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‘Ramsay’s Women’: Gender and Genre in the Works of Allan Ramsay

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Abstract

This dissertation examines the representation of the female character across all genres in the work of Allan Ramsay. In the genres of poetry, drama, and song, the role of the Scottish female is examined in relation to the preservation and dissemination of Scottish cultural modes and traditions. This is explored within the context of the progression of Scotland as a nation in the early eighteenth century. This thesis argues that Ramsay presents the Scottish female as playing a vital role in the development of Scotland as a polite nation through her use of Scottish cultural modes, and that he champions his female characters as worthy and competent in performing this function.

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I would also like to thank my Mam, Dad and Brother, also my Nana and Granda for their constant love and encouragement, as well as the star that is Connor Bryson. To all my friends who have seen me through this process, thank you so much. Jess, Annie, Sarah and Laura, Susanne, Heidi and Ilaria, Oli, Ed and Harry.

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge the very essence of this thesis in the eighteenth-century women that Ramsay chose as muses. Although many of their names and voices are inevitably lost, I hope that this thesis can make some small contribution in rectifying this in bringing attention to some of Ramsay's most interesting and worthy characters.

NB: Unfortunately due to the COVID19 pandemic I have been unable to access the best source for some texts, and in some cases I have had no access to critical works such as Gibson's. Regretfully this has meant that in some instances I have had to forgo the inclusion of such criticism in this piece, but with most texts, and of course all primary texts of Ramsay's, I have found and used the most appropriate sources possible given the circumstances. All are listed in the references/bibliography.

Introduction

Recently there has been something of an explosion of scholarly interest in the literary works of Allan Ramsay. His poetry, songs, and his dramatic pastoral piece *The Gentle Shepherd* have been the subject of much debate and interrogation amongst scholars of Scottish literature: after a period of dormancy, Ramsay studies are coming to vigorous life. Indeed, researchers at the University of Glasgow are currently producing a new multi-volume edition of Ramsay's works.[1] Perhaps more than ever before, Ramsay is appreciated as a forward-thinking progressive, navigating eighteenth-century Scotland with views maybe somewhat more modern than many of his contemporaries. Whilst older criticism and writers like Gibson[2] largely view Ramsay as obsessed with a nostalgic Scottish past, this thesis argues that he is in fact a figure fully engaged with contemporary events. From the likes of 'Elegy on Maggy Johnston', a poem about an ale-wife who died in 1711, through to his 1721 collection of poems and his later work in the likes of the *Tea-Table Miscellany* and *The Gentle Shepherd*, Ramsay's recognition of the importance of Scotland's traditions and cultural capital in its advancement as a nation is demonstrated. Within these key presentations of Scottish culture and its significance across all three genres, the Scottish female is placed by Ramsay as a vital factor in its dissemination and preservation. However, whilst considerable work has been undertaken in exploring Ramsay's interest in culture and politics, as well as his broader social awareness, there has heretofore been surprisingly little attention given to his attitude towards the female character and women within his work. The work of Steve Newman[3] offers some enriching discourse on the subject, particularly in the context of *The Gentle Shepherd.* Notwithstanding Newman's work, and considering the general lack of critical interest in the representation of women in Ramsay's corpus, this dissertation attends to this void in Ramsay studies while considering Ramsay's choice of genre as an anchoring point throughout his work. It is divided into three chapters, each concerned with a different genre of writing; within each the generic precepts and linguistic modes used by Ramsay are interrogated thoroughly within the context of gender. The first chapter analyses Ramsay's poetry, the second Ramsay's dramatic career in *The Gentle Shepherd,* and the third covers Ramsay's work as a

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[1] https://www.gla.ac.uk/schools/critical/research/researchcentresandnetworks/robertburnsstudies/edinburghenlightenment/ [accessed 09/12/2020]

[2] Andrew Gibson. *New Light on Allan Ramsay.* (Edinburgh: Brown, 1924).

[3] Steve Newman, *Ballad Collection, Lyric, and the Canon: The Call of the Popular from the Restoration to the New Criticism,* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 2007).

Steve Newman, 'The Scots Songs of Allan Ramsay: 'Lyrick' Transformation, Popular Culture, and the Boundaries of the Scottish Enlightenment,' in *Modern Language Quarterly* 63.3 (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2002). P.277-314.

Steve Newman, 'Ballads and Chapbooks' in '*The Edinburgh Companion to Scottish Romanticism'*, Ed. Murray Pittock, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), P.19

songwriter, collector and editor. This dissertation's focus on gender allows new critical perspectives on the well-worn paths of Ramsay studies, which explore his use of language and genre to express ideas and opinions on contemporary political and social issues. Carol McGuirk, who argues that Ramsay's vernacular "heightened the premises of his chosen genre",[4] as well as John Dwyer,[5] add to such discussion; however Murray Pittock's 'Allan Ramsay and the Decolonisation of Genre'[6] is one of the most significant products of this line of enquiry. Ramsay's deliberate use of specific genre to disseminate certain ideas most effectively is undoubtedly a trademark of his, an undeniable part of his literary legacy. As such, it is central to this dissertation's exploration of Ramsay's engagement with women and gender.

In all chapters Ramsay's writing and representation of his female characters, as well as considerations made towards his female audience, are examined. Indeed, Iain Gordon Brown comments on the significance of Ramsay's dedication of *The Gentle Shepherd,* not to any of the great men of the day, but to a woman, Susanna, Countess of Eglinton.[7] In such a dedication, Ramsay clearly demonstrates his consciousness, as well as approval of a female audience for his literature; arguably he works to intellectually 'court' a female audience, he is aware of the potential of women as readers and works to attract their attention. Indeed he went further than dedications, as he went on to represent such (aristocratic) women in his poetry in the likes of 'The Fair Assembly' and 'Tartana', as well as women of lower social rank in the likes of 'Maggy Johnston' and 'Lucky Spence', all of which are examined later in this study. Ramsay's perception and presentation of the role of the female figure in the post-Union context of early eighteenth-century Scotland is also considered throughout. The Union and the political climate of Scotland is particularly relevant to Ramsay's work, and there has been much speculation around Ramsay's political (and perhaps Jacobitical) tendencies. This is manifested in the work of Corey Andrews[8] and Michael Murphy, the latter of whom describes Ramsay as a "discreet Jacobite propagandist".[9] Whilst Ramsay's Jacobitism is open to discussion, his valuing of

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[4] Carol McGuirk, 'Augustan Influences on Allan Ramsay.' in *Studies in Scottish Literature* 16 (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1981), p.99

[5] John Dwyer, and Richard B. Sher ed., *Sociability and Society in Eighteenth-Century Scotland*, (Edinburgh: The Mercat Press, 1993), p.1-23

[6] Murray Pittock, 'Allan Ramsay and the Decolonisation of Genre', in *Review of English Studies* 58 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 316-337.

[7] Iain Gordon Brown, ''Superfyn Poetry Nae Doubt?' Advice to Allan Ramsay, and a Criticism of *The Gentle Shepherd.'* in *Bibliotheck* 13.2 (Glasgow: University Library, 1986), p. 33-41

[8] Corey Andrews, *Literary Nationalism in Eighteenth-Century Scottish Club Poetry.* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 2004).

[9] Michael Murphy, 'Allan Ramsay's Poetic Language of Anglo-Scottish Rapprochement' in *Etudes ecossaises,* 17, Universite du Littoral Cote d'Opale (Grenoble: Grenoble Alpes University Press, 2015) p.13

and desire to protect Scottish culture and tradition is undeniable. Although not the central focus of this dissertation, the historical landscape in terms of political turmoil around the Acts of Union, as well as the early Jacobite rebellions of 1715, 1719 and 1721 are a constant consideration when examining Ramsay's writing, contemporary with such events. Indeed, Newman comments on Ramsay's marrying of the concepts of culture and politics within the genre of song: "They [Scots songs] are a means for Ramsay to theorize and realize what will bind Scottish society together in the wake of the political depredations of the Union."[10] Similarly considered is the contemporary social climate in terms of societal expectations of women within working and familial roles, and more generally as members of eighteenth-century Scottish society. The works of Bridget Hill[11] and Katherine Glover[12] give insight into the daily domestic lives of eighteenth-century Scottish and British women. The existence of a critical male gaze, as identified by Laura Mulvey[13] in her work, is present throughout the stories of the female characters written by Ramsay, perhaps most obviously in the likes of 'The Scribers Lash'd' and 'Love Inviting Reason'. Although her work is set in the context of cinema and the visual arts, it remains a crucial and relevant reference point within the context of this thesis. The male gaze personified in the criticism and influence from masculine powers in society such as the Presbytery, and even the institutions of marriage and the family in the roles they prescribed the contemporary eighteenth-century female, is a subject of scrutiny throughout this study.

The central consideration of the dissertation however, is Ramsay's representation of the role of women in preserving and disseminating Scottish culture and tradition within the aforementioned contexts, and the positive role this played in the progression of Scotland as a polite and civilised nation. Whilst there are obvious differences in female representation throughout Ramsay's corpus, a strong core message regarding the importance of the female character as a cultural vessel is present. In all genres, Ramsay represents the female figure as a vital tool in both the preservation and dissemination of national culture and tradition within eighteenth-century Scotland. In this role, the female characters are presented as progressive; their upholding of cultural traditions is portrayed as an important driving force in a Scottish progress narrative. In their domestic and working lives, as well as in their deaths, women of all social classes and backgrounds are represented by Ramsay as playing a crucial role in the development of Scotland.

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[10] Newman, *Ballad Collection, Lyric, and the Canon: The Call of the Popular from the Restoration to the New Criticism*, p.59

[11] Bridget Hill, *Eighteenth-century Women: An Anthology*, (London: Routledge, 2013)

[12] Katherine Glover, *Elite Women and Polite Society in Eighteenth-Century Scotland,* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2011)

[13] Laura Mulvey, *Visual and Other Pleasures: Language, Discourse, Society*, General Editor. Stephen Heath, Ed. Colin MacCabe & Denise Riley, (London: Palgrave, 1989)

Ramsay's Prefaces are demonstrative of the core beliefs surrounding women and their role in the preservation of national culture presented throughout his work. In his preface to the 1721 edition of his poems, Ramsay sets forth his belief in the validity of Scotland as a progressive and enlightened nation, as well as his belief in the importance of the role that its women played in this identity. Ramsay works to assert his use of the Scots language, perhaps one of the most obvious tenets of Scottish culture in his collections, hailing it as a natural and worthy mode of expression despite contemporary fashion for the classical languages, or a 'standard' Augustan English. The use of Scots is present in every genre that Ramsay tackles, representative of an individual and worthy facet of Scotland's cultural identity within the newly formed Great Britain. In the preface this sentiment is clearly established, as Ramsay comments that his friends assure him that: "my small knowledge of the dead or foreign languages is nothing to my disadvantage. King David, Homer and Virgil, say they, were more ignorant of Scots and English tongue, than you are of Hebrew, Greek and Latin: pursue your own natural manner, and be an Original."[14] Here Ramsay begins by doubly validating the message he gives, in its having come from others, his 'chearful friends'. The message itself is clear in its intent: Scots is elevated within this passage, asserted by Ramsay as comfortable, and perhaps equal, alongside the 'Hebrew, Greek and Latin' of revered biblical and classical authors such as 'King David, Homer and Virgil'. Scots language (representative of a broader Scottish culture), and arguably Ramsay as an author himself, is placed on an equal footing with them within this context through juxtaposition and comparison. Whilst Ramsay validates Scots alongside the classical languages in this passage, it is also important to note that he equally validates it alongside the English language too. In his inclusion of 'the Scots and English tongue', Ramsay shows an awareness of the British, post-Union context within which he was writing, and within this context he subtly asserts Scottish individualism in his discussion of language. Scots is placed on an equal footing with the English language, it could even be argued that in its precedence over 'English' in the sentence and its phrasing, Ramsay is assigning it a greater importance. Murphy comments that "While Ramsay uses Scots to give a Scottish colouring to his poetry and situates himself within a Scottish literary heritage through his use of particular verse forms, he intends to remain accessible to English readers as well as Scottish ones."[15] Ramsay's consciousness of the society within which he was operating, and the political implications of the Acts of Union of 1707, is evidenced, setting a precedent for his wider collection of works. Indeed, earlier in the text, Ramsay comments: "I understand Horace but faintly in the original, and yet can feast on his beautiful thoughts dress'd in British".[16] Ramsay includes mention

[14] Ramsay, Allan, Preface to *Poems* Vol. 1, (Edinburgh: Ruddiman, 1721) https://data-historicaltexts-jisc-ac-uk.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/view?pubId=ecco-0163900601&terms=1721%20allan%20ramsay [accessed 09/12/2020] P.6

[15] Murphy, 'Allan Ramsay's Poetic Language of Anglo-Scottish Rapprochement' p.14

[16] Ramsay, Preface to *Poems*, p.6

of a wider 'British' nation in his preface, in order to present Scotland as a capable and culturally adjusted nation within the context of the Union. This is a trope seen throughout Ramsay's work, evidenced in his address to "ilka lovely British lass"[17] in his introduction to his *Tea-Table Miscellany.* Whilst he mentions Scots and Scottish culture frequently throughout the preface, he does so in conjunction with constant mention of Britain. In doing so, Ramsay arguably works to present Scotland as a nation strong and individual in its culture and traditions (here represented in Scots language), progressive and enlightened because of, not in spite of this. This too is an idea carried throughout his collections; particularly in his poetry, in the likes of 'The Fair Assembly' and in his introduction to the *Tea-Table Miscellany,* Ramsay displays a consciousness of a specifically 'British' socio-political landscape, as he works to champion the place of Scotland as a culturally separate but concordant partner within the Union. As noted by Kenneth Simpson, in this instance: "Ramsay writes as a Scot, in Britain to Britain."[18]

An awareness of this context is carried throughout the chapters in this thesis. The first chapter focuses on Ramsay's poetry. In it, Ramsay's representations of working women such as Lucky Spence and Maggy Johnston, as well as portrayals of aristocratic ladies in their domestic spheres in 'Tartana' and 'The Fair Assembly', are examined. The second chapter focuses on Ramsay's pastoral drama *The Gentle Shepherd,* and his use of setting, language and song within the pastoral genre in order to convey messages around female autonomy and capability. The last chapter carries through to examine Ramsay's work as a song writer and collector, focusing largely on his *Tea-Table Miscellany.* Here the female as a consumer is examined, as well as her role in community events and the civilising of the male.

Ramsay ensures to place his female audience and the wider Scottish female population as intrinsic components of the success and progression of such a civilised and prosperous nation. In the 1721 preface he comments that "the ladies too are on my side, they grace my song with the sweetness of their voices, conn over my Pastoral, and smile at my innocent merry tale."[19] Here Ramsay introduces the female figure as vital disseminators of all breeds of his work: 'Pastoral', 'song' and his 'merry tale' told through a poetic medium. In this way, the ladies are crucial broadcasters of Scottish cultural tradition, in turn encouraging national progression and a strengthened place for Scotland as a distinct nation within the Union. Ramsay's positioning of the Scottish female as an important cultural vessel is presented here, demonstrating the attitude he replicates across all genres of his work. Ramsay

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[17] Allan Ramsay, Dedication in *Tea-Table Miscellany,* (Edinburgh: Ruddiman, 1724) https://data-historicaltexts-jisc-ac-uk.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/view?pubId=ecco-0555901500&terms=tea%20table [accessed 09/12/2020] p.1

[18] Kenneth Simpson, 'Poetic Genre and National Identity: Ramsay, Ferguson and Burns' in *Studies in Scottish Literature* 30 (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1997): p.34

[19] Ramsay, Preface to *Poems*, p.6

praises female understanding and intellect in their clear enjoyment and 'smiling' over his work, as well as their tangible role in cultural preservation in their singing of his 'song'. The female singing voice is highlighted by Ramsay as a significant cultural tool. Ramsay utilises the precepts of each genre of his writing, introduced within the passage examined above, in order to robustly defend and praise the substance of Scottish culture and tradition in its role in furthering Scotland's position as a progressive and enlightened nation. The female characters within his poetry, drama and songs are arguably presented as the most effective, and pivotal agents in ensuring the preservation of Scotland's national identity within the Union, as well as its progression as a nation, in their circulation and consumption of its treasured traditional national culture. This dissertation demonstrates that 'Ramsay's Women' are central to contemporary Scottish culture and the progression of Scotland as a polite, civilised nation.

Chapter 1: Poetry

Ramsay uses a range of poetic forms, including the elegy and satire, that depict his working class female characters, as well as imitations of more traditional forms with elements of the neoclassical, heroic couplets and Royal Stanza that his more aristocratic upper class characters inhabit. Regardless of class, Ramsay validates contemporary Scottish women and their upholding of national cultures and traditions to assert the legitimacy of Scotland as a progressive nation. Whilst Ramsay imitates classical forms in the likes of 'Tartana' and 'The Scriblers Lash'd' using traditional Augustan English, he also makes particular use of specifically Scottish forms, such as the Standard Habbie with Scots vernacular, in his 'Elegy on Maggy Johnston' and 'Lucky Spence's Last Advice'. This chapter is divided into halves, with the working women in Ramsay's Standard Habbie poems being examined first, and the more genteel ladies in his more traditionally neoclassical poems examined second. Ramsay highlights the toxic nature of a patriarchal power structure and male dominated society across all facets of eighteenth-century society. In the likes of 'Lucky Spence's Last Advice', Ramsay highlights the dangerous and unfair situations that women are placed in, not only because of men themselves, but also because of typical contemporary gender expectations, prescribing that women be meek, obedient and passive participants in society, and men aggressive, active and dominant.[1] The women in these texts are presented sympathetically, as Ramsay encourages his audience to empathise with the struggles of the often demonised characters he works to humanise. Whilst he does highlight the vulnerability of women, Ramsay champions the female character in the male dominated and patriarchal society that they inhabit, placing them as catalysts for social change and cultural progression in their working and domestic lives. In this sense, female characters within Ramsay's poems are presented as crucial proponents of Scottish culture; tradition bearers comfortable within a progressive society. This is presented in their upholding of a diverse range of traditional cultural modes such as dancing in 'The Fair Assembly', dress and fashion in 'The Scriblers Lash'd' and 'Tartana', and drinking culture and oral tradition in 'Maggy Johnston' and 'Lucky Spence'. Ramsay not only champions the female characters' right to autonomous thought and action, but also their right to be respected as important social players within the advancing of Scottish culture through their expression.

In instating his positively presented female characters and their actions within the Scottish form of the Standard Habbie, Ramsay implicitly promotes the Scottish poetic form and thus culture as an accommodating space for heroic Scottish women. In the words of Michael Murphy, "The Scots

[1] This aligns with the views of feminist critics like Laura Mulvey, who talks of "the binary male/female, active/passive opposition".
Laura Mulvey, Introduction in *Visual and Other Pleasures: Language, Discourse, Society*, General Editor. Stephen Heath, Ed. Colin MacCabe & Denise Riley, (London: Palgrave, 1989) p.10

colouring of Ramsay's poems is reinforced by the use of Scottish genres and metrical forms."[2] In this sense, the national identity of the female characters and the culture they promote and uphold is reinforced throughout the poems in their continued inhabiting of the culturally Scottish metrical form. Ramsay portrays the female as a vital proponent in the advancing and protection of Scottish culture within the Standard Habbie. Pittock describes the Standard Habbie as "the aaabab stanza with four eight – and two four-syllable lines, the a lines iambic tetrameter, the b lines dimeter". He also comments on its origins, stating that it "dated in Scots from the fifteenth century".[3] It is important to note that in partaking in the writing of poetry in the Standard Habbie form, Ramsay was adhering to a well-established Scots literary tradition, present in "Hamilton's 'Last DYING WORDS of BONNY *HECK'*" as well as "Sempill's epitaph on Habbie Simpson"[4] (for whom the form is named). According to Pittock, Ramsay in this instance "adopts a native form to tell a native tale".[5] The use of Scots language in these poems also serves to consolidate this agreement between form and content, as Davis and McLane state: "In his first collection of *Poems* (1721), Allan Ramsay defended his decision to employ Scots as a language of poetic expression: "good Poetry may be in any Language"."[6] Ramsay's use of Scots language, coupled with its placement within the Standard Habbie, strengthens this sentiment within the poems. Scots language and culture is asserted throughout as worthy within not only the literary and poetic world, but within wider society also. The role of Scottish culture in aiding the female and the progression of society is displayed in Maggy's subversion of patriarchal expectations in her harnessing of the expectation of female servility. She turns such an expectation to financial profit for herself in charging for her serving of ale, whilst highlighting Scottish drinking culture and promoting the growth of Scottish oral culture and story-telling within this.

Working Women

'Elegy on Maggy Johnston'[7] was published in Ramsay's 1721 collection of *Poems*, but first appeared much earlier, in chapbook form, nearer to the time of Maggy's death in 1711. This elegy pays tribute to a female brewer who supplied the people of Edinburgh with good ale and a social space within which to drink and tell stories, propelling Scottish oral culture in the consumption of a

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[2] Murphy, 'Allan Ramsay's Poetic Language of Anglo-Scottish Rapprochement' p.16

[3] Pittock, 'Allan Ramsay and the Decolonisation of Genre' p.321

[4] Pittock, 'Allan Ramsay and the Decolonisation of Genre', p.320

[5] Pittock, 'Allan Ramsay and the Decolonisation of Genre', p.321

[6] Leith Davis and Maureen McLane, 'Orality and Public Poetry' in *The Edinburgh History of Scottish Literature: Enlightenment, Britain and Empire* (1707-1918), Ed. Susan Manning, Ian Brown, Thomas Owen Clancy, Murray Pittock, Ksenija Horvat, Ashley Hales, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Uni Press, 2007), P.128

[7] Martin Burns and John W. Oliver (eds), *The Works of Allan Ramsay* (6 vols) Vol. 1 – Poems: 1721 (Edinburgh: Blackwood for the Scottish Text Society, n.d., c.1951) pp.10-13

Scottish product. Ramsay's choice in immortalising Maggy as a female brewer is significant when contemporary statistics are considered: "Edinburgh, the brewing centre of Scotland, had 266 people licensed to sell ale in 1730, of whom twenty-eight (just over 10 per cent) were female."[8] Maggy's gender, unusual in her profession at this time, is utilised by Ramsay to assert the validity of the working class Scottish female as a positive cultural disseminator in society. The fact that Ramsay similarly immortalises another female brewer in 'Elegy on Lucky Wood in Canongate'[9] further compounds this. His commemoration of Lucky Wood, another positive driving force in the social community of Edinburgh, consolidates the ideas around the Scottish female and her cultural importance presented also in 'Maggy Johnston'. Ramsay's reference to Lucky as a "common mither" (l.51) compounds the vital social, and arguably nurturing role within the identity of ale-wife, inhabited by both Lucky and Maggy. The speaker laments Maggy's death, going on to describe her successes as an alewife in Edinburgh. Maggy is shown as capable in subverting patriarchal values to succeed commercially and financially within the context of male demand for goods and services. In doing so, she is portrayed as an important figure within the progress narrative. Not only does she arguably contribute significantly to the growth of the Scottish economy in her service to the many customers mentioned, she arguably provided a space in which cultural socialisation is encouraged, with the union of different classes of customers as well as their ideas and stories. In the poem, "Ramsay presents a local form of Scottish culture, the community that revolves around Maggy's pub",[10] emphasised in his naming of specific Scottish locations around Edinburgh such as 'Auld Reeky' (l.1) 'the green' (l.12) and 'Bruntsfield-Links' (l.20). Although it could be argued that the poem is in fact a satirical view on excessive drinking, Maggy's position as a force for good in the Scottish economy and community endures regardless. Maggy's harnessing of an already thriving drinking culture[11] supports the strengthening of Scottish oral culture, conveyed in the Scots language within the Scottish Standard Habbie. This serves to consolidate the promotion of Scottish identity in culture that Ramsay encourages throughout the poem; both the ale itself and the oral storytelling produced by it are shown as playing a positive role in the socialisation of the Scottish public, with Maggy placed as the primary figure in accommodating such cultural functions. The environment she creates is described as a

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[8] Anthony Cooke, 'Bousing at the Nappy' in *A History of Drinking, The Scottish Pub since 1700*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015) p.38

[9] This poem, parallels 'Maggy Johnston' in many ways. Lucky Wood is praised in her role to Scottish society in brewing ale, serving food and providing a space for socialisation and thus the preservation of Scottish culture. Burns & Oliver (eds), *The Works of Allan Ramsay* pp.18-21

[10] Davis and McLane, 'Orality and Public Poetry', p.129

[11] Maggy's success represents a wider trend in contemporary society, as eighteenth-century prosperity resulted in "increasing alcohol consumption and in increase in the number of pubs, ale houses and other drinking places."
Cooke, 'Bousing at the Nappy' p.42

collective social space: “Then Maggy Johnston’s was our howff;” (l.38). In the use of ‘our’ Maggy’s pub is shown to be a space of collective social commerce. The whole community is shown as being comfortable in the belief that the social space created by Maggy is a fully accommodating environment. By extension, this emphasises the vital role that she played in the socialisation of a community. Such community is definitively identified as Scottish, the poem is immediately located in the city of Edinburgh as the opening line states: “Auld Reeky! Mourn in sable hue,” (l.1). This line situates the action within a specifically Scottish location and defines Maggy’s death as something lamentable, that the whole city is grieving over. As Pittock comments, Ramsay uses “elegy to represent national loss and the loss of nationality itself”.[12] Maggy is placed as a symbol of Scottish identity in her situation as a Scottish woman of ‘Auld Reeky’, her death portrayed as a great loss within Scotland. Ramsay uses specific mention of mourning to draw attention to the sense of bereavement associated with Maggy’s departure. Furthermore, Standard Habbie and Scots vernacular are used in the elegy to draw attention to the fact that such a loss is indeed ‘national’, specifically Scottish in its nature, exacerbated here in the Scots reference to Edinburgh as ‘Auld Reeky’. The likeable Maggy is situated as thoroughly Scottish within the poetic form of the text, as well as within the poetic content itself with its mention of specific Scottish geographic locations and even familiarised locations, meaning that she is a part of a local set of references that Edinburgh residents know and are intimate with. This allows for her to be placed as a real proponent of Scottish culture. The Scottish location of Edinburgh, and its Scottish produce in the ale made and sold by Maggy, allow Ramsay to clearly assert the cultural importance of Scotland in terms of its national community and the importance of the role of the female within this.

