hauntingly powerful writer.[44]

A point-by-point comparison is useful because much might be said along similar lines about Spence as an example of a Scottish diasporic writer. As previously highlighted, Spence's works are difficult to access in both Scotland and the wider United Kingdom. Regardless of this, Spence is now gaining critical attention from scholars not just in Australia but from further afield. Spence is worthy of study because she helps fill the space left in relation to how colonial Scots are remembered and how the ideas they took with them were retained and employed. Additionally, there is an argument to be made that some of Spence's work is not just 'brave and hauntingly powerful' but that novels such as *Mr Hogarth's Will* and *Gathered In* can withstand a qualitative

[43] Spence, *Autobiography*, p.36.
[44] Crawford, *Scotland's Books*, p.484.

comparison with those of contemporary Victorian British novelists. The only reasonable conclusion to be drawn is that Spence has been unfairly overlooked.

There is a lack of consistency surrounding this critical silence because her fictional output goes beyond some of the more conventional topics of the time, dealing as it does with areas such as the efficacy of different political systems and the need for legislative reform in relation to divorce. A contemporary Australian female writer Henry Handel Richardson (Ethel Florence Lindesay Richardson, 1870-1946) had, like Spence in the early part of her journalistic career, to write under a male pseudonym because of the influence and power of those who controlled all areas of the publishing industry. Anne Summers in *Damned Whores and God's Police* (1994) notes that 'Richardson played the game by the male rules, denying herself the opportunity to explore her own specifically female experiences and thereby perpetuating the prejudice that women's experiences are unworthy material for a national literary tradition'.[45] *Commercially successful Australian novels were mainly concerned with the physical challenges and 'adventures' of conquering the outback rather than reflecting the perspectives of the women who played an equal part in the settlement of the colonies. Popular works included Joseph Furphy's *Such is Life* (1903), Ralph Boldrewood's *Robbery Under* Arms (1888) and Marcus Clarke's *For the Term of his Natural Life* (1874). As will be seen in the closer analysis of *Mr Hogarth's Will* and *Gathered* In, Spence does not conform to the male rules and as a result she has to constantly confront institutional barriers. She is also ready to explore the experiences of women who emigrate to an entirely new environment in a literary effort to demonstrate that the experiences of one half of the population are as worthy as the other half's, and this legacy demands a fresh interpretation. Those chronological changes observable in critical readings of Spence from the 1960s onwards only serve to point up the ultimate irony: the very fact that Spence *was* a woman and that she *had* an alternative perspective on Australian colonial society has allowed her now to

[45] Anne Summers, *Damned Whores and God's Police* (Ringwood, Victoria, Australia: Penguin Books Australia Ltd., 1994), p.67.

become enmeshed within contemporary Australian criticism and it is likely that interest in her writings will increase in Australia when her bicentenary is marked.

There are also sound literary reasons why Spence's works are being looked at afresh by academics. Across all of her novels key themes emerge which were of interest to similar writers. Jenni Calder, in referencing Margaret Oliphant and others working within the conventions of the time, comments 'to say that in the early decades of the nineteenth century Scotland's fictional women were preoccupied with money, marriage and property is almost to be tautological' and goes on to examine how this landscape begins to change: 'By the 1880s women were questioning traditional views of marriage and beginning to construct a rather different picture of the possibilities of women's lives'.[46] It is important to record that Spence has pre-dated this interrogation of conventions by at least thirty years, 'questioning traditional views' in *Clara* Morison as early as 1854. Spence returns to the same topic of looking forensically at marriage through the personal journey of Mary Lancaster in *Tender and True*, through her depiction of the educated and vigorous Jane Melville in *Mr Hogarth's Will* and in her portrayal of the cultured Edith Gray in *Gathered In.* All of this culminates in *Handfasted* where Spence's radicalism is of such an order that she is, in effect, censored. In Spence's own words about the literary competition's adjudicator and the book itself 'the judge feared that it was calculated to loosen the marriage tie – it was too socialistic and consequently dangerous'.[47]

Religion was also an area of contention in the literature of the period and Spence is not afraid to challenge prevailing orthodoxies. Spence writes 'the doctrine of innate human depravity is one of the most paralysing dogmas that human fear invented or

---

[46] Jenni Calder, 'Heroes and Hero-Makers: Women in Nineteenth-Century Scottish Fiction', in Cairns Craig, gen. ed., Douglas Gifford, ed., Vol. 3, Nineteenth Century, *The History of Scottish Literature* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1988), Chapter 13, pp. 263, 266.
[47] Spence, *Autobiography*, p.131.

priestcraft encouraged'.[48] At one stroke, Spence cuts away at both Calvinistic pre-destination and the guilt-inducing theology of other religions. A deeply religious person herself, she is prepared to go back to empirical teachings and offer an alternative, gendered response to what is always presented as the woman's fault in Genesis. Spence introduces preachers and ministers into her works to articulate both the ideas she opposes and those she supports. Bennett makes a comparison between Spence and George Eliot (whom Spence met on one occasion) and sees similarities in aspects of the themes in their writings. In making the direct literary link between them he notes 'while her plots contain certain elements of romance, the literary manifesto might well have come from Chapter XVII of *Adam Bede*'.[49] Certainly, Spence's belief that literature has a moral power would ratify this kind of matching as appropriate and it is exemplified in her novels where intruded dialogue about religious matters is consistently apparent.

How civic society was constructed and could be improved was also an area of great importance to contemporary writers. Spence is keenly interested in almost every aspect of how a community functions, from the system of electoral representation to the philosophy and practice of how to care for the dispossessed and disadvantaged. In many respects this is one reason why her reputation as a social reformer has been so pronounced and throughout her writing there is ample evidence of how she uses her fiction to present her ideas to a wider audience. Employment and education rights for women, the treatment of orphans, unequal distribution of wealth, the iniquities of land ownership, support for a co-operative ideology, the need for penal reform and support for progressive legislation around divorce are but some of the areas she addresses. Spence's representation of marriage, religion and civic society, then, much of it with a Scottish presence, highlights important reasons why her profile should now be higher than it currently is. Carruthers refers to 'the traditional Scottish

[48] Spence, *Autobiography*, p.130.

[49] Bruce Bennett, *An Australian Compass: Essays on Place and Direction in Australian Literature* (South Fremantle: Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 1991), p.147.

diagnosis of infantilised, evasive Scottish literature of the Victorian age'.[50] If Spence is accepted as one who writes with a Scottish accent, albeit in a colonial environment, her output provides a healthy antidote to that perceived malaise.

By way of concluding this section, acknowledgement is made of certain contradictions in Spence's life and works, specifically in the areas of religion, politics and class. In the first instance, Spence's move from Scottish Presbyterianism towards Unitarianism in 1855 may have been on entirely theological grounds as she claims in her autobiography, with 'nothing but the Bible as my guide'.[51] A fresh examination of the interplay between her life and her writings, however, suggests that other factors not fully explored elsewhere are important, raising the issue of how Spence integrated culturally into a new, largely-English society. Spence's Scottish religious accent is being constantly modified inside a wider British colonial context. In the political arena Spence marks herself out as a great advocate of effective voting or proportional representation but in any fully-rounded analysis of her stance the following sometimes-ignored statement needs to be brought into the light, made in 1866 on her visit to Britain when commenting on John Stuart Mill's *Political Economy*:

> For myself, I considered electoral reform on the Hare system of more value than the enfranchisement of women, and was not eager for the doubling of electors in number, especially as the new voters would probably be more ignorant and more apathetic than the old.[52]

There are problematic opinions being expressed here, not just with regard to the franchise and not just with regard to equal gender representation but also in relation to attitudes and value judgements. Her comment raises the question of Spence's interpretation of the democratic process and places her some distance away from the aspirations of the Scottish Radicals of the 1820s, many transported to Australia, who were seeking universal male franchise and annual parliaments. *Devine notes in *Scotland's Empire 1600-1815*:

[50] Carruthers, *Scottish Literature*, p.114.
[51] Spence, *Autobiography*, p.64.
[52] Spence, *Autobiography*, p.89.

> The conviction of the Scottish radicals led by Thomas Muir in 1793 and their subsequent transportation to Botany Bay caused much anger at the time and led to a flood of pamphlets and broadsheets over the years condemning the punishment of enforced exiles as cruel, unnatural and barbaric.[53]

Given Spence's close interest in political and social reform, and her knowledge of recent Scottish history, her silence on any reference to the Scottish Radicals' trials and the Australian connection is noticeable.

Another area of contention hinted at is the role of elites in advocating change on behalf of those who cannot or choose not to advocate change for themselves. Revisiting her literature helps provide a more assured standpoint from which to draw any conclusions, especially when the variegated nature of the suffrage movement is understood in an Australian context.

Finally, issues to do with class are an important part of Spence's vision and need to be further unlocked. Spence's Australia was moving from a system of indentured labour to one where individual effort and entrepreneurialism both in the countryside and in the cities was creating new wealth. A class-based system was in the process of being established. In her fiction, Spence's portrayal of servants and other working-class people is an area of contention. Florence S. Boos notes that there is an inherent contradiction when the lower classes are being portrayed by middle-class writers and asserts that the essential problems come when they are attempting to 'advocate for a better life on behalf of their working-class sisters, while simultaneously reinforcing the latter's separate, subordinate status'.[54] Spence's middle-class writings do not convey a significant sense of understanding the potential for class resentment in society which Boos suggests here. In the round, however, Spence is a complex figure whose oeuvre occupies a colonial space that merits an alternative historic, literary

---

[53] Devine, *Scotland's Empire*, p.272.

[54] Florence S. Boos, 'Writing Across the Class Divide', in Hartley, *History*, Chapter 16, p.284.

and cultural analysis, whether, with regard to contextualisation, it is to be from a Scottish, British or Australian feminist perspective. Her legacy is of significant value and the Scottish presence in her fiction deserves to be examined in the context of how Australia came to represent itself in imaginative writing.

CHAPTER TWO

The Scottish Framework of Spence's Australian Fiction

SOME PARADOXES IN AUSTRALIA'S CO-OPTION OF SPENCE

This chapter aims to present an intellectually convincing case that Spence constructs most of her creative fiction on Scottish and not Australian foundations. It is of interest that some Australian critics like Thomson and Magarey are keen to promote Spence as an important, if until recent times ignored, Australian feminist author of the period. This is essentially problematic because Spence does not sit with any real conviction in the existing recognised canon of Australian nineteenth-century writers. Spence can be situated in that context only retrospectively and therefore a revisionist approach has to be adopted to attempt to justify her placement. Indeed, as has already been noted, in any imaginative reconstruction of Australia there is a noticeable absence in Spence's works of the elements which are deemed to be genre markers of Australian writing of the Victorian era.

Spence herself was careful to avoid 'the remittance man, the gaunt shepherd with his starving flocks and herds, the free selector on his arid patch, the drink shanty where the rouseabouts and shearers knock down their cheques'[55] and the like. Spence resolutely set her creative intentions in direct opposition to what would now be regarded as key Australian motifs in the development of the country's literature. There is a significant absence of anything relating to the country as a former penal colony and, in particular, nothing which supports the elevation to iconic status of either escaped prisoners or ex-convicts who challenge the imperial authority of the Crown. Additionally, the important religious, civil and political influence of the Irish Catholic community, so critical in shaping aspects of Australia's development as a country, is either marginalised or omitted.

---

[55] Spence, *Autobiography*, p.202.

With regard to the treatment of indigenous peoples, there is no negative representation in Spence's writings of colonists who are clearing the land of local communities and contributing to the destruction of an entire Australian way of life. Spence places no emphasis on stereotypically Australian concepts such as mateship or physical endurance in the bush frontier and the supposed development of a democratic, nationalist egalitarianism forged around activities on the goldfields. Indeed, Spence's artistic response in *Clara Morison* to the exodus of males from Adelaide during the gold rush presents a counter-narrative to masculinist notions of pioneering heroism in the struggle with the land. She offers instead, in passing observations, a gendered perspective of an environment in which women are not being harassed by aggressive males and where women quickly assume responsible roles in civic society hitherto denied them. Spence's subsequent if brief rendering of life on the goldfields has its focus on overcrowded conditions, exorbitant prices, threats to social cohesion and the elevation of greed, not on the development of metonymic Australian heroism which is essential to the existing canon.

The paradox is that there is a synthetic desire to include Spence in the context of this tradition and to have her reconsidered as somehow more authentically Australian than other writers of the period such as Henry Lawson (1867-1922) and Joseph Furphy (1843-1912). In fact, Spence brings to her Australian works the literary inheritance of writers like Sir Walter Scott and George Eliot and her writings must therefore be viewed against an essentially Scottish and British background, not an Australian one. On the strength of this, it is not unreasonable to argue that Spence might be expected to appear in any alternative canon alongside contemporary female writers offering opposition to the masculinist Australian oeuvre. Yet paradoxically a significant feminist critic like Kay Schaffer fails to place Spence retrospectively in the category of the progressive woman writer. Schaffer argues instead that the relatively-limited output of Barbara Baynton (1857-1929) deserves a wider audience because this new focus 'brings to the attention of readers and students of the Australian tradition a

writer whose fierce but short-lived talent had been overlooked and all but lost'.[56] Schaffer states that Baynton is important because she presents a gendered perspective of life in the bush, highlighting the hardships for women. Schaffer does not go beyond this, however, to reference a writer like Spence whose focus is on other significant concerns and who refuses to accept these pre-ordained parameters as the ones to work either within or against. Spence is a dissident not just because she rejects stock characterisations and settings for her novels but because she is tackling radical social issues fifty years before Baynton offers an already-circumscribed alternative. Schaffer does not mention Spence once in her entire analysis and the silence serves only to amplify the failure to recognise that alternative versions of colonial life were published and available. Spence possesses an equally 'fierce' talent and she has also been 'overlooked'. This eschewal of Spence is puzzling because it cannot easily be explained by an assumption that Schaffer was unaware of Spence's contribution, given her detailed knowledge of the Australian writing of the period.

To resolve these paradoxes, and to attempt to explain why Thomson and Magarey revere Spence retrospectively yet Schaffer co-opts Baynton at Spence's total exclusion, requires a tangential approach. Spence is needed by some Australian critics despite being a writer who ignores the conventions of contemporary Australian literature and is neglected by others because she does not fit a pre-determined narrative. In an enthusiasm to embrace her as a pioneering Australian feminist writer the more problematic and unpalatable aspects of Spence's works are either suppressed or ignored. Spence is, in fact, an outsider with a discernible Scottish voice. If Jodi A. Campbell, Elizabeth Ewan and Heather Parker are correct when they argue that there is a significant body of writing which reflects 'the rich diversity of the identities that have characterised the Scots' then this seems a felicitous and

[56] Kay Schaffer, *Women and the Bush: Forces of Desire in the Australian Cultural Tradition* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 148.

productive platform from which to begin to assess Spence's writing rather than to manipulate any inappropriate categorisation for her. In particular, 'the impacts of people and place'[57] which Campbell, Ewan and Parker deem important to the creation of this identity, allied with Spence's use of the Scots language and her reliance on Scottish cultural allusions, provide a profitable space to explore. Any retrospective analysis premised solely upon contrived Australian beginnings is arguably misplaced and fails to address the core Scottish presence in her works.

SPENCE'S SCOTTISH SETTINGS

Thomson has written of Spence that 'every one of her novels is set in England and South Australia and every one insists on the superiority of the younger freer society'.[58] Leaving aside for now Spence's consistently-expressed view about the cultural deficit in Australian society at that period, it is the incorrect reference to 'England' which is at once jarring and disconcerting. If there is a need to take issue with such a perceptive critic then this goes to the very heart of how a canon of writers is to be established around ideas of national identity. To have to iterate that Scotland is not the same country as England while it is, at the time of writing, in the same state as England, Wales and Northern Ireland, may be seen from an international perspective as of little relevance; petty to the point of risibility and just another example of Scottish hypersensitivity to mere semantics. However, to let this pass without further comment would be to betray Spence's artistic intentions and to seriously misrepresent how she consciously constructs her fiction. Spence chooses settings, characters, dialogue and Scottish reference points deliberately, not accidentally. Crawford, in the context of arguing that in literary terms England rather than Britain was England's main focus, recognises 'a slipperiness in the use of the

---

[57] Jodi A. Campbell, Elizabeth Ewan and Heather Parker, eds., *The Shaping of Scottish Identities: Family, Nation, and the Worlds Beyond* (Guelph, Ontario: Centre for Scottish Studies at the University of Guelph, 2011), p.6.
[58] Thomson, *Fiery Troop*, p.113.

term “English”’[59] which he argues must be consistently challenged when ‘Scottish’ and ‘Scotland’ would be more accurate and appropriate. It is important that this is done with respect to Thomson’s incorrect assertion.

The evidence of the centrality of Scottish settings permeates Spence’s novels. The opening of *Mr Hogarth’s Will* could not be more explicit. ‘In a large and handsomely-furnished room of a somewhat old-fashioned house, situated in a rural district in the south of Scotland…’[60] locates her work both geographically and contextually. The idea of Australia as an artistically-imagined country is not introduced until Chapter 8 and only at that point through the reported adventures of the returned emigrant Peggy Walker. When the wealthy South Australian squatter Walter Brandon attends a dance in Edinburgh, Spence has him as ‘an educated Englishman among an assembly of Scotchmen’.[61] Spence is using Edinburgh as an important intellectual and social centre where Brandon can escape the cultural monotony of the Australian bush and she is quick to mark that there is a perceived distinction between English and Scottish people. Furthermore, when Spence stresses Brandon’s extensive Scottish kinship ties, she is suggesting by inference that even this Englishman’s emigrant journey began historically in Scotland. *Mr Hogarth’s Will* eventually reaches Australia only at the beginning of the third volume, via a sojourn in London and some time spent on a European tour. This places Spence in a Victorian writing context whose co-ordinates are Scotland, London-centric Britain, an aesthetically-rich Europe and only afterwards the Australian colonies.

Likewise, when Spence wants to address two of her central concerns, namely suffrage reform and the argument for proportional representation, she places the

---

[59] Robert Crawford, ‘England’s Scotland’, in Gerard Carruthers and Colin Kidd, eds., *Literature and Union – Scottish Texts, British Contexts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), Chapter 15, p.333.

[60] Catherine Helen Spence, *Mr Hogarth’s Will* (Ringwood, Victoria, Australia: Penguin Books Australia Ltd., 1988), p.3.

[61] Spence, *Hogarth’s Will*, p.127.

debate in Scotland. Francis Hogarth, the beneficiary of Henry Hogarth's eccentric will, stands as the prospective Member of Parliament for the Swinton area in the Scottish Borders. The electoral machinations involving the Conservatives and Liberals are acted out in five burghs in adjoining Scottish Border counties, allowing Spence the opportunity to provide commentary on the perceived inadequacies of the 1832 Reform Act. Spence's artistic locus for a subject so close to her active public life is a Scottish constituency in a British Parliament from which both colonial administrators and Australians are invited to draw lessons. There is a hierarchy of locational importance with Scotland at its head. Spence is enthusiastic in describing the detail of the voting processes and ultimately she presents Hogarth's success against the Tory Lord Fortescue as a possible model for the future in Australia. The setting for her depiction is a Scottish one and this gives her the chance to demonstrate a convincing argument that potential electoral abuses in the old country should not be exported to the colony. Hogarth's subsequent involvement in the Australian political system can be read as a vindication of the stance he adopted in Scotland, with his success in breaking past corruptions to be repeated for the future benefit of Australian civic society.