The poem goes on to state the commercial success of Maggy:

> “To tell the truth now Maggy dang,
>
> Of customers she had a bang;
>
> For lairds and souters a’ did gang
>
> To drink bedeen,
>
> The barn and yard was aft sae thrang,
>
> We took the green.” (ll.8-12).

Arguably the Standard Habbie has a specific effect on the audience reading of the poem, and thus Maggy. Maggy’s placement within this historically Scottish form emphasises her nationality – her role is identified as not only an ale-wife, but a Scottish ale-wife. The stanza places Maggy as a socially unifying figure in her success, bringing together both ‘lairds’ and ‘souters’ in her creation of

[12] Pittock, ‘Allan Ramsay and the Decolonisation of Genre’, p.325.

an accepting social space around the drinking of ale. Cooke comments on the "democratic nature of taverns in the rural suburbs of Edinburgh, where 'lairds' and 'souters' (shoemakers) intermingled".[13] The mixing of social classes in Maggy's 'howff' is highlighted in the identifying of customers according to their occupation and thus their social class. Pittock comments on Ramsay's use of Maggy as a working class woman, as a unifying figure in this context: "But this [Ramsay's Patriotism] is no passive patriotism, as we learn early in Ramsay's poetic career in his 'Elegy in Maggy Johnston' (*Works:* l.10). The choice of subject is no Lycidas nor bishop's wife, but a Brewster and a publican, an apparently 'low' figure who in reality stands as a synecdoche for all classes in Scotland's capital."[14] In choosing a working woman as the subject of such mourning, Ramsay imbues Maggy with a level of importance. She is presented as a social catalyst in her creation of a space within 'Scotland's capital' accessible to all classes, and her death represents a real loss in terms of the social and cultural traffic her services allowed. It could be argued that the female brewer's servility to the male is highlighted. She is shown as providing a service and working for an exclusively male clientele of 'lairds and souters', having made fulfilling their wishes her lifestyle and identity. Whilst this is valid, arguably Ramsay's portrayal of the working brewer woman rather allows for a subversion of patriarchal expectation and values. Whilst she does indeed serve the men, she turns such an expectation into one that can turn over profit and financially benefit her. By assuming the identity of 'alewife' and working within the patriarchal system, she subverts the expectation of female servility in a way that allowed her to be socially and financially comfortable whilst providing an important social and cultural function to Edinburgh residents. This is evidenced in the speaker commenting of Maggy:

> "Of wardly comforts she was rife,
>
> And liv'd a lang and hearty life,
>
> Right free of care, or toil, or strife
>
> Till she was stale,
>
> And ken'd to be a kanny wife
>
> At brewing ale." (ll.79-84).

Maggy is shown as personally successful in achieving independent financial stability within a patriarchal power structure, her identity as a 'kanny wife // at brewing ale' being placed as a central element in this. Davis and McLane go as far as to comment that "In 'Maggy Johnston', the symbol of

[13] Cooke, 'Bousing at the Nappy', p.52

[14] Pittock, 'Allan Ramsay and the Decolonisation of Genre', p.321

cultural continuity was the skill at beer-making”.[15] It can be argued that this sentiment is tangible within the poem itself, as the speaker hopes that Maggy has left her recipe to her ‘bairns’:

> “Or hast thou left to bairns of thine
>
> The pauky knack
>
> Of brewing ale amaist like wine?” (ll.45-47)

In this sense, Maggy’s profession and her status as a ‘kanny wife’ acts as a cultural stronghold of Scottish national identity. Moreover, Maggy is shown by Ramsay as playing a vital role in the preservation and progression of Scottish culture, in her upkeep of a skill that allows for such ‘cultural continuity’ in its consumption and appreciation.[16] Because of her profession Maggy is not only capable in subverting patriarchal expectation, but also overcomes it to some extent in her status as an independent woman of means, even if these means do come from the pockets of men – perhaps this in itself makes such an achievement all the more significant.

As well as this, the ale allows for the encouraging of Scottish oral storytelling and socialisation. Davis and McLane comment that “The transmission of that skill [ale brewing] will in turn be productive of further oral activity in the form of speech or ‘crack’”.[17] This is reflected in the following verses, as the speaker recounts how after taking Maggy’s drink, the groups of men would sit together and tell stories:

> “Then of auld stories we did cant
>
> Whan we were fou.” (ll.35-36)

The speaker also attributes Maggy’s ale with providing the men with conversation, stating that it: “gar’d us crack.” (l.48) The men being ‘fou’ before storytelling and being ‘gar’d’ crack’[18] by Maggy’s ale, places Maggy and her services as direct proponents of Scottish culture and tradition. Maggy’s ale and its consumption is singled out as playing a specific part in the socialisation and mixing of men from different social strata, allowing for the preservation of traditional oral culture within a contemporary context, across the social spectrum. The national aspect of this narrative is emphasised in the Scots language used to describe the conversational effects of the ale – ‘crack’ is used instead of

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[15] Davis and McLane, ‘Orality and Public Poetry’, P.129

[16] Again, the importance of this is reemphasised in ‘Lucky Wood’ as Ramsay takes a different tack to make the same point. He laments the lack of continuation in Lucky’s lack of children to pass her recipes on to: “She has na left her make behind her, // But now she’s dead.” (ll.53-54).

[17] Davis and McLane, ‘Orality and Public Poetry’, P.129

[18] ‘Talk, gossip, free and easy conversation’ https://dsl.ac.uk/entry/snd/crack_n1 [accessed 09/12/2020]

'conversation' as 'auld stories' are told. Hammerschmidt comments that in "Linking the representation of urban scenes to the consumption of local or regional products, Ramsay promoted Edinburgh's spaces and inhabitants as proper subjects for literature, and as subjects of national importance and interest."[19] Maggy is portrayed as a vital player in her upkeep and progression of Scotland's cultural narrative, allowing for the spread of traditional cultural forms within a contemporary setting of social progress and camaraderie. Maggy's action allowed for the consumption of the 'local or regional' Scottish product in her ale within the 'urban scenes' of 'Edinburgh's spaces', propelling Scottish culture in drinking and oral story-telling. As such, Maggy, a working-class female character herself, as well as the Scottish national environment represented by her 'howff', are validated as the 'proper subjects' mentioned by Hammerschmidt, key components in the cultural narrative of a progressive Scottish nation. Davis and McLane comment further on the creation of a nationally Scottish environment in Maggy's howff, stating: "Ramsay conjures, in such poems as his 'Elegy on Maggy Johnston', the vibrant, oral community of the Brunstfield Links pub."[20] The social space that Maggy creates within the pub, facilitated by her making and selling of alcohol, not only affirms Scotland as a 'subject of national importance and interest' as mentioned by Hammerschmidt, but also acts as a kind of melting pot for the coming together of a range of social classes in their appreciation of and partaking in Scottish oral culture and storytelling. The character of Maggy, as well as the likes of Lucky Wood[21] and the working-class female more generally, is shown as having been a vital player in facilitating the coming together of Scottish men from all social backgrounds in such a cultural community, acting as a unifying force in rallying a diverse mix of Scottish people.

Ramsay's use of elegy and his representation of the mourning of the whole city of Edinburgh denotes Maggy's importance as a culturally significant figure. The role that Maggy's Scottish national identity played within this is emphasised not only in the Scots vernacular and Standard Habbie form of the poem, but also in the portrayal of her creation of a culturally Scottish product. She is shown as an important and active member of Scottish society and a vital proponent of its continued cultural progress, not only in her obvious promotion of Scottish drinking culture, but also in the upholding of traditional oral story-telling this encouraged. Her positive portrayal throughout the poem, in her

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[19] Soren Hammerschmidt, 'Ramsay, Fergusson, Thomson, Davidson and Urban Poetry', in *The Edinburgh History of Scottish Literature: Enlightenment, Britain and Empire* (1707-1918), Ed. Susan Manning, Ian Brown, Thomas Owen Clancy, Murray Pittock, Ksenija Horvat, Ashley Hales, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007) p.80

[20] Davis and McLane, 'Orality and Public Poetry', P.128

[21] Lucky Wood is similarly shown as an important social player in this respect: "She ga'e us aft hail legs o' lamb, // And did nae hain her mutton ham;" (ll.43-44), "To the sma' hours we aft sat still, // Nick'd round our toasts and snishing mill;" (ll.55-56) The above reference to Lucky as a 'common mither' is also relevant here.

creation of a cultural product to be consumed within an identifiably Scottish environment (paralleled by and compounded in Lucky Wood's presentation in Ramsay's 'sister-poem'), works to cement the importance of the Scottish female and her cultural contributions in aiding the progression of the Scottish nation.

In 'Lucky Spence's Last Advice'[22] the last words of a brothel madam are recounted in Scots, as the scene at her bedside is depicted. It is described by Cooke as "a biting social satire in vernacular Scots, written in the 'habbie' stanza".[23] In his placement of female prostitutes as the heroines of a traditionally high form elegy, Ramsay arguably mocks the critics who condemn the use of 'low' subjects in 'high' forms. Instead it can be said that Ramsay uses satire to assert the legitimacy and humanity of such subjects, as set forth in his definition of poetry in the 1721 Preface. Lucky implores the female sex workers under her care to subvert and even exploit the male gaze and the sexualisation of the female to charge money for sexual services, all the while harnessing drinking culture and ideals of female innocence and naivety to rob the men of more money. Drinking culture is also presented positively within 'Lucky Spence' as a unifying collective activity for the women – it is harnessed as an effective coping mechanism in traumatic situations, comforting the women in Lucky's final moments.

The character of the brothel madam was not uncommon in early eighteenth-century art and literature – Hogarth's 1732 'A Harlot's Progress'[24] features such a madam (Mother Needham) alongside the fallen figure of Moll Hackabout. Ramsay's portrayal of the Madam however, serves to humanise such figures, defending them as capable of compassion and care even in their morally dubious profession. As Rhona Brown comments, "Ramsay commemorates the seedy side of Edinburgh life and its real characters with human warmth and some pride: in so doing, he demonstrates that they are as worthy of literary memorial as the subjects of customary elegies."[25] Lucky is shown harnessing Scottish drinking culture not only to encourage the exploitation of patriarchal attitudes, turning them to profit for her employees, but also to comfort the women in her care, as they unite over a 'gill' in her last moments. In this sense, as in traditional deathbed poems, she bequeaths her legacy, even if such a legacy is an unconventional one. Drinking culture and Scottish identity within this are shown as vital components in the women's financial advancement and their emotional wellbeing, allowing them to

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[22] Burns & Oliver (eds), *The Works of Allan Ramsay* pp.22-26

[23] Cooke, 'Bousing at the Nappy', P.56

[24] John Hogarth, *A Harlot's Progress,* c. 1732, Engraving, The British Library, London https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/a-harlots-progress [accessed 09/12/2020]

[25] Rhona Brown, 'Self-Curation, Self-Editing and Audience Construction by Eighteenth-Century Scots Vernacular Poets' in *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, (Hoboken: Wiley, 2018) p.162

progress in life past Lucky's death with the drinking of a 'gill' as an important practical tool both in work and leisure. Lucky speaks first:

> "My loving lasses, I maun leave ye,
>
> But dinna wi' ye'r greeting grieve me,
>
> Nor wi' your draunts and droning deave me,
>
> But bring's a gill;
>
> For faith, my bairns, ye may believe me,
>
> 'Tis 'gainst my will." (ll.7-12)

The poem begins emotively as the pain at Lucky's parting, felt by both her and her 'bairns', is illustrated in her speech within the Standard Habbie. Genuine concern for the 'loving lasses' being left behind is portrayed, as is their great sorrow in Lucky's departure. Such poignant, humane action is deliberately situated within the Standard Habbie, around the subject of death. The stanza form, representing a long-established Scottish literary tradition, is portrayed as an appropriate environment for such action, progressive in its sympathetic housing of traditionally shunned (but in reality worthy) members of society. Although sex workers were some of the most demonised women in eighteenth-century society,[26] Ramsay capitalises on the emotional precepts of the elegy, using Lucky's death to humanise them. Within this, Ramsay places Scottish drinking culture as a vital component. Here again, the comfort brought by traditional drinking culture is highlighted, its culturally Scottish nature emphasised in the Scots vernacular used to name a specifically Scottish measure of alcohol.[27] Furthermore, the service of the women in bringing it to the dying Lucky is portrayed as bringing some comfort in a difficult circumstance. Not only does it comfort Lucky and presumably reduce any pain she is in, it gives her distressed 'bairns' a useful and reassuring task to perform. Arguably Ramsay places Scottish drinking culture, as in 'Maggy Johnston', as a positive, unifying force within Scottish society, its role as a national symbol strengthened in its situation within Standard Habbie form and the Scots vernacular (particularly in its definition as a 'gill' linked by rhyme with Lucky's 'will') used to describe the scene. Alcohol unites the women and brings succour in the most distressing context of death. The women in the poem are placed as upholders of this facet of Scottish culture, in their ready

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[26] The general disdain of the prostitute in early eighteenth-century society is described by de Mandeville: "Publick whoring consists in lying with a certain set of women, who have shook off all pretence to modesty; and for such a sum of money, more or less, profess themselves always in readiness to be enjoy'd. … the minds of women are observ'd to be so much corrupted by the loss of chastity" (Bernard de Mandeville, *A Modest Defence of Public Stews,* 1724, p.8) in Hill's *Eighteenth-century Women: An Anthology*, P.38.

[27] Gill – The wort of ale or beer in its fermenting state, in Sc. measure, one fourth of a Mutchkin, or about three-fourths of the Imperial gill. https://dsl.ac.uk/entry/snd/gill_n1_v [accessed 09/12/2020]

supply and demand for it themselves alongside their sympathetic portrayal as human and relatable characters.

Lucky goes on to use her last words to give practical advice to the women under her care. They are encouraged to subvert patriarchal expectation and turn it to financial gain. Working with the male gaze, ideals of female beauty and the damaging sexualisation of the female, they offer sexual services for a fee. Moreover, Lucky also encourages them to lie to and steal, taking advantage of customers whilst sleeping or drunk to obtain valuable goods. She suggests that the sex workers lead the clients to believe that they are virgins:

> "When e'er ye meet a fool that's fow,
>
> That ye're a maiden gar him trow," (ll.19-20)

Here several sexist and cultural tropes are capitalised on to trick the male and make financial gains. The ideal of innocence and virginity thrust upon the female is played upon to encourage custom. Subsequently, lack of male control and viewing the female as a sexual object is also subverted – the women are encouraged by Lucky to capitalise on this culture of sexism in order to make money in charging for sexual encounters they provide.

As well as suggesting that they exploit traditional drinking culture, she "exhorts her 'girls' to get the customer drunk and unconscious as quickly as possible, then rob him":[28]

> "Drive at the jango till he spew,
>
> Syne he'll sleep soun." (ll.23-24)
>
> "Whan he's asleep, then dive and catch
>
> His ready cash, his rings or watch;" (ll.25-26)

The women capitalise on the normalisation of drunkenness within their cultural sphere. The use of Scots vernacular in naming the alcohol as 'jango' situates the culture of drinking as specifically Scottish. In this sense, the Scottish nation itself and the women's Scottish identity within this are placed as vital in the cultural tools they provide in aiding their survival. In including such advice, Ramsay highlights the role of the male and the damaging beliefs held by many customers. Brown comments that "Although prostitutes were often scapegoats for petty crime in Edinburgh in the contemporary press, Ramsay reminds his readers that the sex trade depends on male desire for its existence."[29] In this sense, Ramsay absolves the female sex workers of much of the moral guilt,

[28] Cooke, 'Bousing at the Nappy', p.56

[29] Brown, 'Self-Curation, Self-Editing and Audience Construction by Eighteenth-Century Scots Vernacular Poets', P.163

shifting the burden of the perceived immorality of sex work from them to the perverse male customers. As such, Lucky and her workers are presented sympathetically, as Ramsay represents the gendered oppression they subvert in order to survive. Even in her dying breaths, Lucky considers it expedient to school the women in how best to navigate the misogynistic attitudes they are faced with in their line of work. In including this, Ramsay arguably highlights the constant danger and financial pressure felt by these women, whilst criticising the social structure that allowed for it and praising the defiance of the women and their use of culture to their advantage.

Also significant are Lucky's warnings about potential abuse from customers. Although told to subvert misogynistic expectations in order to make financial gain, the women are still shown as working within the bounds of a male dominated oppressive social structure, and suffer as such. Unlike Maggy Johnston, they work in a severely vilified sector, and so have extra societal criticism to contend with:

> "But dawt Red Coats, and let them scoup,
>
> Free for the fou of cutty stoup;
>
> To gee them up, ye need na hope
>
> E'er to do well:
>
> They'll rive ye'r brats and kick your doup,
>
> And play the Deel." (ll.43-48)

> "There's ae sair cross attends the craft,
>
> That curst Correction-house, where aft
>
> Vild Hangy's taz yer riggings saft
>
> Makes black and blae,
>
> Enough to pit a body daft;
>
> But what'll ye say." (ll.49-54)

The presence of the Red Coat within the poem, presumably there to 'keep the peace' in a post-rebellion Scotland, emphasises further the intensity of the contemporary political climate. Subtlety was necessary for Ramsay if he were to continue publishing and disseminating such work without fear of state persecution. Whilst earlier in the poem Lucky advises the women to lie and steal from the customers, when it comes to the British, militaristic figure of the Red-Coat, she advises great caution. She urges them to 'daut' and fawn over the Red-Coat, allowing him to drink as much alcohol as *he*

wishes, a change from the advice to ‘drive at the Jango’ earlier in the poem regarding other customers. With the Red-Coat, Lucky encourages the prostitutes to take on a more submissive role to protect themselves, contrasting to the criminal and rebellious behaviour she encourages with other customers who are not earmarked as exclusively ‘British’, or ‘foreign’ to Edinburgh. In this sense, the vulnerabilities of the Scottish female in the face of the ultimate symbol of male aggression and misogynistic power in British military rule is emphasised. The sex workers are not, however, portrayed exclusively as victims. In including descriptions of their abuse, portrayed as a hazard of the job, Ramsay in fact emphasises their strength and fortitude. He does portray them sympathetically, but not exclusively as martyrs. They are shown first and foremost as survivors (rather than simply victims) of an unfair and harmful system. In the portrayal of the sex workers as human characters, the patriarchal system and the men representative of this within the poem are criticised implicitly.

Pittock comments on such defiance within Lucky’s advice, commenting on the “words that offer nothing of the repentance for crime common in the genre, but instead a defiant recommendation to ‘carry on whoring’”.[30] Such a recommendation does indeed go against the ‘repentance for crime common in the genre’. Even in contemporary popular literature, such as Defoe’s *Moll Flanders*,[31] the prostitute continued to be portrayed exclusively in terms of either a demonic Jezebel figure or a shamed and repentant sinner. In choosing to represent Lucky as confident and proud in her advice, Ramsay rebels against the societal norms expected in the portrayal of sex workers. Instead of using Lucky’s death and her lasses’ greeting as an opportunity to moralise on the evils of prostitutes, Ramsay validates them and their retaliation against an oppressive and misogynistic society, and their utilising of Scottish culture to do so.

Although having lived in such a reviled sector, subject to horrendous abuse,[32] Lucky dies in relative comfort, surrounded by the unconventional family she has created. She is mourned and cared for in her last moments by her employees, tended to with alcohol and their collective greeting.

> “Lass gi’e us in anither gill,
>
> A mutchken, Jo, let’s tak our fill;” (ll.97-98)

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[30] Pittock, ‘Allan Ramsay and the Decolonisation of Genre’, p.325

[31] In one episode, Moll meets a drunk man and is convinced to return to his lodging with him. After he has used her sexually, she steals his watch and purse full of gold. Although a strikingly similar situation to the one described by Lucky, Moll is portrayed as feeling guilty and repentant. - Defoe, Daniel. *Moll Flanders,* (London: Penguin, 1978) pp.218-220 (first published 1722).

[32] See ll. 43-66

Here again, the comfort brought by alcohol and traditional drinking culture is highlighted, with a 'mutchken'[33] being named in Scottish vernacular as the measure to be taken. Even in her death, Lucky and her 'loving lasses' can partake in a unifying collective activity to console themselves. In her life ending thus, Ramsay subtly suggests that the methods employed by Lucky and her employees in drinking, tricking the men and subverting patriarchal values, are successful and useful. Although morally dubious, such trickery of the male is portrayed as conducive to female comfort and security in a context where female abuse at the hands of the male is shown as prevalent and wholly immoral, and in a context where women are self-reliant in financial and emotional terms. Furthermore, the alcohol is shown as consistent in bringing comfort during traumatic experiences. Ramsay places Lucky and her workers as important figures in arguing for the subversion of patriarchal values, highlighting the damaging nature of a male dominated society. Within this, their placement in the Standard Habbie and the role that the consumption of Scottish alcohol plays in the security it brings the women acts to promote Scottish culture and tradition as a useful factor in their protection and emotional bolstering.

Although shown in a context very different to that of Maggy Johnston, the supply and consumption of alcohol throughout 'Lucky Spence' is shown as a positive force, affording safety, financial gain and comfort to the women when they most need it. Ramsay also advocates for a change in culture, a progression from a traditionally male dominated misogynistic one, to a more balanced and considered one. Whilst the male figures in the text and the power structures they represent are shown as damaging, the female figures, whilst flawed, are shown much more favourably. A loving, familial atmosphere is portrayed around the women. Not only this, but they are also shown as intelligent and capable in their use of the cultural modes available to them to survive and advance financially. In their sympathetic portrayal, the women in the text and their reaction to Lucky's death are used to advocate change and progression in society, away from brutality and demonisation of the female, and towards a respect of all women as human characters, undeserving of abuse. Scottish culture, represented in the Standard Habbie form, Lucky's mode of speaking in Scots vernacular, and the drinking culture within it, is placed as a vital tool in this progression, in both the protection, and the comfort it affords the women throughout their working lives. Ramsay places the women as advocates of a cultural shift and progression in society towards one that is both safer and less misogynistic, with Scottish cultural symbols such as 'gills' and 'mutchkens' placed as central components in such a progression.

All female characters within these poems are shown to some extent as capable and successful individuals, achieving a level of independence and financial security in their professional endeavours by subverting sexist ideals within society, and by harnessing Scottish cultural modes. The women are also shown as important proponents of progress within society in their role as upholders of national

[33] A measure of capacity for liquids or for powdery or granulated solids = approx. 26 cu. ins. or ¼ pint Scots, i.e. ¾ pint imperial.
https://dsl.ac.uk/entry/snd/mutchkin [accessed 09/12/2020]

culture and traditions within Scotland's progress narrative. Whilst gendered oppression directed towards the women is portrayed in the poems, their subversion of patriarchal attitudes and power structures is shown alongside this, as the women overcome such boundaries and expectations in order to propel change in society in their advancement as women in their use of Scottish culture and tradition alongside their own autonomy and intelligent thinking.

Middle and Upper-Class Women

Ramsay also portrays middle and upper-class women in his poetry, but the forms by which they are presented differ from those of Maggy Johnston and Lucky Spence. These poems are less obviously Scottish than the Standard Habbie poems in their form, as Ramsay uses classical allusion to elevate his Scottish subjects, promoting them and their culture in a different way than in his Standard Habbie poems, but with similar effects and arguably the same core message. In both 'Tartana'[34] and 'The Scriblers Lash'd'[35] Augustan English is used, rather than Scots vernacular, however in 'The Fair Assembly'[36] the Scottish linguistic mode is maintained. As discussed in the Introduction, Ramsay's preface to the 1721 edition introduces this topic, pertinent in these instances, as he states that although the written words may look 'English', Scots inflection remains within them.[37] Here Ramsay perhaps makes a broader point about the endurance of Scottish culture and individuality within the British, and largely Anglo-centric context, of the Union. Throughout all poems discussed however, Ramsay continues to place Scottish women as central subjects, with the content of his poems remaining decidedly Scottish regardless of form and language. The women's domestic lives are examined within this section; their expression through clothing and fashion and the role they played in event organisation. This category of woman is portrayed by Ramsay as continually oppressed by the patriarchy in suffering constant barrages of male criticism in the way they live their domestic lives. As well as this, however, they are shown as successful in subverting patriarchal values, (as all working women examined do), in order to positively impact society and its cultural progression. Their hosting of balls and following of fashion allows for an upward trajectory of cultural progression within eighteenth-century Scottish society. These Scottish women are placed as valuable innovators and proponents of popular culture, aiding the advancing of Scotland as a civilised and 'polite' nation

[34] Burns & Oliver (eds), *The Works of Allan Ramsay* pp.27-36

[35] Burns & Oliver (eds), *The Works of Allan Ramsay* pp.83-89

[36] Martin Burns and John W. Oliver (eds) *The Works of Allan Ramsay* (6 vols) Vol. 2 – Poems: 1728 (Edinburgh: Blackwood for the Scottish Text Society, 1953) pp.129-35

[37] Ramsay, Preface to *Poems* p.7

whilst maintaining its historic and individual cultural identity. All social classes of women have a functional and important role to play in the Scottish society represented by Ramsay in his poems.