The importance in Spence's literary imagination of the Scottish Borders, the Lothians of Scotland and Edinburgh cannot be over-emphasised. Spence set the opening eight chapters of *Gathered In* in the Lothians, moving the action from parish events to the vital intellectual and administrative nerve-centre of the capital. Yet there is no sentimentality about the economic realities of such a Scotland in her portrayal of life in the area. Marion Oswald has seen all of her sons emigrate in order to make a better living, including George Oswald who has worked assiduously to make a fortune in Australia. On learning by letter of her son's munificence to his nephew Kenneth and themselves, Marion remarks proudly 'wad Geordie hae come to sic a

kingdom in the three Lothians, think ye, if he had stopped here like John Lindores?'[62] Spence is always alive to the potential benefits of the Scottish imperial diaspora and does not belong in a Scottish literary milieu which laments the loss of an impoverished past. She stands outside a male literary tradition here, being, unusually, a female writer presenting valid economic reasons for emigration. *Alan MacGillivray, in *Exile and Empire*, stresses this general theme about the negative outcomes of Scots emigrating. In referencing works by Sir Walter Scott, John Galt, Michael Scott and Robert Louis Stevenson, MacGillivray concludes:

> Stevenson's gloomy vision seems to put Scotland's nineteenth-century imperial writers into a bleaker context. However much good many of them did in their own spheres, however free most of them remained from the corruption of wealth and power, they were all ultimately shipped together on a doomed vessel bound on a tainted and dubious quest. They performed nobly all the tasks required of them and wrote up the log clearly and efficiently before they took their severance and departed.[63]

Spence's positivity and enthusiasm about emigration, by contrast, is all the more remarkable when set against this literary background. Whyte offers a possible explanation why those with views such as Spence's might not have been warmly welcomed into any patriotically Scottish grouping of writers:

> A Scottish Studies powered by militant cultural nationalism was always compromised by its unwillingness to deal honestly with the enthusiastic participation of large segments of the Scottish population in the British imperial enterprise, and the benefits these segments reaped as a result.[64]

Spence uses the agricultural pressures on farming in Scotland as the benchmark against which to calibrate rural poverty and in some cases, in a counter to Whyte's view, she accepts that emigration from Scotland was often a necessity rather than an 'enthusiastic' choice. However, in the case of George Oswald, Spence illustrates a

---

[62] Catherine Helen Spence, *Gathered In* (Adelaide: Adelaide *Observer and Journal* and Brisbane *Queenslander*, 1881-82), p.39 in Dodo Press edition. John Lindores was a neighbour of the Oswalds and Marion Oswald was keen that Isabel should marry him.
[63] Alan MacGillivray, 'Exile and Empire', in Gifford, *History of Scottish Literature*, p.425.
[64] Christopher Whyte, 'What Walter Scott Can Offer Us Today', in Christopher MacLachlan and Ronald W. Renton, eds., *Gael and Lowlander in Scottish Literature: Cross-Currents in Scottish Writing in the Nineteenth Century* (Glasgow: Scottish Literature International, 2015), Occasional Papers: Association for Scottish Literary Studies, no.20, p.62.

success story representative of one of Whyte's 'segments' and demonstrates that Spence is fully aware of the financial value of imperialism to Scotland. If Whyte's main thrust is that imperial cosmopolitanism was seen by the literary classes as a negative for Scotland, the efficacious nature of Spence's output once more acts as a counterbalance to this view. This may also provide a way of reading Spence's fiction in the twenty-first century, by offering an alternative to the perception that all Scottish emigration was either forced or unwanted in the context of the economic circumstances of the country being left behind. Regardless of the balance of the argument, leaving Scotland, not England, is Spence's main focus.

Scotland is where Spence's literary journey begins and often ends, whatever its trajectory. The final section of *Gathered In* completes a symbolic circle when Kenneth Oswald returns to Scotland for his marriage and honeymoon. In this instance, Scotland is not just a geographical location but is a place for spiritual reconciliation, underscoring again the importance of the Scottish setting for Spence's creative intent. Pam Perkins has explored this literary device at length and Spence's use of it places her in a tradition which includes Scottish women writers Christian Johnstone (1782-1854) and Susan Ferrier (1782-1854). Perkins reflects upon how the Highlands in particular are actualised for emotive reasons:

> Precisely because Highland locales were associated with an exoticised world that was culturally as well as geographically distanced from modern England, they rapidly became a form of literary shorthand that authors could use to explore ideas about links between character and culture.[65]

The Highlands of Scotland, then, are another literary signifier of the difference between Scotland and England and Australia. Spence uses a remote, rural cottage in Highland Glenrea to place the laird's son Norman McDiarmid with Isabel Oswald, the daughter of peasants, in the early stages of their relationship before Kenneth is born to them. For Spence the Highlands of Scotland offer a sympathetic space where what

[65] Pam Perkins, '"That Fairyland of Poesy": The Highlands in Early Nineteenth-Century Women's Fiction', in MacLachlan and Renton, *Gael and Lowlander*, p.110.

she would have considered genuine love could be nurtured, regardless of status or wealth. Neither England nor Australia serves this function in her writing.

Spence's other novels also offer a variety of Scottish settings. *Clara Morison* opens in a 'fashionable street in Edinburgh'[66] and Clara's voyage begins from the port of Leith. This reference point is important as the plot unfolds because it will serve as a place known to, and visited by, many characters. Even when Spence chooses to compose in an entirely different genre, as in the utopian *Handfasted*, the setting for her imagined colony of Columba has its birth in Scotland. The central-American republic, in an echo of the Scottish Darien Scheme, is populated largely by native Scots. Again, Spence's lack of sentimentality about the realities lying behind this Scottish emigration of 1745 is evidenced once more. Spence writes 'but there were bad times in the Lowlands, and a spirit of unrest among the people'[67] in reference to the religious, military and economic factors which were impacting disproportionately on Scotland as distinct from England at that time. The fact that Spence mentions the negative impact on the Scottish Lowlands and not just the better-known implications for the Highland is worthy of note. The aftermath of the Jacobite rising of 1745 had significant consequences for both England and Scotland, but in entirely different ways. Spence is keen to ensure that these historical and cultural reference points are central to her narrative and that the national distinctions are clearly made. That both the Highlands and the Lowlands are referenced in her novels indicates that Spence embraced the totality of the Scottish topography in her imagination.

Throughout *Handfasted* both Edinburgh and Cockburnspath in Berwickshire have a critical emotional resonance for the main characters as Spence develops her ideas, particularly with regard to religious matters. It is also within this Scottish-marbled

[66] Catherine Helen Spence, *Clara Morison: A Tale of South Australia During the Gold Fever* (London: John W. Parker and Son, 1854), p.1.
[67] Catherine Helen Spence, *Handfasted* (London: Penguin Original, 1984), p.16.

imaginary landscape that Spence promotes her radical views about the institution of marriage, giving yet another point of entry into how her novels can be interpreted for a modern audience. Spence consistently presents different facets of Scotland in her writing, the country being at one and the same time a place of balm and reconciliation which people want to come to and also a place of rigid theological dogma which people are keen to leave. These imaginative parameters are nowhere evident in her depictions of English and Australian landscapes.

This is not to argue that Scotland is the only created space in Spence's fiction. There is an imagined England in both *The Author's Daughter* and *Tender and True*. In the latter, Spence offers the reader the small town of Woodleigh, 'as pretty and as sleepy a place as any in England'.[68] In the former, Spence describes the absolute power of English landlords able to dismiss their tenants at short notice without challenge. Having already mentioned the problems in the Lowlands of Scotland, Spence thus incorporates the idea that there were unacceptable political and economic conditions across Great Britain as a whole which she did not want to see repeated in the new land-allocation system of South Australia, in this way foregrounding a wholly-British perspective.

As would be expected, across all her works there is an image of Australia presented to the reader, particularly of Adelaide and its surroundings but also the emerging urban centres of Melbourne and Sydney. These imaginary spaces are different from Scotland, however, and they allow perspectives which are very often in direct contrast with Scottish ones, especially in relation to history, geography and culture. Peggy Walker describes her first experiences of life in the bush; the aridity and dust constant features and the hinterland a place of danger harbouring reptiles and indigenous peoples. This is now neither England nor Scotland but a collection of

---

[68] Catherine Helen Spence, *Tender and True: A Colonial Tale* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1856), p.1.

motifs for the exoticism of a different world. It is not unreasonable that Thomson's assertion about the English settings of Spence's novels must be challenged and interrogated, otherwise there cannot be a fully-rounded appreciation of what Spence is trying to achieve imaginatively. For Spence, Scotland is a country of many beginnings to which people return for different reasons. England is often a place of something other than Scotland, economically and socially, and Australia is yet to be fully realized. *Some of the differences between Scotland and England about which Spence makes explicit comment, other than language use, range from the Scots' perceived emphasis on the value of education, contrasting styles of religious observance and differing aspects of Scots law through to variations in the security or otherwise of land tenure for tenant farmers and the suitability of Scots to be creditable, if clannish, colonialists. This centrality of a Scottish milieu in her writing led ineluctably to Spence's creation of Scottish characters being at the heart of two of her key thematic concerns, marriage and religion.

SPENCE'S SCOTTISH, ENGLISH AND IRISH CHARACTERS

Magarey notes the richness of the Scottish texture in Spence's writings and remarks on 'the privileged place she continually accorded to Scots within a predominantly English, or English-colonial society'.[69] Here once more the contradistinction between the two nationalities is made apparent. In many respects, however, Magarey's comment is a marked understatement and over-simplification which requires considerable qualification. In *Gathered In*, fifteen of the nineteen significant characters are Scottish. This overwhelmingly signals a deliberate artistic direction on Spence's part. It is important to try to tease out Spence's specific intentions in populating this novel in this way in order to understand what she is intending to say about Australia. Spence does also include a number of English and Irish characters but many are presented in a negative light, often stereotypically so, and again there are reasons for this.

[69] Magarey, *Unbridling*, p.61.

There is a remarkable chapter in *Gathered In* entitled 'Worship in the Men's Dining Room' which is set on the sheep-station of the Scottish colonist William Gray. Here, in typical eating quarters deep in Australian bush country, David Henderson delivers a sermon on The Last Supper to the assembled listeners. Henderson speaks 'in well-chosen words, but with a north country accent'.[70] The 'north country' here is not mapped by Australian, English or Irish co-ordinates but is a manifestation of Spence's intention to reinforce a direct religious link between Scotland and Australia. Revealingly, Spence has Henderson say of himself 'but I'm no preacher. I'm only a wandering sort of bush missionary or evangelist, you might call me, only that no one has sent me but my Master. I have received no ordination at the hands of man'.[71] This short speech is alive with important themes which Spence is always keen to explore and she chooses a peregrinatory, free-thinking Scot to be her messenger; someone, in fact, like herself. Another listener, Kenneth Oswald, is in Australia at the behest of his wealthy uncle in an attempt to educate his cousin Jim to the standards of respectability expected of a gentleman. Kenneth will go on to become a successful, wealthy and married colonist. Spence highlights the benefits which await the sober, religious and dependable Scot in the imperial project, regardless of background or birth circumstances. William Gray is an older version of the same phenomenon and symbolic of the advantages which have accrued to those Scots bold enough to have made the journey in a previous generation. Gray is presented very sympathetically by Spence and he reveals himself as a charitable and conciliatory man. She offers him as a beneficent example of values being brought from Scotland that can help underpin the moral fabric of the new land. Once more, there is the complete lack of any misplaced national sentiment in Spence's determination that, while advantageous as a cradle, Scotland is a place that can benefit any emigrant who leaves it.

---

[70] Spence, *Gathered In*, p.69.
[71] Spence, *Gathered In*, p.109.

Two other Scottish characters in this 'little knot of worshippers before the God who was waiting to hear'[72] are important in the novel. Sybil Ellerton, the unhappy wife of the impoverished Englishman Herbert Ellerton, is from an aristocratic Scottish blood-line and therefore free from any inherited Australian convict taint. Sybil brings this strain of racial purity to the country for the future, implicitly rejecting the colony's penal past. The second character is Donald McTavish, a very recent arrival at the sheep-station and 'the most Highland and perhaps the most ignorant of the shepherds on the place'.[73] There is thus more than one Scotland in Spence's imagination and in the cameo moment captured here in the bush five important characters join in worship concluding their service with a Scottish psalm. For Spence, religion is an all-important unifying power for moral good and this idea is exemplified here by highlighting the temporal conjunction of a variety of Scottish emigrants, all participants in the imperial settlement of Australia. *An analysis informed by post-colonial thought would recognise that not one of these key figures is either English or Australian by birth and through her extreme selectivity in characterisation Spence foregrounds the view that Scots will have an effect disproportionate to their numbers on the future progress of the colony.

Given that the novel moves between Scotland and Australia because of the web of family connections, back in the Highlands the reader finds the aristocratic Norman McDiarmid left to his guilt in his attempt to ensure there is no incriminatory evidence linking him as the husband of Isabel Oswald and father of Kenneth in order to safeguard the inheritance of his estate. At the same time in the south of Scotland Isabel's mother, the deeply Calvinistic and embittered Marion Oswald, rails at the injustice of the situation. Spence makes the point about what should be the essential egalitarianism of the Christian conscience not turning on wealth or power and uses the Scottish peasant voice of Marion to emphasise this. In Marion's son George Oswald, seventeen years in Australia, Spence spares none of the details associated

[72] Spence, *Gathered In*, p.105.
[73] Spence, *Gathered In*, p.126.

with the evils of alcohol. His return to sobriety comes only after David Henderson's intervention in saving Kenneth from the false accusation of murdering Jim Oswald. Spence transports to Australia her specific memory of Scotland's difficult relationship with alcohol and she develops George Oswald's character to show that old Scottish habits can be changed, difficult as the process might be. In the wake of a determined effort to embrace temperance will come success in business, a materially-improved life, the chance to support poorer family members back in Scotland and the prospect of religious salvation. Spence wants to project the imagined construct that sober and morally-upright people from Scotland will in time make South Australia and the wider territories flourish.

Other Scots occupy the remaining important spaces in *Gathered In*. Isabel Oswald, although dead, remains very much a live presence throughout. Spence presents Isabel, a single woman with a child of unknown parentage, as a paragon of virtue yet despite this someone exposed to malicious parochial gossip. Spence uses this unattractive Scottish background setting to emphasise her own disapproval of how the concept of sin is understood in such a strictly Presbyterian context. Spence presents characters from a repressed and repressive Scotland, claustrophobic, unforgiving and lacking any compassion. Spence needs this Scottish woman in this Scottish context, rather than in the more ambiguous fluidity of Australian society, to underline the strength of her own feelings about moral judgements in such cases. Kenneth's best friend at Edinburgh University, the divinity student Harry Stalker, is another Scot imagined by Spence for specific purposes. Harry comes from a long line of Highland parish ministers and always feels an outsider with the 'Calvinists of the Calvinists'[74] because he wants to 'open the kingdom of heaven to people who are the despair of the churches'.[75] Allied to Harry's unease at the state of Scottish religion is Spence's sympathetic portrayal of Nelly Lindores, Kenneth's childhood friend and subsequently maid to his grandparents after he emigrates. Later in the novel Harry and Nelly

[74] Spence, *Gathered In*, p.422.
[75] Spence, *Gathered In*, p51.

marry, and Spence maximises the nuances of their involvement with each other to present a model for an equitable relationship which overcomes barriers of class and religious disapproval in a way that Isabel Oswald could not do with Norman McDiarmid. Harry and Nelly provide a positive gendered example for Spence's focus on the institution of marriage which Spence felt could and should be different and better for women in Australia.

That the pre-eminence of Scottish characters is not confined to one novel is equally evident in *Mr Hogarth's Will*. Here, twelve of the fifteen main characters are Scottish, and while unfamiliarity with the text can make any critical interpretation seem overcrowded by listing them it is important at least to recognise Spence's insistence on this Scottish presence in the colony. The recently-deceased Henry Hogarth, owner of Cross Hall estate in the Scottish Borders, is regarded by the community as a most eccentric man and his unusual will means his adopted nieces Jane and Alice Melville will have to survive in the world based on the merits of their education, a view close to Spence's own beliefs. Spence needs Scottish characters for this framework too so that she can exploit the device of 'the Scotch marriage law'[76] which will be examined in detail later. Jane presents an immediate challenge to the employment conventions of the day with her background in Euclid, the classics, chemistry, mineralogy, the science of agriculture and accounting practices, not to mention the ability to swim, ride and shoot. Spence does not leave many excuses for prejudiced male employers to overlook her, and is clearly laying down the gauntlet to ask what it is women are supposed to be capable of before they can be retained on equal monetary terms. Nevertheless, Jane is subsequently rejected in Edinburgh for a range of professional occupations and, in a further blow, is warned by Miss Thomson, a successful and independent Lothians farmer, against trying to make a living from the land. Thomson cautions 'my dear girl, you do not know what you ask. Without capital, and a large capital, no one need think of taking a farm in Scotland'.[77] Spence

[76] Spence, *Hogarth's Will*, p.9.
[77] Spence, *Hogarth's* Will, p.26.

can thus introduce one of the iniquities of capitalism as an economic philosophy with respect to land ownership in Scotland, bringing to the fore the need for availability of affordable land in any other country and by association Australia. Scotland and Australia are connected by this reference to a historically contentious subject in Scotland and one which was often a catalyst for emigration. Alice, physically and emotionally the less robust of the sisters, has her own ambition to make a career as a professional writer. More than once Alice sees marriage as the solution to her financially-precarious situation. Spence, however, deliberately limits Alice's horizons to the exigencies of being a poorly-paid dressmaker, as a result of which her health suffers. It is only when Alice eventually reaches Melbourne that she can become more confident and more independent. There, freed from the strictures of her past, she is ultimately able to marry in a respectful and equitable relationship - the kind of ideal couple envisaged by Edward Gibbon Wakefield as being suitable for securing the future of a developing country. Spence's message is clear once more: the best of Scotland premised on positive female role models will only serve improve Australia's moral environment.

Margaret 'Peggy' Walker, an uneducated Scottish laundress who has already been to Australia and has returned to Edinburgh to look after her sister's five orphaned children and their grandfather, is a pivotal Scottish character for Spence. Peggy acts as a bridge across the continents and can speak knowledgeably of the merits of both lands. Peggy exhibits decent Christian values which are directly attributable to her Scottish upbringing; thrift, compassion and faith in the value of education to transform lives for the better. After receiving a leaving gift of money from Brandon's indebted neighbour Stanley Phillips, she invests it in a small general store in Melbourne. Unlike the situation described in Miss Thomson's warning, Peggy exploits through her own hard work the opportunities available in Australia where a woman can control her own capital and can make entrepreneurial decisions regardless of her

station in life. Spence here presents another positive gendered message, providing an imaginative space where women can flourish in business.

Francis Hogarth or Ormistown inevitably falls in love with Jane Melville, a love forbidden unless he renounces the terms of the unorthodox will. Francis, too, has Scottish attributes accorded him by Spence. Thrifty like Peggy and William Gray, well-read, hitherto a respectable head clerk in the Bank of Scotland and demonstrating excellent personal Christian qualities, he lives modestly in a small cottage on the outskirts of Edinburgh. Francis's interest in politics as an independent thinker is also a convenient vehicle which allows comment on the need for land reform and revised voting systems both in Britain and Australia. By contrast, Elizabeth Ormistown or Hogarth or Peck or Mahoney, depending upon where she is encountered in the novel's journey, and Francis's supposed mother, is another transplanted Scot. From a feminist perspective, her unsympathetic portrayal can be read differently from the way Spence intends. Liz Peck has had to make her way against similar forces which have beset Jane and Alice but without many of their advantages. Once attractive in a number of ways, Liz Peck's face 'now had so many marks of care, of evil passions, and of irregular living, that it was perhaps more repulsive than if it had been absolutely plain in features'.[78] Liz's surnames are a reminder of the many disadvantages women suffer living fragile hand-to-mouth existences dependent upon feckless males. First revealed financially desperate in a pub outside Adelaide, Liz is presented as a drinker, a liar, an impostor, a forger, a blackmailer and one with a disreputable past in the underbelly of Edinburgh. Set against morally-upright Scots like Jane Melville and Peggy Walker, Liz Peck and her questionable kind are not Australia's future and she is eventually marginalised and dies. Nevertheless, Liz Peck's experience was in all probability closer to the reality for many Australian women yet Spence chooses not to stress the iniquity of her predicament. Clearly in Spence's imagination there are different kinds of Scottish women.

[78] Spence, *Hogarth's* Will, p.304.

Of particular importance in Spence's Scottish characterisation is her stress on the beneficial impact of kinship and extended family connections in aiding emigration. Clara Morison, the Scottish orphan from Edinburgh, has a chance meeting in Adelaide with the neighbouring Scottish Elliot family who turn out to be distant relations. This change in fortune eventually allows Clara the opportunity to challenge conventional assumptions about women, particularly in relation to marriage. The Scots in Spence's preferred mould are hardy and resilient pioneers, ready and able to meet unexpected challenges in times of adversity and always bolstered by their Christian faith. The Duncanson family, emigrants from Orkney as hired farm servants of Clara's husband-to-be Charles Reginald, is another of Spence's imagined building blocks. Sandy Duncanson's wife is full of praise for her husband, emphasising his ability to make shoes and clothes. The Duncansons bring the strengths of the Orkney crofters to South Australia: collectively they are skilled in sheep-farming, fishing, baking, dairying, spinning, knitting and food preservation. Self-reliant to the end, most helpful of all they have five children. All of this, from an imperial perspective, shows that Spence has clear views about who would make better colonists in comparison with ex-convicts and Irish Catholics. The Presbyterian Scottish Lindsay family in *The Author's Daughter* replicates this concept of the ideal colonial construct. Thus when a holistic examination is made of Magarey's assertion about the place of Scots in Spence's writings it can be seen that Scottish people did not just enjoy a privileged position but a dominant one. Their contribution to Australia is very often presented in marked contrast to that of migrants from other countries and their presence is ubiquitous.

Spence's portrayal of Irish and English characters can at times be quite disconcerting. She makes no effort to differentiate between the Anglo-Irish, Ulster Presbyterians or Gaelic Irish in Australia. Spence's approach is one-dimensional and culturally monolithic. In *Gathered In*, the groom Mick O'Hearn is in a master-servant relationship with George Oswald who is now in complete charge of the obedient

Irishman, with the inference that Scotland is overseeing Ireland on England's behalf. Mick's wife Biddy is a servant responsible for the drudgery of all the domestic chores. On one occasion, with no apparent irony, they are cast as Irish servants in a bush farce scripted for the entertainment of the settlers. Later in the novel, when the search is underway for the murderer of Jim Oswald, the first suspect is Patrick Donovan, 'a poor half-witted fellow' who supports himself 'by working a little and begging a little, and living upon very little'.[79] Spence's Irish are poor, indolent, servile, ignorant, the butt of comedy, superstitious, untrustworthy and all Roman Catholic.

In addition to this caricatured misrepresentation, an alternative reading of some of Spence's other characters can reveal a strain of latent anti-English feeling. The Englishman Herbert Ellerton, Sybil's wayward husband, is a morally-bankrupt dissolute who will go on to commit murder; Aunt Oswald, George's wife, with her English background is a vulgar materialist, gluttonous and without an opinion of her own, and in *Clara Morison* the unpleasant bully Miss Withering, newly-arrived from Staffordshire, makes a number of lives miserable through her hectoring and belittling manner. In *The Author's Daughter* two of the main characters are the Earl of Darlington and Anthony Derrick, both English and both equally selfish and manipulative. Spence will not go as far as to articulate an outright anti-English sentiment but there are inferences to be drawn from these important representations, especially in contrast to the way in which she generally portrays Scots. Whether or not Spence's anti-Catholicism and inferred anti-English sentiments are key identifiers of her middle-class Scottish heritage requires further exploration. There is no doubting, however, that one clear indicator of where her cultural roots lie is in her deployment of the Scots language.

[79] Spence, *Gathered In*, p.324.

SPENCE'S USE OF SCOTS LANGUAGE

Language is a powerful identifier, its use often politically-charged and containing the potential for division. There have been phases in Scottish history when socially-aspiring Scots have been advised to avoid the use of Scots words or Scotticisms. Heavily influenced by Sir Walter Scott, Spence never loses an awareness of belonging to a Scottish cultural tradition and her use of Scots provides her with an important way in which to mark out Scottish identity for her own artistic reasons. Spence uses Scots for different purposes at different times. Several examples will serve by way of illustration. In *Gathered In*, Marion Oswald chides and upbraids the aristocratic Norman McDiarmid when he wants to see Isabel's corpse. Marion refers specifically to Kenneth's predicament:

> He belongs noo to his grandfather and to me. He is an orphan, and I'd fain have him ken no other than that. And since you were owre hard to do Isabel the justice she should have had, and she was owre soft to make you, I'd have you and Kenneth kept apart for good and a'.[80]

Spence chooses to use Scots to contrast the moral sincerity, righteous anger and quiet conviction of the peasant woman with the self-seeking and duplicitous behaviour of the Highland laird whose responses are all in Standard English.

Spence is always alive to the nuances of Scots. When George Oswald is sober he speaks 'in much better English than he had spoken under the influence of brandy'. On one occasion, however, in the midst of a prolonged bout of drinking, he tries to force Kenneth to join him and his language changes immediately to Scots:

> My throat's as dry as a whustle, for all I can do to slocken my drouth. But I have an excuse to drink for two when you're ben; let's have two bottles of brandy, I'll ring for Mick.[81]

This aggressive and bullying response is shown elsewhere, especially when George Oswald is being verbally abusive to his wife. Spence's message is that the use of Scots can be a reversion to the primal; something unwholesomely atavistic and a marker of

---

[80] Spence, *Gathered In*, p.4.
[81] Spence, *Gathered In*, p.86.

uncivilised masculine behaviour which belongs in an uncouth Scotland and should have been left behind. In this context its use shows a lack of respectability and is a linguistic manifestation of exactly what is not required in the colony.

A third illustration exemplifies an aspect of Spence's political thinking. When Francis Hogarth is campaigning on the hustings in the Scottish Borders he is questioned mainly in Scots by two separate deputations led respectively by Sandy Pringle, once a weaver and now a mill-owner, and Jamie Howison 'of the class called in the south country, in common parlance, a *creeshey* weaver, who had not risen, and was not likely to rise'.[82] Howison goes on to express the radical views of the weavers and argues back 'but, Maister Hogarth, ye see that property, an' education, an' rank, an' a' that, hae had it a' their ain way for hundreds o' years; it's time that we should hae oor turn'. In rejecting this in Standard English, Francis's answer to the echo of Robert Burns is an echo of Spence's own view when he replies 'you cannot say that, in any electoral district you could name, with manhood suffrage the working classes would not enormously outnumber the educated classes'.[83] Jamie Howison and his like, the 'creeshey', greasy, dirty people, are not wanted inside Hogarth's elitist political circle. The demotic Scottish voice of the radical weavers here is a threatening one, especially in any potentially revolutionary environment. Howison cannot be trusted with the right to vote and his Scottish Borders dialect marks him out as a representative of the agitating, uncomfortable forces which could potentially be unleashed if not carefully managed by Hogarth and his class. Standard English is the voice of aspiration, power, authority and control.

Spence also uses Scots in a variety of contexts to evoke different emotions, a technique evident in *Handfasted*. Liliard Abercrombie's first words to Doctor Hugh Victor Keith as he stumbles inadvertently into the lost world of Columba are 'an

---

[82] Spence, *Hogarth's Will*, p.269.
[83] Spence, *Hogarth's Will*, p.271.

whaur hae ye come frae?'[84] Here Spence uses Scots to underpin the links to kinship, continuity and a possible shared knowledge of familiar places. It is also used to suggest the potential for an immediate bond based around an awareness of common historical experience between this stranger of Scottish parentage and this descendant of emigrant Scots. For those considering emigration, Spence's deliberate linguistic choice emphasises that even if you have left the land of your own people, the possible intimacy of what awaits at your reception, referenced by Scotland and its language, will serve to narrow the distance between Scotland and Australia. A fair proportion of the dialogue in *Handfasted* is in Scots-inflected language, particularly in informal conversations. At the end of the novel Liliard Abercrombie, now married to Dr Hugh Victor Keith and recuperating from smallpox in Scotland, delights the local people she meets because of her use of the old Scots words she still speaks as a matter of course.

*Emma Letley in *Language and Nineteenth-Century Scottish Fiction* (1989) succinctly outlines the fluctuating pressures which surrounded the use of Scots in fiction of the nineteenth century, from Sir Walter Scott's cultural deployment setting a commercially-acceptable literary marker through to the critical ambivalence about the Scots used by J.M. Barrie, Ian Maclaren and S.R. Crockett at the end of the century. Letley summarises the overall approach in a conclusion which could apply to Spence's deployment of language when she argues 'we see how the writer can use Scots in tension with a controlling Standard English to the greatest artistic effect'.[85] The nuanced use of Scots in different emotional situations is not normally explored to any noticeable extent elsewhere in critiques of Spence's fiction.

These instances serve to point up that Spence once more references multiple Scotlands, with her use of the Scots language another artistic device deployed as necessary for aesthetic effect. The presence of Scots also reinforces a contrast with Standard English and asserts a key marker of one of the differences between Scottish and English characters. Australia, as a former penal colony founded from London in

[84] Spence, *Handfasted*, p.33.
[85] Emma Letley, 'Language and Nineteenth-Century Scottish Fiction', in Gifford, *History of Scottish Literature*, Chapter 17, pp.321-336, p.333.

which colloquial or slang features might be anticipated, is not represented linguistically to any noticeable extent.

SPENCE'S DIFFERENT SCOTLANDS

As already evidenced, Spence's Scotland is not a unitary entity homogenous in its relationship with itself or indeed with Britain and the empire. It is a fragmented nation, not just geographically but as an idea. Broadly-speaking, Spence re-imagines three Scotlands in descending order of respectability. Her fixed point of reference, not unnaturally, is her childhood landscape; the relatively-wealthy, relatively-fertile swathe of land from Edinburgh to the Lothians. Here is the location against which to judge all other places and persons:

> My mother's father, John Brodie, was one of the most enterprising agriculturists in the most advanced district of Great Britain. He won a prize of two silver salvers from the Highland Society for having the largest area of drilled wheat sown.[86]

The appeal to family lineage is important to Spence as is a respect for, and close knowledge of, sound agricultural practice. Spence is proud of her ancestors' achievements, especially when endorsed by a prestigious national establishment body, and proud of the area in which she grew up.

However, not all of Scotland aligns itself with Spence's good opinion. When, in *Gathered In*, Edith Gray arrives in the Scotland of Castle Diarmid near Ross-shire immediately before she declares her love for Kenneth Oswald it is the otherness which strikes her. 'How different was the scenery and the life in this remote part of the Highlands from anything Edith had seen at Wilta or all over Victoria'. The reader is invited to be a voyeur with Edith and see what this difference might consist of. Edith concludes that through Norman McDiarmid's efforts he has 'set himself to work

[86] Spence, *Autobiography*, p.26.

rigorously to improve the property; but above all, to improve the shiftless, indolent habits of the people'. This landscape allows Edith to put aside in an instant all her reservations about McDiarmid's questionable conduct towards Isabel Oswald because he has been prepared to deal with these 'shiftless' Highlanders. For Edith now, Norman is to be commended for showing 'with his own hands his ignorant clansmen the best way of making their land productive'.[87] Edith goes to the heart of what she now understands as McDiarmid's righteous behaviour: the feckless Highland people are to blame for their own poverty; breaking up old habits of land management is beneficial and ultimately emigration is a sensible alternative to be encouraged. For Edith, it takes a person with the visionary courage of McDiarmid to see this task through. This optimistic interpretation is transplanted to Australia where Spence implicitly indicates that equally 'shiftless' peoples have also been removed wholesale from their land with the same beneficent justification. An alternative indigenous narrative about a different relationship with their country is not permitted, thus denying another genuinely Australian perspective from being presented. From a post-colonial perspective, at least in this one respect, aspects of the treatment of the dispossessed in Scotland and Australia are similar.

McDiarmid's land is at least capable of being improved in the manner of the Lothians and most of its people are redeemable one way or another. In her imagination, by the time Spence represents the inhabitants of the Gaelic-speaking western seaboard and islands of Scotland, she barely conceals her disdain. Here, all hope for civilised improvement is irrevocably lost. At the end of Donald McTavish's story concerning his dog, narrated just before David Henderson's sermon about The Last Supper begins on William Gray's station, Donald explains that he 'was talked ofer to go to Milburn, and here I'm up the country, where there's no shooting and no fushing and no lads wuss the poats. Ohone'.[88] Here Spence colludes as the enthusiastic mocker of Gaelic culture and all its traditions; the Gael a servant to the

[87] Spence, *Gathered In*, p.440.
[88] Spence, *Gathered In*, p.128.

land-owning master who is coerced into leaving his home to find himself in an unknown place on the other side of the world on the lowest rung of the Australian sheep-station ladder. Spence goes on to repeat the idea of the imagined Gael more than once and, if possible, is even more derogatory in her portrayal of a Gaelic woman. Whyte poses a trenchant question when he asks 'was the relationship of England and of the Scottish lowlands to Gaelic Scotland that of an imperial power towards a colonial population?'[89] Spence's representations here would suggest that this was indeed the case.

In *The Author's Daughter* Donald McClure, another recently-arrived Gaelic shepherd, is chided for his ignorance about figs. Later in the same novel, Dugald McLachlan and his Gaelic wife are introduced when they are based on an out-station helping to make the land habitable for future British colonists. Dugald's labour is back-breaking in the intense heat. He is sinking wells through solid rock to reach the all-important water on which everything depends in the driest part of the driest continent. It is, however, Dugald's lack of facility with English which Spence chooses to focus on. Dugald has 'been driven by necessity into the knowledge of about a hundred' words and his wife 'could not speak more than twenty-five words'.[90] In addition, Dugald's wife is 'not over clean',[91] a hardly-sympathetic gendered sketch given the atrocious conditions she is having to endure. For Spence, the Gaelic-speaking Highlanders are ignorant, uncommunicative and dirty, with more than a hint of racial inferiority and fit only for the worst manual tasks. Spence, the political radical and social reformer, has an opportunity to develop her Gaelic characters in a more rounded way and ask challenging questions about why the Gaels find themselves in this position in the first place. She opts instead for mean-spirited caricature. Any other analysis, however, would not have sat comfortably within Spence's imperial outlook and would have raised disconcerting questions. The presence of Scotland as a

[89] Christopher Whyte in MacLachlan and Renton, *Gael and Lowlander*, p.61.
[90] Catherine Helen Spence, *The Author's Daughter* (London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1868), p.183.
[91] Spence, *Author's Daughter*, p.263.

transported idea is important in her representation of colonial life in Australia, but some Scotlands are more valuable than others.

SPENCE'S SCOTTISH CULTURAL REFERENCE POINTS

*Space precludes a full analysis of all of Spence's Scottish cultural reference points but it is reasonable to argue that they are everywhere present in her works. Perhaps this is another example of her portable Scottishness which she took with her to the other side of the world or perhaps once again she exploits artistically the world she is most familiar with in her imagination. Even a cursory reading of her novels reveals the quantity of Scottish-inflected background knowledge Spence is asking the reader to be aware of to understand her creative intentions. As Graeme Morton and R.J. Morris assert in their consideration of the civil, political and cultural changes which took place in mid-Victorian British society, 'Scotland had a remarkably confident national identity'. In attempting to explain this phenomenon in the context of English constitutional and economic dominance, they caution against historicism and argue that 'the dual existence of Scottish and British national identities was not regarded as weakness by contemporaries'.[92] *Morton and Morris go on to argue that because of Scotland's changing demographics in the nineteenth century, rapid urban industrialisation, migration patterns and improved transport and communication links, the essence of national identity was itself arguably changing with more of a focus on Westminster politics and an emphasis on Protestant royal links with Scotland. They recognise the importance of avoiding dogmatism in assessing what was now involved in definitions of being 'Scottish' and 'British' in a phase of significant historical change for Scotland.

---

[92] Graeme Morton and R.J. Morris, 'Civil Society, Governance and Nation, 1832-1914' in R.A. Houston and W.W.J. Knox, eds., *The New Penguin History of Scotland from the Earliest Times to the Present Day* (London: Penguin Books, 2002), Chapter 6, pp.355-416, pp.410-11.

*If anything, Spence defies any reliance on essentially English forms of discourse to set the artistic direction of her novels. Brief examples from four of Spence's other novels indicate the extent to which the foundations of her texts are demonstrably Scottish. In *The Author's Daughter* the Lindsays from the Scottish Lowlands are an immigrant family central to the plot and their progress in Australia is charted in detail. Again, in *Clara Morison*, a repeated motif is how the topography of South Australia is absorbed and understood by the Edinburgh-reared Clara in Scottish terms. This use of Scotland as the point of refraction is embedded throughout the novel. Thirdly, an important character in the least-Scottish inflected novel *Tender and True* is Joanna Gordon who becomes a close confidante of the main character Mary North (Lancaster) and her positive Scottish characteristics are emphasised at key emotional moments. Finally, given its subject matter and structure, *Handfasted* has a plethora of Scottish historical and literary references. Here, Spence is at pains to stress the reasons for the failure of the Darien Scheme, the economic importance to Scotland of the 1707 Act of Union and the global literary significance of Scott's Waverley novels. Touchstones as varied as Scottish proverbs and the centrality of the General Assembly in Scotland's life are liberally mentioned throughout all of Spence's fiction and are significant in creating a strong sense of reliance on a Scottish creative mindset. In particular, reference is made to the Scottish ballad tradition on over twenty occasions throughout her works.

When all of this is aggregated and then when the collective body of Spence's choice of settings, characterisation, use of the Scots tongue and cultural nexus is carefully dissected, it is apparent that the Scottish presence is absolutely intrinsic to her fictional output. Any nuanced view of her novels demonstrates that the Scottish weave is not even remotely matched by an Australian equivalent. Certainly, there are references to Australian landscapes, architecture, mineral wealth, pastoral interests and urban centres but the sense conveyed is very much an anthropological or environmental one; that of an observer of a new world. England, too, is present but it

is only her representation of London, visited in 1864 and 1893, which convinces. There is nothing like the same emotional resonance and essential lived experience as demonstrated in the wide-ranging prominence she accords Scotland. The contrast of Australia as a country which had lost its own indigenous history and which was striving to create a new one out of the legacy of an essentially-English imperial conquest could not be more pronounced when Spence intrudes Scottish cultural reference points. Furthermore, looking next to a critique of Spence's exploration of marriage and religion, the central significance of her Scottish background is evidenced time and again. England and Australia do feature, but only in opposition.

CHAPTER THREE

The Centrality of Scotland to the Marriage Plot in 'Mr Hogarth's Will' and 'Gathered In'

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SCOTTISH AND ENGLISH MARRIAGE LAW

Spence, in common with many nineteenth-century British writers, male and female alike, understood that the marriage plot was a vital component in any novel aiming to be deemed commercially viable in an expanding literary marketplace. If Charles Dickens (1812-70) is taken as the prime example to illustrate the point, relationships between men and women feature significantly in texts such as *David Copperfield* (1849-50), *Bleak House* (1852-53) and *Great Expectations* (1860-61). This interest in marriage as an institution of national importance was simultaneously reflected in contemporary political and legal responses with, for example, the passing of the Marriage (Scotland) Act (1856), the Matrimonial Causes Act (1857), the Married Women's Property Act (1870) and the Second Married Women's Property Act (1882). Spence's approach to the subject matter, however, is heavily inflected by the Scottish perspective she brings to this all-pervasive topic. Spence is keenly aware of the differences between Scottish and English legislation pertaining to marriage and in her novels she uses this space to good effect, particularly in light of the fact that English law applied in Australia.

In historical terms, Lord Hardwicke's Act of 1754, intended to abolish perceived aberrations in marriage unions in England by reinforcing the primacy of the Church of England in the ceremony, had the ultimate effect of emphasising the differences already in existence between Scotland and England. The historian Christopher Smout summarises the essence of the historical position in Scotland:

> An irregular marriage had always been valid, however, because the Scots held to the blindingly simple doctrine that if any two people of lawful age (12 for a girl, 14 for a boy) wished to get married, if they

> were physically capable of marriage and not within the prohibited degrees of kinship, and they both freely expressed this wish and freely accepted each other in marriage, then they were married. Consent made a marriage – not the clergy, nor the civil official – but the consent of the two people wishing to marry.[93]

Irregular marriages as described by Smout were most common in, but not exclusive to, remote rural areas where there was no guaranteed church presence. Spence exploits artistically everything recorded here by Smout and incorporates into her fiction all of these differentiating Scottish aspects as plot devices. Recurring themes include the age of young lovers, the physical capacity of couples and how this is linked to the future wellbeing of the Australian colony, consanguinity, free will as opposed to coercion and unwitnessed consent. In turn, this opens out the potential to explore attendant issues such as witness reliability, the significance of written documentation as proof of marriage and the concept of presumption through habit and repute. Other important topics like illegitimacy and entail, where once again Scots law differed from English law, help provide Spence with a framework which would simply not have been possible without these national differences. The individuality of Scottish marriage customs, as distinct from the ceremony itself, also allows Spence the opportunity to provide additional colour and interest. With her upbringing in the Scottish Borders, Spence would have been aware of the variations in courtship routines between the middle-classes on the one hand and agricultural labourers on the other. Along with an acknowledgement of the cultural acceptance of illegitimacy in certain Scottish rural districts, even if frowned upon in religious quarters, these issues of class differences and how to provide a moral framework for relationships permeate her work.

*Katie Barclay, in a comprehensive and rigorous examination of love and intimacy in the correspondence of sixty-five elite Scottish families from 1650 to 1850, determines there is a unique Scottish dimension to the institution of marriage. She writes:

---

[93] T.C. Smout, 'Scottish Marriage, Regular and Irregular, 1500-1940', in R.B. Outhwaite, ed., *Marriage and Society – Studies in the Social History of Marriage* (London: Europa Publications Limited, 1981), Chapter IX, p.206.

> While Scotland is often pointed to as a country with strong family ties, manifested most clearly in the clan networks, it is also a country that at a legal and religious level consistently promoted the rights of the individual over that of the family when it came to choice of marriage partner (unlike Scotland's southern neighbour).[94]

Spence reflects this unique dimension of the difference between Scotland and England across her novels in her depiction of a range of Scottish characters in a variety of circumstances.