'The Scriblers Lash'd' was first published in 1718. In it, Ramsay highlights the male criticism of Scottish women's dress, whilst defending the right of women to dress how they please. The damaging nature of male criticism is highlighted throughout, and Ramsay uses such a portrayal to condemn damaging male power structures and their effects. Moreover, in being defended the women are shown as important cultural figures, their autonomy in dress and the self-expression this allowed being portrayed as a positive asset in a progressive society. The poem is written in Augustan English and iambic pentameter, featuring heroic couplets throughout. Ramsay uses classical allusion and neoclassical poetic devices to elevate the content, endowing it with a sense of importance as a vital message to be listened to and heeded. In using such poetic devices, Ramsay arguably increases accessibility, encouraging a more 'British' and English audience to take heed of Scottish society and its current issues, placing Scotland and its culture as important within the union. The women in the poem are shown aiding the cultural progression of Scotland as a 'polite' nation in their keeping pace with fashionable trends of dress, despite constant criticism and chastisement. Although the world may see them as frivolous, Ramsay portrays them as important contributors to the prosperity of Scotland in both its national wealth and cultural image – "as women acquired limited financial power over the course of the century, fashion became a means of displaying economic as well as sexual status."[38] Not only are their individual choices in dress defended as a basic right, female expression and prerogative in fashion is also portrayed as a positive facet of Scottish culture, in crafting a civilised society in its displays of wealth and feminine sexuality. The fact that "clothing was particularly singled out by women for the elements of personal identity it conveyed"[39] in eighteenth-century society places female thought and expression as inherently bound with fashion and the wearing of clothes. Female thought and the cultural prowess this brought in the following of fashion trends is portrayed by Ramsay as important and useful in supporting the progression of Scotland. In the beginning of the poem, the speaker asserts:

"I'm call'd in Honour to protect

The Fair, when treat with Disrespect" (ll.5-6)

Going on to state that such protection is:

"Against vile Mungrels of *Parnassus*

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[38] Kimberly Chrisman, 'Unhoop the Fair Sex: The Campaign Against the Hoop Petticoat in Eighteenth-Century England', in *Eighteenth-Century Studies,* Vol. 30, No. 1, (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1996) p.16

[39] Maxine Berg, 'Women's Consumption and the Industrial Classes of Eighteenth-Century England', in *Journal of Social History,* Vol. 30, No. 2, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996) p.421

Who through Impunity oppress us." (ll.11-12).

In these heroic couplets Ramsay not only singles himself out as a protector of the 'Fair', he portrays such a plight against harmful male criticism as a universal issue – the use of 'us' denotes Ramsay's personal grievance with the men criticising women. It is shown as an issue that is problematic for all. Ramsay portrays the women positively from the offset, describing them as the 'Fair', whilst employing negative language to describe the 'vile Mungrels' who reprimand women and their choice of dress. Ramsay employs classical allusion from the beginning. He references the 'Muse' in the first line, and in doing so, feminises his poetic inspiration. In mentioning '*Parnassus'* he also situates the issue of female dress within a traditionally respected and revered form, as in 'Tartana'. In this sense, Ramsay imbues the subject immediately with a sense of importance. Already, Ramsay can be seen advocating female expression and denouncing those who attempt to curtail it. He goes on to highlight the vulnerability of the female in eighteenth-century society, commenting on the attacks:

"Against the Sex who have no Arms,

To shield them from insulting Harms,

Except the Light'ning of their Eye,

Which none but such blind Dolts defies." (ll.23-26)

Ramsay draws attention to the already vulnerable position of women, even wealthy women who can afford to dress well, within society. He portrays them as easy targets for male criticism in their vulnerability, and by implication adds to the negative portrayal of the male critics he is denouncing. The men are shown as bullies, attacking those with less means of defence, or 'arms' than themselves. The uniting of 'no Arms' and 'Harms' in rhyme within the heroic couplet further consolidates the idea of damage done to the female by the sexist critics. The idea of male abuse of female vulnerability is emphasised and exacerbated in the proximity of the two notions within the couplet.

Later in the poem Ramsay focuses his defence more specifically, mentioning different articles of lady's dress attacked by the male critics:

"In your Opinion next nought Matches,

O! horrid Sin! The Crime of Patches!

Tis false ye Clowns. I'll make't appear,

The glorious Sun does Patches wear;

Yea, run thro' all the Frame of Nature

You'll find a Patch for every Creature;" (ll.92-96).

Exclamations and sarcasm are used in the second line of this passage to mock the men criticising the wearing of patches. Ramsay goes on to evidence examples of patches in the natural world, such as the sun and its clouds. Andrews comments that "Ramsay develops a theory on the omnipresence of "patches" in nature … By Ramsay's standards, disrespecting the "Fair" by condemning their use of artificial enhancement ("patches") is not only rude but "unnatural" in itself."[40] Ramsay adheres to the classical tradition in his allusion to nature in strengthening his argument. Not only is the sun mentioned, it is portrayed as comparable to the fashionable ladies within the poem, and both are shown as parallels in their wearing patches. Not only is the poem itself elevated generally in such natural classical allusion, but the ladies themselves are also specifically elevated in their direct comparison to a natural force as praised and mighty as the sun itself. Consolidating this further is the long-held tradition that Venus herself had a 'patch' in the form of a mole on her cheek; Sarah Jane Downing comments that "reputedly Venus has a beauty spot, one lovely drop of darkness to highlight her perfect complexion".[41] In their wearing of patches, the women are thoroughly initiated into a divine classical tradition of goddesses and the power of nature, validated by Ramsay's defence of them against the 'vile mungrels of *Parnassus'*.

As the poem goes on, Ramsay becomes increasingly obvious in his message – the promotion of respect for the choices of women, in their dress and their own bodies:

> "But learn to speak with due Respect,
>
> Of *Peggie's* Breasts, and Ivory Neck" (ll.111-112)

> "If *Nellie's* Hoop be twice as wide,
>
> As her two pretty limbs can stride:
>
> What then? Will any Man of Sense
>
> Take Umbrage, or the least Offence;" (ll.115-118)

Although it could be argued that in naming female body parts Ramsay is unnecessarily sexualising the female subjects, arguably he is not doing so himself, but is in fact drawing attention to the negative effect of the male gaze and the sexualisation of the female so prevalent within society, examined earlier in 'Lucky Spence'. He 'holds a mirror' up to society, drawing attention to such issues. This sexualisation from the male is shown as being bound up with criticism and censoring of the female.

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[40] Corey Andrews, ''Almost the Same, but Not Quite': English Poetry by Eighteenth-Century Scots', in *The Eighteenth Century,* Vol. 47, No. 1, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006) p.71

[41] Sarah Jane Downing, *Beauty and Cosmetics 1550-1950*, (Oxford: Shire Publications, 2014) P.22

Policing of female dress is shown as an extension of the policing of the female body, sexuality, thought, and autonomy itself. In his imperative command to respect Peggie, Ramsay both disciplines the disrespectful male critics and humanises the oversexualised and criticised female. In using popular contemporary names in naming Peggie and Nellie in this section, Ramsay works to focus the reader on the human aspects of the women being discussed, increasing sympathy for the cause of female choice he is championing.

As with his use of patches earlier in the poem, Ramsay names specific articles of criticised dress to further strengthen his argument. In his mentioning of Nellie's wide 'hoop' Ramsay creates a point of contention within the poem. His argument becomes more pertinent when the vehemence of many contemporary male critics regarding the wearing of hoops is considered. Kimberly Chrisman comments that "The hoop literally presented a wide target for satirists, and since its first mention in *The Tatler,* an enormous body of criticism has grown up around the garment".[42] Such detestation of the hoop expressed by men publicly is further discussed by Chrisman, who mentions that "the style was perpetually mocked in poems, caricatures (…), and satirical diatribes with titles like "A Short and True Description of the Great Incumbrances and Damages that City and Country is like to sustain by Women's Girded Tails" and 'The Enormous Abomination of the Hoops Petticoat as the Fashion now is.'"[43] When this is considered, Ramsay's defence of the Scottish women appears all the more deliberate, in that he was going against the grain of contemporary society in defending such modes of dress and female choice in wearing it. In the mentioning of such a specific article, Ramsay pits himself on the side of the female and her autonomous choice, portrayed throughout as something to be valued and respected.

Beyond this, Ramsay goes on to assert female autonomy, displayed in choice in dress (exemplified in patches and hoops) as completely valid:

> "And will you, *Mag-pys!* Make a Noise,
>
> You! grumble at the Lady's Choice!" (ll.125-126)

> "Pray leave't to them, and Mothers wife,
>
> Who watch their Conduct, Mein and Guise,

[42] Chrisman, 'Unhoop the Fair Sex: The Campaign Against the Hoop Petticoat in Eighteenth-Century England', P.11-12

[43] Chrisman, 'Unhoop the Fair Sex: The Campaign Against the Hoop Petticoat in Eighteenth-Century England', P.5

To shape their Weeds as fits their Ease:

And place their Patches as they please." (ll.127-130)

Here Ramsay asserts that the burden of criticism, if indeed there be one, should be shifted from male critics to the women themselves. He defends the right and ability of women to make their own informed decisions about the way they dress and portrays this as a positive feature in a progressive society. Female relatives are delineated as the most appropriate figures to oversee the dressing of female family members if necessary, rather than critical men. Such a theme is present throughout Ramsay's work, as demonstrated earlier in 'Lucky Spence' where there is a sympathetic and supportive community of women: often the feminine aspects of the 'family unit' are presented as the most wholesome, safe and useful. Arguably Ramsay defending the use of the patch once again is also significant. Ramsay uses the patch as a point of contention within the poem to thoroughly reject the criticism of the male commentators in favour of the 'Lady's Choice'. He distances himself from the damaging proscriptions of the misogynistic male and instead continues to use such specific examples to advocate for female choice in cultural domestic matters such as fashion and dress.

In advocating female autonomy in fashion and dress, Ramsay places the women as important figures in the progression of the Scottish nation. The women are shown as innovators and followers of recent and contemporary fashion trends.[44] Within this advancing of culture, the Scottish identity of the women is protected, asserted and shown as a positive asset. Whilst the male critics are portrayed negatively:

"Hence Poets are accounted now

In *Scotland,* a mean empty Crew:" (ll.147-148)

The women in the poems are shown as superior not only in their following of fashion and individual choices in dress, but also in their Scottish identity within this. They are also shown as more progressive than their male critics.

"Unthinking, thus the Sots aspire,

And raise their own Reproach the higher:

By medling with the Modes and Fashions

Of Women of politest Nations" (ll.63-64)

Reference to the ladies as the 'Women of politest Nations' serves to reinforce the idea that in their following of fashion, these women aided the growth of Scotland as a 'polite' and civilised nation. As

[44] Chrisman cites the creation of the hoop in England as being 1709, less than a decade earlier, with *The Tatler* referring to "the new-fashioned Petticoats" in December 1709. p.8

well as this, the coupling of ‘Fashions’ and ‘Nations’ within the rhyming couplet in the stanza further links the two together. The fashion worn and disseminated by the Scottish ladies is directly linked and shown as being intrinsic to Scotland as a ‘politest nation’.

The classical allusion and iambic pentameter used throughout, as well as the heroic couplets, aid the elevation of the content of the poem. The placing of such an issue within traditional respected cultural forms of poetry serves to impose a sense of importance upon the cultural issues discussed. The women are placed as proponents of progress within the Scottish nation, and as vital figures in encouraging the cultural growth of it as a modern and civilised country. Within this they are also encouraged to reject narrow-minded male criticisms. Such cultural growth is portrayed as a direct result of autonomous female choice and freedom of expression, represented by female dress and following of fashion. Haidt comments that “eighteenth-century texts and images invest the figure of woman with the capacity to represent a cluster of concepts around women’s agency and independence, consumption and productivity, and national economic health.”[45] Ramsay can certainly be said to do so in this poem. In his representation of the fashionable woman, Ramsay portrays the eighteenth-century female as a figurehead of such cultural concepts, symbolic of the progression of national production and ‘economic’ health within the progressive Scottish society. Ramsay continues to advocate female autonomy within an oppressive system; as the fashionable women in the poem are shown as disseminators and advancers of culture within the Scottish nation, the men criticising them are shown as inhibitors of such progress.

Ramsay also places the female and her form of dress as important cultural narrators and advancers in ‘Tartana, or the Plaid’, however here in using a specifically Scottish garment, Ramsay asserts the validity of traditional Scottish culture more directly. In ‘Tartana’, first published in 1718, Scottish women are praised for their beauty and virtue in wearing traditional Scottish plaid. The inclusion of tartan within the poem and the central place it takes was a bold choice by Ramsay given the political climate. Pittock describes the contemporary symbolism of tartan in the early eighteenth century: “it was on its way to becoming the rebel and not just the patriot cloth, the mark of the Jacobite who supported the ancient royal line and (after 1707) opposed the Union.”[46] In this sense, the female figure and her wearing of plaid are all the more significant in their representation as a tool through which to elevate and praise Scottish culture. This is compounded in the poetic form of the

[45] Rebecca Haidt, ‘A Well-Dressed Woman Who Will Not Work: Economics, and Eighteenth-Century Fashion Plates, in *Revista Canadiense de Estudios Hispanicos,* Reproducciones y representaciones dialogos entre la imagen y la palabra’, Vol. 28, No. 1, (Alberta: University of Alberta Press, 2003) p.138

[46] Murray Pittock, ‘Plaiding the Invention of Scotland’ in *From Tartan to Tartanry: Scottish Culture, History and Myth*, Ed. Ian Brown, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010) P.35

text with its heroic couplets, classical allusion and iambic pentameter. The poem also adheres to this cultural construction in being written in Augustan English, indeed as Newman comments: “While Ramsay may value the plaid as a metonymy of traditional Scottish culture, he does so in genteel Augustan English.”[47] Arguably in using the ‘genteel Augustan English’ mentioned by Newman, Ramsay attempts to ‘soften the blow’ of the rather controversial praising of tartan throughout the poem. In presenting a contentious topic within a linguistic mode more palatable to those English readers who would perhaps denounce the wearing of tartan most vehemently, Ramsay allows for the distribution of the message of the poem in a more effective way. Not only did the use of Augustan English give the poem a wider audience and reach, it also to some extent acted as a safety barrier in preventing Ramsay’s presentation as a ‘dangerous’ Jacobite writer. Conversely, it could be said that it is perhaps an even bolder move of Ramsay’s to present such political sentiments in ‘standard’ English. Scottish nationality however, is fully asserted in the character of the Scottish woman, who serves as a vessel for praise throughout the poem; her Scottish national identity and her upholding of Scottish culture in the wearing of tartan being presented as vital components in her portrayal as attractive and righteous. Indeed, Ramsay states:

> “our FOREFATHERS proudly scorn’d
>
> To be with any other WEED adorn’d” (ll.29-30)

He later goes on to praise the tartan further: “O First of GARBS! Garment of Happy Fate!” (l.56). Ramsay uses the female to validate Scottish culture – he directly praises the women and their wearing of tartan and in doing so commends Scottish culture, encouraging the audience to view it positively:

> “With this our Beauteous MOTHERS vail’d their Charms
>
> Each Quality, Age, Sex, each Youth, each Maid,
>
> Deem’d it a *Deshabille* to want their Plaid.” (ll.61-63)

The use of the female figure, as in ‘Maggy Johnston’, is a culturally significant one. Newman comments that: “Eighty percent of “Tartana” is devoted to celebrating the plaid not as a Highland soldier’s uniform, but as a Scots*woman’s* native dress.”[48] Pittock’s comments on the military associations of tartan around this time shed new light on Newman’s observation: he states “it was during the era of the Jacobite risings from 1689 to 1746 that tartan became confirmed as the uniform

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[47] Steve Newman, ‘The Scots Songs of Allan Ramsay: ‘Lyrick’ Transformation, Popular Culture, and the Boundaries of the Scottish Enlightenment’ P.284

[48] Newman, ‘The Scots Songs of Allan Ramsay: ‘Lyrick’ Transformation, Popular Culture, and the Boundaries of the Scottish Enlightenment’, p.304.

of that party."[49] The publication date of this poem, just 3 years after the 1715 rising, places Ramsay's tartan firmly within this bracket. In this sense, it can be argued that Ramsay was encouraging positive associations with a national Jacobite cause in his praise of the tartan, something that seems even more obvious when the following is considered: "in 1715, the Jacobite army was uniformed in tartan"[50]. Ramsay deliberately chooses women, rather than the traditionally male militaristic tartan-clad figure, to represent an advancing Scottish culture. Not only are they admired and praised for their Scottish national identity and adherence to Scottish culture and tradition in their dress, they are also shown as elevating the position of Scottish culture within the poem. Their beauty and virtue in the poem so littered with classical allusion places them, and by implication Scottish culture, in an elevated position of cultural significance and validity. They, as the addressees and subjects, and thus Scottish culture, are shown as vital components of the poem, comfortable, like the women of 'The Scriblers Lash'd' within the honoured space of the literary classical world.

In the 1718 edition, before the poem itself, Ramsay includes an Address, "TO THE *SCOTS* LADIES, Irresistible Charmers".[51] Ramsay not only singles out his intended subjects as women, but as specifically Scottish women. In the opening address, Ramsay goes on to name "SCOTLAND" particularly, describing it as a "*Nation of* HEROES!".[52] Ramsay situates the women within this Scottish heroic narrative, stating: "*you are acknowledged the fairest and handsomest"*.[53] The women are praised as worthy recipients of admiration from the very beginning, as well as an audience capable of understanding and accepting such praise. Although the position of the women in the poem is already established as subjects of commendation, Ramsay advances this towards the end of his address, stating to the ladies: "*I have invock'd you my* Proper Muses".[54] Here Ramsay introduces elements of the classical and reference to classical literature that is present throughout the poem. In associating his Scottish female subjects with such a respected poetic form, in a role so glorified as the 'muses', Ramsay elevates them and the cultural modes they represent. In his emphasis upon their Scottish identity and genders from the very first, Ramsay asserts the validity of the Scottish female and her culture within even the most sophisticated of poetical forms.

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[49] Pittock,'Plaiding the Invention of Scotland', p.36

[50]Pittock,'Plaiding the Invention of Scotland', p.36

[51] Ramsay, 'Tartana', (Edinburgh: 1718) https://data-historicaltexts-jisc-ac-uk.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/view?pubId=ecco-0436700700&terms=tartana%20allan%20ramsay&pageId=ecco-0436700700-20 [accessed 09/12/2020] pp.3-4

[52] Ramsay, 'Tartana', p.4

[53] Ramsay, 'Tartana', p.4

[54] Ramsay, 'Tartana', p.4

Such assertions of the worthiness of the Scottish woman and her cultural modes continue throughout the poem. In the opening line of the poem, Ramsay reiterates his address:

> "Ye *Caledonian* BEAUTIES, who have long
>
> Been both my Muse, and Subject of my song" (ll.1-2)

Here the Scottish women are directly linked to the revered space of the classical world in their positioning within the heroic couplet. The association of the women with the muse, (like the women of 'The Scriblers Lash'd') as well as song within the couplet, places them as honoured subjects, worthy of the praise given them throughout the poem.

Next however, Ramsay introduces the idea of the plaid as a cultural symbol of the beauty and virtue of the Scottish lady and her country, stating that he: "Designs the Glory of your PLAID to raise" (l.5) Ramsay goes on to introduce specific Scottish rivers such as '*Tweed'* (l.12), '*Clyde'* (l.15) and *'Tay'* (l.17) alongside classical references such as 'PHOEBUS' (l.8) and the 'REAL MUSES' (l.11). In situating real Scottish places within the classical environment of the form of the poem, Ramsay declares their validity as harmonious counterparts, working together in praise of an already established and worthy subject – the Scottish lady and her plaid, representative of Scottish culture more generally. Such mixing of Scottish reality and classical idealism continues throughout, reinforcing the precious status that Ramsay imbues in the Scottish Ladies and their Plaid. As well as naming specifically Scottish geographical places, Ramsay also includes direct address to the Scottish ladies in the form of feminised clan names such as: 'BRUCINA' (l.99), 'PRINGELLA' (l.132), 'CAMPBELLA' (l.130), 'STUARTA' (l.140) and 'RAMSEIA' (l.140). In including such examples of explicitly Scottish names, feminised in their referring to specific women of Scottish aristocratic families, Ramsay emphasises the importance of the role of Scottish national identity within the poem as a factor worthy of praise in the women.

Ramsay goes on to highlight the protection that the wearing of plaid brought women, beyond its aesthetic appeal:

> "How decent is the PLAID when in the Pew
>
> hides th'inchanting FAIR from Oglers View" (ll.205-206).

Here Ramsay underlines the vulnerability of the female to the uncomfortable male gaze from the 'oglers', however he also includes praise for the plaid as a protective cultural instrument for the female, providing a shield from the perverse male. The fact that Ramsay situates such an example within a 'Pew' is also significant. In doing so, he is arguably further admonishing the inappropriateness of the male gaze and the objectification of women. Feelings of sexual desire or perverse voyeurism become all the more shameful within the holy and sacred space of the church. By implication, the plaid becomes even more important and valid in its use as a shield against such unsolicited attention. The cultural

emblem of the plaid is portrayed as a useful tool in contemporary society, giving women the means to protect themselves from male licentiousness. At its most basic, the Scottish cultural emblem is placed wholly on the side of the pure and virtuous.

Ramsay presents the women's wearing of the plaid as a civilising force upon men in Scottish society. In providing distraction from sexual impulses towards the female, the plaid serves to encourage male attention to settle on a more moral subject. In using the space of the Church, Ramsay allows for potentially harmful male attention to be redirected into a holy and righteous course. Newman comments on this, stating that the women in 'Tartana' are "No mere object[s] of sexual desire", going on to state that the desire elicited in the poem is "redirect[ed] for the good of polite society".[55] The plaid, representative of Scottish culture, protects the female whilst educating and reforming the male. The female and her plaid within this space also take on a consecrated aspect. In her civilising influence, facilitated by the wearing of her Scottish tartan within a holy place, the Scottish woman is further elevated in her semi-divine and sacred status as a cultural upholder and civiliser; here Ramsay refutes contemporary views of tartan as representative of wildness and rebellion.

Towards the end of the poem, Ramsay goes on to state the significance of the tartan as a cultural product and export of Scotland, and of the vital role that the women play in such success in trading:

> "Now say my MUSE e'er thou forsak't the Field,
>
> What profit does the PLAID to SCOTIA yield?
>
> Justly that claims our Love, Esteem and Boast,
>
> Which is produc'd within our Native Coast.
>
> On our own Mountains grows the GOLDEN FLEECE,
>
> Richer than that which *Jason* brought to *Greece:*
>
> A beneficial Branch of ALBION's Trade,
>
> And the First Parent of the TARTAN PLAID.
>
> Our Fair Ingenious LADIES Hands prepare
>
> The equal Threeds, and give the Dyes with Care;
>
> Thousands of Artists sullen Hours decoy

[55] Newman, 'The Scots Songs of Allan Ramsay: 'Lyrick' Transformation, Popular Culture, and the Boundaries of the Scottish Enlightenment', p.306

On rattling Looms, and view their Webs with Joy." (ll.228-239)

Ramsay continues to use classical allusion in his mention of 'MUSES', the 'Golden Fleece' and '*Jason* brought to *Greece',* associating such revered tales with the production of tartan in Scotland by the Scottish women themselves. In doing so, Ramsay continues to elevate the position of the Scottish female and the tartan garment. More than portraying Scottish tartan products and the women who wear them as equal to the great classical characters and their adventures, Ramsay goes as far as to suggest that Scotland's produce is of greater value. In his assertion of the fleece from 'Our [Scottish] Mountains' being 'richer than that which *Jason* brought to *Greece'* Ramsay positions Scottish female characters, and their trade and culture as superior to that of the ancient classics, another topic mentioned in Ramsay's 1721 Preface and reiterated in this instance. He also mentions the benefits that Scottish tartan brings to 'ALBION'. In doing so, Ramsay declares Scottish culture as a useful and worthy component of wider British trade, a significant statement at a time when Scotland and its culture was viewed as more backward and primitive than England and London.[56] In all of this, the Scottish female is placed as a crucial component in such success. The 'Fair Ingenious LADIES' are credited with the production of the tartan, and thus as direct upholders of Scottish culture and Scottish success on an economic level nationally.

Scottish tartan is presented not only as a useful cultural tool in the improvement of the lives of the women who wear it, but also as a worthy export in an increasingly civilised nation. Tartan as a cultural symbol is shown as having a civilising influence within society, discouraging perverse male impulses and encouraging moral and useful motives, such as attention in church and successful and healthy trading relationships outwith Scotland. As well as this, it is shown as a vital practical tool in the progression of Scotland on an economic level, in a post-union environment. Ramsay turns many negative contemporary attitudes towards tartan 'on their heads'. Instead of a symbol of Scottish barbarity, tartan is presented as a symbol of supreme civilisation. Ramsay harnesses and subverts 'the idea of the "unnatural woman [that] was an important part of Hanoverian propaganda against the Jacobites"[57] in clothing his female characters in the typically masculine militaristic tartan uniform, whilst presenting them as feminine angelic paragons in their use of Scottish culture. Ramsay places the specifically Scottish female as an important ambassador of Scottish culture. In the praise directed towards the female throughout the poem, often mixed with classical allusion, the role of women in advancing the cultural growth of Scotland as a nation is emphasised. Their wearing of the tartan, as well

[56] A contemporary example of this attitude towards Scotland, (pre-empting later ones such as Dr. Johnson's) can be observed in a diary extract from Celia Fienne's travels: 'The houses are but poor Cottages Like Barns to Look in, much Like those in Scotland' in 'Through England on a Side Saddle', Celia Fiennes, (Saddleworth: Folk Customs, 2016) p.212

[57] Pittock,'Plaiding the Invention of Scotland', P.37

as their role in its production, are presented as essential in the progress of Scotland in the spread of such cultural modes as positive and civilising upon the general population and the wider Scottish economy.