SPENCE'S VIEWPOINT AS EXPRESSED IN 'A WEEK IN THE FUTURE' AND 'HANDFASTED'

Spence had quite definite opinions about the institution of marriage itself and, more pertinently, about marriage within a colonial environment. In *A Week in the Future* and *Handfasted* she comes closest to articulating her preferred models because there is no doubt that for her there were gradations of acceptability. In the former novel, Spence devotes an entire chapter entitled 'Marriage and the Relations of the Sexes' to the topic. *Handfasted*, in which the Scottish adventurers have to choose how to shape their new community, is given over almost completely to the implications of adopting a rational and equitable approach to both marriage and family life, particularly when things do not work out as intended. Spence presents a template in *A Week in the Future* suggesting how relationships might be realised in London one hundred years hence:

> Parents, indeed, warned against excessively early unions, and public opinion (here, as in other things, the collective conscience) discouraged marriages under the age of nineteen for lads and seventeen for girls. But though marriage, even earlier, was free and quite legal, parenthood was never allowed till the young people were in the full vigour of manhood and womanhood. Science has put it into the power of the married people to regulate their families, and it was considered disgraceful not only to have too many children, but to bring into this world the progeny of the immature or the silly.[95]

---

[94] Katie Barclay, *Love, Intimacy and Power: Marriage and Patriarchy in Scotland, 1650-1850*, Gender in History Series (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), published to Manchester Scholar Online: July 2012 DOI:10.7228/Manchester/9780719084904.001.0001.

[95] Spence, *A Week in the Future*, p.88.

This, then, replicates many core elements of Smout's summation of the Scottish marriage position, but with Spence's codicil attached. In all her novels Spence weaves together these strands of age-suitability and emotional maturity, parental and civic expectations and the 'collective conscience' militating against large (poor) families with feeble (and therefore potentially state-dependent) offspring, Spence's understood meanings in parentheses. The euphemistic reference to birth control is an echo of the sentiment which Spence freely borrowed from the work of her Scottish friend Jane Hume Clapperton's *Scientific Meliorism and the Evolution of Happiness* (1885) where eugenics is advocated as a solution to offset the causes and solve the problems associated with poverty. For Spence, marriage was no different from any other controllable area of human life.

In *Handfasted* the main character Dr Hugh Victor Keith is used initially as a foil to reflect contemporary British and Australian religious expectations about the patriarchal nature of marriage. In a passage which references Sir Walter Scott's *The Monastery* and the fact of handfasting being an ancient Scottish custom, Dr Keith is at first bewildered with and condemnatory of the whole idea: 'This was an unexpected outcome of the want of the minister and the Standards with people who interpreted the Bible just as they pleased'.[96] Here Dr Keith reflects the widespread view that there should be a church blessing for any marriage in accordance with 'the Standards', the accepted guidelines of the Church of Scotland. Individual deviance from conventional practice would be perceived as somehow ungodly and sinful. Following discussions with the currently-handfasted Liliard Abercrombie, however, he is nudged towards the possible efficacy of handfasting. Liliard, his wife-to-be, explains how the new community of Presbyterian Scottish settlers in Columba led by Marguerite de Launay had to start afresh with what was left of their inherited religious customs. Spence uses this opportunity to emphasise that the approach to marriage is now different because a woman is instrumental in framing its terms of

[96] Spence, *Handfasted*, p.44.

reference. Dr Keith is converted long before the end of the novel and ironically, without the voluntary severance clause essential to the handfasting contract applicable at any time during one year and a day in any union, he would not have been able to begin his relationship with Liliard.

Although she had chosen not to marry, Spence had a close knowledge of extended family life and understood the critical importance of the need in Australia for families to settle and expand down the generations, particularly ones who would be creditable additions to the developing but often unregulated colony. In representing marriage in fictional terms, Spence was faced with a number of problems. Her own sense of morality often ran counter to the mores of a wider Australian environment in which people with different experiences, including that of transportation and convictism, were shaping their new lives. In *Mr Hogarth's Will* and *Gathered In* Spence explores a range of relationships and through both characterisation and authorial comment makes it plain which versions she sees as those which will provide a sound example for the colony.

SPENCE'S SCOTTISH SOLUTION TO AN AUSTRALIAN PROBLEM

The historical position of Australia as the location of the ultimate place of exile and punishment for Britain and Ireland's most unwanted criminals meant that Spence faced an initial difficulty in having to reconcile contemporary thinking about inherited characteristics. If the only subject matter available for characters in a novel was to be drawn from the ranks of those released after serving jail sentences then there would be a question mark about their suitability for marriage and the calibre of any resultant offspring. *From 1776 onwards, with the American Colonies no longer easily available to the London government for transportation, Australia emerged as a

potential solution, thinking ratified in the Transportation Act of August 1784. As Robert Hughes remarks:

> They chose the least imaginable spot on earth, which had been visited only once by white men. It was Australia, their new, vast, lonely possession, a useless continent at the rim of the world, whose Eastern coast had been mapped by Captain Cook in 1770. From there, the convicts would never return.[97]

Hughes outlines that Botany Bay itself, Van Diemen's Land and Norfolk Island were, in turn, to become emblematic of cruelty to convicts, allowing despotic Governors such as Major Joseph Foveaux (1765-1846) on Norfolk Island to operate in an autocratic and sadistic manner outwith any semblance of legal or moral check.

Any hereditary starting point, therefore, would have to challenge the belief that criminal tendencies were passed on down the generations with no hope of correction. On the other hand, any purely environmental starting point would have to accommodate the impact of the barbaric and squalid conditions imposed upon the poorest classes by an emerging industrialist capitalist system. Spence could not be seen artistically to elevate to respectability the progeny of the criminal fraternity whose female members were regarded as prostitutes.

Another aesthetic difficulty for Spence lay in the fact that there already was an indigenous population in Australia who could potentially have been involved in any fictional marital arrangements. The women, in particular, could easily have become imagined as partners to the disproportionately high number of single white males in the colony. It is illuminating that in *Handfasted*, despite its often-vaunted radical credentials, the native women in the new society of Columba still have to be conquered in battle and fully assimilated into Christian precepts before they can be considered fit for marriage to the invading Scottish settlers. For Spence the issue of racial superiority proved increasingly problematic and it was only later in life that she

[97] Robert Hughes, '*The Fatal Shore' – A History of the Transportation of Convicts to Australia 1787-1860* (Great Britain: Collins Harvill by arrangement with The Harvill Press and Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1987; London: The Folio Society, 1988), p.38.

began to consider she could have been mistaken in her racist opinions. *On a lecture tour in America in 1893 Spence spent three weeks in Boston staying with William Lloyd Garrison (1838-1909), son of the famous abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison (1805-79). Spence noted the impact this visit had on her thinking:

> But in this house I began to be a little ashamed of being so narrow in my views on the coloured question. Mr Garrison, animated with the spirit of the true brotherhood of man, was an advocate of the heathen Chinee, and was continually speaking of the goodness of the negro and coloured and yellow races, and of the injustice and rapacity of the white Caucasians.[98]

As Louis James explains when considering Victorian colonial novels in general, 'if African natives were savages, and Indians deceitful Orientals, antipodean aborigines were seen as subhuman brutes to be ruthlessly exterminated'.[99] Spence was living in the midst of an invading colonial presence and she adopted without question this prevailing attitude of hostility and contempt towards those being conquered. From the perspective of creating characters who could be part of any marriage plot the idea of miscegenation was excised from her imaginary possibilities. At a stroke, this immediately eradicated a significant pool of potential wives and husbands for white and European colonists, unlike the marriage between John Wiltshire and Uma in Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Beach of Falesá* (1893). In *Clara Morison* Spence's depiction of Black Mary, dressed in an opossum-skin rug and having to chop wood for a living, is indicative of how she portrayed indigenous people; never as potential partners.

The crucial factor affecting the early marriage market in Australia was the structural imbalance between the number of males transported against the number of females. The disparity was of such an order that government authorities in both London and Sydney were forced to deploy every possible means at their disposal to

[98] Spence, *Autobiography*, pp.152-153.
[99] Louis James, *The Victorian Novel* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), p.195.

discourage homosexual behaviour between males. This had a concomitant impact on how transported female convicts were treated, and as Summers comments 'the women were distributed to the men almost as part of the daily rations'.[100] Indeed, fear of homosexual behaviour and its perceived degenerative consequences was one of the driving forces in the campaign to abolish transportation, although some convicts were still being shipped to Western Australia as late as January 1868. As Robert Hughes records, there were significant tensions surrounding the subject at a political level:

> Abolitionists like Lord John Russell and Sir William Molesworth wanted to show that transportation to Australia depraved most of its victims and reformed none of them. Proponents of transportation – especially the wealthy Australian landowners, who stood to lose their assigned labour if convictry was abolished – did not want convict homosexuality discussed; but its opponents did.[101]

Spence does not reference male homosexuality in her novels, even obliquely. Yet *Mr Hogarth's Will* was published three years before the last convict ship *Hougoumont* landed its human cargo at Fremantle, illustrating that all the complexities associated with transportation were still current when she was writing.

In addition, the inherent contradiction in the demands of capitalism proved increasingly problematic for Spence to try and reconcile in her fiction. Even when freed, former convicts were often brutally treated when they eventually reached the workplace. In order to keep wages down, influential employers who supported unregulated access to cheap labour almost universally preferred male workers without any costly familial ties. With the labourers having a status only marginally beyond that of the convict such an approach, both in real life and in fiction, militated against the model of a civilised and settled family life. A further complication arose with the advent of the enormous wealth generated by the opening up of the goldfields. Despite the discoveries of the 1850s saving the economy of Australia, Spence disliked the

[100] Summers, *Damned Whores*, p.315.
[101] Hughes, *The Fatal Shore*, p.244.

short-term nature of the process itself and condemned what she saw as the greed, violence and lust spawned by the reckless and uncontrolled scramble for serendipitous wealth. In *Tender and True* Spence portrays the goldfields as a breeding ground for mutual suspicion, violently jealous behaviour and an illegal trade in liquor. Prostitution and bigamy were commonplace, as were hasty marriages enacted without church approval. This model was not going to provide the kind of stability in family life which Spence wanted to project for the colony. It meant once again, however, that another significant arena of Australian society was denied an outlet in her artistic imagination.

As a result of the aggregation of these and other factors, government authorities adopted an entirely different approach. As Jan Kociumbas details, they came to endorse 'free trade, free labour, free marriage and godly family life, as well as freedom of religion and, in due course, self-government'.[102] This position was derived from the thinking of Edward Gibbon Wakefield and was designed to promote stable, secure and ultimately profitable family units in South Australia where Spence's family had settled. In an irony of history, Wakefield had previously been jailed for trying to use the Scottish marriage laws to his own advantage by eloping to Gretna Green in 1826 with 16-year-old Ellen Turner. In her creative output, then, Spence moved towards a paradigm which would resonate more easily with the Victorian marriage plot familiar to her readers. She turned to these ideas of eighty acre land purchase for family units, a preference for imported Scottish colonists, a more equitable relationship between men and women and a move away from the concentration of wealth in a few hands to promote the concept of a Christian commonweal. Spence was an enthusiastic devotee of Wakefield's proposals, writing about South Australia that 'in the land laws and the immigration laws it struck out a new path, and sought to found a new community where the sexes should be equal, and where land, labour, and capital should work harmoniously together'.[103] In the process of translating this to

[102] Kociumbas, *Oxford History*, p.177.
[103] Spence, *Autobiography*, p.32.

her creative output, contrasting models of marriage are explored and her preferences are presented in the most favourable light. Much of what she develops in terms of plot and characterisation, however, begins its journey in Scotland then moves across the globe as the need arises. Here, as in other areas, the Scottish presence is vital.

THE CENTRALITY OF SCOTTISH RELATIONSHIPS IN 'MR HOGARTH'S WILL'

Three relationships dominate the marriage plot in *Mr Hogarth's Will* and, of the six main characters involved, five are Scottish and one is of Scottish heritage. This allows Spence to present not only different kinds of unions (with, in one case, a glance at the political union between Scotland and England) but once again different Scotlands. Even in the sub-plots there are a wholly-disproportionate number of Scots portrayed. It is instructive to consider why Spence makes this artistic choice and to examine why she wants to carry versions of Scottishness to the new world. It may be that Scotland was the environment most familiar to her and that was why she drew heavily on it but this argument lacks some force given the number of years she had been resident in Australia when writing and her commitment to an emerging civic society there. It is more likely that other messages are intended. Thomson writes in the introduction to the Penguin edition of *Mr Hogarth's Will* 'this is not, however, a novel which preaches to us'.[104] Another reading of the novel could argue that, from a person who composed and delivered over one hundred of her own sermons, *Mr Hogarth's Will* takes every opportunity to make Spence's stance on marriage abundantly clear in as forceful a manner as possible and that in it she is always keen to provide signposts for her desired direction of travel.

[104] Helen Thomson, Introduction to *Mr Hogarth's Will* (Ringwood, Victoria: Penguin Books Australia Ltd., 1988), p.xiii.

Spence's didacticism is evident from the very earliest stages of the novel. The reader is informed that Henry Hogarth 'had never married' yet, when the will is read, Francis Ormistown or Hogarth is described as Hogarth's 'son by a private irregular marriage contracted with Elizabeth Ormistown'.[105] Thus Spence immediately introduces the main theme of marriage and foregrounds that there is something wholly contradictory in any understanding of what the term is to mean. The reader is left with the puzzle of how a person can be married and not married at the same time. In a further twist, it is revealed that the issue at stake is not the fact of the marriage itself but whether proof exists that any ceremony had been witnessed. Henry Hogarth's two orphaned nieces Jane and Alice Melville have lost out as a result, as Jane explains to her sister:

> "The marriage was irregular, but legal," said Jane. "I see now the cause my uncle had to dislike the Scotch marriage law. He must have been made very miserable from some unguarded words spoken or written, but this does not prevent his son taking the position of a legitimate heir."[106]

The model of marriage presented at the beginning, with the emphasis on its legality in Scotland and therefore anywhere else in the world for all time unless annulled, suits Spence's purposes for the remainder of the plot. Everything hinges ultimately on Francis's search to find out who he is and how he can be freed from the restrictions of the will which forbid any prospective marriage to either Jane or Alice Melville. The novel is in essence about a marriage which is not a marriage having produced a son who is not a son and Spence carefully manipulates these apparent contradictions to allow her characters to express views about the gender-bias inherent in the institution itself.

Jane's understanding of the situation they now find themselves in allows her to discuss with her sister how they must interpret afresh their uncle's life. They come to the conclusion that a Scotch marriage can be wholly unsatisfactory, it can lead to

---

[105] Spence, *Hogarth's Will*, pp.3-4.
[106] Spence, *Hogarth's Will*, pp.9-10.

personal unhappiness and it is often the result of a hasty, intemperate liaison. It is, however, binding in Scots law and ensures inheritance, even if problems are being stored up for the future when these types of relationships disintegrate. Spence clearly thinks that the implications of the Scotch marriage plot offer a different, and differentiating, attraction for a middle-class readership both in Britain and Australia. On closer analysis, however, her approach leaves some uncomfortable points to address. The situation is presented largely from a Scottish viewpoint but no account is taken of the implications for the Elizabeth Ormistown referred to in the will, now known as Liz Peck and living in Australia. For all that Spence presents her as disreputable, a feminist perspective could interpret otherwise any woman finding herself in the same situation. In time it is revealed that Liz Peck has always wanted to ensure she could make a claim on Hogarth's Scottish estate of Cross Hall as would have been her entitlement on Hogarth's death. She has deliberately avoided falling into the trap of becoming involved in any other marriage ceremony, despite having had a child to an unnamed wealthy gentleman. She has held true to not engaging in bigamous relationships when it might have been easier for her to do so. She has also taken the precaution of keeping old letters and signed remittances from Hogarth as proof of what had happened between them.

Spence makes it difficult to maintain any level of sympathy for Liz Peck, however, especially when the truth of her story is revealed. Elizabeth Ormistown had met the medical student Henry Hogarth when a servant in a College (University) lodging house in Edinburgh and had enjoyed the Scottish 'daffing'[107] with him. Eventually after a brief flirtation they had lived together for three months in Paris (shorthand for a city associated with sin) before they returned to Scotland, Elizabeth now pregnant. Elizabeth's mother is portrayed by Spence as avaricious and scheming, deliberately poisoning her daughter until nearly dead in order to pressurise Hogarth into a

[107] Spence, *Hogarth's Will*, p.377.

declaration of marriage. This is sworn in front of two Edinburgh neighbours as witnesses and signed off accordingly. Liz recounts the scene to Walter Brandon, Alice Melville's husband-to-be, thirty-four years later in Melbourne:

> "This is a marriage in Scotland. Without the paper it was a marriage, but mother liked to see things in black and white. Harry never could get out of it – though he said afterwards that he did not know what he was about when he signed it."[108]

An alternative reading might suggest that Elizabeth's mother's motivations were understandable in attempting to protect her daughter from being completely abandoned by Hogarth, given the inevitable consequences for a woman from her class in society.

Hogarth meanwhile inadvertently overhears a conversation and wrongly assumes from it that the father of the child is actually an Edinburgh joiner, Jamie Stevenson. A year or so after the child, Frank, is born Hogarth offers to pay the costs for Elizabeth and her mother to emigrate to Sydney to rid himself of the social embarrassment he now suffers. In London, hours before departure, Frank dies and Elizabeth's mother surreptitiously exchanges the corpse for a similar-aged child in an adjoining room. At the actual moment of departure, Hogarth unwittingly decides to keep this child as his own and take him back to Scotland to have him raised and educated. This device ultimately allows the removal of the barrier to marriage between Francis Hogarth and Jane Melville (no longer cousins) and legitimises the movement of the plot to Australia (Francis seeking the truth about his mother). Here, then, are the presented consequences of an irregular Scotch marriage: bitter accusations of betrayal; the abandonment of the servant-class female; a poisoned foetus; the theft of another woman's child to leave a dead one in its place and a whole catalogue of duplicitous, selfish, cheating behaviour to follow. On the counts of both heredity and environment (a different Edinburgh is offered as Hogarth enjoys a licentious and profligate

[108] Spence, *Hogarth's Will*, p.380.

lifestyle) Spence uses this as an example of what a relationship between two people should not be founded on, with its malign effects rippling halfway across the world for decades to come. Here it could be argued Spence uses many of the stylistic conventions of the sensationalist novel in her depiction of the Scotch marriage plot in an attempt to hold the attention of her readers. Without this Scottish background, however, she would not have been able to construct both the British and Australian scenarios which she did.

When Francis Hogarth and Jane Melville go through Henry Hogarth's personal effects at Cross Hall they discover a packet of letters written in French from an old confidante in Paris, Marguerite de Véricourt. Jane's superior education is highlighted when she is the one able to translate the correspondence of this 'true heart'. The epistolary device allows Marguerite to articulate the iniquities of the French cultural practices of the time when patriarchal control was the reality, fathers choosing prospective partners for their daughters. The international perspective is widened further when Spence details the courtship behaviour of Scottish males involved in global enterprises who return with relative fortunes. She castigates these upper-class and middle-class Scottish men who, having profited from an imperial life in the likes of India, America and Australia, come home to seek a bride from a younger generation of women whose horizons have been circumscribed by genteel poverty. Spence expresses her dismay in an authorial intervention:

> The court that is paid to any man who is believed to be in a position to marry is one of the most distressing features in British society; it is most mischievous to one sex, and degrading to the other. Long, long may it be before we see anything like it in the Australian colonies![109]

Spence here links Scotland to Britain to Australia in her condemnation of the connection between wealth and love, insisting that there must be a renewed sense of moral purpose in marriage stretching across the empire. In the process of making this

[109] Spence, *Hogarth's Will*, p.78.

plea, however, Spence has occluded and denied the specific problems peculiar to the colony referred to above, as if Australia was somehow in a position to lead the way in pioneering enlightened approaches to marriage. Her selective fictional representations have to insist that marriage was, ultimately, a symbol of hope for the future of the empire but not necessarily starting with the existing Australian population.

The presentation of the relationship between Henry Hogarth and Elizabeth Ormistown opens the way for Spence to next explore a more traditional courtship with more conventional pitfalls. In one respect the marriage entrepôt disparaged by Spence is partly reflected in the dilemma which faces Alice Melville when she meets the rich Australian squatter Walter Brandon following her failure to succeed commercially as a poet. Alice, like her sister, has lost in the order of twenty thousand pounds as a result of the disinheritance and her initial response is to see marriage to a wealthy man as a solution to her woes. Brandon, English by birth and holidaying in Edinburgh as a guest of his Scottish aunt Mrs Rutherford, has returned to seek a bride. From Brandon's perspective the reader is given an assessment of the different women he meets. Jane Melville he finds too intelligent and too didactic for his liking, Spence underscoring the view that educated women who express their opinions too forcibly pose a threat to patriarchal expectations. On the other hand, he finds Alice Melville physically attractive and cultured, with her Scottish accent pleasant to the ear. Alice, however, knows that in Australia Brandon had once made inappropriate advances to his Scottish domestic servant Peggy Walker and she rejects his first proposal of marriage despite his promise of every material comfort and the private publication of her poems. On hearing the news that Alice has rejected Brandon, Jane Melville's advice is unexpectedly fatalistic:

> "Perhaps you ought to have a man of more fixed principles, if he could be had. But Elsie, my darling, it is not who we ought to have in the world, but who will have us; reflect that you may never have such an offer, or, indeed, another offer of any kind, again."[110]

[110] Spence, *Hogarth's Will*, p.191.

This response about the acute nature of gendered pressure surrounding acceptance of marriage proposals, from a character who is unreservedly sensible and prepared to challenge conventions throughout the novel, requires closer examination. Women's choices are limited to the passivity of waiting to be selected and, if not chosen, will face the uncertainty of potential spinsterhood. Spence tackles this issue in *The Author's Daughter*. There, the Scottish character Jessie Lindsay proposes unsuccessfully at first to George Copeland who takes her offer as a permission to start kissing her. She rejects him entirely and he has to return contrite to her after a year, having reflected on the error of his assumptions, before she finally accepts his proposal. Brandon, too, appears to have matured and seen the folly of his ways since his earlier lapse into unacceptable behaviour. Despite her own private opinions, Spence had enough empathy to understand the position the majority of women found themselves in when such proposals were made and knew that financial pressures and restricted employment opportunities weighed heavily against many women having the capacity to make a free and unfettered choice. Jane Melville recognises that Brandon had made an error of judgement but as a devout Christian she can also see that he is capable of redemption and change, and she finds reassurance in that.

Emphasising the transient and ephemeral nature surrounding protestations of love after the initial rejection by Alice, Spence has Brandon turn his attentions quickly to Miss Harriett Phillips, the confident and well-bred English daughter of a doctor friend and someone socially superior to himself. Spence develops Harriett's character in contrast to that of Alice Melville, ultimately allowing Brandon to make an informed choice about two different women; one Scottish, one English. Harriett, too, has pondered the fate of the ageing spinster left unwed and considers the position she finds herself in: 'It was so difficult for her to meet with her equal, either social, intellectual, or moral, and a husband, even though an Australian, began to be looked

upon as a desirable thing at her time of life'.[111] Again, Spence is alive to an understanding of the limitations which even an intelligent and cultivated woman like Harriett might face in finding a suitable partner, her 'even though an Australian' a sly jibe at the perceived social inferiority of the inhabitants of the colony. Spence's humour is in evidence as she delineates the ways in which Brandon comes to see a less-appealing side of Harriett, especially when they go shopping for clothes together.

In his search for an ideal of womanhood, Brandon returns to Peggy Walker for his point of reference and remarks 'if ever I am blessed with a wife she will have cause to cherish the memory of that homely Scotchwoman'.[112] Thus it is to Peggy's Scottish example that Brandon looks for some kind of calibration in how to make a judgement for the future; his ex-employee in the Australian bush who had once rebuffed his intemperate advances but whose bravery, honesty, dedication and selflessness had taught him respect for women. Brandon's letter containing his second proposal to Alice is crossed in the post and eventually back in Melbourne he proposes to her in person. Alice's continuing uncertainty, despite her eventual agreement, is revealed in their subsequent conversations when Brandon confesses his foolishness in pursuing someone as selfish and wilful as Harriett and Alice insists in turn that there will have to be a blend of friendship and love between them before they can have a future together. It is only when the moral example of Peggy Walker is invoked that Alice is prepared to recognise and accept that Brandon has progressed from his historically-inconsistent behaviour. Without Peggy Walker as the loadstone for their desired union there would have been potential difficulties in a relationship where one party was imperfect and the other hesitant. As it is, their shared respect for the guiding example of the peasant laundress is reified in a range of symbolic ways. Francis Hogarth informs Peggy back in Edinburgh that Alice's one regret is that 'she is only sorry she could not be married from your house,'[113] a Scottish marriage custom which signals to the watching community who is of the greatest importance in the life of the

[111] Spence, *Hogarth's Will*, p.197.
[112] Spence, *Hogarth's Will*, p.216.
[113] Spence, *Hogarth's Will*, p.411.

bride-to-be. Likewise, in the Epilogue, the future reveals that Walter and Alice now have three children with the first called Maggie in honour of Peggy Walker, the naming of children in Scotland at the time having familial significance and often following a hierarchy of importance. This emphasises once more that Spence does not look to either England or Australia in her deliberate selection of marriage-related conventions. Scotland's commercial appeal did not just lie in the choice of Highland settings but also in the intrusion of unique marital practices endorsed by an appeal to Scottish antiquity.

With Spence having shown the pitfalls of the irregular Scotch marriage and then a courtship in which potential partners are assessed for suitability, she brings forward the paradigm of Francis Hogarth and Jane Melville. In a certain respect, they provide a counterbalance to one of the major tropes of Victorian fiction. Elsie B. Michie, referencing *Jane Eyre* (1847) by Charlotte Brontë (1816-55) in an examination of the influence of wealth on relationships, asserts:

> This book explores one of the most common marriage plots in the nineteenth-century English novel: the story of a hero positioned between a wealthy, materialistic, status-conscious woman who might enhance his social position and a poorer, more altruistic, and psychologically independent woman who is the antipode of her rich rival.[114]

Spence, however, cleverly moves the boundaries of this kind of plot around, forcing a consideration of different perspectives. It is out of this fluidity that the success of their relationship emerges. In the first instance, there is no obvious 'hero'. Jane Melville, like her sister having lost her share of the estate, was on the cusp of becoming a wealthy heiress. Cross Hall employed many tenant farmers on its productive and fertile land and Jane, possessed of a broad education and a fine intellect, is already aware of her status in the community. If she had considered marrying Francis Hogarth, a clerk in the Bank of Scotland potentially much poorer

[114] Elsie B. Michie, *The Vulgar Question of Money: Heiresses, Materialism, and the Novel of Manners from Jane Austen to Henry James* (Baltimore, Maryland: The John Hopkins University Press, 2011), p.1.

than she was, she would have enhanced his position considerably. All of this is turned on its head in the time it takes to read the will and this allows Spence to explore the dilemmas left as the contradictions open out. Francis too has had his fortunes totally reversed in the same moment and now has to confront a reality which will mean relinquishing his newly-acquired wealth to nominated charities if he wants to propose to Jane. Francis's anguish is made clear in his first words to Jane when he says apologetically 'believe me, Miss Melville, no-one can regret this extraordinary will as I do'.[115] The parameters are set for whoever should wish to be a suitor to Jane and it is clear any rationale cannot be premised on a binary choice.

Jane is capable of making her own decisions and is resilient, not compliant, in the face of adversity. When Jane first visits Francis's cottage on the outskirts of Edinburgh she is at once impressed with what she sees. The dwelling is comfortable, neat, contains tasteful furniture and has a folio of engravings, symbolic of respectability and an appreciation of art. Most significantly for her, his 'very excellent collection of books was methodically arranged in ample book-shelves'.[116] Her previous suitor Dalzell's concern for shallow materialism has been exchanged immediately for the cultural and artistic intelligence made manifest in Francis's collection of drawings, poetry and fiction. This is one important way in which their mutual attraction is strengthened. Thus Francis, rescued from inauspicious beginnings and catapulted to unexpected wealth and status, is placed alongside the middle-class Scottish woman who is equally-well if not better educated. This balance of intellectual values will help ensure that any developing relationship is grounded in a shared aestheticism, not in any squalid bidding-war. Francis is presented to the world in his new guise as a desirable bachelor whose portfolio includes company investments, railway shares and bank capital and it is no surprise that 'calls and invitations came from every quarter', Spence highlighting the primacy of material motivation in such cases. Potential marriage partners from families associated with

---

[115] Spence, *Hogarth's Will*, p.7.
[116] Spence, *Hogarth's Will*, p.34.

the Scottish Borders such as the Maxwells and the Crichtons are introduced to Francis but although always polite ‘he shrank from the most insinuating speeches and the most flattering attentions’.[117] Francis’s physical revulsion reinforces his sensitivity in emotional matters and underscores his imperviousness to insincere blandishments. Just as there is no ‘hero’, there is no ‘rich rival’.

That the relationship will not be based on the perceived vulgarity of engrossment on either side is reinforced when religion is introduced into their discourse. Jane agrees to accompany Francis to his small, non-conformist church in Edinburgh and there, contrary to her own expectations, she enjoys both the sermon on the necessity of suffering and also the integrity of the prayers being offered. Here is a complete contrast to both the chaotic, licentious and secularised relationship between Henry Hogarth and Elizabeth Ormistown and to Brandon’s tolerant indifference to faith coupled with Alice’s reflexive response that any marriage of convenience would solve her monetary problems. Their joint reading of Marguerite de Véricourt’s letters gives Francis and Jane the opportunity to reflect on what should constitute the best kind of relationship. Marguerite’s observations about her daughter Clemence’s future have a particular resonance for them:

> I will give her a choice, and, at any rate a power of refusing even what appears to me to be a suitable marriage; for no doubt it is better for an intelligent and responsible human being to choose its own destiny, and to run its own risks.[118]

Both Francis and Jane are ‘intelligent and responsible’ Scots and they are free to choose without either coercion or any imposed morality foisted upon them. This is not the kind of polarised choice Michie characterises as an essential of the Victorian marriage plot but one which is thoughtful, considered and based on intellectual harmony.

[117] Spence, *Hogarth’s Will*, p.79.
[118] Spence, *Hogarth’s Will*, p.74.

Once the problem of Francis's birth-mother has been removed and he resigns his seat in the British Parliament the way is clear for him to join Jane in Australia and make his proposal. In sloughing off the encumbrances of his past in preparation for a new beginning, Francis charitably donates the proceeds of Cross Hall to the Blind Asylum, the Deaf and Dumb Asylum, a psychiatric institution and an infirmary. The selflessness of Francis and Jane is evidenced even as they pledge themselves to each other in an intimate conversation, he having renounced material possessions and political status to come to her and she proclaiming that she would have sacrificed even marriage itself for his personal wellbeing. Both thank God for the providence that has finally brought them together, underlining the importance that a Christian framework should surround their union. Jane's final words, which conclude the novel, bring together a number of dominant themes and consolidate messages that have been prefigured throughout: 'I do not think that you increase the number of happy marriages or lessen the number of mercenary unions by making the task for a single woman to maintain herself honestly and usefully such very uphill work'.[119] The original title of the novel had been *Uphill Work* before this was rejected as a potential source of mischief to hostile critics but it does indicate the connection Spence wants to make between free choice in marriage and economic independence for women to allow them to make that choice in an unfettered way. Francis and Jane go on to have three children, Francis now a partner in a flourishing mercantile firm. Francis, with Jane's support, decides to engage in Australian politics to contribute to civic society. Both of these Scottish immigrants re-affirm their faith that the future of the colony will be based around sound education for their children, male and female alike. When Peggy Walker asks Jane and Francis about how their 'lassies' are going to be educated, Jane replies with conviction:

> "Very much as we were educated ourselves," said Jane; "with more care taken for the cultivation of

[119] Spence, *Hogarth's Will*, p.439.

> their natural tastes, but the groundwork will be the same."[120]

This reference to the manner in which Henry Hogarth controversially educated his nieces in accordance with how males of the time were schooled indicates that their educational parameters have been brought with them from Scotland and not founded on any existing Anglican Church or masculinist Australian example.

THE CENTRALITY OF SCOTTISH RELATIONSHIPS IN 'GATHERED IN'

Published first in serial form after Spence had been living in Australia for another sixteen years from the time of *Mr Hogarth's Will*, *Gathered In* is, if anything, even more rooted in Scottish soil. There is little in a conceptual sense that identifies the novel as Australian, particularly in relation to the topic of marriage. Once more the key relationships developed by Spence involve a disproportionate number of Scottish characters suggesting that, in an artistic sense at least, she has not left behind the Scotland she had known to replace it with life in an imagined Australia. As before, Spence depicts the process of each marital union in close detail and presents each one for scrutiny. Once more the reader is left in no doubt about her preferred model to ensure Australia's future growth and wellbeing.

Spence returns almost immediately to the Scottish legal position when she highlights Marion Oswald's bitterness about her grandson Kenneth's status. Spence's own opinions lie behind Marion's reflections on the time the aristocratic Norman McDiarmid and her daughter Isabel spent together:

> She knew the facility of the Scottish marriage law, by which any written admission or verbal acknowledgement of being married, is as binding in law as a solemn religious ceremony, and she also thought too well of her daughter to believe that she could have lived for a year with Norman McDiarmid without believing that some such bond subsisted between them.[121]

[120] Spence, *Hogarth's Will*, p.437.
[121] Spence, *Gathered In*, p.12.

Without the unique status of this Scottish device the plot could not have been taken forward. Marion's assessment of her daughter's moral probity confirms in her mind that this had been no casual liaison but must have approximated to a marriage. The reference to 'a year' has its own concordance with the period of time associated with handfasting. Isabel's final, secret letter to Norman reveals the nature of her feelings for him when they had lived together after Isabel had nursed his dying sister. Isabel recognised that the differences in their respective social stations meant that he could leave her any time he wanted to. This led Isabel to make the decision, albeit under duress from Norman's mother and grandfather, to return home with Kenneth and not pursue any legal claim because 'it was love that made me leave you, love as great, aye, even greater, than what brought us together'.[122]

Thus that same tension between love and money is laid before the reader and once again it is made clear that the consequences of the Scottish practice stretch down the years to come. Spence's authorial intervention, coming from behind the mask of Marion, makes her view known just as emphatically as in *Mr Hogarth's Will*:

> One of the greatest evils of the Scottish marriage law is the curious moral obliquity which makes people think it right to move heaven and earth to prove an old, irregular bond, which will snap through new and more sacred relations.[123]

Although Spence's tolerance is evident for the idea that people should not be punished unduly for youthful indiscretions, nevertheless there is a disquieting ambiguity here from a writer publicly keen to advocate better rights for women, particularly after divorce or death of a spouse. From a feminist perspective the undeniable conclusion is that both materially and reputationally it is the woman who pays the heavier price in any such situation. This is despite the fact that Norman

---

[122] Spence, *Gathered In*, p.33.
[123] Spence, *Gathered In*, p.35.

McDiarmid recognises that the strength of his feelings towards Isabel at that time in his life were no less ‘sacred’ than the ones he has in his current marriage.

Hugh Carmichael, McDiarmid’s university colleague at Edinburgh, had tried over the years to prove Isabel’s claim to Castle Diarmid and the accompanying estate. In an important scene towards the end of the novel Carmichael describes to George Oswald in Australia how he had come across Norman and Isabel in their cottage in Glenrea in Ross-shire in the Scottish Highlands. Here the core of the plot is illuminated as Carmichael probes them to establish what the exact nature of their relationship is. On a day when Carmichael finds himself in Isabel’s company without Norman, and captivated by her beauty, love of nature and appreciation of literature, he attempts to kiss her. As Carmichael reports to Kenneth’s uncle, the subsequent outrage provokes Norman to express his disgust and anger at ‘the insult offered to his wife’[124], words spoken in front of Carmichael and the Highland servant Phemie Sinclair. This confrontation allows the vital declaration to be uttered publicly in front of the necessary two witnesses. However, Norman’s subsequent marriage to Grace Syme, daughter of a wealthy Edinburgh merchant, and their establishment of a secure family unit with six children, is presented by Spence as compensating for the previous unsatisfactory situation. Edith Gray, Kenneth’s future wife, condemns any potential disruption to such new domestic harmony, despite her earlier criticism of Norman having abandoned Isabel:

> To brand the heads of the households as not lawfully married, and all their children as illegitimate, appeared now a much more serious thing to Edith than ever before; and she began to think that in her regard to the claims of the dead woman, she had forgotten the claims of the living one, who had married without knowledge of any bar in the way.[125]

Edith is echoing Spence’s own opinion here, but another reading could interpret this as Grace Syme’s mercantile inheritance combining with the aristocratic lineage of the McDiarmids for an elevation in social prestige to the mutual advantage of both parties. In the process, Norman McDiarmid has chosen not to tell Grace about Isabel

[124] Spence, *Gathered In*, p.380.
[125] Spence, *Gathered In*, p.441.

and Kenneth being abandoned partly as a result of his family's class-based condemnation of the circumstances. Edith, however, seeks Norman's forgiveness for her past mistrust, throwing herself at his feet before he kisses and blesses her, the religious gesture providing the ultimate moral approbation. There is a lingering sense in which Spence never quite resolves the moral contradictions inherent in trying to rationalise the unjust circumstances of the past with the exigencies of the present.

Norman McDiarmid's daughter Sybil, born, raised and educated in Scotland, at seventeen had married the Englishman Herbert Ellerton. They had emigrated to Australia six months later because of his financial waywardness. Sybil is replete with all the prestige markers of the Scottish landed gentry such as a clan motto and a coat of arms. The improvident Ellerton, however, is scathing about almost everything Scottish, a trait used to underline his unpleasant nature. Theirs is an unhappy marriage, despite Sybil's loyalty and forbearance. Sybil, homesick and dependent upon the hospitality of the Scottish squatter William Gray, suffers Ellerton's disparagement of her links with the past. Spence as the omniscient narrator intervenes and makes explicit her own opinion of the reasons for the inappropriateness of this marriage:

> It had indeed been a painful disenchantment to Sybil Ellerton to find that there was now no tie but duty and appearances to bind her to the husband who had inspired the brief madness of a first love. Every shred of the glory with which she had invested him had been stripped off, and she now saw the crookedness and meanness of his selfish nature.[126]

This theme of the too-early marriage is repeated elsewhere in Spence's fiction and she was to use *Handfasted* to present a reasoned alternative to such 'brief madness' that would allow sensible resolutions for both parties in the event of separation. Norman McDiarmid is reluctant to intervene in Sybil's predicament because of the painful memory of his own 'first love' being forbidden by his mother and grandfather.

---

[126] Spence, *Gathered In*, p.168.

It is the image of the naïve, trusting and well-bred Scottish gentlewoman, encouraged through circumstances to yoke herself to the overweening bullying of a domineering Englishman, that Spence shows what is repellent about such a marriage. It is nowhere made explicit that this is intended to be read at a metaphorical level about the relationship between Scotland and England, Scotland historically being represented in literature as the female in the Union, but such an analysis could be inferred from any wider analysis of Spence's occasional scepticism about English characters. *Alasdair Raffe, for example, in an examination of John Arbuthnot's *The History of John Bull* pamphlets (1712), references how this historical allegory emerged. 'His decision to represent Scotland as Bull's sister was highly significant for his interpretation of the Union, and allowed him to express various judgements about Scotland's relationship with England'.[127] Michelle Ann Smith reiterates this point and argues 'the use of the feminine to allegorize Scotland continues a mediaeval commonplace figure and theme'.[128]

Spence reserves the preferred model of marriage for that between Kenneth Oswald and Edith Gray, the daughter of Scottish colonists. They face the anxieties and vicissitudes of misunderstood affections, the question of Kenneth's illegitimacy, Kenneth's wrongful imprisonment for the murder of Jim Oswald and the fundamental disagreement between them about Isabel Oswald's motivation for not claiming her rightful inheritance. Like Francis Hogarth and Jane Melville, they demonstrate separately and collectively that they are capable of unselfish, loving acts which can resolve complex moral dilemmas in a spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation. Edith's moment of epiphany in recognising her love for Kenneth is described as 'this tumultuous, this exquisitely, almost painfully delicious sensation'[129], an uncharacteristically hyperbolic and sensually-charged piece of prose from Spence.

[127] Alasdair Raffe, 'John Bull, Sister Peg, and Anglo-Scottish Relations in the Eighteenth Century', in Carruthers, Kidd, *Literature and Union*, p.46.
[128] Michelle Ann Smith, 'A Wedow in Distress: Personifying Scotland' in Campbell et. al., *The Shaping of Scottish Identities*, p.109.
[129] Spence, *Gathered In*, p.390.

Spence writes in her autobiography that she knew she had to keep her own emotions in check but there is a sense in which these words betray a potential for passionate feeling that was publicly repressed. The defining meeting where Kenneth and Edith discuss their feelings for each other takes place in the English Cemetery in Florence beside the grave of Elizabeth Barrett Browning where Edith lays a wreath composed of entwined Scottish wildflowers and Australian immortelles, Kenneth all the while referring to a copy of George Eliot's *Romola* (1863). This Arnoldian scene brings together English, Scottish and Australian motifs in a union of perfect concordance, symbolic of imperial harmony. Here again is the reinforcement of the importance of the intellectual sympathy necessary in Spence's view to ensure the solid foundations for a colonial marriage. They pledge their allegiance over the graveside, each reciting lines from one of Browning's love sonnets. Once more both characters stress that the perfect union is not about peripheral material trappings such as trousseaux and financial settlements but is about love for its own sake. The novel ends with their simple, unadorned marriage announcement in the Melbourne *Argus*, juxtaposed with the much more elaborate insertion from their erstwhile acquaintances Algernon Marmaduke and Louisa Charlotte Honey, their names verging on the parodic.