The domestic lives of such women are further portrayed and defended in 'The Fair Assembly', first published in 1723. In it, Ramsay defends and praises the social dances and gatherings organised by aristocratic women, put on for the entertainment and enjoyment of the younger generation. Not only are they enjoyable, they are also praised as important social functions in their use of Scottish culture to educate the younger generation in polite discourse and behaviour whilst providing opportunities for prospective spouses to meet. When the idea that "the concept of politeness lay at the heart of eighteenth-century elite society"[58] is considered, the importance of the role of the functions is further consolidated. Throughout the text Ramsay again alludes to classical writing, elevating the subject of his poem and emphasising the air of importance he gives to the women and the events, however within this he also uses vernacular Scots as his mode of linguistic expression. Here Ramsay demonstrates his heterogeneous approach to literary culture; all modes and genres are shown as being open to the Scots poet in this respect. The women organisers to whom the poem is addressed are shown as important exponents of Scottish culture, encouraging polite and civilised socialising and courtship within the framework of traditional Scottish dances and gatherings in Edinburgh. They are shown aiding the "civilising mission and the process of cultural sophistication that urban sociability was supposed to bring about."[59] Like Maggy Johnston, the women in this poem are shown creating a vital social space within which different people can meet, however the focus of such events in this poem revolves around the elite classes, and the introduction of prospective spouses with the socialising of the younger generation. In this sense, the women within 'The Fair Assembly' are ascribed a role of even greater importance. Not only are they acting as preservers of Scottish culture in their inclusion of traditional dance, they use such culture to both civilise the younger generation, initiating them into polite society, and provide the means for the conception of a new set of cultured married couples within a space that is both safe and enjoyable for young women.

Ramsay's Dedication demonstrates his support of the female-driven endeavour that is the Assembly. Here Ramsay, as "Scotland's foremost poet … and a consistent campaigner for the polite cause"[60] states most explicitly his intention and beliefs regarding the lady organisers and the role that they played in Scottish culture and society. In the preface of the poem, Ramsay makes it clear that he is writing for the ladies who are the subjects of the poem. It begins:

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[58] Glover, *Elite Women and Polite Society in Eighteenth-Century Scotland,* P.3

[59] Hammerschmidt, 'Ramsay, Fergusson, Thomson, Davidson and Urban Poetry', P.81

[60] Glover, *Elite Women and Polite Society in Eighteenth-Century Scotland*, P.7

"TO THE MANAGERS,

Right HONOURABLE LADIES,

HOW *much is our whole nation indebted to Your Ladyships for Your reasonable and laudable Undertaking to introduce Politeness amongst us*" [61]

Here Ramsay assumes a deferential tone, marking them out as people worthy of praise and respect. He uses the honourable title of '*Your Ladyships'* reflecting their aristocratic backgrounds – the five directresses Ramsay mentions are: The Countess of Panmure, Lady Drumelzier, Lady Orbiston, Lady Newhall, and Lady North Berwick. Ramsay mentions the indebtedness of the 'whole nation' to them, drawing attention to the role that such women play within society in the crafting of nationhood and culture. Katherine Glover comments on Ramsay's inclusion of a narrative of nationhood within the address to the ladies, stating that "he [Ramsay] believed [the Lady Managers] to be engaged in a truly patriotic, progressive endeavour."[62] She goes on to comment that "the Countess and her friends, Ramsay argued, were carrying out a patriotic act of benevolence to the governing classes of post-Union Scotland."[63] Ramsay's awareness of the national importance of the 'patriotic' Scottish assemblies, and the cultural progression they encouraged, is displayed clearly in his reverent tone when addressing the organisers. The 'Lady Managers' are positioned as the vital social figures in Scotland's advancement as a polite nation, the functions they put on acting as a crucial training ground for the next generation of Scottish aristocracy in the uncertain terrain of the 'post-Union Scotland' mentioned by Glover. Their introduction of 'politeness' into society is shown as positive in its encouraging of the progression of a civilised Scottish nation. Ramsay uses Scots to describe the civilising process; it is not Anglicisation that yields improvement, but rather, improvement is shown as coming from within Scotland, its culture, and linguistic modes:

"(*in plain* Scots) blate and bumbaz'd, fyking how to behave" (p.1)

In including such a passage written in Scots, in his address to the ladies he is writing for, established as aristocratic in the previous lines, Ramsay makes a declaration of the worth of Scottish culture and language in even the most civilised and polite conversation. Although in other works such as 'Tartana', Ramsay uses Augustan English to elevate his Scottish subjects, here he uses Scots to assert its validity as a language of the polite classes within contemporary society, represented in the real and recognisable setting of the Assembly. Scots is shown as appropriate to address and converse with

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[61] Ramsay, Preface to 'The Fair Assembly' p.1

[62] Glover, *Elite Women and Polite Society in Eighteenth-Century Scotland*, P.7

[63] Glover, *Elite Women and Polite Society in Eighteenth-Century Scotland*, P.7

ladies of the highest calibre. He goes on to state his intention, defending the ladies and their social events against the scathing male critics, as in 'The Scriblers lash'd'. He states:

> "*Tis amazing to imagine, that any are so destitute of good sense and Manners, as to drop the least unfavourable sentiment against the* FAIR ASSEMBLY."

As in 'The Scriblers Lash'd', Ramsay positions himself against the attackers of female behaviour, placing himself as a protective figure, defending the women and educating the reader as to why the women are so important in their cultural service to Scottish society. The criticism Ramsay mentions was indeed prevalent, as "The Countess [Panmure] informed her husband that the assembly was railed against by the Presbyterian ministers, and it was soon condemned in print in a lengthy pamphlet which summarised assemblies as 'dishonourable to GOD, scandalous to Religion, and of dangerous Consequences to Human Society.'"[64] In pitting himself against such a powerful presence as the Presbytery, Ramsay's defence of the women becomes all the more significant. When the specific criticism of the assemblies being 'of dangerous Consequences to Human Society' is considered, Ramsay's argument to the contrary throughout the poem gains heat. It is not unlikely that Ramsay would be aware of this specific tract and attack and in his 'Fair Assembly' he effectively works to assert the complete opposite. Instead of being a danger to society, Ramsay portrays the assemblies as being of exceptional use in aiding the progression of polite Scottish society and manners in their use of traditional Scottish culture. In making the sentiments of his poem so completely opposite to this criticism, and in mentioning the criticism of those 'destitute of good-sense and Manners' in his address, Ramsay arguably works to create a counter-culture around the negative associations with the assemblies created by the Presbytery. As in 'The Scriblers Lash'd', Ramsay brings awareness to the unfair criticism that the women receive in their service to the nation, as well as the cruelty of their critics. He creates a sympathetic atmosphere around the ladies defended in the poem, implicitly elevating them and the culture around them. Thus, not only is the service in the assembly that the ladies provide defended and praised, but so too are the women themselves.

Ramsay then builds upon this, and continues to praise the efforts of the lady organisers in their role in cultural and societal progression:

> "*Noble and worthy Ladies, whatever is under Your auspicious Conduct must be improving and beneficial in every Respect. May all the fair Daughters copy after such virtuous and delightful Patterns as you have been and continue to be: That You may be long a Blessing to the rising Generation"*

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[64] Glover, *Elite Women and Polite Society in Eighteenth-Century Scotland*, P.7

Ramsay consolidates his earlier points, setting out very clearly that although the work of such women has been subject to criticism, it is nevertheless vital in educating the younger generation and thus beneficial to Scottish society as a whole. The women are shown as crucial social players in preparing the younger 'rising Generation' of 'fair Daughters' for a life in polite society, encouraging matches, all the while preserving Scottish culture through the mediums of dance and music. The importance of women in the improvement of Scottish society is emphasised further in the specific mention of the 'fair Daughters'. Although the assemblies offered a mixed sex space for both young men and women to meet, Ramsay makes sure to emphasise the continued role of Scottish women in advancing Scottish culture, across the generations. The younger generation are encouraged to 'copy after such virtuous and delightful Patterns' – not only is the continuation of female influence in cultural progression and polite society recognised, it is encouraged. Indeed, as Glover states: "Participation in the new world of polite sociability was a means of promoting national improvement in which women, as well as men, could engage."[65] Whilst the assemblies did maintain a level of class division in their elite nature, they can to some extent be argued as acting as a leveller in terms of gender. They provided a space within which women could contribute to such 'national improvement', in a way perhaps more tangible than the men in such circumstances. Indeed, the board of organisers for the Assembly comprised entirely of women: it is them to whom the poem is addressed and the 'fair Daughters' who warrant specific mention in their role in 'copying' the 'patterns' of social etiquette to progress the nation, rather than Scotland's sons. These sentiments expressed in the initial address are echoed throughout the poem.

The emphasis placed upon the Scottish national identity of the women and the place it rightfully held in polite society is repeated in: "Now *Caledonian* Nymphs attend" (Verse.1 l.7). Not only are the women completely associated with Scotland here, they are also compared to Nymphs. The women are given an almost mythical status, exalted as esteemed characters in a sophisticated narrative. Such allusion coupled with Ramsay's assertion that this poem is in 'the Royal Stanza'[66] gives the poem and its content an air of literary authority and sophistication. The Scottish identity of the female subjects is shown as harmonious in conjunction with their elevation as semi-divine figures.

The civilising role of the assemblies is also reiterated. Both female and male participants are shown as benefitting:

> "His wishing Look his Heart displays,
>
> While his lov'd Mate's in Motion:
>
> He views her with a blyth Amaze,

[65] Glover, *Elite Women and Polite Society in Eighteenth-Century Scotland*, P.7-8

[66] Ramsay, 'The Fair Assembly, A Poem, in the Royal Stanza' (See Title)

And drinks with deep Devotion" (Verse 10, ll.3-6)

Here the assemblies and the dancing within them, like the plaid in 'Tartana', are clearly shown as having a positive and civilising effect upon the male. The male gaze that is so often portrayed as predatory in the poetry of Ramsay, as in 'Tartana' and 'Lucky Spence', is transformed in the environment of the assembly and its dancing, controlled and regulated fully by powerful women. In creating a respectable environment, the safety of the female is likelier to be ensured as both parties have an honourable outlet for physical excitement and emotional admiration in the traditional cultural mode of Scottish dance. Moreover, the female organisers are also preserving something sacred and special in their upholding of a long-established Scottish cultural form in the organising of social dancing. In seeing the female dance in 'Motion', the man views his 'Mate' in purely emotional terms, with no mention of the physical, or sexual longing. The 'Devotion' and admiration of the female, encouraged through the medium of traditional Scottish dance at such events, is shown as a positive and moral force. The coupling of 'motion' and 'devotion' in rhyme serves to emphasise this – linking the two as intrinsic, the devotion is portrayed as a natural follower of the motion of the dance. In this sense, the female organisers play a crucial role in the civilising of the male, and by implication the protection of the female. As Glover states: "The concept of the sociable woman as a source of social improvement for the men around her was a cornerstone of polite culture."[67] In their training of the 'fair Daughters' as civilising influences within the educational setting of the assembly, the older generation of Scottish ladies arguably worked to ensure the continuation of such cultural education and civilisation, across generations. In such a scenario, women are placed as thoroughly useful as a civilising influence, encouraging the initiation of Scotland into polite society through the cultural medium of dance, also shown as a vital component.

The Scottish cultural form of dancing is shown as an important vessel for the expression of positive emotions. This is reflected in the care and effort that the older generation of ladies put into organising the events, as well as the emotions felt and expressed by the youth participating. The Scottish dancing, like the drinking of Scottish ale and wearing of Scottish garments, is shown as a unifying act. All members of the event are brought together by the respected female characters of the Lady Managers, within this cultural form of social communication and expression. Here Scottish culture is placed as central in the progression of a civilised and polite society, acting as a unifying force in socialising the next generation of respectable young couples. Glover summarises this: "Through their [the governing classes'] confident demonstration of polite, civilised behaviour, they would show Scotland to be a modern, civilised country. And absolutely vital to the success of this project was the regulatory role

[67] Glover, *Elite Women and Polite Society in Eighteenth-Century Scotland*, P.10

played by the Countess of Panmure and her female friends."[68] The women to whom the poem is addressed are placed as vital proponents of the culture itself and the subsequent socialisation needed to navigate polite society. Ramsay portrays them as important community members, to be respected and revered for their contribution in aiding Scotland's initiation into and progression within civilised culture in the preservation of national traditions and customs. Like Maggy and Lucky, these women are positioned as tradition bearers within the context of Scotland's progress narrative, even if the type of tradition they uphold differs from that of the working women.

In all poems within this section, women are portrayed by Ramsay as important in advancing Scottish society in the preservation of tradition and upholding of cultural modes. Such culture and the traditions it adheres to are shown as having a positive impact when handled by the female characters. Maggy's encouragement of Scottish drinking culture and oral story telling creates a space within which all classes of men can socialise and learn, as she makes financial gain herself, whilst Lucky's advice and drinking serves to benefit both her employees and herself in the comfort and opportunities for financial gain it brings. The upper class ladies are also shown as advancing cultural society in Scotland in their domestic lives – the following of fashion and wearing of plaid allows for a championing of female expression and autonomy within a cultural context, whilst the organising of dances serves to both preserve Scottish culture, and socialise and civilise the younger generation. In all poems discussed here, the women are shown as competent and proficient. Whether in their contributions to the Scottish economy, their own financial gain, creating social spaces, or in their autonomous expression in dress, the women are all positioned as important exponents of Scottish culture in their contributions to Scottish society.

[68] Glover, *Elite Women and Polite Society in Eighteenth-Century Scotland*, P.7

Chapter 2: Drama

Ramsay's Pastoral play *The Gentle Shepherd* takes place in a rural Scottish village, near Edinburgh. The action is situated in the late seventeenth-century, a politically significant choice given that its setting is pre-union and pre-Hanoverian. The body of characters are almost all rustic, adhering to the pastoral precepts of the genre. They inhabit roles within the category of 'villager' such as shepherd, shepherdess, and even 'witch' in the case of Mause. The rural characters of Ramsay's pastoral allow for implicit comparisons to be made between them and the more urban women that characterise many of his Edinburgh poems. Although the characters and setting in Ramsay's drama differ from many in his poems, the importance of national identity and the validity of Scottish culture within a progress narrative remains a central theme. This idea of Scottish progression and cultural prowess, expressed in Ramsay's preface to his 1721 *Poems*,[1] is carried throughout *The Gentle Shepherd.* Scottish tradition and culture is promoted throughout in the use of a pastoral setting, Scots language, and traditions such as song performance. Indeed, the importance of song performance is emphasised when the publishing history of *The Gentle Shepherd* is considered. Pittock details the role of song in the creation of *The Gentle Shepherd,* commenting on how "Ramsay developed his play from two pastoral dialogues, *Patie and Roger* (1720) and *Jenny and Moggy* (1723), which themselves had roots in the broadside mode of Scottish political pastoral related to the Stuarts".[2] Ramsay went on to revise the play, the later version of the play containing 21 songs rather than the original 4. Pittock comments on the "1726 second edition with its four songs, rather than the twenty-one of the later ballad opera".[3] Newman comments on how in the 1729 version of the play, Ramsay "added seventeen songs, turning a play with a few musical interludes into a full blown ballad opera".[4] Therefore, this chapter will be organised into three sections (setting, language, and song), providing an appropriate way in which to explore these themes and the female characters within. In his use of these aspects in this work, Ramsay works within the genre of the pastoral, adhering to its conventions but also adjusting them to fit his agenda in portraying the validity of Scottish culture and Scotland itself through his female characters. The lives that the women lead because of the rural and historical setting, the vernacular Scots language they use, and the traditional songs that they sing all work

[1] Here Ramsay asserts the validity of Scots as a language of literary worth, as well as encouraging positive associations around Scottish culture and tradition. "[recounting praise from Dr. Sewel] The *Scotticisms,* which perhaps may offend some over-nice ear, give new life and grace to the poetry, and become their place as well as the *Doric* dialect of *Theocritus,* so much admired by the best judges". Ramsay, Preface to*Poem s*, p. 6

[2] Pittock, 'Allan Ramsay and the Decolonisation of Genre', p.333

[3] Pittock, 'Allan Ramsay and the Decolonisation of Genre', p.333

[4] Newman, The Scots Songs of Allan Ramsay: 'Lyrick' Transformation, Popular Culture, and the Boundaries of the Scottish Enlightenment', p.307

towards creating an idealised version of Scotland within the play. The pastoral allows for such a portrayal of Scottish life and character, and in doing so allows for Ramsay to present a perfected society that is unequivocally Scottish. This all builds on the point that Scotland as a nation is presented as a progressive and positive space, largely because of its valuable culture and traditions and the women who uphold them.

Setting in *The Gentle Shepherd*

Ramsay's version of the pastoral drama adheres to many of the traditional precepts of the genre, following the definition provided by Terry Gifford reasonably closely. Gifford defines the pastoral, as focusing on "life in the country, and about the life of the shepherd in particular." He goes on to more specifically identify the pastoral form as an "idealisation of the environment, […] complicated by the labour involved in working in it, or the tensions of love relationships experienced in it".[5] Perhaps the most obvious trope that Ramsay adheres to within the Pastoral genre, is that of choosing a rural, countryside setting to accommodate all action within the play. Moreover, Ramsay chooses to create an exclusively Scottish pastoral setting for his very obviously Scottish characters to inhabit. The 'scene' at the beginning of the play is set as "A shepherd's village and fields some few miles from Edinburgh."[6] This allows Ramsay to draw indirect comparisons between the rural and urban culture and society around Edinburgh, highlighting contrasts between the lives of the village and city women. This is another feature of the pastoral genre utilised by Ramsay to create a strong central message about the importance and relevance of Scottish culture as well as drawing attention to issues of social injustice and gendered abuse within the city. Gifford comments on the use of contrast within the pastoral, stating: "pastoral refers to any literature that describes the country as providing an implicit or explicit contrast to the urban."[7] Ramsay uses the generic precepts of the pastoral to draw attention to, as well as exacerbate these comparisons between rural and urban within his female characters through the spaces they inhabit. In highlighting such discrepancies, he creates a sense of interest around social welfare and the treatment of lower-working-class women within Scottish urban districts.

Pittock states that "[Ramsay's pastoral is] a politically charged representation of Scotland through an idealised landscape and its inhabitants."[8] In this way, Ramsay's choice of setting and landscape, and his situating of his Scottish characters within this, does serve a political purpose in its emphasis upon

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[5] Terry Gifford, 'Pastoral', in *The New Critical Idiom*, (London: Routledge, 2019) p.4

[6] *The Gentle Shepherd* (1725) in *Poems by Allan Ramsay and Robert Fergusson*, Ed. Kinghorn, Alexander Manson, and Law, Alexander. (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic, 1985). (all subsequent references will be to this edition and will be given in parentheses after the text).

[7] Gifford, 'Pastoral' p.5

[8] Pittock, 'Allan Ramsay and the Decolonisation of Genre' P.333

Scottish nationality, and a perhaps not 'idealised', but nevertheless largely harmonious Scottish pastoral backdrop. By portraying Scotland in such an optimistic light within his play, Ramsay encourages positive associations with Scotland more generally 'in real life' from his audience. Ramsay works to encourage a sympathetic and positive view of rural Scotland. In this light, his assertion of the legitimacy of Scottish culture and society, through the landscape, is indeed a political move. Such a portrayal allows for the expression of politicism around Scottish culture that may otherwise have gone unacknowledged. Ramsay's choice in his specifically Scottish setting appears all the more deliberate when other contemporary pastoral literature is considered. Pope's 1709 *Pastorals* contains classical allusions and reference to the classical mode of the pastoral, however also makes specific reference to locations in and around London, such as the 'Thames' and 'Windsor'.[9] Whilst *The Gentle Shepherd* makes little specific reference to classical literature other than within the form itself, it of course is very clearly Scottish. Leask comments on Ramsay's acknowledged title of "Theocritus's true heir", but goes on to comment upon his identity within "a realistic Scottish poetic idiom and setting";[10] in *The Gentle Shepherd* Ramsay dispenses with classical allusion, and instead maintains and cultivates a setting that is very nearly contemporary and Scottish. In working against convention and choosing to abandon the typical Classical setting of the traditional pastorals such as those from Theocritus, and even the more English settings like those from Pope, Ramsay consciously works to bring contemporary Scotland into the forefront of his audience's minds, suggesting that Scotland is 'worthy' of pastoral elevation just as much as Pope's London. In capturing imagination through the pleasurable context of a pastoral play, Ramsay can subtly bring to attention contemporary issues of gender and nationality in eighteenth-century Scotland. In this sense too however, Ramsay's pastoral does align with other contemporary works, like Pope's, in drawing attention to real places in an almost propagandist manner. Both poets use mention of specific place names whilst adhering to the more rural aspects of the genre in continuous mention of natural features such as the 'Blest Thames's shores'[11] and Peggy's 'Corn-riggs'. The cultures surrounding the locations are thus promoted by both Pope and Ramsay as elevated and sacred, worthy of mention within the revered space of the pastoral text.

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[9] Alexander Pope, 'Spring. The First Pastoral, or Damon.' In *English Poetry 1579-1830: Spenser and the Tradition,* http://spenserians.cath.vt.edu/TextRecord.php?&textsid=33797 [accessed 09/12/2020]

[10] Nigel Leask, *Robert Burns and Pastoral: Poetry and Improvement in Late Eighteenth-Century Scotland*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010) p.50

[11] Alexander Pope, 'Spring. The First Pastoral, or Damon.' In *English Poetry 1579-1830: Spenser and the Tradition* http://spenserians.cath.vt.edu/TextRecord.php?&textsid=33797 [accessed 09/12/2020]

In his use of a specifically Scottish pastoral, Ramsay arguably asserts the potential of Scotland to be a safe and accommodating place.[12] It can be argued that in his setting of *The Gentle Shepherd* Ramsay suggests that there is an alternative society available to Scotland, in a secure, prosperous and community-centred realm, represented by the rural village society. Newman comments that "Ramsay's innovation in pastoral is driven by his desire to encourage the polite qualities of sympathy set forth by Addison and Steele and to situate Scotland as the terrain for a new form of pastoral and lyric."[13] Whilst Ramsay does undoubtedly promote the 'civilisation' of Scotland as a polite nation through its women in much of his work (see 'Tartana' and 'The Fair Assembly') in *The Gentle Shepherd,* Ramsay's focus is more on the working women, less concerned with 'politeness' but still representative of a progressive Scottish nation. In the years after the Acts of Union, an assimilation of the Scottish population into an anglo-centric culture was encouraged by many. A contemporary example of this approach is James Thomson's *The Seasons,* Pastoral writing published from 1726-1730. Susan Manning comments that "His [Thomson's] extended political pastoral *The Seasons* (1726-30) developed Pope's praise of the prosperous legitimacy of the Stuart monarchy in 'Windsor Forest' into Whig praise of the stability of post-union Britain."[14] Ramsay, however, makes a concerted effort to highlight the individual nature of a valuable and important Scottish culture, apart from that of England and Westminster, in working to 'situate Scotland as the terrain for a new form of pastoral and lyric'. It can also be seen as a way to advocate the validity of Scotland as a nation with its own separate, legitimate culture; *The Gentle Shepherd's* rural idyll, promoted the potential of Scotland and its ability to become the idealised nation represented by the pastoral village society.

In his creation of such an Eden in *The Gentle Shepherd*, Ramsay highlights the potential for a safe and happy life for the eighteenth-century Scottish woman, albeit in a very perfected version of Scotland, or perhaps simply away from the corruptions of the city. This in itself is perhaps a statement about the inherent danger to women in eighteenth-century Scottish society. Ramsay had to create a utopia for the female characters to be safe and happy. This view of Ramsay's pastoral serving as a vessel for political thought is supported by Leask, who agrees with Stuart Curran's argument that "even at its most idyllic, '18th century pastoral had been more or less tinged with politics' [and that

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[12] The treatment of Peggy and Jenny within the text directly contrasts with that of many of the urban women, particularly sex workers. Whilst the urban sex workers are abused and harmed by the men they interact with, Peggy and Jenny are adored and revered by the men within the text, particularly their sweethearts (a relationship denied to the urban sex workers in Ramsay's poems). Such a difference is established in the opening notes of the play, where Patie is described as "The Gentle Shepherd in love with Peggy", and Roger is described as "A rich young shepherd in love with Jenny".

[13] Newman, 'The Scots Songs of Allan Ramsay: 'Lyrick' Transformation, Popular Culture, and the Boundaries of the Scottish Enlightenment', p.300

[14] Susan Manning, 'Post-Union Scotland and the Scottish Idiom of Britishness' in *The Edinburgh History of Scottish Literature: Enlightenment, Britain and Empire (1707-1918)*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006) p.46

this] was especially true of Scottish Pastoral"[15]. In this sense, *The Gentle Shepherd* 'at its most idyllic' still serves a political purpose in highlighting gendered social injustice within Scotland as well as the cultural significance of Scotland and its value in a post-union context.