THE SCOTTISH MARRIAGE DIMENSION ACROSS SPENCE'S NOVELS

Similar to the examples discussed in *Mr Hogarth's Will* and *Gathered In*, the broad categories in evidence reveal a spectrum which includes condemnation, tolerance and approval. Space precludes a more detailed analysis but many of these unions are worthy of further consideration. The Scottish Clara Morison, while exemplifying Barclay's 'strong family ties' in the fortuitous meeting with her cousins, is also independent enough in mind to exercise her own unfettered judgement in agreeing to marry the English sheep-station owner Charles Reginald in what will prove to be a beneficial union. In the same novel the avaricious Scottish milliner and draper McNab marries the unpleasant Englishwoman Miss Withering in what is presented as an

economic arrangement convenient to both parties, not unlike the Union of 1707. In *The Author's Daughter* the paradigm which is presented is that between the steady and reliable Scot Allan Lindsay and the English orphan Amy Staunton who rejects the prospect of wealth and status to be with him. Indeed, in their entirety, the Scottish Lindsay family represents everything that is worthwhile about how colonists should behave and about what colonists should become in the course of time as the generations succeed each other.

Looked at holistically, it is clear that Spence uses her portable Scottishness to determine a framework within which examples of how Australia can flourish are represented in imaginary terms. It is difficult to argue that Spence knew nothing other than the ideas of Scottishness she emigrated with, given her long engagement with civil and political matters in Australia. Beverley Kingston asserts that with regard to marriage, following the 1861 Census, what emerged in common thinking about a typical Australian was an idea of 'a successful mix of migration from England, Scotland and Ireland.'[130] For Spence, however, there are no transported Irish political rebels, no descendants of English convicts, no Scottish paupers or radicals and certainly no indigenous peoples to obfuscate her vision. Equally there are very few Australian-born characters represented, and those universally from immediate British stock. Instead, imported, middle-class, educated, Christian Scots with a commitment to civic duty and the advancement of the imperial project are central. What emerges across her novels is that for artistic purposes her marriage plots and her views about the institution itself could not have been developed without the significant use of a range of Scottish reference points.

[130] Beverley Kingston, *The Oxford History of Australia: vol. 3, 1860-1900, 'Glad, Confident Morning'* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1988), p.123.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Centrality of Scotland in Spence's Representation of Religious Matters

SUMMARY OF HISTORICAL RELIGIOUS POSITION IN AUSTRALIA

The First Fleet colonists in 1788 brought with them the beliefs and practices of the Church of England which immediately assumed religious dominance as the territory was systematically appropriated. The Reverend Richard Johnson was the colony's first Anglican chaplain, thus placing a member of the Church of England at the heart of the governing officer class. The arrival in 1810 of the Governor-in-Chief Lachlan Maquarie (1762-1824) served to consolidate and strengthen the Anglican religious hold already established. As part of his official task to reform the colony, the autocratic Macquarie immediately restored observance of the Sabbath, imposed taxation on spirits to deter drunkenness, forbade illicit relationships of any kind and ordered all convicts to attend Sunday worship. This enhanced the authority of Anglicanism in religious matters and positioned it as the moral arbiter in relation to social conduct. By the time of the foundation of South Australia in November 1836 William Broughton had been consecrated as the first Anglican Bishop of Australia and Anglican influence was increasingly being extended into educational provision. Thus the groundwork for shaping the future of Australian society both spiritually and secularly was built round the assumption of Anglican supremacy in opposition to smaller and other religious groups.

There were immediate theological pressures on members of the Scottish Presbyterian Church in a new environment where these larger, well-established and more liberal congregations were beginning to flourish. It was against this background of dominant Anglicanism that Spence and her family had to find an appropriate religious home. Prominent and wealthy Scots started to move away from a severe style of preaching which involved acrimonious disputes over obscure and increasingly-

irrelevant points of the interpretation of scripture. As Malcolm D. Prentis recognises, ‘the Presbyterian Church lost Scots at both ends of the ecclesiastical spectrum: those wanting less dignity and more warmth went to the Methodists while those wanting more dignity and repose went to the Anglicans’.[131] Spence was not immune to these forces of change. Although her rejection of what she regarded as the gloominess of Calvinism and the helplessness attached to Predestination are reasons she cited in her autobiography for converting to Unitarianism in 1855, there is little doubt that social factors were also involved in her decision. It is important to note that some Scottish Presbyterians attempted to transport and consolidate existing religious beliefs from Scotland to Australia as a counter to the hegemony of assumed Anglicanism. In referencing the career of the Scottish evangelical preacher and politician John Dunmore Lang (1799-1878), Valerie Wallace writes ‘the attempt to establish the Church of England as the church of the empire also generated an enormous amount of protest’ and the same areas of contention such as patronage, political power and economic influence in spiritual matters were manifested in Australian religious discourse. Wallace records that from 1823 onwards Lang campaigned vigorously for the Church of Scotland to have the same religious privileges in Australia as the Anglicans, basing his arguments on an appeal to the sacrifices of the Covenanters, Biblical texts and rights enshrined in the Act of Union of 1707.[132] Spence uses these elements of conflict as touchstones in her writing and a number of her characters, such as Harry Stalker in *Gathered In* and Margaret Keith in *Handfasted*, confront the associated problems, but she herself was not drawn to Scottish Presbyterianism in Australia.

[131] Prentis, *Scots in Australia*, p.228

[132] Valerie Wallace, *Scottish Presbyterianism and Settler Colonial Politics: Empire of Dissent* (Cambridge: Palgrave MacMillan, 2018), p.3.

SPENCE'S SPIRITUAL JOURNEY FROM SCOTTISH PRESBYTERIANISM TO UNITARIANISM

Spence recalls in her autobiography her religious upbringing in Melrose, with morning and afternoon services in summer and a longer, combined service in winter. The services followed a set structure with a commentary on scripture and a subsequent moralising sermon. Spence's only observation about this was how surprising it seemed to those unfamiliar with the pattern, noting that the joint winter service 'was a thing astonishing to English visitors'[133] thus emphasising that she viewed her early religious world from a uniquely Scottish perspective. Spence uses her own knowledge of the Scottish Shorter Catechism and its proofs to good effect in *Gathered In* where the young Kenneth Oswald innocently questions his grandmother about the logic of Predestination and the subsequent definition of sin. In this way, Spence's rigorous religious grounding is critical in allowing her to explore creatively how people reach their own religious beliefs. Kenneth Oswald's spiritual journey is to be influenced by listening to the peregrinatory David Henderson, a bush preacher in the Australian outback, and Margaret Keith's journey will take her from Jensenism to Catholicism to Presbyterianism.

The theme of religious understanding being a journey is evident in Spence's *An Agnostic's Progress from the Known to the Unknown* (1884). This work, first published anonymously, is entirely derivative from John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* (1684) with Spence deploying a range of abstract characters similar to the original in a similar quest. What *An Agnostic's Progress* serves to highlight, however, is the huge influence the dissenting Bunyan had on Spence's own approach to writing about religious matters, with continuous inquisition a central feature. Scottish Presbyterianism is therefore not the only religious influence in her life. In time, Spence's Biblical knowledge was reflected positively in the employment testimonial provided by her

[133] Spence, *Autobiography*, p.22.

former teacher Sarah Phin. Phin recorded her high regard for Spence's religious upbringing, noting that she was 'so clear-headed and so patient, and so thoroughly upright in word and deed, and your knowledge of the Scriptures equal to that of many students of Divinity'.[134] Spence at seventeen was happy to use this endorsement when applying for jobs as a governess, her Scottish religious probity underpinning her subsequent success. It was also of great value when in May 1846, with the support of her mother and sister, Spence opened her own school which she ran until 1850.

Spence's attraction to the Unitarian Church, which she finally joined in the 1850s, was not an impulsive act. Her personal account sheds light on this, both for what it includes and what it omits. Spence had made the acquaintance of a Unitarian, Caroline Emily Clark, a niece of Sir Rowland Hill who had been Secretary of the South Australian Colonisation Commission from 1833-39. Spence found that she enjoyed the social company of Clark and her largely-English circle of intellectual friends. In addition, Clark had been complimentary about Spence's novel *Clara Morison*. Subsequent to this, Spence informed her own minister Rev. Robert Haining that for a three-month period she would attend his morning sermons and in the evenings go and hear the former-Presbyterian and now-Unitarian Ulsterman Rev. John Crawford Woods. Other family members joined her in this move towards a new preacher and over this period, with a renewed sense of positivity, Spence wrote 'we liked our pastor, and we admired his wife, and there were a number of interesting and clever people who went to the Wakefield Street Church'.[135] Spence's focus is clearly on the qualities of the people in Woods's congregation and the associated social and cultural dimensions rather than on any specific aspect of theology. It is worthy of note that Spence does not say whether there were equally 'interesting and clever' people left behind in Haining's Church of Scotland congregation. Susan Magarey (Eade) in her thesis on Spence gives biographical details of the seatholders and subscribers of this congregation in 1865. A representative example is that for A. Hardy who was 'J.P., solicitor and Notary Public, Member of House of Assembly; secretary of Glen Ormond

[134] Spence, *Autobiography*, p.41.
[135] Spence, *Autobiography*, p.64.

Silver Lead etc. Mining Company; hon. Secretary of Adelaide Club; R.W. Provincial Grand Master of the Masonic Lodge with the English Constitution'.[136] Spence was always open about the fact that she enjoyed being in the company of important, powerful and influential people wherever she found herself, and it was to this Unitarian congregation that Spence eventually chose to belong. Leaving aside the advantages of the social opportunities now open to Spence it is only fair to identify that Unitarianism itself, with its emphasis on individual free will and the practical application of scripture, would have an appeal to her. Nevertheless, there is a sense of ambivalence about her motivation for this change in spiritual direction. A desire for a more middle-class, upwardly-mobile and intellectually-stimulating milieu combined with a theology that embraced the active involvement of women would appear to have been central to Spence's thinking.

SPENCE'S FICTIONAL REPRESENTATION OF CONVENTIONAL RELIGIOUS FIGURES

In Spence's novels she often reveals a caustic and dismissive disregard for figures of religious authority. Suspicious of Judaism, hostile to Catholics and of the view that High Anglicanism was too close to Rome, Spence in fact reserved her most bitter invective in her fiction for Scottish preachers. Towards the end of *Gathered In* when Rev. McDrone questions one of his elderly female parishioners, Tibbie Mathieson, about why she appears to go to sleep when he begins his sermons yet listens intently to the likes of Harry Stalker, Tibbie's reply is an iteration of the contrast between the formulaically stale and the freshness of intellectual challenge:

> "Weel, Sir, ye see, it's just this. Ye're a kenned hand, and we can lippen (trust) to you, and when ye've gi'en out the text I ken fu'weel what ye'll make o't. It'll be all soond Gospel doctrine. But when the like o' young Stalker or thae birkies frae Edinbro' comes down, my certy, they need watchin'. There's nae kennin' frae the text what they're like to mak o't."[137]

---

[136] Susan Eade, *A Study of Catherine Helen Spence 1825-1910* (Canberra: Australian National University, 1971), M.A. Thesis, p.378.
[137] Spence, *Gathered In*, pp.420-21.

Rev. McDrone is predictable to the point of boredom, his congregation dulled over many years by the repetitive and droning nature of his uninspired if orthodox preaching. He offers no challenge to the basis of their faith and the normal result is mere acquiescence on all sides to the anticipated rituals. With a free-thinking theologian like Harry Stalker, however, who is prepared to expound an alternative interpretation of received doctrine, there is a different response from Tibbie Mathieson. She is steeped in observance and is therefore alert to the nuances of religious discourse. Spence chooses to make societal awareness of the changes taking place in preaching habits a gendered one, with a woman like Tibbie the attuned arbiter of any shifting undercurrents. Spence is implying that any challenge to male authority in the pulpit will come from the response of religious women like Tibbie who are the weekly guardians of the faith. Stalker will ultimately conclude that he has no place in the kind of church McDrone represents and he will leave of his own volition, citing as a major factor in his decision the church's hostility to issues which were of particular significance to women.

Rev. Herries in *Mr Hogarth's Will* also reveals Spence's aversion to unprincipled religious conduct. In Herries's previous visits to Henry Hogarth at Cross Hall he had talked only of the mundane and commonplace, Hogarth's unorthodox views revealing Herries as lacking the intellectual courage to challenge him on any point of faith. With Hogarth's death, however, and the news now spreading quickly about Jane and Alice Melville being disinherited, Herries approaches both women with an entirely different demeanour. Emboldened enough to criticise Henry Hogarth directly to their faces and referencing as much gloom as possible from the scriptures, Herries takes it upon himself to compensate for the perceived deficiencies in their religious upbringing. The effect on Jane, however, is that she 'did not feel much comforted or edified by the well-meant exhortation'. Alice, likewise, is repulsed by Herries's personal attacks on her loved and respected uncle and she was horrified 'when he dwelt upon the temptations of riches and the difficulty with which the rich can enter the kingdom of Heaven'.[138] Herries exemplifies cowardly hypocrisy, his theology

[138] Spence, *Hogarth's Will*, p.22

malleable and dependent upon the circumstances of his audience. Here once more the challenge to the assumed authority of the church is coming from a female perspective with two intelligent women unwilling to comply with insensitive platitudes and in the process questioning inappropriate application of scripture. Jane and Alice share Tibbie's scepticism about accepting male religious monovocalism without a degree of objective interrogation.

Having highlighted the boring mundanity of Rev. McDrone and the moral vacillation of Rev. Herries, Spence presents a more profound and disturbing critique of Scottish Presbyterianism in her portrayal of Rev. Archibald Keith in *Handfasted* . There is value in examining this character because of the light it sheds on Spence's theological thinking. An ancestor of Dr Hugh Victor Keith, Archibald Keith had been minister at Coldbrandspath (Cockburnspath) in Berwickshire before selling off family farms to finance the expedition to the new central-American colony of Columba. Dr Hugh Victor Keith's Scottish grandmother tells him that Archibald was motivated by the thought 'that he would be the spiritual guide of five hundred emigrants more effectively than he could be in a Kirk with a patron and temporalities and a cauldrife Kirk session and presbytery'.[139] The grandmother's religious references were fundamental points of contention in the Kirk which led eventually to the Disruption of 1843 in Scotland and the establishment of the Free Church. For Scotland and beyond the importance of this schism cannot be overstated. In *Gathered In* Spence uses the debates about who controls the appointment of ministers and what the relationship between the people and God should be like as reference points in Harry Stalker's movement away from organised religion.

Through a combination of circumstances Rev. Archibald Keith had managed to put himself in a position to ask the parents of Marguerite de Launay if he could marry her. Marguerite, cultured and well-educated, had been raised by a Jansenist aunt in Fontainebleau. Her personal journal forms Book 3 of the novel. Under pressure from

---

[139] Spence, *Handfasted*, p.20.

both her parents and from the anti-Catholic Keith who condemned 'the dogmas of an infallible church, priests and sacraments, and asserted the right of private judgement' Marguerite was coerced into abandoning 'the modified Catholicism which I had blindly followed'.[140] At the age of eighteen, in line with Archibald Keith's promise that her impoverished parents should receive half of her income for as long as they lived, her mother and father accepted his proposal. In effect sold, Marguerite is at pains to stress that the marriage had no basis in love, her true sympathies lying with naval Lieutenant Paul Durham, a close friend of her brother Victor. Marguerite finds herself unhappily married to Archibald Keith and living in his parish of Coldbrandspath in Scotland. Marguerite records that the aggressive and dogmatic minister was keen to gain a position of power in the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland 'so as to check what he called the growing Erastianism of the Scottish Kirk'. Marguerite notes in relation to the Union of Parliaments between Scotland and England in 1707 that 'his greatest grudge against the Union was that secularism had encroached upon the Headship of Christ, and that there had been granted sinful toleration for both popery and heresy,'[141] cultural, religious and historical reference points which had dominated Scottish life from the sixteenth century onwards. Marguerite, with her background of sympathetic Catholicism, has become shackled to a zealot intent on church militancy in the direct tradition of the Scottish Covenanters. In a sign of his intolerance, he burns the copy of Shakespeare's plays which Lieutenant Durham had gifted to Marguerite, self-righteously justifying his actions by citing the profanity of its contents. He comes to dominate every aspect of Marguerite's life, rationalising each vindictive act with references to his strength of faith and her spiritual weakness.

The one friendship Marguerite is able to maintain is with her permanent maid Violet Anderson, mother of an illegitimate son Gavin. Marguerite argues strongly against her husband's prejudices about this appointment, cleverly confronting him with his own beliefs:

[140] Spence, *Handfasted*, p.162.
[141] Spence, *Handfasted*, p.172.

> There were many scruples to overcome on the part of my husband, especially as I was so greatly set upon it, but as Violet had stood the rebuke of the Kirk session, and had been readmitted to church privileges, and was a sincere penitent, there was no logic in his saying that we could not look over her transgression and forgive her when in his capacity as a minister of Christ's Church he had forgiven the sinner.[142]

Here Marguerite juxtaposes the idea of respectability with the ideas of Christian rebirth. Marguerite is thus able to able to articulate an opposition to her husband's relentless search for sin and his disturbing obsession with the need for punishment. In time, his extreme interpretation of doctrine causes him to lose the opportunity to move to an influential parish in Edinburgh despite having been the prestigious Moderator of the General Assembly for two years. Archibald Keith now determines to become the spiritual leader of the new settlement at any cost. Marguerite records that he wanted to be the driving force in determining the ethos of the colony and, amongst other precepts, wanted 'to found it on true religious principles, to bring up the children of the settlement in the fear of God'.[143] In an ironic twist of fate, he dies on board the emgirants' ship *Scotia* in the act of saving Gavin Anderson from being washed away. There is an implicit suggestion here that out of the death of an old theology will emerge the birth of a new one with the focus of its resurrection on those who, like Gavin Anderson, have been the marginalised and dispossessed. In a further ironic twist, it now falls to Marguerite and her younger son Victor to identify and shape what the 'true religious principles' of the new colony are to be. Based on their experiences of Scottish Presbyterianism as represented by Archibald Keith they are determined that, whatever else, any new creed will not be founded on either fear or a cowed subservience to impossible strictures. Marguerite will now critique the distorted brand of Calvinism personified by her dead husband and offer an alternative based on the principles of a commonweal rather than a dictatorship. Once again in Marguerite, like Tibbie Mathieson and Jane and Alice Melville before her, Spence offers a gendered challenge to the masculine orthodoxies of the Presbyterian Church,

---

[142] Spence, *Handfasted*, p.176.
[143] Spence, *Handfasted*, pp.187-88.

with the added dimension this time that a woman will not be querulously questioning practices from the outside but will now be at the 'true heart' making the decisions.

SPENCE'S APPROACH TO RELIGION IN 'GATHERED IN'

There is a preponderance of unattractive male clergy in Spence's works. In *The Author's Daughter* Rev. Frederick Evans, the uncle of the heroine Amy Staunton and rector in the English parish of Belmont near London, provides a typical example. Spence introduces him as follows:

> The rector was neither High Church nor Broad Church nor yet distressingly Low Church; but it is probable that if he had been either, he would not have been so absolutely useless in the Church as he was, for any kind of view held earnestly would have been better than his indifference and inactivity.[144]

Spence condemns Evans's insipid lack of conviction, underlining that she felt religion should be a dynamic part of daily life in which committed, intelligent and devout people should demonstrate commendable leadership qualities. Spence was emphatic in her view that the Protestant religion was a fundamental issue about whose future society could not afford to be complacent and allow to wither because of turpitude. In another revealing passage in her autobiography, with no specific allusion to Unitarianism, she stresses once again the importance of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678) in her thinking and makes reference to the allegorical Vanity Fair as a place nowadays *not* to be passed through as quickly as possible:

> Vanity Fair is the world in which we all have to live and do our work well, or neglect it. Pope and Pagan are not the old giants who used to devour pilgrims, but who can now only gnash their teeth at them in impotent rage. They are live forces, quite active, with agents and supporters alert to capture souls.[145]

Spence's evident hostility to Roman Catholicism, in which males dominate the power structures, is illustrated here with the combative references to 'forces', 'agents' and

[144] Spence, *Author's Daughter*, vol.2, p.188.
[145] Spence, *Autobiography*, p.130.

'capture' and could be read both as markers of her middle-class, Scottish Presbyterian upbringing and her lifelong adult challenge to the lack of female representation in religious matters. In addition, the word 'agents' carries connotations of the inheritance of an Elizabethan, anti-Jesuit stance in which suspicion is directed at the intellectual representatives of the Catholic faith. Spence equally had a clear and robust antipathy to the materialism of secular atheism. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that Spence did have a positive vision to offer about males and religion in her creative output. It is in the Scottish characters of David Henderson and Harry Stalker in *Gathered In* that an articulation of this vision can be found.