It should be noted that the rural-urban dichotomy above discussed does not apply to all Ramsay poems set in and around Edinburgh. The likes of Maggy Johnston and Lucky Wood are depicted as having led fairly comfortable and successful lives within the confines of the city space. Even Lucky Spence herself dies surrounded by the affectionate family unit she had created. In *The Gentle Shepherd*, all female characters achieve a level of comfort and success. Even Mause, described as a 'witch' at the beginning of the play and in several places throughout, is crowned a heroine by the ending, with the aristocratic Sir William inviting her to live the rest of her life in his manor:

> "Mause, in my house in calmness close your days,
>
> With nought to do, but sing your Maker's praise."
>
> (Act 5 Scene 3, ll. 195-196.)

No such elevated ending is given to the lower-working class women in Ramsay's urban poems. The innocent and well-intentioned courtship of Peggy and Jenny in the hills and glens of the Scottish countryside could not be more different from the treatment and abuse of the working women described in 'John Cowper'[16] or Lucky's prostitutes, likely beaten

> "black and blae,
>
> Enough to pit a body daft" (ll.52-53).

Ramsay arguably uses such a dichotomy, exacerbated by his choice in setting in his pastoral, in order to champion and advocate the possibility of a positive and progressive society within Scotland for all citizens, regardless of wealth or gender. The placement of Patie and Peggy as relatively poor agricultural labourers, and the revolution in their circumstances regarding wealth and social standing represents this idea in practice. Even more effective in demonstrating this potential for progression, is the character revolution in Mause. In his creation of a rural idyll and his placing the supposed 'witch'[17] Mause within it, and the subsequent redeeming of her character, Ramsay comments upon the civilising effect of the rural setting (representative of Scotland at its full potential): the rural setting is portrayed as having a natural order, whereas the city is perhaps *too* determined by human beings. As

[15] Leask, *Robert Burns and Pastoral: Poetry and Improvement in Late Eighteenth-Century Scotland,* p.59

[16] Burns & Oliver (eds), *The Works of Allan Ramsay* pp.14-17

[17] In contrast to Patie and Roger's complimentary descriptions in the opening notes of the play, Mause is described as "An old woman supposed to be a witch".

such, the positive potential of Scotland is displayed and symbolised by the redemption of the demonised female character within the pastoral village. Such redemption is represented most clearly in Mause's discovery to Sir William that Peggy is indeed his niece:

"Long have I wish'd to see this happy day,

That I might safely to the truth give way;

That I may now Sir William Worthy name,

The best and nearest friend that she can claim:

He saw't at first, and with quick eye did trace

His sister's beauty in her daughter's face." (Act V, Scene III, ll.66-71)

Sir William praises Mause personally upon this revelation, and his remembrance of her as his sister's nurse:

"Ha! Honest nurse, where were my eyes before!

I know thy faithfulness, and need no more;" (Act V, Scene III, ll.85-86)

The old, poor and decrepit working class female serves as the perfect 'villain' to civilise, even if she is revealed as never having been such a villain by the ending of the play. This in itself is perhaps a significant statement by Ramsay regarding the vilification of the working class woman. Rather than simply 'fixing' Mause in a 'road to Damascus' style episode, Ramsay reveals her as a thoroughly good person, loyal to Peggy throughout her life. Mause never was a witch, she was simply a human being, vulnerable to defamation due to her gender and class.

Her and Madge's outspokenness, exemplified in her remonstrance of Bauldy, exacerbates these vulnerabilities. Mause and Madge decide to punish Bauldy after he reveals his intention to be unfaithful to Neps, his sweetheart.[18] Indeed Madge goes as far as to attack Bauldy, as she:

"*Flees to his hair like a Fury"* (Act. IV, Scene I, l.86)

Indeed, she leaves Bauldy injured:

"Bauldy *gets out of* Madge's *clutches with a bleeding nose."* (Act. IV, Scene I, l.89)

After Madge's attack on Bauldy, she defends her friend and criticises Bauldy for his antagonistic and disrespectful behaviour:

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[18] In his belief that Mause is indeed a witch, Bauldy requests her help in turning Peggy's love to him. "Cou'd ye turn Patie's love to Neps, and than // Peggy's to me, - I'd be the happiest man." (Act II, Scene III, ll.56-57).

"That's true; and Bauldy, ye was far to blame,

To ca' Madge ought but her ain christen'd name."

(Act. IV, Scene I, ll. 95-96)

By behaving in a way that does not conform to typical gender roles and the expected role of a meek and mild elderly woman in a village society, Mause's character is opened up to greater criticism from a patriarchal society that sought to silence the voices of women protesting against mistreatment at the hands of the male.

In the character of Mause, Ramsay also gives voice to similar episodes of gendered injustice and misjudgement prevalent throughout contemporary eighteenth-century Scottish society. Bridget Hill states that "the vast majority of women in the eighteenth century were grossly under-privileged and wickedly exploited."[19] This is certainly true of some urban women within Ramsay's corpus. Whilst the younger female sex workers in Ramsay's realist Edinburgh poems are displayed as sharing much of the rebellious and cynical spirit of Mause, they are denied the chance of 'redemption'. The generic precepts of the pastoral, however, allow for a redemptive episode to unfold successfully within *The Gentle Shepherd*. By choosing Mause, symbolic of the most denigrated members of society, Ramsay opens a narrative of salvation for such characters. The space of the 'curst Correction-house' and the violent punishment of the working class urban women appears all the more horrific when considered alongside Mause's freedom to criticise directly and retaliate successfully against the injustice from male members of her rural society:

"That curst Correction-house where aft

Vild Hangy's taz ye'r riggings saft"

('Lucky Spence's Last Advice, ll. 50-51)

Whilst the vulnerable urban women are beaten and whipped because of their poverty and their profession within the sex trade (exclusively serving the powerful male), the rural women go as far as punishing the corrupt male figure. Although there is certainly a level of retaliation amongst the sex workers, encouraged by the likes of Lucky Spence to rob and exploit their customers, the dangers of social institutions associated with the urban space is a significant difference. Whilst the 'curst Correction-house' of inner-city Edinburgh and 'Leith-wynd', as well as figures like John Cowper, are portrayed as a constant threat to the urban women, the rural rebels Mause and Madge are removed from such danger in the pastoral setting. The fact that Ramsay places the successful retaliation (as well as the redemption) of the 'lowly' female within the pastoral, and thus the utopian version of Scotland he creates, is significant. In this, Ramsay maintains the conventions of the pastoral described

[19] Hill, *Eighteenth-century Women: An Anthology*, p.3

by Gifford, where the "apparently simple and unsophisticated characters of low social status are the vehicle for the writer's exploration of complex ideas about society."[20] The character arc of Mause as an 'unsophisticated' character within the pastoral is shown to encourage a positive reaction from the audience regarding consideration of the female voice and treatment of vulnerable women. Although of 'low social status' she is a likeable character as Neps and Peggy's protector, as well as relevant within the progress narrative as a major figure within the play. From this perspective, Ramsay's pastoral representations of rural women, as well as his portrayal of urban women can be said to be aimed to inspire a positive association around the female figure within the context of the progression of Scottish society. This progress is shown as not only positive and important for female welfare, but also as being propelled by the female voice. Newman comments upon the acknowledgement of social injustice and the encouragement of societal improvement represented within the play and its characters, stating "the play emphasizes a progress gentle and inevitable, embracing new economic, social and aesthetic possibilities without casting out the virtues of Scottish pastoral life."[21] Ramsay's use of the rural setting creates a stronghold of Scottish history and identity within the context of 'economic, social and aesthetic' progress. By locating the progress of the characters, particularly Mause, within the Scottish pastoral idyll, Ramsay creates a safe and acceptable context in which to advocate the development of Scottish society, for the greater good of the social players within it. By utilising the rural setting of the pastoral, Ramsay is able to endorse societal progression within Scotland, whilst placing Scottish identity and culture as the intrinsic ingredient in the nurturing and success of such a society. By giving Scottish culture and history a crucial role within such a narrative, Ramsay works to ensure its continuation and recognition as important and respected within Great Britain. However, the reality that the rural inhabitants would perhaps be left behind by some forms of progress is significant. Whilst such a reality is present within 'real life', the idyll created by Ramsay in *The Gentle Shepherd* allows for all characters to progress within an accommodating Scottish space. The audience is encouraged to view Scottish cultural heritage as not only vital in societal progression within the rural village, but as crucial also in eighteenth-century Scottish society and its improvement.

Scots Language in *The Gentle Shepherd*

The use of the Scots language is significant when considering Ramsay's use of the pastoral genre. Ramsay's use of Scots vernacular in *The Gentle Shepherd,* as well as his depiction of the female voice, asserts the validity of working class Scottish culture within a progress narrative. Ramsay's use of Scots throughout the play, and his bestowing this manner of speech upon almost all characters, contrasts with the fashion of using Augustan English in pastoral writing at the time,

[20] Gifford, 'Pastoral', p.5

[21] Newman, 'The Scots Songs of Allan Ramsay: 'Lyrick' Transformation, Popular Culture, and the Boundaries of the Scottish Enlightenment.' p.306

practiced by the likes of Thomson and David Mallet.[22] Ramsay's use of Scottish vernacular language within the play is deliberate, with his main purpose being to use the female vernacular voice within the context of the 'high' form of the pastoral to declare the legitimacy of Scottish language and culture. Peggy's use of vernacular is a particularly relevant example, as she represents both the pastoral and the 'high' in her situation as both shepherdess and aristocrat by the end of the play. The cultural significance of Scots in *The Gentle Shepherd* is commented upon by Leask*:* "Ramsay's equation of Scots with Theocritan 'Doric' gave a new cultural dignity to the attenuated Scottish poetry tradition that he sought to revive in *The Evergreen* (1724) and his own poetic works."[23] Ramsay adapts the classical precepts of the genre in order to create a new culture of respect and sophistication around the Scots language in the context of the play and his wider corpus of works, including *The Evergreen, The Tea Table Miscellany* and his *Poems*. The use of vernacular Scots in *The Gentle Shepherd* is also relevant when considering the impact of the rural-urban dichotomy within the genre. McGuirk comments that "The "realism" of vernacular diction made the country landscape of pastoral seem more gentle and simple; it made the urban landscape seem more complex and seamy."[24] In this sense, Ramsay encourages sympathy for the play's characters, and advocates awareness of the differences between rural and urban life, and the social injustices associated with this disparity. In his use of vernacular, Ramsay continues to craft an optimistic and positive association with Scotland through his idealised pastoral village, perhaps in fact making a statement about the depth of Scottish culture and heritage. By using vernacular Scots to do so, he ensures that Scottish identity remains central to the notion of positive social advancement within a civilised Scotland, represented in the progression of the female characters.

Throughout the play, Ramsay's characters maintain a mild but obviously Scottish mode of expression (with the exception, at times, of Sir William).[25] The use of Scots, viewed typically as 'low' by the literati[26] at this time, within a 'high' genre such as the pastoral, is significant. The general attitude

[22] Although born in Scotland around 1705, Mallet, like Thomson, wrote in Augustan English. Mallet's 'William and Margaret', a ballad written in English, is in fact published in Ramsay's *Tea-Table Miscellany*.
Sandro Jung talks of his using 'prominently the (artificial) poetic diction of the Augustan tradition" p.44, Jung, Sandro, "David Mallet, Anglo-Scot: Poetry, Patronage, and Politics in the Age of Union", (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2008)

[23] Leask, *Robert Burns and Pastoral: Poetry and Improvement in Late Eighteenth-Century Scotland*, p.57

[24] McGuirk, 'Augustan Influences on Allan Ramsay', p.99

[25] Sir William is an expected exception in this instance. As the most socially elevated and aristocratic character by far, his use of Augustan English comes as no surprise. This is further compounded as the reader is made aware that he has spent time abroad.

[26] Although writing in the second half of the eighteenth-century Dr Samuel Johnson represents such an attitude well in his writing. "The conversation of the *Scots* grows every day less unpleasing to the *English;* their peculiarities wear fast away; their dialect is likely to become in half a century provincial and rustick, even to themselves." P.380

towards the use of vernacular is demonstrated in Clerk's advice to Ramsay upon first reading *The Gentle Shepherd*. He comments that Peggy "speaks in a fulsome dialect, and you seem by her picture to declare that nature has made all the sex equal & yet has been more bountifull to brutes."[27] Clerk's reference in particular to Peggy, as well as his referring to her as a 'brute' is significant. Although in reference to a fictional character, in Clerk's advice we see the policing of the working class female and her language. The discomfort felt by Clerk seemingly comes from the fact that Peggy, presented as an attractive female (who is eventually revealed as high-born) in the 'high' pastoral, is speaking in a manner 'unbecoming', working class, and of course recognisably Scottish. Elsewhere in his letter, Clerk comments that Ramsay should have "given Peggie a Character more suitable to her high birth. For in spight of her mean education, something above the common rank of Shepherdess should have appeared in her."[28] Here again, we see Clerk discount the occupation of shepherdess as an impossible role for a high-born lady. Within Clerk's letter, we see the degradation and disregarding of working class society, the lives led by these women, and the language they use. Hill's view that "All [eighteenth-century] women of the labouring classes suffered"[29] is relevant here. Although treated well within the context of the play, the reality of damaging and disrespectful attitudes towards the Scottish working female are revealed in Clerk's letter. Here Ramsay again 'differs from the norm'. Arguably he attempts to defy Clerk's attitude by having Peggy speak continuously in the 'fulsome dialect'. Even after discovering Patie's aristocratic birth, Peggy continues to use the language of their courtship when conversing with him:

> "I greet for joy, to hear thy words sae kind."
>
> (Act. IV, Scene II, l.163.)

Through the character of Peggy, and his "ingenious employment of Scots 'Doric' as a 'realist' pastoral idiom",[30] Ramsay asserts the validity of the voice of the working class Scottish female. Although eventually revealed as an aristocrat, Peggy maintains her vernacular manner of speaking

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Writing about 'Earse', his comments are relevant to a more general perception of Scottish language: "It is the rude speech of a barbarous people, who had few thoughts to express, and were content, as they conceived grossly, to be grossly understood." P.267
Johnson, Samuel, "A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland" (London: Strahan and Cadell, 1785).

[27] Gordon Brown, ''Superfyn Poetry Nae Doubt?' Advice to Allan Ramsay, and a Criticism of *The Gentle Shepherd',* p.40

[28] Gordon Brown, "'Superfyn Poetry Nae Doubt?' Advice to Allan Ramsay, and a Criticism of *The Gentle Shepherd."* p.39

[29] Hill, *Eighteenth-century Women: An Anthology*, P.6

[30] Leask, *Robert Burns and Pastoral: Poetry and Improvement in Late Eighteenth-Century Scotland*, p.57

throughout the narrative,[31] right up until her final performance of a song to the tune of 'Corn-riggs Are Bonny" to end the play:

> "He kiss'd, and vow'd he was be mine,
>
> And loo'd me best of ony,
>
> That gars me like to sing since syne
>
> O corn-riggs are bonny."
>
> (Act.V, Scene. III, ll. 245-248)

In maintaining Peggy's 'fulsome dialect', even once she is discovered to be high born, Ramsay uses the female voice to declare the legitimacy of Scots. Use of Scots here is reminiscent of Ramsay's assertion of its legitimacy within his poetry, in his address to the high-born directresses of 'The Fair Assembly'. A relevant example of the scorn that Scots was met with can be found in Cibber's 1730 version of *The Gentle Shepherd,* performed in Drury Lane, London. In the preface, the playwright acknowledges Ramsay's influence: "I am indebted to Mr *Ramsay's* GENTLE SHEPHERD, (*a* Scotch *Pastoral Comedy,* wrote Originally in *Five Acts)"* yet remarks: "I have scarce ventur'd to make any farther Alterations than were absolutely necessary … changing it into the *English* Dialect, without which, it had not been intelligible to our Auditors".[32] Here English literary hostility is demonstrated in the contempt of Scottish culture and its 'unintelligible' language. Ramsay's decision to write the play in Scots is thus consolidated further. As one of the most attractive characters within the play, Peggy acts as an important figurehead for the Scots language, advocating its use across all classes of society. By endowing his heroine with Scots vernacular speech, Ramsay encourages the audience too to respect and consider the validity of speaking in Scots, as they have presumably respected Peggy as a sympathetic character. Peggy personifies a 'rags to riches' narrative, beginning as a humble shepherdess, and ending as a high-born lady, suitably betrothed to her aristocratic lover. By ensuring that Peggy retains her use of Scots, regardless of social situation, Ramsay asserts the legitimacy of the Scots language, and more broadly Scottish culture and history, within the progress narrative.

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[31] Ramsay's assertion of the appropriateness of Scots around the aristocracy is compounded throughout his work, across genres. In the likes of 'The Fair Assembly' we see Ramsay directly address ladies of high society, such as the Countess of Panmure, in Scots in his opening address.

[32] Theophilus Cibber, ''PATIE and PEGGY: OR, THE FAIR FOUNDLING. A *SCOTCH* BALLAD OPERA. As it is Acted at the Theatre-Royal in *Drury-Lane.* By His MAJESTY'S SERVANTS.' *Vix ea Nostra Voco.* With the MUSICK prefix'd to each SONG.' (London: J.Watts, 1730). https://books.google.co.uk/books?hl=en&lr=&id=kNhZAAAAcAAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA1&dq=the+gentle+shepherd&ots=w90EVz74eP&sig=dTy1OSwEL2iny9mLvByXSJ1jYVI#v=onepage&q&f=false [accessed 09/12/2020]

Pittock states that "*The Gentle Shepherd* was a contribution to realist pastoral that approached that high cultural form explicitly through the literary currency of the street."[33] Considering the wide use of Scots in eighteenth-century Scotland, Ramsay's pastoral is indeed more 'realist' than many of the pastorals being written and consumed in Augustan English by Scottish audiences, such as Thompson's and Mallet's. Moreover, it can be argued that by using vernacular Scots in his pastoral, Ramsay caters to an audience wider than that of the traditional English middle and upper classes and the London and Edinburgh literati. The contemporary disregard for Scottish working class culture and its representation in literature is expressed further in the 1730 adaptation's preface: "I shall therefore only add, tho' the CHARACTERS in this OPERA are *low,* I flatter myself, they'll not appear distasteful to the politest Circle of our ENGLISH BEAUTIES."[34] Ramsay's inclusion of working class characters who speak Scots is therefore confirmed as a political decision. Just as the pamphlets and broadsides holding Ramsay's poems throughout his early career represented a vestige of accessibility to the working classes, so too did a dramatic vernacular performance, a performance that was deemed 'too Scottish' and 'too low' for the consumption of an English audience, without adaptation. The theatre underwent a "cultural shift"[35] in the eighteenth century; as the number of female players increased, the theatre remained open and accessible when *The Gentle Shepherd* was first being performed.[36] By choosing to use vernacular within drama, and within the pastoral, Ramsay diversifies from the traditional precepts of the pastoral, as well as contemporary pastoral dramas such as those from Pope and Thomson. The play also perhaps allows Ramsay to present his lower class characters 'from within', in a way that pastoral poetry by the likes of Pope perhaps does not, thus encouraging a more sympathetic reaction towards such characters. The middle-class, often aristocratic, matronly female figures are praised in Ramsay's 'Fair Assembly', however by choosing to write a pastoral, a traditionally high and anglicised form, in Scots, Ramsay more clearly asserts his alliance with a working class, female audience. At the same time, Ramsay presents Scots as a civilised language, one that is fit to relay the action of the prestigious pastoral. Both Leask and McDiarmid are in agreement that "for all its limitations, the romantic comedy of *The Gentle Shepherd* was the freest treatment of the country theme that serious poetry could then have permitted, and it was in its pastoral form that the Scots language found its first ambitious use."[37] Peggy's vernacular

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[33] Pittock, 'Allan Ramsay and the Decolonisation of Genre' p.333

[34] Cibber, ''PATIE and PEGGY: OR, THE FAIR FOUNDLING. A *SCOTCH* BALLAD OPERA …' (London: J.Watts, 1730).

[35] Helen E. M. Brooks, 'Actresses, Gender and the Eighteenth-Century Stay: Playing Women', (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2015)

[36] It is important to note here that during this time the theatre was very heavily regulated and would, in effect, be closed down in the first half of the eighteenth century. Indeed, Ramsay's own theatre in Carrubbers Close was shut down by the authorities in 1737, having only been established by Ramsay the previous year.

[37] Leask, *Robert Burns and Pastoral: Poetry and Improvement in Late Eighteenth-Century Scotland*, p.62

reinforces this, whilst aligning with the idea of Ramsay using the female voice to reassert Scottish cultural validity. Peggy's declaration of affection towards Patie in Act II Scene III exemplifies her use of vernacular:

> "When first thou gade with shepherds to the hill,
>
> And I to milk the ews first try'd my skill:
>
> To bear a leglen was nae toil to me,
>
> When at the bught at e'en I met with thee."
>
> (Act II, Scene III, ll. 57-60)

Peggy asserts her affection in a way that fits clearly within the generic precepts of the pastoral. Her mention of the 'shepherds' on the 'hill' and her milking of the 'ews', alongside her use of vernacular in explaining this, marries the pastoral form and Scots vernacular in a positive context. Peggy's expression of affection serves to drive further forward the idea of Scots being an important, intimate and valid mode of expression within the pastoral genre. By having his female characters, (especially his ultimately high-born one), express themselves in the 'literary currency of the street', Ramsay declares the legitimacy of Scots, and also counteracts the embarrassment communicated by Clerk and Cibber regarding the use of Scots within literature. Through such declarations, (in the spirit of those in his 1721 preface) Ramsay shifts the burden of shame onto those who, like Clerk and Cibber, scorn it.

Ramsay's use of Augustan English elsewhere in his poetry, however, must be considered when examining the use of vernacular Scots within *The Gentle Shepherd*. Although Ramsay made great use of Scots across a variety of genres within his whole body of work, he also produced a significant amount of verse written in the traditionally accepted and 'high' form of Augustan English, used by Pope and Gay, and Cibber in adapting Scottish text, as well as other contemporary Scottish pastoral writers such as Thomson. McGuirk comments that "It is concluded that overall, Augustan influence gave Ramsay the scope to make use of vernacular Scots in its revival of classical rustic genres like the pastoral of *The Gentle Shepherd*."[38] Although McGuirk's acknowledgment of the importance of Ramsay's work in Augustan English is valid, the assertion that this 'allowed' progression to vernacular work is open to debate. Ramsay chose to write in Scots from his earliest publications. He was not writing in Scots because he did not know how else to write. He wrote in Scots because he made a conscious choice to do so. Indeed, Ramsay states as much in his 1721 Preface, commenting of Scots: 'the pronunciation is liquid and sonorous, and much fuller than the English of which we are

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[38] McGuirk, 'Augustan Influences on Allan Ramsay' p.99

masters'.[39] McGuirk goes on to comment that "Although Ramsay revered the achievements of the distant Makars, he looked to contemporary Augustan writing for ways to reintroduce Scots in forms "higher" than the bawdry and comic elegy in which it had continued to be used."[40] McGuirk suggests that Ramsay made a concerted effort to place the Scots language within forms higher and more respected than the traditional comic forms. This supports the idea of Ramsay using Scots within an "ambitious"[41] context in a narrative of progression.

Newman comments on the use of Augustan English more specifically within *The Gentle Shepherd*, spoken by Sir William. He discusses the negative judgement *The Gentle Shepherd* received from some critics for "using Scots to depict only low-life characters … [whilst] dispensing comforting platitudes in Augustan English through the authoritative mouth of Sir William."[42] Sir William, as the 'most aristocratic' character, is indeed bestowed with a manner of speaking that is traditionally 'higher' than the vernacular Scots used by other characters. Even when addressing characters who speak in Scots, Sir William largely retains this more Anglicised way of speaking. When addressing Symon and Elspa, he insists:

> "Delay a while your hospitable care;
>
> I'd rather enjoy this evening calm and fair,
>
> Around yon ruin'd tower, to fetch a walk
>
> With you, kind friend, to have some private talk."
>
> (Act III, Scene II, ll. 158-161).

This is one of the only instances of real and continued class differentiation in speech throughout the play. What can be challenged, however, is the idea of Ramsay's use of Scots to depict only 'lower' characters. Although the majority of characters in the play can be categorised as 'lower' or working class, something also remarked upon by Cibber, Ramsay purposefully elevates both Patie and Peggy from this social position, whilst maintaining their use of vernacular Scots, in order to assert the validity of Scottish vernacular speech and Scottish culture. Ramsay uses this as a symbolic representation - just as vernacular Scots is shown to have a place within the mouth of the aristocratic lady and her lover, so too does vernacular speech have a place within the 'high' form of the dramatic pastoral. In making the choice to use Scots vernacular within *The Gentle Shepherd*, and in bestowing

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[39] Ramsay, Preface to *Poems,* p. 5.

[40] McGuirk, 'Augustan Influences on Allan Ramsay' p.103

[41] Leask, *Robert Burns and Pastoral: Poetry and Improvement in Late Eighteenth-Century Scotland,* p.62

[42] Newman, 'The Scots Songs of Allan Ramsay: 'Lyrick' Transformation, Popular Culture, and the Boundaries of the Scottish Enlightenment' p.288

it upon his most heroic characters, Ramsay ensures that his audience are encouraged to view it, and thus Scottish cultural identity, as not only an important component of a progressive Scottish society, but as a respected one too.