Immediately prior to the introduction of David Henderson, Kenneth Oswald, on his uncle's station in Australia, is in a state of considerable despair. As tutor to his intractable and sullen cousin Jim, missing Scotland and feeling abandoned by his friends 'he was suffering so keenly from intellectual isolation, as well as from a phase of religious difficulty, that his inner life was almost unendurable'.[146] Kenneth is, to all intents and purposes in Bunyanesque terms, in the Slough of Despond. At this point Kenneth gives a lift to the itinerant preacher whose 'eyes had a power of inward vision which gave them an intensity and a depth of expression in which speculation lost itself'. In contrast to most of the other religious figures in Spence's works Henderson is presented as a man of intelligence, thoughtfulness and profundity, and when he goes on to reference his being blessed by the Lord, Kenneth at once places him not as 'a dissenting lay preacher or an Anglican lay reader' but 'more like a philosopher or a savant'. From the outset Henderson has attractive, almost mystical, qualities and Kenneth warms to him at once. He is not conventional in dress, allegiance or religious orthodoxy, all suggestive of an approach which will not be circumscribed by the theology of Divinity schools. He and Kenneth discuss the difference between holding service and preaching and how Henderson sees his role:

[146] Spence, *Gathered In*, p.102.

> Not holding service, endeavouring to lead worship; you do not see the difference, few folk do. Service is a term derived from the old Temple ritual, with its regularity, its pomps, its sacrifice – something, in fact, done to the glory of God. Worship, as I take it, is just the uplook of the human soul to the Highest. No service to Him; He needs none.[147]

Henderson's radical approach to religion embraces feelings which are intuitive and empathic, eschewing any outward show of repetitive rituals, material artifacts or hollow gestures. His dissenting voice is very much a personal interpretation of scripture but it does map out an alternative space in which legitimate worship can take place. He tells Kenneth that he does not follow a cerebral theology nor does he value persuasive oratory designed to sway people to a particular perspective. He feels instead that he will have done God's work if he 'can make a handful here and there, in these neglected heathenish bush stations, see some of the wondrous things in the Gospel'.[148] Henderson wants to live and demonstrate his Christianity every day of the week and not just perfunctorily on a Sunday. Henderson's break with orthodoxy is not on the institutional scale of the schismatic Disruption of 1843 in Scotland but it nevertheless clears an area in which the evangelical voice can be heard, free from external structural pressures. Kenneth is both intrigued and heartened at this chance meeting and is challenged by Henderson's thinking. Kenneth feels in Henderson he has a link with Scotland, an intellectual equal and a potential friend. Almost at once his feelings of despondency are lifted.

Henderson's evangelism includes a concern about the economic inequalities evident in the colony. He argues they are a result of land and capital being controlled by a wealthy few on the one hand and labourers being forced to accept the lowest possible wages on the other. He is worried about the resultant spiritual impact on the wellbeing of the poorest, observing 'it grieves me to see the station hands and the shearers, the men by whose weary drudgery wealth and comfort are produced for their masters and prosperity for the colony, making their money like machines, and

[147] Spence, *Gathered In*, pp.108, 109.
[148] Spence, *Gathered In*, p.110.

spending it like idiots or madmen'.[149] Henderson argues that the whole community has a collective responsibility for the poor and orphaned and he introduces the concept of care for 'the children of the State'.[150] Writing *State Children in Australia: A History of Boarding Out and its Developments* in 1907, Spence herself was to contribute significantly to the Australian government's approach to the care of orphaned and impoverished children, and a connection can be seen here between ideas articulated in her fiction and those appearing later in her non-fiction publications.

Edith Gray, like Kenneth, is immediately struck by the demeanour of the wandering preacher and wants to hear him speak to the workers. She emphasises that the usual visiting 'scholarly and gentlemanly' clergymen do not normally want to connect with the roustabouts and is particularly critical of their last visiting minister who was far happier out shooting with her father, playing billiards and listening to Sybil Ellerton sing. Edith is also scornful about the content and style of the sermon that was actually delivered:

> And on Sunday he calls all the hands in, that are not out on necessary business, all washed and trimmed, to hear him read prayers out of a printed book and then he hurried through a short sermon, which, whether he wrote it or not, he certainly read as if he rather disbelieved it than otherwise, and dismissed them with an unctuous blessing delivered in ex-cathedra style.[151]

Henderson's sermon is in complete contrast, with his sincere belief in Christ's sacrifice evident to all and his farewell blessing based upon a psalm commonly sung in Scotland. Those who attend, including Edith and Kenneth, are openly mocked by Sybil's husband Herbert Ellerton who is disparaging about all the levels of bush society going to hear 'some howler' preaching 'in the men's kitchen in an atmosphere redolent of a mixed odour of supper, tobacco smoke of the rankest flavor, and dogs, not to speak of the men'.[152] In time, Henderson will be instrumental in saving Kenneth in a physical, not just a spiritual, sense when his evidence in court proves that the

---

[149] Spence, *Gathered In*, p.111.
[150] Spence, *Gathered In*, p.113.
[151] Spence, *Gathered In*, p.120.
[152] Spence, *Gathered In*, p.122.

contemptuous and arrogant Ellerton is the murderer of Jim Oswald. Later in the novel Henderson again articulates his rationale for choosing his religious path by explaining he is motivated by the desire 'to know the future history of those obscure and unnamed men and women who were witnesses to that divine life and death'.[153] For Henderson the example of Jesus is all that matters, not the rituals, trappings or theological niceties of conventional observance.

Henderson continues on his way and, months later, meets Kenneth again when they discuss the difficulties in finding a meaningful understanding of religious beliefs in the face of 'modern scepticism'. Henderson reassures him with a positive message, urging him to place his trust in God and embrace the advance of civilisation because, as he argues, 'higher and nobler aspirations are leading us ever nearer to a fairer and vaster celestial city than John Bunyan ever dreamed of in his day'.[154] Bunyan, not Unitarianism, is once again a point of reference, linking Henderson with a long dissenting tradition. Henderson's final contribution to the novel is his spiritual support for Kenneth throughout his prison ordeal. Henderson is one acceptable face of Christianity for Spence; a Scottish preacher who demonstrates the antithesis of everything Archibald Keith's interpretation of Presbyterianism represented.

Harry Stalker, the other important male religious character in Spence's fiction, does not in fact continue with his formal career in the Church of Scotland but ultimately finds himself in an interrogative context similar to that of Marguerite, Tibbie, Jane and Alice. It is the presence of religion in Scotland which dominates the text, and Spence consistently presents a gendered critique of the reasons why religious practice must reform if it is to survive. Stalker illustrates an element of disquiet about how the Church of Scotland is responding to contemporary societal issues, which he articulates in his discussions with Kenneth. Stalker feels that the world is changing rapidly but the Church of Scotland is not keeping pace. Wallace has shown earlier how clergy like John Dunmore Lang were campaigning vocally in

---

[153] Spence, *Gathered In*, p.144.
[154] Spence, *Gathered In*, pp.192-93.

Australia at the time, Lang himself moving towards the idea of democratic republicanism free from London control, but Spence chooses to drive the debate through referencing a Scottish hinterland. Stalker explains to Kenneth 'if I could only get a spark of that divine faith which your friend the bush missionary has to guide him, life to me would have a meaning'.[155] Just as the pragmatic Henderson exemplifies the tenets of Christianity in practice and presents a challenge to uncommitted orthodoxy, so Stalker presents a cogent intellectual argument against the prevailing theology of Scottish Presbyterianism. Stalker is not a moral paradigm of earthly perfection but he does bring his formidable intellect to bear on the current position of the Church of Scotland. Like Henderson, Stalker has a distrust of respectability and he too constantly takes the side of the disadvantaged. Stalker's contrary credentials allow him to consider a whole range of religious and societal issues from an empirical and unconventional perspective.

Stalker is liked by Kenneth's grandparents Marion and John Oswald and he continually probes Marion in particular, for 'he loved to draw her out, and to elicit by question and rejoinder that curious mixture of Calvinistic theology and worldly wisdom, which is so essentially a national characteristic of the bygone generation'.[156] As a minister, Stalker recognises the importance of a Presbyterian religious background as one of the main identifying features of the rural peasant class of Scotland. He also recognises, however, that this is a receding picture of a past truism and that a different, less fixed, approach is needed for more challenging times ahead in an industrialising society. He feels the Church of Scotland is losing its presence and authority in the new class system emerging in urban areas. In his respect for the two older people he is able to leave aside his customary scepticism but he recognises they do not represent the Church's future in Scotland.

Stalker appears one last time at the end of the novel when Kenneth and George Oswald return from Australia to Scotland. Stalker confesses he has been fighting with

---

[155] Spence, *Gathered In*, p.423.
[156] Spence, *Gathered In*, p.57.

his conscience and now he wants to leave the Church of Scotland for good. Kenneth tries to discourage him from the finality of this act, stressing that urban congregations increasingly require ministers who are independent thinkers. Stalker, however, feels that he cannot be intellectually honest because of the constraints of dogma:

> But every thoughtful preacher in our Presbyterian Churches works in fetters – not only with the risk of being arraigned for heresy before the Church Courts, but with the certain conviction that in seeking the truth, and, so far as he sees it, expounding it, he is paltering with his own vows and subscriptions.

Stalker is repulsed by what he sees as an anti-intellectual culture in the Church of Scotland coupled with a self-appointed, introspective system of internal discipline and punishment. He can no longer be part of an institution afraid of open debate which continues to gaze towards money rather than embracing honest discussion without recrimination. Stalker recognises the magnitude of his internal turmoil and knows what a wrench it will be for him to leave 'the Kirk of my forefathers, where four generations of Stalkers have preached in parish pulpits and done pastoral work'[157] but despite this pull of history he is still prepared to give up everything. Stalker feels he can no longer embrace the narrow Calvinistic perfectionists who are convinced of their own rightness because 'the universe is too vast, too complex, too bewildering for me to find any keys to its mysteries,'[158] his comments reflecting his (and possibly Spence's) view of the Church's inability to accommodate the impact on contemporary theology of the significant scientific and technological changes of the period.

Stalker's concerns, however, are more wide-ranging than theology. Like Henderson, he attacks the fundamental tenets of capitalism, questioning how the interests of commerce, business and finance in a global economy can be reconciled with the message of the Sermon on the Mount. He rejects the example of Christ when it comes to resolving 'the still harder questions arising out of the relations of the sexes, the mighty problem of modern life' and finds the lack of guidance in the Bible unhelpful when religion has to accommodate a man being 'tempted by the sight or by

---

[157] Spence, *Gathered In*, p.423.
[158] Spence, *Gathered In*, p.424.

the touch of a woman's loveliness'. This leads him to criticise the Church of Scotland's support of existing divorce laws, a defence derived from scripture. Stalker stands in opposition to the existing religious conventions surrounding marriage and in his own relationship with Nelly Lindores he wants to embrace a different, more equitable approach not based on any material contract. Pointing to the example of Kenneth's half-sister Sybil Ellerton, he attacks the intransigence of strict Presbyterians in their failure to acknowledge that marriages can face insurmountable difficulties. He complains 'the whole thing is faulty and incomplete, but stands in the way of real reform, for if you touch the marriage question they come down on you with the Bible'.[159] Stalker also admits that he cannot countenance the Scottish Church's position on unmarried mothers because he feels the Church's condemnation colours and dominates civic society's response. Finally, Stalker has come to question the nature of love itself, particularly with respect to how relationships are formed and sustained. He rejects the stereotypical view premised on an unrealistic notion of worshipping another person in an obsessive and all-consuming manner. When people pledge their futures together he asserts, in an echo of Smout's explanation above, 'it is the love that sanctifies the marriage, more than the marriage can sanctify the love'.[160] Harry's decision to leave the Presbyterianism of the Church of Scotland behind is based on a process of logical and empirical thinking. He can no longer agree in his conscience with the Church's stance on core issues of theology, political economy, sexual attraction, divorce and illegitimacy and in much of this process he is repositioning the role of women in society.

In *Gathered In*, Spence chooses to develop the two Scottish characters of the pragmatic David Henderson and the intellectual Harry Stalker to explore the theological and societal position of the Church of Scotland as well as conventional religious practice in a wider sense. There is no reference of any significance across this novel to the importance of theology or practice in any uniquely Australian or Anglican religious institution. This highlights that it was the religious practice of the

[159] Spence, *Gathered In*, pp.427-8.
[160] Spence, *Gathered In*, p.432.

country she had left behind which was still Spence's central literary concern, not Unitarianism, even at this date. It is the Church of Scotland in Scotland, not its transplanted version in Australia, which provides Spence's focus for an increasingly-gendered religious critique.

SPENCE'S POSITIVE DEPICTION OF FEMALE RELIGIOUS FIGURES

Spence makes a deliberate artistic choice to foreground female religious figures and represent them in a positive way. Marguerite de Launay, now as Margaret Keith, has to work from first principles regarding Christianity. Margaret, a latter-day Saint Margaret of Scotland and her son Victor, ultimately the winner in the theological debate, begin their new spiritual life in Columba with just the consciences of the settlers and a few salvaged Bibles as their guides. Margaret, when called upon by the community to pray and to preach – a woman now commanding this influential position – turns away completely from the repressive Scottish doctrines of her deceased husband. Margaret's first decision is to abandon the Catechisms and structure her approach entirely on the teachings of the Gospels and in the process she 'found out how differently they could be interpreted when they were not considered under the benumbing influence of tradition'.[161] It is Margaret who proposes and modifies the custom of handfasting as the basis of the marriage ceremony, a decision immediately endorsed and validated by the colonists. By adopting this new approach, hasty and unsuitable marriages are almost completely eradicated and illegitimacy and prostitution eliminated entirely. Orphans are treated with special respect and given prestigious positions in the developing society. Fear is removed as a spiritual weapon and the concept of original sin is abandoned. In time, a Kirk is built to provide a place for worship and, in a community without writing or printing materials, it serves also as a schoolhouse, a theatre and a venue for civic gatherings. Margaret gains unanimous support for her views on the observance of the Sabbath, incorporating into

[161] Spence, *Handfasted*, p.198.

it the more relaxed approach of her French upbringing. Public worship and the reading of the Bible every Sunday are maintained as familiar practices and the teaching of the scriptures is enmeshed in school lessons as would have been expected by the settlers. However the pleasure principle, anathema to the strict Presbyterianism of Archibald Keith, is important for the European Margaret and she reflects ‘I recollected the Sunday afternoons at Fontainebleau where our unlearned peasantry danced on the turf, and I believed that was more in accordance with the spirit of Christian religion than either hard work or wearisome exercises’.[162] Christianity in Columba, then, recognises and embraces the idea of ordinary people having pleasure in an open and public way, free from the debilitating incubi of Scottish Presbyterian’s Sabbatarian shame and guilt. In this evolutionary way and incrementally over a period of time Margaret and Victor establish a completely different religious discourse from that left behind in the parish of Coldbrandspath.

By the time Dr Hugh Victor Keith arrives in Columba one hundred and forty-three years’ later, a key spiritual figure is Sister Dorothea, the main preacher at Palmtown Kirk. Sister Dorothea has been through the ceremony of handfasting and has a child but she has chosen not to commit to the institution of marriage. Here is a single woman involved in shared parenting representing the spiritual acme of the community. She is also a teacher, a nurse and an extremely devout civic and religious member of the republic, respected by all. Spence is challenging almost every sacred shibboleth here, insisting that there must be no conflation of marital conformity and moral superiority. The image of this radical figure was not approved by the male judge in the literary competition for which the novel was submitted, however, and *Handfasted* was rejected for publication with barely-concealed gendered hostility. It took until 1984 for it to be published and the passage of time has shown that Spence was pioneering and visionary in this respect.

---

[162] Spence, *Handfasted*, p.198.

In *A Week in the Future* Spence devotes a chapter entitled *Religion and Morality* to religious matters. It could reasonably be argued that this represents how Spence understood the contemporary global environment in which spiritual beliefs would have to survive. Emily Bethel, who has traded her life in exchange for a week in an imagined London one hundred years in the future, is able to question Miss Somerville, known as St. Bridget, about how the events of history have affected organised religion. St. Bridget is extremely well-informed about all aspects of religious life and, like Sister Dorothea and Margaret Keith, is also a highly-regarded preacher with extensive pastoral responsibilities. Spence anticipates that opposition to female clergy and the control of Kirk sessions by male elders will be subject to challenge. Spence is insightful about the forces which threaten traditional Christianity, emphasising the changed religious climate in which 'the active spirits – the Socialists, the Communists, and the Nihilists – were impassioned and aggressive Secularists and looked on the churches as the greatest hindrances in the way of human progress'.[163] St. Bridget confirms to Emily that over the century there had been a greater move towards ecumenicalism and that people guided by religious principles had provided much of the intellectual motivation for tackling poverty and injustice at a political level. Emily then questions St. Bridget about the baptismal practices of the High Church Anglicans and is reassured to hear that 'there is no social advantage or prestige in belonging to the English Church now-a-days'.[164] Likewise, Emily is gratified to learn that, with respect to the Catholic Church, 'the domination of an ignorant and arrogant priesthood has been exchanged for the helpfulness of an enlightened ministry'.[165] Again, these examples serve to suggest that there was more than a trace of anti-Anglican and anti-Roman sentiment in Spence's Scottish-nuanced approach to religious matters. Spence recognised there had to be clerics and preachers in society but she did not want male, Presbyterian, Anglican or Catholic representatives to dominate the landscape. She wanted to open up religious territory, with all its concomitant power and influence, for women.

[163] Spence, *A Week in the Future*, p.128.
[164] Spence, *A Week in the Future*, p.132.
[165] Spence, *A Week in the Future*, p.136.

Spence’s concern with the primacy of spiritual matters is evident not just in the religious figures she imagines but also in a significant number of scripture-influenced allusions spread across all of her novels. The characters she creates, whether they are in support of one form of church organisation or against another, allow her to explore contemporary theological tensions. For Spence, religion was a central concern in her output. She was writing from the background of a Scottish culture where religious outlook and national identity were very closely intertwined, if not indivisible. Her milieu was middle-class and in the absence of a Scottish parliament in Scotland itself the Church very often spoke the voice of the middle-classes on behalf of the nation. Spence transported this concept of the role of religion in shaping the morality of society to Australia, also a country lacking a parliament free from external governance. Across her fiction the Scottish presence in religious matters, with women prominent in the discourse, is very significant.

CONCLUSION

The main aim of this dissertation has been to argue that Catherine Helen Spence's fiction should be re-assessed in light of the fact that the Scottish presence in her works has not hitherto been prominently foregrounded. This claim was based on the evidence examined across a range of Spence's writings. To achieve the aim of the dissertation, a number of important aspects were highlighted for consideration.

The importance of Spence's use of Scotland in which to set key elements of her different plots was highlighted. Without this topographical device, particularly in relation to the Highlands, the dissertation argued that Spence could not have fully achieved her artistic goals. Additionally, Spence's depiction of Scottish characters was pivotal in consolidating her view that settlement by Scottish colonists, preferably Protestant and self-disciplined, would be advantageous for the future prosperity of the territory. The sheer number of her fictional Scottish characters, out of all proportion to their presence in comparison with their English and Irish counterparts, reinforces the fact that Scotland's people or their immediate descendants were critical to the realisation of Spence's creative intentions. As well as having a focus on the centrality of Scottish settings and characterisation, the dissertation also argued that Spence's use of the Scots language was an important differentiating marker of national identity. Spence's artistic choice to use Scots in intruded dialogue, often in an attempt to convey a certain emotional resonance, underlined this feature. Moreover, Scottish cultural references provided Spence with a significant proportion of her allusory background material. The dissertation held that an understanding of these geographical, historical and literary allusions was critical in the need to fully apprehend Spence's imaginative hinterland. Equally, the cultural reference points consolidated the impression that Spence understood her approach to writing fiction from a Scottish perspective.

In addressing the key topics of marriage and religion, the dissertation argued that the centrality of both Scotland and Scottish characters was paramount. Without the existence of the differences between Scottish and English (and by implication, Australian) legislation, Spence could not have structured her marriage plots in the manner she chose. Again, the couples who emerged as exemplars of successful marriage unions were disproportionately Scottish in number. Similarly, with regard to religion, the central argument was that Spence concentrated almost exclusively on matters relating to Scottish Presbyterianism and its legacy. Both Anglicanism and Roman Catholicism were presented largely in opposition to the theological matters which preoccupied the Church of Scotland. When all of the above factors are considered in aggregate it is arguable that the Scottish presence in Spence's fiction is of sufficient order to make it central to any literary analysis of her works.

If the findings of the dissertation are accepted as legitimate and credible then there are certain implications which follow, particularly for future researchers of her fiction. Spence has a value in Australia, certainly for feminist critics who read her as a woman breaking new ground both in fiction and in public life. There is an argument that to provide a more rounded appreciation of how and why nineteenth-century Australia understood itself imaginatively, further exploration is required surrounding the reasons for the commercial success of a male tradition in contrast with Spence's more nuanced feminist approach which did not maintain contemporary appeal. Perhaps further inquiry is needed to ascertain if there are specifically Scottish elements across all her works which would enhance the scope of a revised feminist critique.

As well as a feminist perspective, there are other contexts in which Spence's fiction may be interrogated when establishing a case for the value of reading and studying her works. As has been shown in the Introduction, some current readings of Spence place her comfortably within the parameters of nineteenth-century British

fiction. Fariha Shaikh and Sarah Sharp as referenced are two of a number of critics arguing to reposition Spence in this context, Shaik in particular highlighting Spence's significance in relation to Elizabeth Gaskell and Charles Dickens in the context of emigration literature. With regard to this claim, it might seem in the first instance that any attempt to compare Spence with such as Dickens is incongruous, given Dickens's centrality to Victorian-era literature in contrast with Spence's position on the periphery of British and Australian writing. However, in a novel like *Great Expectations*, published in 1861, Dickens presents his readers with an imagined version of convictism and Australia in the figure of Abel Magwitch and an imagined version of a problematic marital situation in the character of Miss Havisham. Spence was competing in the same commercial marketplace at approximately the same time with *Mr Hogarth's Will* (1865) and she too offers an artistic re-creation of Australia and a plot centred on marital complexities. *David Copperfield* (1849-50) is concerned with Copperfield's marriages to Dora Spenlow and Agnes Wickfield and Wilkins Micawber's transformation from debtor in London to colonial magistrate in Australia. A valid literary comparison could be made about the different interpretations of both the institution of marriage and the settlement of Australia between the male writer in London and the female writer in Adelaide. Overall it could be argued Spence has a place in this British milieu, albeit with a colonial timbre and with her Scottish presence offering a perspective which is not London-centric.

This Scottish presence and the unfolding of Spence's Scottish voice is worth considering, not just in contemporary Australia or in the context of Victorian Britain but also in Scotland itself. Spence's thematic concerns of women in society, marriage, religion, language and land offer connectivity to other Scottish writers who also wrote within a wider context. Here it is tentatively possible to argue that in her works there are more than echoes of Susan Ferrier's *Marriage* (1818) and that she looks forward to Willa Muir's *Imagined Corners* (1931) and Lewis Grassic Gibbon's *Sunset Song* (1932). There is, in addition, the potential for considering the Scottish dimension of Spence's fiction within the regional context of the Scottish Borders. The influence of Sir Walter

Scott on her was of great significance, but as has been noted above parallels can also be drawn with the works of other topographically proximate writers like Allan Ramsay, James Hogg and Robert Louis Stevenson. It may even be that as a colonial writer Spence points towards the imperialist works of Lord Tweedsmuir, John Buchan, or indeed other Scottish writers working from a diasporic location. *Because Spence's writings counter some of the prevailing Scottish Victorian constructs, then, there may be additional value in exploring further this whole area of diasporic writings with the possibility that the existing canon of Scottish literature is enhanced both in terms of working towards a more forensic definition of what it means to be considered as a Scottish writer and in terms of a recalibration of the current gender imbalance evident in many current commentaries. Accepting all of the difficulties involved in the complexities of both national and regional identities being subject to the processes of formation and deformation, there is a reasonable argument to be made, nevertheless, that Spence can claim ownership of the heritage of a Borders writer.

In conclusion there are a range of contexts in which future researchers could conceivably approach Spence. It may be that Spence is not sufficiently or uniquely Australian enough to be fully embraced within the existing Australian literary canon. Likewise, it may be that Spence's Scottish freighting and colonial perspective place her in the margins rather than the mainstream of the British Victorian novel. It may also be the case that her enthusiastic imperial outlook coupled with her physical dislocation from Scotland means she does not sit comfortably within any negotiated space for post-Romantic nineteenth-century Scottish writers. If there is a doubt about the placing of Spence, her security, in fact, may lie in the fact that she is contingent on all of these other constructs. Her representations of Scotland suggest an exploration of, and some possible answers to, the imaginative rendering of the British colonisation of Australia and how the experience of emigration was actualised in familiar literary terms. Regardless of which interpretation, if any, is to assume dominance, the dissertation has argued that Spence remains a Scottish-accented

female writer of the Victorian period worthy of a larger share of the literary critical space currently allocated to her in Scotland.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES

Spence, Catherine Helen, *A Week in the Future* (Adelaide: Centennial Magazine, 1888-89; repr. UK: Dodo Press, 2018), www.dodopress.cco.uk, specialists in publication of rare and out-of-print books

Spence, Catherine Helen, *An Agnostic's Progress from the Known to the Unknown* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1884; repr. https://books.google.com, 2018)

Spence, Catherine Helen, *Clara Morison: A Tale of South Australia During The Gold Fever*, 2 vols (London: John W. Parker and Son, 1854; repr. Victoria, British Columbia: AbeBooks, 2018), a subsidiary of Amazon.com, Inc.

Spence, Catherine Helen, *Ever Yours, C.H. Spence: Catherine Helen Spence's 'An Autobiography' (1825-1910), Diary (1894) and Some Correspondence (1894-1910)*, ed. Susan Magarey with Barbara Walsh, Mary Lyons and Maryan Beams (Kent Town: Wakefield Press, 2005)

Spence, Catherine Helen, *Gathered In* (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1977; UK: Dodo Press, 2018), www.dodopress.co.uk

Spence, Catherine Helen, *Handfasted* (London: Penguin Original, 1984)

Spence, Catherine Helen, *Mr Hogarth's Will*, 3 vols (London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1865; Ringwood, Victoria: Australia Penguin Books Ltd., 1988)

Spence, Catherine Helen, *Portable Australian Authors*, ed. Helen Thomson (St Lucia, Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 1987)

Spence, Catherine Helen, *State Children in Australia: A History of Boarding Out and its Developments* (Adelaide: Vardon and Sons Limited, 1907; repr. Victoria, British Columbia: AbeBooks, 2018)

Spence, Catherine Helen, *Tender and True: A Colonial Tale,* 2 vols (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1856; repr. Victoria, British Columbia: AbeBooks, 2018)

Spence, Catherine Helen, *The Author's Daughter*, 3 vols. (London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1868; repr. Victoria, British Columbia: AbeBooks, 2018)

Spence, Catherine Helen, *The Laws We Live Under* (Adelaide: Minister of Education of South Australia, 1880; repr. https://books.google.com, 2018)

SECONDARY SOURCES

Albinski, Nan Bowman, *Handfasted: An Australian Feminist's American Utopia* (Pennsylvania: Wiley Online Library, 1989), Journal of Popular Culture, vol. 23, Issue 2, pp.15-32, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0022-3840.1989.00015.x

Armstrong, Nancy, '*Desire and Domestic Fiction*': *A Political History of the Novel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987)

Arnold, Matthew, 'Culture and Anarchy' (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1869), in Lipman, Samuel, ed., *Rethinking the Western Tradition* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994)

Baldick, Chris, *The Social Mission of English Criticism 1848-1932* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983)

Barclay, Katie, *Love, Intimacy and Power: Marriage and Patriarchy in Scotland, 1650-1850* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), 'Gender in History Series', Published to Manchester Scholar Online: July 2012, doi:10.7228/Manchester/9780719084904.001.0001, [accessed 27 March 2020]

Barclay, Katie, *Marriage, Sex, and the Church of Scotland: Exploring Non-Conformity Amongst the Lower Orders*, 'Journal of Religious History', Vol. 43, No. 2, June 2019, doi:10.1111/1467-9809.12580, pp.163-179 ©2019 Religious History Association, [accessed 27 March 2020]

Barry, Peter, '*Beginning Theory*': *An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*, 3rd edn. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009)

Bashford, Alison and Philippa Levine, eds.,*The Oxford Handbook of the History of Eugenics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010)

Bell, Bill, ed., *The Edinburgh History of the Book in Scotland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), vol. 3, 'Ambition and Industry 1800-1880'

Bennett, Bruce and Jennifer Strauss, eds., *The Oxford Literary History of Australia* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1998)

Bennett, Bruce, *An Australian Compass: Essays on Place and Direction in Australian Literature* (South Fremantle: Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 1991)

Bernstein, Susan David and Elsie B. Michie, eds., *Victorian Vulgarity: Taste in Verbal and Visual Culture* (Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2009)

Blaikie, Andrew, 'A Kind of Loving: Illegitimacy, Grandparents and the Rural economy of North East Scotland, 1750-1900', in *Scottish Economic and Social History Journal* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994), 05/1994, vol. 14, Issue 1

Blaikie, Andrew, *Scottish Illegitimacy: Social Adjustment or Moral Economy?*, 'The Journal of Interdisciplinary History', vol. 29, Issue 2, pp.221-227, Publisher Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press Journals, Gale Academic OneFile Select, https://link-gale-com.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.ac.uk/apps/doc/A21200885/EAIM?u=glasuni&sid=EAIM&xid=460619ae, Accessed 27 March 2020, Gale Document Number: GALE|A21200885

Blaikie, Andrew,' Unhappy After Their Own Fashion: Infant Lives and Family Biographies in Southwest Scotland, 1855-1939', in *Scottish Economic and Social History Journal* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998), 01/1998, Vol. 18, Issue 2, pp.95-113

Boardman, Kay and Shirley Jones, eds., *Popular Victorian Women Writers* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004)

Brannigan, John, *New Historicism and Cultural Materialism* (London: MacMillan Press Ltd., 1998)

Broadie, Alexander, *The Scottish Enlightenment – The Historical Age of the Historical Nation* (Edinburgh: Birlinn Limited, 2001)

Campbell, Jodi A., Elizabeth Ewan and Heather Parker, eds., *The Shaping of Scottish Identities: Family, Nation, and the Worlds Beyond* (Guelph, Ontario: Centre for Scottish Studies at the University of Guelph, 2011)

Carruthers, Gerard and Colin Kidd, eds., *Literature and Union – Scottish Texts, British Contexts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018)

Carruthers, Gerard, David Goldie and Alastair Renfrew, eds., *Scotland and the 19th-Century World* (Amsterdam-New York: Rodopi, Scottish Cultural Review of Language and Literature, 2012), vol. 18

Carruthers, Gerard, *Scottish Literature* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd., 2009)

Clancy, Laurie, *A Reader's Guide to Australian Fiction* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1992)

Clapperton, Jane Hume, *Scientific Meliorism and the Evolution of Happiness* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench and Company, 1885)

Clive, John, Bernard Bailyn, *England's Cultural Provinces: Scotland and America* (Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, *The William and Mary Quarterly*, vol. 11, no. 2, *Scotland and America*, April 1954), pp. 200-213. Stable URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/1922039 accessed: 10-02-2019 18.27 UTC

Cowan, Susan, *Contributing Caledonian Culture: A Legacy of the Scottish Diaspora,* 'Journal of Australian Studies', 27:26, 87-95, doi: 10.1080/14443050309387827, 2003), published online 18 May 2009

Crawford, Robert, *Devolving English Literature*, 2nd edn. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd., 2000)

Crawford, Robert, *Scotland's Books: The Penguin History of Scottish Literature* (London: Penguin Group, 2007)

Daniels, V.K., *History and Literature: A Study in the Novels of C.H. Spence* (Adelaide: University of Adelaide, 1962), thesis for B.A. Honours in History at the University of Adelaide

David, Deirdrie, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Victorian Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001)

Deane, Laura, *Gender, Madness, and Colonial Paranoia in Australian Literature: Australian Psychoses* (London: Lexington Books, 2017)

Dixson, Miriam, *The Real Matilda: Woman and Identity in Australia – 1788 to the Present*, 4th edn. (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press Ltd., 1999)

Eade, Susan, *A Study of Catherine Helen Spence 1825-1910*, (Adelaide: Australian National University, June 1971), M.A Thesis

Eagleton, Terry, *Literary Theory: An Introduction,* Anniversary Edition (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008)

Foster, Shirley, *Victorian Women's Fiction: Marriage, Freedom and the Individual* (London and Sydney: Croom Helm Ltd., 1985)

Gifford, Douglas and Dorothy McMillan, eds., *A History of Scottish Women's Writing* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997)

Gifford, Douglas, ed., *The History of Scottish Literature* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1988), vol. 3, 'Nineteenth Century'

Gilbert, Pamela K., *Disease, Desire and the Body in Victorian Women's Popular Novels*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997)

Gilbert, Sandra M. and Susan Gubar, '*The Madwoman in the Attic' – The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979)

Gordon, Eleanor, *Irregular Marriage and Cohabitation in Scotland, 1855-1939: Official Policy and Public Practice* University of Glasgow, 'The Historical Journal' 58, 4 (2015) p.1059-1079©Cambridge University Press, doi: 10.1017/S0018246x14000636

Green, H.M., *A History of Australian Literature, Pure and Applied*: *1789-1923*, 2 vols (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1961), vol. 1

Hadgraft, Cecil, *Australian Literature – A Critical Account to 1955* (Melbourne: William Heinemann Ltd., 1960)

Hallum, Kirby-Jane, *Aestheticism and the Marriage Market in Victorian Popular Fiction: The Art of Female Beauty* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2015)

Hamilton, Susan, ed., '*Criminals, Idiots, Women, and Minors' – Victorian Writing by Women on Women* (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 1996)

Hartley, Lucy, ed., *The History of British Women's Writing, 1830-1880,* (London: Palgrave McMillan, 2018), vol. 6

Hergenhan, Laurie, ed., *The Penguin New Literary History of Australia* (Ringwood, Victoria, Australia: Penguin Books, 1988)

Houston, R.A. and W.W.J. Knox, eds., *The New Penguin History of Scotland from the Earliest Times to the Present Day* (London: Penguin Books, 2002)

James, Louis, *The Victorian Novel* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006)

Johnston, Grahame, ed., *An Australian Literary Criticism* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1962)

Kelley, Mary, *Private Woman, Public Stage – Literary Domesticity in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984)

Kelly, Duncan, ed., *Lineages of Empire – the Historical Roots of British Imperial Thought* (New York: Oxford Press Inc., 2009), Proceedings of the British Academy – 155

King, Judy and Graham Tulloch, eds., *'Tenacious of the Past' – the Recollections of Helen Brodie* (Adelaide: Centre for Research in the New Literatures in English at Flinders University and Libraries Board of South Australia, 1994)

Kingston, Beverley, *'My Wife, My Daughter, and Poor Mary Ann': Women and Work in Australia* (Melbourne: Thomas Nelson [Australia], 1975)

Kingston, Beverley, *The Oxford History of Australia 1860-1900*, vol. 3, 'Glad, Confident Morning', (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1988)

Kociumbas, Jan, *The Oxford History of Australia 1770-1860*, vol. 2, 'Possessions', (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1988)

Kramer, Leonie, ed., *The Oxford History of Australian Literature* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1981)

Leneman, Leah, '*No Unsuitable Match': Defining Rank in Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth-Century Scotland*, 'Journal of Social History', (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh, 2000), pp.665-682

Livingstone, Sheila, *Scottish Customs* (Edinburgh: Birlinn Limited, 1996)

Mack, Douglas S., *Scottish Fiction and the British Empire* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006)

MacLachlan, Christopher and Ronald W. Renton, eds., *Gael and Lowlander in Scottish Literature, Cross Currents in Scottish Writing in the Nineteenth Century* (Glasgow: Scottish Literature International, 2015) Occasional Papers: Number 20, Association for Scottish Literary Studies

Magarey, Susan, *Unbridling the Tongues of Women: A Biography of Catherine Helen Spence* (Sydney: Hale and Iremonger, 1985)

McLean, Ralph, Ronnie Young and Kenneth Simpson, eds., *The Scottish Enlightenment and Literary Culture* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2016)

McMillan, Dorothy, ed., *The Scotswoman at Home and Abroad*: *Non-Fiction Writing 1700-1900* (Glasgow: The Association for Scottish Literary Studies, 1999)

Michell, Dee, *Dear Miss Spence: An Open Letter to Catherine Helen Spence (1825-1910)*, (Life Writing, 13:4, pp.481-492, doi: 10.1080/14484528.2015.1124358, 2016)

Michie, Elsie B., *The Vulgar Question of Money*: *Heiresses, Materialism, and the Novel of Manners from Jane Austen to Henry James* (Baltimore, Maryland: The John Hopkins University Press, 2011)

Moore, T. Inglis, *Social Patterns in Australian Literature* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1971)

Myers, Janet C., *'Verily the Antipodes of Home': The Domestic Novel in the Australian Bush*, (Providence, RI: Duke University Press, 2001), Source: Novel *A Forum on Fiction*, vol. 35, No. 1, (Autumn 2001)

Nash, Andrew, *Kailyard and Scottish Literature* (Amsterdam-New York: Scottish Cultural Review of Language and Literature, 2007)

Norquay, Glenda, ed., *The Edinburgh Companion to Scottish Women's Writing* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012)

O'Farrell, Patrick, *The Irish in Australia*, (Kensington, New South Wales, Australia: New South Wales University Press, 1993)

Outhwaite, R.B., ed., *Marriage and Society – Studies in the Social History of Marriage* (London: Europa Publications Ltd., 1981)

Palmer, Vance, *The Legend of the Nineties* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1954)

Perkins, Pam, *Women Writers and the Edinburgh Enlightenment* (Amsterdam-New York: Rodopi, Scottish Cultural Review of Language and Literature, 2010), vol. 15

Piesse, Jude, *British Settler Emigration in Print 1832-1877* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016)

Pike, Douglas, *Paradise of Dissent*: *South Australia 1829-1857* (London: Longmans, Green and Co. Ltd., 1957)

Pollard, Sydney and John Salt, eds., *Robert Owen – Prophet of the Poor* (London: The MacMillan Press Ltd., 1971)

Prentis, Malcolm D., '*The Scots in Australia*': *A Study of New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland, 1788-1900* (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1983)

Reising, Russell, *'The Unusable Past' – Theory and the Study of American Literature* (New York: Methuen, 1986)

Ruiz, Marie, *British Female Emigration Societies and the New World, 1860-1914* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2017)

Said, Edward W., *Reflections on Exile and Other Literary and Cultural Essays* (London: Granta Books, 2001)

Schaffer, Kay, *'Women and the Bush': Forces of Desire in the Australian Cultural Tradition* (Melbourne, Australia; Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 1988)

Schreuder, Deryck M. and Stuart Ward, eds., *Australia's Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), Oxford History of the British Empire, Companion Series

Shaikh, Fariha, *Nineteenth-Century Settler Emigration in British Literature and Art* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018)

Sharp, Sarah, *'Your Vocation is Marriage': Systematic Colonisation, The Marriage Plot and Finding Home in Catherine Helen Spence's 'Clara Morison'* (1854) (Glasgow: Association for Literary Studies, Scottish Literary Review, Spring/Summer 2019), vol.11 no.1, pp.27-45. *Project* MUSE muse.jhu.edu/article/723402

Showalter, Elaine, ed., *The New Feminist Criticism – Essays on Women, Literature and Theory* (London: Virago Press Limited, 1986)

Sinnett, Frederick, 'Fiction Fields of Australia' in *The Journal of Australasia* vol. 1 July to December 1856, (Melbourne: George Slater, 1856), Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, scanned for the Google Books Project

Smith, Rosalind, *Clara Morison: The Politics of Feminine Heterotopia* (Adelaide: Southerly, 2001), vol. 61, Issue 3

Summers, Anne, *Damned Whores and God's Police* (Ringwood, Victoria, Australia: Penguin Books Australia Ltd., 1994)

Thomson, Helen, 'Love and Labour: Marriage and Work in the Novels of Catherine Helen Spence', in Adelaide, Debra, ed., '*A Bright and Fiery Troop' – Australian Women Writers of the Nineteenth Century* (Ringwood, Victoria, Australia: Penguin Books Australia, 1988), Chapter 8

Tulloch, Graham, 'Styles of Scots in Australian Literary Texts', in Kirk, John M. and Iseabail MacLeod, eds., *Scots: Studies in its Literature and Language* (Amsterdam-New York: Rodopi, Scottish Cultural Review of Language and Literature, 2013), vol. 21

Walker, R.B., 'Catherine Helen Spence: Unitarian Utopian' in *Australian Literary Studies,* vol. 5, no. 1, May 1971 (Hobart: The University of Tasmania, 1971)

Wallace, Valerie, *Scottish Presbyterianism and Settler Colonial Politics: Empire of Dissent* (Cambridge: Palgrave MacMillan, 2018)

Whyte, Christopher, ed., '*Gendering the Nation': Studies in Modern Scottish Literature* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd., 1995)

Wilde, William H., Joy Hooton and Barry Andrews, eds., *The Oxford Companion to Australian Literature* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1985)

Wilkie, Benjamin, *The Scots in Australia 1788-1938* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2017), Scottish Historical Review Monograph Second Series