The place that Augustan English takes within the play, should also be acknowledged in its significance in relation to the female characters. As mentioned, Sir William acts as the locus for the use of Augustan English within *The Gentle Shepherd*, all instances are either spoken by him, or to him. In Act 5 Scene 3, we see Patie present his best friend Roger to his father, introducing him as the lover of Jenny:

"Sir, here's my trusty friend, that always shar'd

My bosom secrets, ere I was a laird;

Glaud's daughter Janet (Jenny, thinkna shame)

Rais'd, and maintains in him a lover's flame:"

(Act V, Secene III, ll. 199-202)

Michael Murphy comments upon Patie's use of Augustan English. He states "Thus, he [Patie] addresses his father in English to present his [Roger's] sweetheart, formally called Janet for the first time in the play, then speaks to her in Scots."[43] Patie's switching from English to Scots here is notable, as he goes from addressing the aristocratic male character of his father, to the working class female character of Jenny. His reversion to Scots to address Jenny, in her native language, is significant. Although he formally presents her and Roger in English, when addressing them personally, he returns to their known language. Patie and Peggy represent the ultimate progression, from peasant to aristocrat. By allowing Patie, symbolic of advancement, to code-switch, it can be argued that Ramsay was consciously placing vernacular Scots as valid alongside Augustan English in the prestigious pastoral. In doing so, Ramsay works to address linguistic prejudices. Although the audience may believe they know the characters of Patie, Peggy and Mause at the beginning of the play, something quite different is revealed at the end. The revelation of Patie and Peggy as aristocrats, and their continued use of Scots throughout the entire play, serves to compound this.

It could be argued that Scots being used to address Jenny is an act of subordination, that she is represented as unable to fully understand and express herself in English, and thus Patie must simplify his language for her to comprehend his meaning. Whilst this reading has some merit, it can also be argued that the use of Scots to address Jenny is a display of the preservation of something sacred, precious, and legitimate. Although it may have been unsurprising and almost expected for Patie to begin speaking in English after his discovery as a Laird, Ramsay ensures that he and Peggy continue

[43] Murphy, 'Allan Ramsay's Poetic Language of Anglo-Scottish Rapprochement' p.10

to use Scots vernacular. In Patie's use of Scots to address Jenny, a lifelong friend and a respected companion to Roger, Ramsay asserts the legitimacy of Scots as a 'real' and expressive language. It is Scots that Patie uses to reassure and comfort his friend in this uncomfortable scenario: '(Jenny, thinkna shame)'. Scots in this circumstance represents an important and treasured mode of expression, as well as conveying intimacy between the characters. Patie's reversion to the more Scottish and colloquial version of Jenny's name acts to consolidate the idea that Scots vernacular is a crucial language in the communication of emotion and the preservation of cultural tradition and custom within a rapidly progressing Scotland, both in the play and in contemporary society.

Jenny is positioned as the social catalyst within the scene, and although she has no dialogue in this section, her presence, and thus the female presence, is nevertheless vital. Ramsay could have just as easily had Patie turn to Roger (the more obvious addressee) and talk to him in Scots. By choosing Jenny to be the recipient of Patie's reassurance in Scots, Ramsay highlights the importance of the role of the working class female within the Scottish progress narrative. She symbolises the importance not just of the female voice, but also the role that the female plays in allowing the voicing of dialogue from others in order to preserve Scottish cultural heritage, in this instance in the form of a national language. In this sense, the social role played by the female characters within *The Gentle Shepherd* and their part in protecting and preserving Scottish culture is reiterated as vital.

Song in *The Gentle Shepherd*

The use of traditional Scottish folk songs within the play is also notable. The pastoral form adds significance, as "Pastoral songs were associated in the seventeenth century both with Scottish subject matter an also with politics and the Stuarts."[44] Although the play was written and published in the eighteenth century, its action is set in the late seventeenth century. Both male and female characters sing, but the voice of the female characters particularly, singing songs in "'woman's tradition'"[45], serves as an assertion of the validity of Scottish culture (and the women disseminating it) and its positive impact within Scottish society. Although there are several examples of singing included in the 1725 edition of *The Gentle Shepherd*, Ramsay later revised his play and added a great deal more. This adds credence to a reading that Ramsay used song within *The Gentle Shepherd* to acknowledge their importance in maintaining audience engagement, and in disseminating messages in a subtle and entertaining way. Moreover, song represents something traditional and intrinsic in the cultural identity and history of Scotland. Ruth Perry comments that "Folk music thrived in Scotland, prized by Scots as nowhere else in Europe as the sacred signifier of their culture. People of every class

[44] Pittock, 'Allan Ramsay and the Decolonisation of Genre' p.333

[45] Hamish Henderson, 'The Ballad, the Folk and The Oral Tradition', 1., in *The People's Past*, (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1991) P.70

and calling treasured their indigenous folk music and regarded it as unique and important."[46] Traversing a range of events and conveying a range of emotional states, the Scottish songs sung in *The Gentle Shepherd* serve as social messengers and unifiers. Whether sung solo, or in the form of a duet or group singing, the songs act as strongholds of Scottish culture in the emotional and practical action of the play, as 'sacred signifiers of Scottish culture' Perhaps because of their provenance in established traditions, the songs draw attention to the ancient nature of them, thus speaking of the powerful nature of Scottish identity. Furthermore, the role that the female voice is given in the singing of the songs serves to consolidate the idea proposed by Ramsay that women, particularly working class women, worked as vital social players in the progression of Scottish culture and society.

Mause's singing to Peggy in Act II Scene III is one such example which conveys a subtle but potent message from a female character. In opening the scene, Mause sings:

> "Peggy, now the King's come,
>
> Peggy, now the King's come;
>
> Thou may dance, and I shall sing,
>
> Peggy, since the King's come.
>
> Nae mair the hawkies shalt thou milk,
>
> But change thy plaiding-coat for silk,
>
> And be a lady of that ilk,
>
> Now, Peggy, since the King's come." (2.3.5-12)

Not only is the song sung by a woman and addressed to another female character, its content centres on the 'feminine' sphere of society, commenting upon the traditionally gendered work of milking 'the hawkies'[47] as well as a change in dress and ladies' fashion as a symbol of advancement in society. Newman comments, "The new lyrics seem deeply conservative since they celebrate the return of an aristocratic lady to '"Silk"'[48]. Silk clothing is shown as synonymous with higher social standing (which is presented as desirable), whilst the more Scottish working-class garment of the 'Plaiding-

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[46] Ruth Perry. 'The Finest Ballads': Women's Oral Traditions in Eighteenth-Century Scotland.' in *Eighteenth-Century Life,* Vol. 32, No.2 (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2008) P.82

[47] 'A cow with a white face' https://dsl.ac.uk/entry/snd/hawkie [accessed 09/12/2020]

[48] Newman, *Ballad Collection, Lyric, and the Canon: The Call of the Popular from the Restoration to the New Criticism*, p.57

coat' is shown as something to aspire to shed. Whilst this interpretation holds some worth, arguably it is included in this section to mask, or dilute, pro-Scottish, even Jacobite sentiments.

The song sung by Mause is not only Scottish, but Jacobite, modified to fit the characters and action of the play. Writing at a time when the Jacobite cause was active, only several years after the rebellions of 1715 and 1719, and closer still to the discovery of the Atterbury Plot in 1722, it was imperative for Ramsay's career, social reputation and indeed his safety that his work did not appear too politically extreme or controversial. The setting of the play in a seventeenth-century context becomes more significant here; arguably in historically distancing the play and its action, some of the contemporary danger associated with Jacobitism is removed. Pittock comments that "the supposed witch Mause (in fact, the victim of misjudgement (ll:iii:80 ff)) sings a Jacobite song "Peggy, here the King's come" adapted in order to be addressed to Margaret."[49] The use of Mause to express feminine concerns and triumphs, set to a politically controversial Jacobite air, should not be underestimated in its significance. In adapting the song, the female voice is given agency. By giving such agency, Ramsay endows the female character with a level of political and social importance. The female singer is represented as a legitimate voice to be listened to, her songs deserving of notice. In this sense, it can be argued that whilst some elements of this song seem to denounce traditional Scottish working class culture, this is secondary to the primary message of pro-Jacobitism and pro-Scottishness. Kenneth Logue comments on the 'tendency' for songs in eighteenth-century popular culture to 'look backwards' to more harmonious times: "Popular songs of the eighteenth-century reflect that tendency: popular politics for some did so also – and these two come together most notably in Jacobitism."[50] When this is considered, it can be argued that Scottish working class culture is used to support the more obvious political cause of Jacobitism within the song, by acting as an agent by which the Jacobite message is communicated through the medium of popular songs.

Peggy's progress from 'rags to riches' is personified within the song, and as such, so is the progress and potential of the working class Scottish female within her society. By placing Peggy as the recipient of the song's message, Ramsay makes a strong point. The relevance of the working-class female is reasserted, despite what seems to be some lyrical incongruence, as Peggy remains staunchly herself, the Scottish female raised in a working-class environment. Although Peggy's mode of dress may change, and her milking the hawkies may cease, she remains decidedly Scottish, retaining her use of vernacular Scots. By choosing Peggy to be placed in this song, Ramsay can subtly promote the Jacobite cause whilst affirming the validity and importance of the working class female and her culture. This also works to support the importance of the working-class female within the progress

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[49] Pittock, 'Allan Ramsay and the Decolonisation of Genre' p.336

[50] Kenneth Logue, 'Eighteenth-Century Popular Protest: Aspects of the People's Past', in *The People's Past*, ed. Edward J. Cowan, (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1991) P.102

narrative. Because of Peggy, the milkmaid heroine with her plaiding-coat, Ramsay can convey serious political messages. No male character could have served this purpose as well as Peggy.

As well as this, the fact that political significance is imbued within such a song, traditionally sung by the female nurse to her young charge adds significance to the place of feminine Scottish culture and tradition within the play. Without the female-sung song, the politically significant Jacobitism within it would have gone unexpressed. By using the song to convey these messages, Ramsay acknowledges the importance of traditional Scottish culture, as well as the Scottish female, in furthering the action. By implication, Ramsay also highlights the role of the working-class female as a disseminator of this culture and its messages, within the progress narrative of contemporary Scottish society, both socially and politically in matters of great importance, such as debates surrounding Jacobitism.

Peggy and Patie's duet in Act II Scene IV also serves to further consolidate the idea that Ramsay uses ballads within *The Gentle Shepherd* to empower the female voice within the "woman's tradition"[51] of singing. This duet is pre-empted by talk of songs. Patie mentions his admiration of Peggy's singing, naming particularly the traditional songs of "*The Boat-man,* or *The Lass of Patie's Mill;"* (l. 74). In response to Patie asking for kisses, Peggy asks him to sing: "Sing first, syne claim your hire" (l.98). Even before the singing has commenced, the female is given a level of control in using the imperative 'sing first' in addressing Patie. In contrast to the typical and contemporary patriarchal expectation that maidens be meek and compliant, Peggy sets a boundary in relation to physical intimacy with Patie, dictating her own terms with which he must comply if he wishes to kiss her. In a society in which the wishes of many women regarding physical intimacy and sexual relations were ignored and indeed wholly disregarded when measured against male pleasure and gratification, the role of the female voice in successfully taking such control is notable. This control established and exercised by Peggy continues throughout the song, and in Peggy a strong and perhaps surprisingly aware and sceptical female voice is expressed. Unlike the similarly aware sex workers in Ramsay's urban Edinburgh poems, Peggy's awareness affords her a level of control and safety, because of her situation within the pastoral village, a safer space for the expression of the female autonomous voice, even though it was traditionally seen as less civilised. This episode further consolidates the idea of a corrupt urban society being judged against a more natural and wholesome rural order.

Patie does indeed begin to sing, respecting Peggy's request. The first verse comprises of him praising her beauty: "the delicious warmness of thy mouth" (l.100), attempting to induce her to accept his advances: "You're made for love, and why should ye deny?" (l.103). Instead of fulfilling the stereotype of the tractable, passive maiden figure, Peggy responds with cynicism. The second verse includes Peggy refusing Patie's advances. This is significant in itself: Peggy's awareness of the patriarchal structure and its potential to damage women like herself is fully expressed within this

[51] Henderson, 'The Ballad, the Folk and The Oral Tradition', P.70

verse. She comments upon the mistreatment and discarding of many women after yielding to the wishes of men:

"But ken ye, lad, gin we confess o'er soon,

Ye think us cheap, and syne the wooing's done?

The maiden that o'er quickly tines her power,

Like unripe fruit, will taste but hard and sowr." (ll.104-107).

The use of 'we' in the first line of the verse denotes the fact that such mistreatment of women is a universal and common issue, even within the idyllic bounds of pastoral village society. Although Peggy may have escaped the horrors of urban prostitution, there are still damaging and pertinent effects of the patriarchal structure present within her society. Indeed, such an example is present in the play in Bauldy's attempted discarding of Neps.[52] Peggy's voice continues to maintain a tone of authority: she is stating facts, plainly and without apology addressing the male about female mistreatment. The naturalistic comparison of the maiden to 'unripe fruit' ties the verse back into the conventions of the pastoral, as the audience is reminded of the prevalence of issues surrounding female consent within even the most unproblematic and utopian of societies, created by Ramsay to be safe and harmonious. The fact that such an issue is present within *The Gentle Shepherd* and that it is necessary for Peggy to worry about it, even with the lad she clearly loves, denotes the severity of the issue that Ramsay was purposefully drawing attention to. In placing such an issue in both the mind and speech of Peggy within the song form, Ramsay is arguably attempting to highlight the reality of the mistreatment of many women in Scottish eighteenth-century society, whilst denouncing such behaviour at the hands of the male.

In the third verse, Patie responds to Peggy's cynicism by comparing her to a "completely ripe" (l.110) fruit, continuing natural allusions, whilst also reminding her that he has "woo'd a lang haff year" (l.111). Only after such assurances, and a respectful reply, does Peggy concede to both her and Patie's wishes, as she "*singing, falls into* Patie's *arms".* Although this is what Patie wished, it is also clearly what Peggy wants, and even in acquiescing with Patie's inducements, she retains control and autonomy. Not only does she comply only when given reassurance from Patie, she also maintains control of the physical intimacy between them:

"Then dinna pu' me, gently thus I fa'

[52] (Bauldy speaking) "And I with Neps, by some unlucky fate, // Made a daft vow: - O, but ane be a beast // that makes rash aiths till he's afore the priest!" (Act II, Scene II, ll. 16-19)
"'Tis sair to thole; I'll try some witchcraft art, // To break with ane, and win the other's heart." (Act II, Scene II, ll.21-22).

Into my Patie's arms, for good and a'.

But stint your wishes to this kind embrace;

And mint nae farther till we've got the grace." (ll.112-115).

Peggy continues to use imperative language to make her wishes clear to Patie: 'Then dinna pu' me' is particularly significant as Peggy takes control of a real physical encounter between her and Patie. The fact that Peggy intends to remain in control, and does so in reality, is significant. By endowing his heroine with control throughout the encounter, Ramsay continues to champion female autonomy, through the female voice and the traditional Scottish cultural form of the Scottish song. The song form in this circumstance can be said to symbolise the vital role that Scottish culture and tradition plays within the progress narrative. Not only does it give Peggy a space in which to express herself, making her needs and wishes known, it also creates a space for the education and the civilising of the male. Newman also considers this episode as a civilising force upon Patie, commenting: "Peggy awakens desire but defers it out of respect for social norms and makes it the engine of civilising Patie, turning him from a rustic lover or covert *carpe diem* – singing aristocrat into a proper gentleman."[53] This idea of the civilising force of the female is continued throughout the verse, as Peggy uses imperative language to tell Patie to:

'Stint your wishes to this kind embrace

And mint nae farther till we've got the grace'.

Peggy again takes control of the physical encounter, setting a clear boundary that there is a limit to their level of physical intimacy until they are married, having 'got the grace'. Ramsay could have had his hero Patie disrespect Peggy's wishes, however he does not. Neither does Patie abandon Peggy when she rebuffs him, or at any other point. By placing his heroine as a strong female with an authoritative voice, and his hero as a respectful listener, Ramsay promotes the respecting of female wishes and boundaries as not only essential and right, but also as conducive to creating a harmonious union and society, for men as well as women. This is consolidated throughout the song. The placement of such a song within the pastoral setting serves to further confirm the mutual respect and harmony between Patie and Peggy as a positive ideal to aspire to within the wider society of Scotland. This again demonstrates that Ramsay's countryside world is perhaps more civilised than his manmade city settings. The traditionally and culturally Scottish song, presented by the female voice, serves to declare the validity and worth of the autonomous female and her wishes, whilst simultaneously

[53] Newman, 'The Scots Songs of Allan Ramsay: 'Lyrick' Transformation, Popular Culture, and the Boundaries of the Scottish Enlightenment' p.303

encouraging the audience to consider female authority as a positive development in a progressive and fair society.

This is further compounded in the ending verse of the song, which is "*Sung by both"* Patie and Peggy. Both parties continue to make natural allusions, entreating the sun to:

> "gallop down the westlin skies,
>
> Gang soon to bed, and quickly rise;
>
> O lash your steeds, post time away,
>
> And haste about our bridal day:
>
> And if ye're wearied, honest light,
>
> Sleep, gin ye like, a week that night." (ll.120-125).

The continued allusion to the natural world they inhabit within the pastoral reminds the reader of the idyllic setting. As the pastoral setting acts as a civilising force, so too does Peggy's voice, demonstrated particularly in this final verse. Now, both Patie and Peggy's fixation is upon their 'bridal day'. Patie no longer urges Peggy to yield to him, he instead focuses his hopes upon the institution of marriage, a respected and safe space within which physical intimacy and sexual relations can occur. Whilst such an attitude is also perhaps an idealisation, it continues the crafting of a sacred idyll in the version of Scotland represented within the pastoral. Patie now assimilates into the accepted social order, acquiescing that physical intimacy must be within wedlock. Logue comments that "If anything, the economic and social changes undergone in the eighteenth century were even greater than the political."[54] Patie's revolution in attitude here certainly reflects social progression. The female voice has a civilising effect upon the male, curtailing his more rambunctious passions, whilst continuing to promote a narrative of progress in social conduct and manners. By the end of the song, Peggy has been able to convince Patie to respect her wishes to wait until marriage for further physical intimacy, whilst also initiating him into a more respected and socially accepted form of progression – that of a fiancé with the purpose of marriage before God in sight. Ramsay uses the song form as an important vessel through which the female voice is displayed as both something to be respected, and an improving force within society; this is a sentiment echoed in 'The Fair Assembly' and 'Tartana', where female characters are praised for the civilising effect they have upon both the younger generation and the men within Scottish society. Newman's stance consolidates this: "In *The Gentle Shepherd,* the tender feelings elicited by refurbished Scots songs, especially when sung by a favoured shepherdess, initiate the shepherd into gentility while preserving what is valuable in Scottish

[54] Logue, 'Eighteenth-Century Popular Protest: Aspects of the People's Past', P.112

culture."[55] The song allows for a display of male respect towards the authoritative female, whilst also portraying this as conducive to creating a healthy relationship between Patie and Peggy and a civilised, ordered society, where women are respected and social order is maintained. The initiation of Patie into 'gentility', represents a wider social change deemed possible in the potential of the autonomous female voice working with Scottish tradition and customs.

Peggy's singing to end the play, in Act V Scene III comes at the behest of Sir William, after he declares "Now all's at rights, who sings best let me hear" (l.230). Although the command comes in the form of a compliment, it is a command nevertheless, which is acknowledged by Peggy in her reply:

> "When you demand, I readiest should obey:
>
> I'll sing you ane, the newest that I hae'e."
>
> (ll.231-232).

Peggy willingly complies. Newman comments "That she [Peggy] sings her song to "obey" her uncle's command to celebrate "all's at Rights" suggests that Peggy will dutifully play her part in a conservative system of gender and status subordination."[56] Although Peggy's behaviour portrays her as compliant, such compliance does not instate a new atmosphere of female oppression and subordination. Whilst Peggy is following a command, she does so willingly. Arguably her autonomy is asserted even here, as she maintains the use of her independent voice to entertain an audience with a song of her own choosing.

The song holds much to be examined and explored in the representation of the female voice, as well as the positive portrayal of Scottish culture and tradition. The fact that Peggy is shown as having a set of memorised tunes, some newer than others, is significant to the idea of the role of the female within the progress narrative of Scottish culture. Newman comments that "Peggy's promise to sing "the newest that I ha'e" reveals the logic by which the author seeks to revivify the tradition of Scots song, self-consciously carrying it from the past to the present. Ramsay argues that this tradition, and by extension, vernacular Scottish culture itself are worth saving."[57] In this way, Peggy's upholding of tradition allows her to act as a preserver of Scottish social culture. As a woman, Peggy is central to the upholding of such tradition, and so her importance is emphasised further. The tune that Peggy sings to

[55] Newman, *Ballad Collection, Lyric, and the Canon: The Call of the Popular from the Restoration to the New* Criticism, p.46.

[56] Newman, 'The Scots Songs of Allan Ramsay: 'Lyrick Transformation, Popular Culture, and the Boundaries of the Scottish Enlightenment' p.28

[57] Newman, *Ballad Collection, Lyric, and the Canon: The Call of the Popular from the Restoration to the New Criticism*, p.52

is 'Corn-riggs Are Bonny', a traditional Scottish folk song, however she adapts the lyrics to fit her present circumstance. This draws Scottish culture and tradition into a contemporary progress narrative, and as Newman states, "moves the audience to think about the new relationship between Scotland's traditional past and the word of tea tables connoted by "the newest that I ha'e"".[58] Peggy spends much of the ballad singing of Patie's great qualities:

> "My Patie is a lover gay,
>
> His mind is never muddy;
>
> His breath is sweeter than new hay,
>
> His face is fair and ruddy:" (ll.233-235).

Although Patie's physical accolades are singled out for praise in the beginning as the song goes on, Peggy sings more of his 'mind' (l.234), and in praise of his kind treatment of her, as well as commitment in his love to her.

> "Last night I met him on a bawk,
>
> Where yellow corn was growing,
>
> There mony a kindly word he spake,
>
> That set my heart a-glowing.
>
> He kiss'd, and vow'd he wad be mine,
>
> And loo'd me best of ony," (ll.241-246)

Although the overarching themes of this final song revolve around female praise of the male, Ramsay is arguably continuing his declaration of female worth and power. Peggy yields a considerable level of power in Patie's adoration for her. The monogamous vows given to Peggy by Patie serve to further consolidate the idea that respect towards the female is conducive to being a good man. This is represented positively, as Peggy's role as a tradition bearer and her refurbishing of Scottish songs for a contemporary audience is highlighted:

> 'He kiss'd, and vow'd he was be mine,
>
> And loo'd me best of ony,'

The inclusion of respect towards Peggy is significant when examined within the context of a love song, a song of praise directed towards Patie. Patie's respect and reverence of Peggy are intrinsic to

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[58] Newman, 'The Scots Songs of Allan Ramsay: 'Lyrick Transformation, Popular Culture, and the Boundaries of the Scottish Enlightenment.' p.295

his representation as a heroic and worthy lover within the song. Moreover, although Peggy's voice may appear more servile when compared to her singing of songs elsewhere in the play, she retains the use of her autonomous voice, expressing her own thoughts, feelings and desires, even if they do fit into the patriarchal construct of eighteenth-century society. Peggy's independent female voice is situated firmly within the pastoral setting. The mention of the 'yellow corn' growing in the scene of their courtship acts to remind the reader of the rural atmosphere crafted within the song and the play. Peggy's female voice and the pastoral Scottish setting work together to create an atmosphere of harmonious love around the two protagonists. Newman comments on the agrarian aspect of the songs within *The Gentle Shepherd*, and their significance, stating that "The bucolic world conjured by the songs in *Tea Table Miscellany* is realized most fully in *The Gentle Shepherd*."[59]

The ending of the song reintroduces the idea of marriage between Peggy and Patie, expressed in their duet together in Act II Scene IV:

"Let lasses of a silly mind

Refuse what maist they're wanting;

Since we for yielding were design'd,

We chastly should be granting.

Then I'll comply and marry Pate,

And syne my cockernonny

He's free to touzel air or late,

When corn-riggs are bonny." (ll.249-256)

Although Peggy's tone again seems subservient and compliant with the patriarchal expectation for a 'yielding' maiden, she does maintain her capacity to make independent decisions about her love life and marriage. This is displayed in 'Then I'll comply and marry Pate'. Among all the talk of submission, this line displays the fact that Peggy is still capable of exercising her autonomous voice in making a conscious decision to comply, whatever the expectations of society, and declare her intentions. Peggy's clear boundaries regarding physical intimacy within wedlock are also reiterated in:

'And syne my cockernonny

He's free to touzel air or late,'

[59] Newman, 'The Scots Songs of Allan Ramsay: 'Lyrick' Transformation, Popular Culture, and the Boundaries of the Scottish Enlightenment' P.288

Peggy’s reference to a traditionally private and intimate part of her appearance and hairstyle, and the access Patie will have to this after marriage, reiterates not only her adherence to social expectation, but also her maintaining of the boundaries set earlier in her relationship with Patie. Peggy maintains her faculties of independent thought in the face of the male seeking pleasure and gratification. Here Peggy is again presented as a civilising force. Peggy’s wishes to marry before physical intimacy is experienced are respected entirely within the text. With this, Peggy not only succeeds as a civilising force upon Patie, but also succeeds as an eighteenth-century woman with a level of autonomy that she exercises to her own advantage, fulfilling her own wishes. Here Ramsay arguably works to promote the expression of the female voice, as well as encouraging his audience to listen to it and give it proper consideration. The song form that Peggy finds she can express herself in serves to remind the audience of the intrinsic role that Scottish tradition and cultural forms play in the creation and maintaining of a safe and happy society for all characters, and indeed for a successful and progressive nation, represented within this context as the pastoral village and its inhabitants.

Throughout his pastoral, Ramsay utilises generic precepts to champion his female characters, portraying them sympathetically as relatable and human heroines. In his employment of setting, language and song, and his use of the female characters’ interaction with these modes, Ramsay argues for the moral intellect and practical capability of the Scottish female. As such, the female characters are positioned as a valuable community in the progression of a civilised Scottish nation, aiding such progression in their preservation and dissemination of Scottish culture and tradition.

Chapter 3: Song

Ramsay's wide corpus of song work and his role as a collector and editor is significant. Breitenbach and Abrams comment on the cultural function of the song, stating that "in the sphere of culture, older traditions of ballad and song have provided a vehicle for the expression of identity, and of gender and national identities among others. These forms have also been appropriated as typifying Scottishness at particular times".[1] With this in mind, this chapter explores the role of women as tradition bearers as well as vessels of progression, in the expression, dissemination and preservation of national culture. Within this chapter, three main themes are identified, and these correspond closely to the life cycle of the eighteenth-century woman: Courting/Marriage, Domestic Life, and Death. In all themes, as in the Drama and Poetry chapters, Ramsay interrogates his female characters in order to champion their right to autonomous thought and action whilst implicitly criticising the power structures that so often oppress them in these different life stages. In doing so, Ramsay uses the generic precepts of song to highlight the importance of the female figure as a cultural disseminator and active participant in Scotland's progression as a nation, as well as to validate Scottish culture and tradition. Sorenson states that "If some ballad and song performances helped to unite resistant communities, others, sometimes drawing from those margins, contributed to the development of a dominant, new enlightened British community, with complicated gender dynamics."[2] In this light, Ramsay's choice of female subjects, as well as his consideration of his female audience, becomes all the more significant, as women within song are demonstrated as both important and positive in their developmental role.

The chief portion of the songs examined in this section are not written by Ramsay but collected by him in his 1724 *The Tea-table Miscellany,* described by Campbell and McCue as "one of the most influential collections of Scots songs of the period […] allied to traditional tunes".[3] Hammerschmidt comments that its publication "further linked this ideal of conviviality to the development of private entertainments organised around the performance of traditional tunes and lyrics, which were designed

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[1] Esther Breitenbach, and Lynn Abrams, 'Gender and Scottish Identity' in *Gender in Scottish History Since 1700,* Ed. Lynn Abrams, Eleanor Gordon, Deborah Simonton and Eileen Janes Yeo (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), P.36

[2] Janet Sorenson, 'Varieties of Public Performance: Folk Songs, Ballads, Popular Drama and Sermons' in *The Edinburgh History of Scottish Literature: Enlightenment, Britain and Empire (1707-1918),* Ed. Susan Manning, Ian Brown, Thomas Owen Clancy, Murray Pittock, Ksenija Horvat and Ashley Hales (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007) P.136

[3] Katherine Campbell and Kirsteen, McCue, 'Lowland Song Culture in the Eighteenth Century' in *The Edinburgh Companion to Scottish Traditional Literatures*, Ed. Sarah Dunnigan and Suzanne Gilbert (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Uni Press, 2013) P.95

for an urban, bourgeois or aristocratic social elite eager to signal its rootedness in regional as well as national cultures."[4] Ramsay harnesses Scottish tradition and culture to continue to forge a place for Scottish identity within a progressive and enlightened polite society. Sorenson comments that "In Ramsay's reconfiguration of them, the act of singing these preserved folk songs in polite society instead articulated Enlightenment ideals, such as sociability and shared feeling."[5] In positioning Scottish culture and the Scottish female so centrally within the songs, Ramsay ensured their acceptance and promotion as important and respectable aspects of polite society, improving those around them in the 'sociability' they encouraged, and thus society more generally. In this sense, the *Tea-Table Miscellany* serves to disseminate such Scottish 'regional' and 'national cultures' through the medium of traditional song, encouraging a more middle and upper-class audience to appreciate the significance of Scottish song culture. It is a work created for and targeted at those that would gather around "the tea-tables which were the centrepiece of every drawing room",[6] in other words, a contemporary female audience. We see this in Ramsay's opening address in the book, to:

> "Ilka lovely British Lass,
>
> Frae Ladys Charlotte, Anne, and
>
> Jean,
>
> Down to ilk bonny singing Bess,
>
> Wha dances barefoot on the Green" (ll.2-6)

Here Ramsay identifies his intended audience as female: he not only names the women collectively as 'ilka British Lass', he also identifies specific women in 'Charlotte', 'Anne', 'Jean' and 'Bess'. Arguably Ramsay immediately begins to humanise his female audience. There is perhaps also a class aspect to this; from the 'Ladys' higher up in the stanza, to the 'barefoot' Bess at the bottom of the stanza, all women are included in Ramsay's dedication. Indeed, Sorenson comments that "More often than not it was women who bought and sang Ramsay's songs (and wrote their own), pointing towards the idea of feminine sensibility important to the Enlightenment notions of refinement."[7] This idea is confirmed within this collection, as Susan Stewart states, "the works of the first wave of song writers, Lady Wardlaw and Lady Grizel Baillie (1665-1746), were recorded in collections such as Ramsay's

[4] Hammerschmidt, 'Ramsay, Fergusson, Thomson, Davidson and Urban Poetry', p.82

[5] Sorenson, 'Varieties of Public Performance: Folk Songs, Ballads, Popular Drama and Sermons', P.136

[6] Glover, *Elite Women and Polite Society in Eighteenth-Century Scotland*, P.4

[7] Sorenson, 'Varieties of Public Performance: Folk Songs, Ballads, Popular Drama and Sermons', P.136

Tea-Table Miscellany."[8] Ramsay recognises his intended female audience as intelligent, important consumers of cultural literature, as well as producers of it, confirmed in his instating of them within his collection.

Ramsay promotes the idea of Scottish women within the 'British Lass' identity in his frequent use of Scots vernacular in addressing the ladies, in 'ilka', 'frae', 'ilk' and 'Wha'. In this also, as in 'The Fair Assembly', and Peggy's language and song in *The Gentle Shepherd*, Ramsay asserts that the rightful place of the Scots language can indeed be at the tea-tables of the middling and upper classes of British ladies. Davis talks of "how the concept of national music evolved within the context of British culture".[9] Such evolution is tangible within the songs in this collection, as Ramsay works within the social and political context of the Union. In marrying the concepts of womanhood and Scottish nationhood in his opening address, Ramsay sets a precedent for the rest of the work within this collection. Perry comments that "women were seen as the carriers of traditional Scottish songs as Scottish song was coming to stand symbolically for Scottish identity".[10] This summarises an issue within Scottish society of which Ramsay was aware, working with in this collection and throughout the entirety of his song work. The woman reader and female character is singled out as worthy and revered, and Scottish culture and nationhood (represented in this instance in the use of Scots) is signified as being comfortable and 'in-place' alongside such precious subjects. The female character, song culture, and the idea of Scottish nationality are placed as sacred within the context of the collection, which is itself a disseminator and preserver of Scottish culture in its accessibility to a wider, middle class British audience. Newman's comment that "in TTM Ramsay introduces a taxonomy that makes these songs the object of more polite notice"[11] is relevant here. Ramsay's use of the female as a civilising force, along with her Scottish identity, denotes a 'taxonomy' that encourages such notice. The fruits of Ramsay's labour in this respect were to be seen throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as Scots song became hugely popular across Britain, in a process largely initiated by Ramsay. The Scottish culture and language that is subject of the songs is brought, often most effectively through the female characters, to a fashionable and polite contemporary readership, advancing the spread of Scottish culture and tradition throughout the homes of 'ilka lovely British Lass'.

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[8] Susan Stewart, 'Scandals of the Ballad' in *Representations,* No. 32, (California: University of California Press, 1990) P.146

[9] Leith Davis, 'From Fingal's Harp to Flora's Song: Scotland, Music and Romanticism', in *The Wordsworth Circle,* Vol. 32, No. 2, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000) p.93

[10] Perry, 'The Finest Ballads': Women's Oral Traditions in Eighteenth-Century Scotland', p.87

[11] Newman, 'The Scots Songs of Allan Ramsay: 'Lyrick' Transformation, Popular Culture, and the Boundaries of the Scottish Enlightenment', P.287

‘The Broom of Cowdenknows’ is one such song collected and preserved by Ramsay in his *Tea-Table Miscellany*,[12] with origins in the seventeenth-century, being traced to as early as 1643 in Lady Margaret Wemyss’ Music-book.[13] The song is also referenced briefly in *The Gentle Shepherd,* as Patie talks of how “Jenny sings saft *The Broom of Cowden-knows,”* (Act. II, Scene IV, l.69). In the song, the female speaker recounts memories of her happy courtship with her “Swain” (l.2) in the Scottish countryside, whilst lamenting that she is now “banish’d” (l.24) from such felicity. The song makes use of pastoral tropes in its setting and content, with a love story between rural figures placed in a bucolic world. Within this, Scottish culture is placed as a present and defining factor in the happiness that was experienced by the female speaker. Not only is the song written in Scots, it also makes specific mention of particular Scottish cultural symbols, such as the speaker’s “Plaidy” (l.36) and her “wee Soup Whey” (l.35). Pittock comments on Ramsay’s role in “the interrogation of classical and high cultural genres by domestic language and models”.[14] Arguably such an interrogation is present throughout this song, whilst the ‘high cultural genre’ of pastoral is tangible in the agrarian setting and ‘domestic language and models’ present in the Scots vernacular and cultural symbols used throughout. The coupling of such language and symbols serves to assert the worth of Scottish culture and tradition, appropriate beside the cultural form of the pastoral. Although comprising of a lament for lost joy, the song uses this to impress the importance of Scotland in its conduciveness to the happiness of the female. Scotland and its culture are situated as thoroughly noble and positive in their hosting of the happiness of the female speaker, exacerbated by her sorrow upon leaving her native land. The female speaker is placed as an advocate of Scottish culture and Scotland is shown as hospitable in hosting the happiness of its women.

The song begins as the speaker describes the joy in which she used to live in Scotland:

> “How blyth ilk Morn was I to see
>
> The Swain come o’er the Hill;
>
> He skipt the Burn and flew to me;
>
> I met him with good Will.” (ll.1-4)

Immediately the song is situated within a rural and pastoral setting, revolving around a love story. Scots vernacular language is used to describe the ‘blyth’ contentment of the female speaker in her

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[12] Ramsay, ‘The Broom of Cowdenknows’ in *Tea-Table Miscellany,* pp.25-27

[13] https://tunearch.org/wiki/Annotation:Broom_the_Bonny_Bonny_Broom [accessed 09/12/2020]

[14] Murray Pittock, ‘Scottish Song and the Jacobite Cause’ in *The Edinburgh History of Scottish Literature: Enlightenment, Britain and Empire (1707-1918),* Ed. Susan Manning, Ian Brown, Thomas Owen Clancy, Murray Pittock, Ksenija Horvat and Ashley Hales (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007) P.105

inhabiting Scotland and her courtship of the ‘Swain’. The use of vernacular within the song is significant. Cowan comments on the publishing history of the eighteenth century and its relationship with the vernacular, stating that “The literary and historical richness of the vernacular tradition was widely recognised for the first time in the published collections of the period”.[15] Ramsay was very much part of this tradition; in fact, it can be argued that he was actually the originator, for the eighteenth-century audience and his main successors, Fergusson and Burns. Ramsay’s use of vernacular was employed extensively to assert the worthiness of Scottish national culture within both a literary context, and that of the newly formed Great Britain.

This verse is followed by a chorus, that is repeated after every verse of the poem:

> *“O the Broom, the bonny, bonny Broom,*
>
> *The Broom of Cowdenknows;*
>
> *I wish I were with my dear Swain,*
>
> *With his Pipe and my Ews.”* (ll.5-8)

The chorus reemphasises the Scottish identity of the speaker, and the importance of Scotland within the narrative. The ‘Broom’ of ‘Cowdenknows’ underlines the Scottish setting in which love flourished, such love, as well as the characters experiencing it, being elevated in its portrayal within neoclassical and pastoral modes. Josephine Dougal comments on the relevance of place within song, stating that “the meanings that a place has is perhaps especially compelling for those whose connections to that place have been disrupted. In the songs of migrants, time and place, then and now, homeland and hereland are often the key ingredients in a musically-shaped sense of home and attachment.”[16] The exiled status of the speaker coupled with the naming of Cowdenknows as a Scottish place, serves to reinforce the ‘sense of home and attachment’. In this emotional framing of the situation, Scotland is represented as a positive environment, one that the speaker wishes to return to.

Reference to her lover as ‘my dear Swain’, as well as mention of ‘his Pipe’ and ‘my Ews’ further compounds the atmosphere of idyllic devotion situated within the Scottish setting. Such memories are juxtaposed with the realisation that the speaker is no longer with her ‘dear swain’, revealed immediately after the first verse in this chorus in ‘I wish I were with my dear Swain’. As such, the happiness that Scotland offered is emphasised through the contrast of sweet memories with the dire

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[15] Edward Cowan, Introduction to ‘The People’s Past Scottish Folk Scottish History’, Ed. Edward J. Cowan, (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1993) P.1

[16] Josephine Dougal, ‘Popular Scottish Song Traditions at Home (and Away)’, in *Folklore,* Vol. 122, No. 3, (Abingdon-on-Thames: Taylor & Francis, 2011) p.286

present situation of the speaker, alone and exiled. Sorenson comments that "Allan Ramsay adapted popular songs with choruses for all to sing, singing providing a supplement to the social interchange of conversation."[17] Arguably the chorus and the singing it encourages does provide a 'supplement to the social interchange of conversation', emphasising the song's message. As the singers come together in singing the chorus, their united position is juxtaposed jarringly with the isolated state of the woman in the song. Thus, more sympathy for the female figure is encouraged.

This sympathy is continued later in the song, as the speaker goes on to lament her banishment from Scotland alongside her separation from 'her swain':

> "Hard Fate that I shou'd banish'd be,
>
> Gang heavily and mourn,
>
> Because I lov'd the kindest Swain
>
> That ever yet was born." (ll.24-27)

The unwillingness of the female to leave such a sacred space is emphasised in the choice of 'banish'd' in describing her exit from the setting. Such separation is exacerbated by the alternate rhyme scheme preserved by Ramsay. It can be argued that such a form and separation of rhyme represents the estrangement of the two lovers, emphasising the already wistful tone of the song set by the use of emotive language throughout. The female figure is also vindicated in her sorry situation in the explaining of her banishment as 'Because I lov'd the kindest Swain'. Her intentions and the love of the two main characters are defended in this choice of wording and the inclusion of such 'excuses'. The Scottish female is portrayed as noble even in her vulnerability and exile. In this sense, Ramsay works to defend the honour of such women, marginalised in society because of the outcome of the type of honourable love described in this song. Ramsay chose to preserve this text in his collection, and in it he uses the female figure not only to praise Scotland as an accommodating background for such love, but also to criticise those in society who would work to counteract this in their cruel censure of the faithful female lover.

Within this narrative, Scottish identity through cultural items is placed as an important aspect of the previous happiness of the female character:

> "My Doggie and my little Kit
>
> That held my wee Soup Whey,
>
> My Plaidy, Broach and crooked Stick,

[17] Sorenson, 'Varieties of Public Performance: Folk Songs, Ballads, Popular Drama and Sermons', P.136

May now ly useless by." (ll.34-37)

The mention of the speaker's 'Plaidy' immediately places Scottish culture and tradition at the centre of her past happiness. Pittock comments on cultural symbols in Ramsay's songs, stating that "Ramsay does not only inflect genre by his use of language and tone, and his conversion of the situations and occasions of street literature into a higher register. He also inflects towards cultural signifiers […] recognisable to a Scottish rather than an English readership."[18] This sentiment is particularly relevant here. Whilst the action of the song is converted into a 'higher' register, such 'cultural signifiers' mentioned by Pittock, like the plaid, are also included (and preserved by Ramsay) as signalling a Scottish identity to the song. As in 'Tartana', a Scottish cultural emblem in the form of female clothing is used, placing it as a protective and useful garment. The loss of the 'Plaidy' arguably represents both the loss of protection and the loss of joy for the female. The tartan, and thus Scottish culture and tradition, is intrinsically linked with the comfort and safety of the female; without it she is portrayed as exiled and destitute. This is also seen in the description of the food the female speaker enjoyed before her expulsion. In this Ramsay arguably utilises food georgic to emphasise the nourishing aspects of Scotland. In her happiness, the speaker was sustained by a wholesome Scottish foodstuff, in her exile this nourishment is unavailable – this aspect of Scottish culture is thus positively associated with the health and happiness it once brought. Alongside this, however, is the reiteration of the loss of such cultural items in how they 'May now ly useless by'. The loss of Scottish cultural symbols is linked directly to a loss of happiness and a decline in personal comfort for the female. Ramsay uses the female figure and her changing emotional state to argue for the value of Scottish culture and tradition through the positive associations created in its symbols.

Whilst Scotland and its culture are portrayed as accommodating to the female and the pastoral love of her and her swain, Ramsay highlights the censorious nature of the society that she is thrust into as a result of her banishment. Arguably her exile represents the presence of conservative forces, even within the idyllic society that she previously inhabited. Even the progressive Scotland that Ramsay presents is not without misogynistic critics, as displayed in 'The Fair Assembly' and 'The Scriblers Lash'd'. In presenting both her former happiness and her current despair, Ramsay promotes sympathy for the female by way of juxtaposition. In his placing of Scottish culture within the song, it can be argued that he aims to assert the cultural importance of Scotland. In his sympathetic portrayal of the female, he can use her as a figurehead through which to implicitly advocate the fairer treatment of women, with Scotland being placed as a nation progressive and accommodating enough to do so.

[18] Pittock, 'Allan Ramsay and the Decolonisation of Genre', p.336

'The Blythsome Bridal'[19] was collected by Ramsay in his *Tea-Table Miscellany.* The original song is popularly attributed to Francis Semple, being published in Watson's *Choice Collection of Comic and Serious Scots Poems* as early as 1706.[20] In this song, the speaker describes a bridal party and the celebration of a wedding, listing the various members of the community present as well as social and cultural activities. Such activities include the eating and drinking of traditionally Scottish produce, as well as performance in social singing and dancing. From the start of the song the main female character of the bride is identified as "Maggie // "The Lass wi' the Gowden Hair." (ll.3-4). Throughout the speaker uses Scots to describe the observations they make, consolidating the events and setting of the song as Scottish in identity. In the positioning of the bride and her wedding as central to the cultural action of the text, the role of the female is arguably emphasised within cultural socialisation, and the upholding of national traditions, as important and necessary. Maggie's marriage to Jocky is portrayed as a central force in the upholding of Scottish tradition and cultural values. In the upholding of such culture, social progression is encouraged, with the uniting of a whole community.

The song opens as the speaker states:

"Fy let us a' to the Bridal,

For there will be Lilting there;

For *Jocky's* to be married to *Maggie,*

The Lass we' the Gowden Hair." (ll.1-4)

Maggy is placed in an active role from the start; Jocky is described as being married to Maggie, rather than she married to him. In the use of Scots in the final line, juxtaposed by the lack of it in the line previous, Maggie is classified as a Scottish bride. The cultural function that Maggie and her marriage celebrations will produce is introduced in the mention of social singing as a draw, evidenced in 'For there will be Lilting there'. The significance of this oral tradition is highlighted when Davis and McLane's comments are considered. They state that "women of all classes and social stations were recognised as significant oral-cultural transmitters."[21] Maggie's identity as a culturally aware female, upholding Scottish tradition in her promotion of oral culture and singing, is consolidated. Ramsay's inclusion of the song and thus Maggie within his collection, as the female 'oral-cultural transmitter', promotes Scottish oral culture and the Scottish woman as important and positive aspects of the song and its society. This is further consolidated by Breitenbach and Abrams' who state that: "the ballad and the song were ingenious cultural forms which, through performance in the community, were

[19] Ramsay, 'The Blythsome Bridal' in *Tea-Table Miscellany,* pp.165-168

[20] https://tunearch.org/wiki/Annotation:Blythsome_Bridal_(The) [accessed 09/12/2020]

[21] Davis and McLane, 'Orality and Public Poetry', P.127

means by which people (and perhaps especially women) could shape a sense of themselves and their place in Scotland's past and in the present."[22] The significance of the Scottish female as an oral cultural transmitter, and the importance of the cultural modes within the song, are championed from the outset as vital in the shaping and maintaining of a strong Scottish cultural identity.

The speaker goes on to describe the Scottish foodstuffs available to eat at the celebrations. As in 'The Broom of Cowdenknows', food georgic is employed to assert the presence and value of Scottish culture through the nutrition and enjoyment its food can bring. In the first verse alone, the speaker mentions several Scottish foodstuffs:

> "And there will be Lang-kail and Pottage,
>
> And Bannocks of Barley-meal;
>
> And there will be good sawt Herring" (ll.5-7)

Such descriptions of food continue:

> "And there will be Fadges and Brachen;
>
> With Fouth of good Gabbocks of Skate,
>
> Powsowdie, and Drammock and Crowdie,
>
> And caller Nowt-feet in a plate;
>
> And there will be Partans and Buckies,
>
> And Whytens and Speldings enew,
>
> With singed Sheep-heads, and a Haggies;
>
> And Scadlips to sup till ye spew" (ll.55-62)

Here the speaker continues to list Scottish cultural produce in a rhythmic and sing-song form, mentioning fish such as 'Skate', and the national dish of 'Haggies'. Scotland is shown as rich and fruitful in its production of so many foods, such a view being encouraged in the atmosphere of matrimony and the reference to the figure of the new bride at the beginning of the song, traditionally symbolic of fertility. The food being portrayed as a tempting draw to attending the wedding also vindicates it, and thus Scottish culture, as relevant and attractive in encouraging contemporary social commerce. Dougal writes of the "icons of Scottishness [that] have been central to the manner in which Scotland has been symbolically imagined in song. They have served to construct pervasive

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[22] Breitenbach, and Lynn, 'Gender and Scottish Identity' P.34

collective ideas and images about what it is to be Scottish".[23] The food listed by the speaker serves as an 'icon of Scottishness', aiding the spread of 'collective ideas' about Scotland as positive, as well as culturally rich and important in its social commerce.[24] The uniting of the community is portrayed as being facilitated by the bride and her upholding of Scottish tradition in the wedding feast. This is emphasised throughout the song in the speaker's listing of members of the community who will be in attendance:

> "And there will be *Sandy* the Sutor,
>
> And *Will* wi' the meikle Mou;
>
> And there will be *Tam* the Blutter,
>
> With *Andrew* the Tinkler, I trow;
>
> And there will be bow'd legged *Robbie*,
>
> With thumbless *Katie's* Goodman;
>
> And there will be blew cheeked *Dowbie*,
>
> And *Lawrie,* the Laird of the Land." (ll.10-17)

Here, as in 'Elegy on Maggy Johnston' and 'Lucky Wood', the meeting of a whole community is portrayed, facilitated by the Scottish female in her aiding the availability of Scottish produce in traditional food and drink. This scene mirrors that of Maggy's alehouse in the inclusion of both 'Lairds and Souters' within the social function that is accessible to all classes. The community is emphasised as Scottish, as the song references the occupations of the characters in Scots, we see examples of this in 'Sutor'[25], 'Blutter'[26] and 'Laird', as well as describing them with words such as 'meikle'[27]. Valentina Bold comments on Ramsay's use (and upholding/preservation) of vernacular, stating that he was "Unapologetically prejudiced towards the language identified with his nation, his explicit commitment to the Scots 'native' language presented a manifesto to later writers, although of

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[23] Dougal, 'Popular Scottish Song Traditions at Home (and Away)', P.283

[24] Such an idea is present within other poems in Ramsay's corpus; 'The Prospect of Plenty' advocates the establishment of a Scottish fishery in the North Sea to harness such Scottish richness.

[25] 'A shoemaker, a cobbler' https://dsl.ac.uk/entry/snd/souter [accessed 09/12/2020]

[26] 'A person addicted to gossip or foolish talk' https://dsl.ac.uk/entry/snd/blutter [accessed 09/12/2020]

[27] 'of size or bulk: large, big, great' https://dsl.ac.uk/entry/snd/muckle [accessed 09/12/2020]

course, he was equally adept in his own work with polished English-based forms."[28] Although he was 'adept' at writing as well as editing in English forms (as will be examined in the 'Death' section later), he made a conscious choice here to preserve the song in Scots. In doing so, he emphasises further the Scottish identity of the people, food, and social commerce described, further endorsing Scottish culture as both positive and individual within Great Britain.

As in 'Maggy Johnston', the consumption of Scottish alcohol is a unifying social activity, bringing together of all facets of Scottish society. The speaker references the alcohol available at the function several times throughout the song:

> "And there will be good sawt Herring,
>
> To relish a Cog of good Ale." (ll.7-8)
>
> "With Swats, and well scraped Paunches,
>
> And Brandy in Stoups and in Caps" (ll.66-67)

The descriptions of alcohol alongside descriptions of food consolidate the positive connotations of Scottish produce. In including alcohol, homage is paid to another unifying product and social activity facilitated by Scottish culture and the Scottish female in her creation of a space within which to consume it. The description of the 'sawt Herring', a traditional Scottish product helpful in the 'relishing' of 'a Cog of good Ale' cements this further, as the Scottish cultural product is portrayed as useful and complimentary in the enjoyment of social activities beyond eating itself. Dougal comments on the role of song in emphasising such cultural experience, stating that "songs can be said to articulate or "give voice" to shared experience, values and cultural understandings."[29] This sentiment is certainly relevant here; the shared cultural experiences listed in the song at the wedding feast are portrayed as thoroughly uniting and positive in their effects.

In the final verse, the role of Scottish culture is fully consolidated in encouraging progressive social commerce and the unification of the community in the mention of dancing:

> "When weary with Eating and Drinking,
>
> Well rise up and dance till we die." (ll.75-76)

Further to the Scottish cultural symbols mentioned in the listing of food and drink, as well as the attraction of social singing, the readership is reminded of the unifying role of social dance. As in 'The

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[28] Valentina Bold, 'Eighteenth-Century Antiquarianism' in *The Edinburgh Companion to Scottish Traditional Literatures*, Ed. Sarah Dunnigan and Suzanne Gilbert, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013) P.89

[29] Dougal, 'Popular Scottish Song Traditions at Home (and Away)', P.285

Fair Assembly', social dancing is an important and enjoyable form of social interaction, instated within the Scottish wedding and the cultural modes surrounding it.

Throughout Ramsay works to preserve the original emphasis of the song on the positive role that Scottish culture plays within the socialisation and progression of Scottish society. The female figure of the bride, Maggie, is placed as an integral figure in the encouraging of such progression and socialisation in the deliberate identification of her and the placing of the action within her wedding celebrations. In her adherence to and upholding of Scottish cultural modes in food, drink, dancing and singing, she can encourage a celebratory atmosphere of progression in affirmative socialisation of the community. Alongside this, such cultural modes are portrayed within the song as positive forces, conducive to the enjoyment and happiness of the community whilst socialising. Scottish culture and tradition is further vindicated as a valid and useful tool in facilitating the harmonious running of Scottish society and community, as well as a way of bringing community and nation together through shared cultural values and celebration.

Domestic Life

In the same vein as the 'Domestic' section of the Poems chapter, much of this section focuses on female consumption of luxury goods asserting female autonomy and propelling Scotland as a culturally acquainted polite nation. In 'Love Inviting Reason', and 'My Jo Janet', the Scottish ladies are portrayed as avid consumers of contemporary popular culture and luxury goods, seen as necessary requisites in polite circles. Throughout both texts, Scots vernacular language emphasises the Scottish nationality of the fashionable ladies and the setting within which they culturally progress. The women empower themselves in their following of fashion and cultural trends; Annie in 'Love Inviting Reason' achieves a level of autonomy in her acquisition of goods that elevates and empowers her, as the male speaker pines for her notice. In 'My Jo Janet', the female character requests gifts of luxury items such as a 'keeking-glass', 'shoon', and a 'pacing horse' from the man who is enamoured with her. She uses the often-damaging male gaze, attempting to benefit financially and socially in hoping to achieve greater cultural prowess, as Annie does in the former song, through collecting such fineries. In both songs, the women are empowered through their cultural awareness and their ability to demand and consume luxury items. Not only do such goods afford them personal gain, they also allow for a level of social respectability in polite society if acquired. Berg comments that "Clothes, light furnishings, marked and table linens, tea ware and china were for women personal and expressive goods, conveying identity, personality and fashion."[30] In this sense, the importance of such goods is elevated: rather than materialistic fancies, they are important social and cultural signifiers. In their financial and social advancement in such consumption, women arguably do indeed propel Scottish culture. In their following of recent and fashionable trends and in their desire to portray a

[30] Berg, 'Women's Consumption and the Industrial Classes of Eighteenth-Century England', p.421

respectable image to polite society, the Scottish women work to promote their culture and identity within a national progress narrative. In this sense the women within Ramsay's song collecting parallel those of his poems. Similarly, the women of 'The Fair Assembly' work within the realms of polite society to promote Scottish identity and culture as important and valid. All such women assert the place of the Scottish female within contemporary respectable circles both within Scotland and in the wider Great Britain, referenced in Ramsay's address to 'Ilka lovely British Lass' in opening the collection.

The first song to be examined in this section is 'Love Inviting Reason'.[31] This is the only song in the chapter authored by Ramsay and appears in his *Tea-table Miscellany*. In this song, the male speaker pines after the female subject, Annie, who has become "a fine Lady in Town" (l.4). He begs her to remember him and take him back as her beloved. Annie is affluent in her collection of luxury items throughout the song, empowered within the social and domestic sphere of eighteenth-century society. In such a position, she commands a level of control not only over the male speaker enamoured with her, but also over herself. The Scottish identity of Annie and her admirer is emphasised throughout in the use of Scots in their address. Annie's identity as an affluent and powerful female is shown as complimentary to her national identity. Although it could be argued that there is some criticism of Annie's fixation on material goods over romance, she is shown as successful in her following of popular culture in her consumption of luxury goods and in the fashionable image she portrays. In this sense, Scotland and its culture are vindicated through the female figure of Annie, symbolic of a nation capable in attending to stylish cultural modes of the day in the domestic lives of its women within polite society. The song perhaps acknowledges the contemporary attitude that Scotland was a primitive and underdeveloped nation; such a view is refuted here as the Scottish female demonstrates the cultural prowess of Scotland.

As in 'The Scriblers Lash'd', male criticism of the female and her fashionable goods is portrayed. The male speaker addressing Annie is shown as viewing her new and more independent lifestyle as 'unreasonable'. He repeatedly pleads with Annie: "Rouze up thy Reason, my beautiful *Annie"* (l.6) Here the entitlement of the male to the female is shown in the possessive 'my' in naming Annie. As well as this, the male gaze portrayed so negatively throughout Ramsay's work[32] is situated within the dynamic between Annie and the speaker. The identifying factor the speaker uses to describe Annie is not one relating to her personality or even her virtue. In placing the descriptor of 'beautiful' in the beginning of the song, Ramsay places emphasis on the superficial nature of the male in pursuing Annie for her appearance. The negative attitude the man has towards Annie's consumption of luxury

[31] Ramsay, 'Love Inviting Reason' in *Tea-Table Miscellany,* pp.61-63

[32] An example is seen in 'John Cowper': "Altho he was nae man of weir, // Yet mony a ane, wi' quaking fear, // Durst scarce afore his face appear, // But hide their head;" (ll.19-22).

goods and her newfound domestic prowess is continued in the next section, as he lists presumably her pets, lamenting the fact that she seemingly holds more affection for them than him:

> "DOES the Death of a Lintwhite give *An-*
>
> *nie* the Spleen?
>
> Can trying of Trifles be uneasy to thee?
>
> Can Lap-dogs and Monkies draw Tears
>
> Frae these Eeen,
>
> That look with Indifference on poor
>
> Dying me?" (ll.12-18)

Arguably such male criticism represents the more conservative forces in society, like those in 'The Scribers Lash'd' and 'The Fair Assembly', opposed to female autonomy and such cultural advancement; Ramsay's message is consistent throughout his use of different genres. The male speaker directly attacks Annie's consumerism in her pet animals as a slight upon himself in her nonchalant attitude towards him. Such an attack is more significant when the effect of such consumerism is considered. It is clear from the offset that Annie's following of popular culture in her consumerism and her subsequent initiation into polite society as a 'fine lady' has given her a level of power that makes her unreachable to the desperate male speaker. In this, Ramsay asserts not only the validity of the Scottish female in her consumption of luxury items, but also the advancing and appreciation of culture that allows for her elevation. Newman comments that "Ramsay adapts Scots songs to clear a space for a polite yet vernacular Scottish literature within a post-1707 Union".[33] In the inconspicuous inclusion of Scots vernacular, alongside the luxury items, symbolic of a civilised and progressive society, it appears that Ramsay does indeed 'clear a space for a polite yet vernacular Scottish literature'. Scots is shown as adept in describing Annie's social advancement, even if it comes in the form of complaint from a disgruntled former suitor. As such, Scottish culture is placed as harmonious within the context of not only Annie's social advancement, but of the wider progression of Scottish society.

Throughout the song, the Scottish female and her culture are presented as more desirable than the male speaker and his backward views. There is an argument that this presentation is intended as ironic, however when the characters within the text are considered, it becomes clear that the song works to validate female advancement in harnessing material culture. Although presented as

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[33] Newman, 'Ballads and Chapbooks', P.19

somewhat aloof, Annie's attitude is validated by the unappealing desperation and manipulation of the frantic male speaker. This continues throughout, as the speaker goes on to name articles of clothing that he presumes are keeping Annie from his reach:

> "AH! Shou'd a new Manto or *Flanders*
>
> Lace Head,
>
> Or yet a wee Cottie, tho never sae fine,
>
> Gar thee grow forgetfu' and let his Heart
>
> Bleed,
>
> That anes had some Hope of purchasing
>
> thine.
>
> Rouse up thy Reason, my beautifu' *Annie,*
>
> And dinna' prefer ye'r Fleegeries to me;" (ll.24-32)

As in 'The Scriblers Lash'd', the inclusion of clothes in 'Manto' and '*Flanders* Lace Head' as luxury items is significant in the social and economic value they held for women. Haidt comments that "A particular trope of women's spending on textiles and luxuries […] was employed by writers and artists during the second half of the century to reference hot-button economic and social issues such as the need for women to contribute usefully to trade and the question of women's responsibilities and desires as consumers."[34] Although Haidt mentions such signalling as more particular to the second half of the eighteenth century, Ramsay was arguably doing just that with his inclusion of 'textiles and luxuries' in the inventory listed by the speaker in this song. The 'question of women's responsibilities and desires' is brought to the forefront, as Ramsay uses the song to highlight the social freedom and independence that such goods brought the female. The speaker suggests that Annie does indeed 'prefer' her 'Fleegeries' to her admirer. The misogynistic nature of the male attitude is further revealed in the use of the word 'purchasing'. In this context, Annie as a fine lady is juxtaposed to the clothes she is described as wearing in the jarring idea represented of the male being able to 'purchase' her heart. It could be argued that this example in fact represents Annie negatively: as her obsession with material goods is evident, her heart has become equally commodified as a material possession. However, the more convincing interpretation is that the male is shown as entitled, portrayed negatively in the disturbing revelation that he in essence wishes to own Annie in the same way that she buys and owns her clothes. The damaging nature of the male gaze is reiterated here, as the woman

[34] Rebecca Haidt, 'A Well-Dressed Woman Who Will Not Work: Economics, and Eighteenth-Century Fashion Plates', p.138

is viewed as a commercial commodity by the male. However, the freedom from the male gaze that Annie gains in her consumption of luxury items is highlighted. In this sense, Scottish trade and cultural commerce is praised as a way for the vulnerable female to escape the selfish designs of the male figure. Although the items mentioned are less specifically Scottish than the likes of the 'Plaidy' in 'The Broom of Cowdenknows', they still positively represent the progression of Scotland. The cultural advancement of Scotland in its recognising of fashionable cultural modes, and the freedom and autonomy that this affords its women, is praised as a vital asset in maintaining the "status of Scotland as a modern, civilised nation".[35]

The selfishness of the male speaker and Annie's newfound level of autonomy continues and is emphasised towards the song's ending:

> "O ! think, my dear Charmer, on ilka
>
> Sweet Hour,
>
> That slade away saftly between thee and
>
> Me,
>
> E'er sqirrels or Beaus or Foprey had Power
>
> To rival my Love and impose upon thee.
>
> Rouse up thy Reason, my beautifu' *Annie,*
>
> And let thy Desires be a' center'd in me," (ll.47-54)

The speaker again directly credits the luxury items and the society associated with Annie's social elevation with taking her affection away from him. He describes them negatively as 'sqirrels', 'Beaus' and 'Foprey'. His complaint further highlights the control that the possession of such products allowed the female. Instead of being beholden to the male, as she may have been without such economic and social assurances as the products afford, she is endowed with a degree of self-government, even when pressured by the entitled male speaker.

Throughout the song, Ramsay supports the role of the female in her autonomous position within society, brought about through her possession of luxury goods and in her following of popular culture. Scottish culture, emphasised throughout the song in the use of Scots vernacular language, is represented as a useful tool in the protection and advancement of the female in society. Within this, Ramsay arguably works to assert the value of the female as a disseminator of such culture, as Annie's collection of goods is listed alongside her obvious power within the song in her dominion over and

[35] Glover, *Elite Women and Polite Society in Eighteenth-Century Scotland*, P.5

freedom from the male. The female is shown as a worthy recipient of such protection in her role promoting Scotland as a progressive, polite nation. In her 'keeping up' with fashion in the consumption of luxury goods in her pets and her clothes, she is able to support the idea of Scotland as an advanced and civilised nation in her representation as a sophisticated Scottish lady.

The next song to be examined is 'My Jo Janet'.[36] This is another older Scots song, appearing as early as 1615 in "old lute manuscripts such as the Skene".[37] In this song, Janet asks for several luxury gifts from her admirer, attempting to turn the male gaze to personal financial and social gain. Throughout this song, the Scottish nationality of the characters, as well as the setting is emphasised in the use of Scots vernacular language, especially in the naming of the goods, and of real Scottish places. Although her admirer is portrayed as reluctant to buy such gifts, the song represents the desire of the Scottish lady to be involved in fashionable and popular contemporary culture. The Scottish female is represented as innovative and active in her requests for items that can aid her social advancement. In this instance, the social awareness and cultural prowess of the Scottish female arguably represents the cultural advancement of Scotland itself. Although less progressive ways of life and societal conservatism are shown in the reply of the admirer, Janet's constant requests represent the progressive cultural shift happening in eighteenth-century Scotland, largely enabled by such female characters in polite circles.

Janet is forthright and confident in her demands from the start. The song opens with her directly addressing her admirer, saying:

"SWEET Sir, for your Courtesie,

When ye came by the Bass then.

For the love ye bear to me,

Buy me a Keeking-glass then." (ll.1-4)

Although affectionate in her address to the 'Sweet sir', Janet immediately assumes an authoritative tone, demonstrated in the imperative command 'Buy me a Keeking-glass'. In her demand, Janet uses the male's admiration for her as a means of justifying the gift. Here she subverts the male gaze, playing into the man's adoration in the hope of receiving a useful and enjoyable luxury item. Such a subversion is all the more significant when the specifics of the 'gaze' or 'keek' that such a gift would allow are considered. Although it could be argued that this gift would encourage a perverse self-obsession and vanity in Janet, the potential power it could instil in her can be viewed much more positively. The keeking glass would arguably allow Janet a greater deal of control and autonomy;

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[36] Ramsay, 'My Jo Janet' in *Tea-Table Miscellany,* pp.111-113

[37] https://tunearch.org/wiki/Annotation:My_Jo_Janet [accessed 09/12/2020]

allowing her to gaze upon herself, instead of existing as object for the gazes of men. The Scottish identity of Janet as a cultural consumer, as well as the product she desires, are emphasised in the Scots dialectal reference to the mirror as a 'Keeking-glass'. In placing Scots vernacular in Janet's speech to describe a luxury item, the legitimacy of Scotland as a place of cultural significance is asserted, its ladies comfortable demanding extravagant presents from their suitors in their own native language. This aligns with Alex Benchimol's stance, who talks of Ramsay's "patriotic strategy to reassert Scottish cultural autonomy after the Union settlement".[38] Furthermore, the description of the 'Keeking-glass' in Scots asserts the rightful place of Scotland as an accommodating environment for such luxury items, fit for polite society and the ladies who inhabit it. This also builds upon the idea of Scotland as a rich and fertile land, as presented in 'The Blythsome Bridal'.

Although her admirer rebuffs her request, instead telling her to look into a well, Janet continues to ask for gifts:

> "GOOD Sir, for your Courtesie,
>
> Coming through *Aberdeen* then,
>
> For the Love ye bear to me
>
> Buy me a Pair of Shoon then." (ll.17-20)

Here Janet continues in the same vein of persuasion in asking for a pair of shoes. Berg comments on the significance of the eighteenth-century lady's wardrobe, commenting that "Clothes were of very special concern. They were valuable items, ranking with furniture as the most expensive of personal household items in household accounts, insurance records and some inventories."[39] Janet's 'shoon' represent an item that would make an expensive gift. The fashionable consumer is desirous of a specifically Scottish product, naming the Scottish town from which she wants her 'Shoon'. Janet again references the goodness of her suitor and his regard for her, and again the wished-for item is relayed in Scots. The 'Shoon' Janet hopes for, like the keeking-glass, are desirable within a Scottish linguistic context, further vindicating the use of Scots as a cultural mode. This is further compounded in the direct reference to a real Scottish place in '*Aberdeen'.* This draws attention to the fact that Scotland's own national domestic trade was to be regarded as a valuable asset, not only in the economic wealth it brought but also in its reputation in producing and stocking stylish consumer goods, desired by the culturally aware and fashionable lady. Dougal comments that "Naming confers a sense of stability not only on the physical world but also on the personal, social and cultural

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[38]Alex Benchimol, 'Periodicals and Public Culture' in *The Edinburgh Companion to Scottish Romanticism,* Ed. Murray Pittock, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011) p.88

[39] Berg, 'Women's Consumption and the Industrial Classes of Eighteenth-Century England', p.421

meanings of a place."[40] In this sense, the naming of Aberdeen encourages the reader to associate it with the stylish goods requested by Janet. This further cements the strong cultural identity created around the character of Janet as a Scottish lady within the action of the text, consolidating the idea of Scotland as a culturally valuable and advancing nation.

Upon receiving another rebuff, Janet goes on to ask for a final gift:

> "KIND Sir, for your Courtesie,
>
> When ye gae to the Cross then,
>
> For the Love ye bear to me,
>
> Buy me a pacing Horse then." (ll.33-36)

The item, requested in Scots vernacular, is once again shown as conducive to social and cultural progress of both Janet and Scottish society. Pittock comments upon Scottish nationality and its aligning with the domestic, talking of "The association of domestic virtue with Scottish authenticity".[41] Arguably this is indeed an association encouraged throughout the song. Janet's 'domestic virtue' as a culturally aware and progressive woman is portrayed as completely comfortable alongside, if not complimented by, her Scottish identity.

Despite her repeated attempts at cultural advancement, this final demand is perhaps the most extravagant request, and is again met with a rebuff, as her suitor replies: "*Pace upo' your Spinning-wheel"* (l.37) Such a rebuff could be said to represent the more conservative forces within contemporary society. The male figure suggests the ancient and traditional occupation of spinning wool instead of the purchase of a pacing horse. Alternatively, this referencing to spinning could represent a kind of prediction from the male regarding Janet's attitude and the future it will create for her. Reference to the 'spinning-wheel' reminds the reader of the occupation of spinster, a woman who made her own living without relying on others, through her spinning of wool. Despite being denied and rejected in her wishes, Janet continues to demand luxury items. In her requests for the items, specified as being obtainable in certain Scottish locations, the female character promotes the idea of Scotland as a culturally significant and 'up to date' nation. The goods needed to present a respectable image in polite society are available in Scotland and desired by its women, despite the discouragement of the conservative male, as in the likes of 'The Scribers Lash'd'. The female figure, in contrast to the male, is placed as the cultural disseminator within the song. Even if the goods she requests are unobtained, her placement of Scotland within the conversation about them portrays the

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[40] Dougal, 'Popular Scottish Song Traditions at Home (and Away)', P.287

[41] Pittock, 'Scottish Song and the Jacobite Cause', p.107

nation as one where such advancement is possible. Whilst such advancement is contested by the male speaker in the song, who rails against the female's 'undesirable' requests, the female speaker is shown as a progressive figure regardless. Janet's obvious awareness of the social prowess that specific goods bring in polite society presents the Scottish female as an established figure in a progressive cultural narrative, accommodated securely within the setting of Scotland.

Death

Within this theme, female characters continue to be portrayed as important proponents of Scottish culture, encouraging a less misogynistic, more advanced, polite society. As in Ramsay's elegies in the Poetry chapter, the theme of death and the emotional responses this provokes are used to emphasise the cultural importance of Scottish women and their vital role within Scotland's progress narrative. The influence of male power is present throughout the songs in this section, however there is an element of vulnerability within the male presence in both 'My Deary if Thou Die', and 'SONG to The Tune of Rothe's Lament; or, Pinky-House'. In the former, the male is portrayed as inconsolable at the prospect of his beloved dying, whilst in the latter, the male is transformed from a corrupt rake to a penitent mourner by his victim's death speech. In all songs the civilising influence of the female upon the male is portrayed, complimented by elements of song and oral culture.

'My Deary if Thou Die' first appears in 1692 in the 'Leyden Lyra Viol Manuscript'[42] but was also published by Ramsay in his *Tea-Table Miscellany.*[43] In this song, the male speaker, enamoured with the female subject, desperately tells of the great sorrow he would suffer were his beloved to die. The female character is idolised and shown as significant to the male's happiness; indeed it could be argued that she surpasses the male presence in her dominating of the song, despite her lack of speech. The importance of the female figure is shown throughout. Immediately in the first verse, the female subject is humanised in her naming as Peggy:

> "LOVE never more shall give me Pain,
>
> My Fancy's fix'd on thee;
>
> Nor ever Maid my Heart shall gain,
>
> My *Peggy*, if thou die." (ll.1-4).

In immediately naming Peggy, a precedent is set for the song in which the female, although idolised, is a real and authentic human being. As in 'Lucky Spence', the potential of death is presented in such a way as to encourage empathy. Such situations are painfully familiar to anyone who has lost a loved

[42] https://tunearch.org/wiki/Annotation:My_Dearie_an_thou_die [accessed 09/12/2020]

[43] Ramsay, 'My Deary if Thou Die' in *Tea-Table Miscellany,* pp.109-110

one, but perhaps in the eighteenth century, a time in which mortality rates were much higher and life expectancy much lower than today, this was a real, worrying prospect for individuals.[44] In presenting such a situation, Ramsay encourages the audience to associate Peggy, as a universal figure, and her situation around death (also universal and familiar) with any similar situations they have experienced themselves; they are encouraged to relate to Peggy, the speaker, and the action of the song. This, alongside the emotive language, crafts a sympathetic atmosphere, encouraging the audience to empathise with the characters.

Although the song is written in Augustan English, some level of Scottish identity is arguably present within the linguistic mode of the text, due to the "linguistic code-switching"[45] identified by Pittock within Ramsay's work. Alternate rhyme is used throughout the song. In the above passage, the words 'thee' and 'die' are coupled in rhyme; although it could be said this serves as a half rhyme in English, the rhyme is arguably intended to be sung in Scots. In including such subtle instances of Scottish rhyme within the song, it can be argued the point is to remind the readership of its Scottish provenance and characters whilst not detracting from the standard form it is written in. Davis and McLane theorise on Ramsay "anticipating the misgivings of an English readership" in this sense, mentioning how "he [Ramsay] celebrates a double fluency in Scots and English".[46] Such a celebration is tangible within this song; although written in Augustan English, Ramsay incorporates 'double fluency', emphasising the rightful place of Scots language and culture within a 'British' context.

Throughout the song, Peggy is presented as a civilising force in her position as a woman in close proximity with death. At several points the speaker states his monogamous intentions:

> "Nor ever Maid my Heart shall gain,
>
> My *Peggy* if thou die." (ll.3-4)
>
> "Then I'll renounce all Woman-kind,
>
> My *Peggy,* after thee" (ll.15-16)

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[44] Rab Houston states "The only reasonably reliable estimate of life expectancy at birth – about 32 years – is based on the use of population age structure from an unofficial 'census' of 1755 fitted to model life tables." Rab Houston, "Mortality in early modern Scotland: the life expectancy of advocates" in *Continuity and Change,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) p.1

[45] Murray Pittock, Introduction in 'The Edinburgh Companion to Scottish Romanticism', Ed. Murray Pittock, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011) P.2

[45] Davis and McLane, 'Orality and Public Poetry', p.128

Peggy and her potential death encourage the man into a state of monogamy, shown as a positive and noble undertaking. Not only does the female influence within the song encourage an affirmative altruism in the male, it arguably takes the potential danger of male interaction away from other women, as the male speaker intends to reserve himself for Peggy even if she dies. At the least, the influence of the female will serve to prevent the male speaker being a promiscuous rake – in this the female's death is used to assert her civilising influence, adding to her positive portrayal. Hill states that: "it was on women […] that there rested the full responsibility for preserving their innocence and upholding the moral values".[47] This sentiment is carried through to the next verse, as the speaker asserts:

> "No new blown Beauty fires my Heart,
>
> With *Cupid's* raving Rage,
>
> But thine which can such Sweets impart,
>
> Must all the World engage." (ll.17-20)

Not only are the monogamous intentions of the male speaker reiterated here, but the positive influence of Peggy is emphasised. In his addressing her and mentioning her 'Sweets' as benefitting 'all the World', a point is made about the positive influence of the female in wider society, paralleling Ramsay's representations of the directresses of 'The Fair Assembly' as well as the Scottish ladies in 'Tartana'. Peggy stands as a symbol of feminine virtue and importance. In the speaker's praise of her, and the extraordinary effect she has on the entire world, the Scottish female is praised for her role within wider society. This fits with Newman's idea that "Ramsay's anticipation of the Enlightenment extends to the way that these songs imagine aesthetics, moral action, and the role of women in uniting the two."[48] The woman is preserved by Ramsay as a thoroughly moral figure in the 'moral action' she encourages throughout the song. The classical allusion employed in the mention of Cupid serves to reassert this, as the civilising mission of the female and her personal assets of virtue and education are elevated within the form of the song.

In his collecting and publishing of this song, Ramsay utilises the emotional precepts of the theme of death, as in his poetry, to present characters in a way that highlights their emotional vulnerability. The female is shown not only as a positive influence, but also as a civilising one. She initiates the male figure, often presented as dangerous to the female in Ramsay's work, into a condition of emotive desperation. Peggy is shown as necessary to the happiness, and indeed functioning, of the male

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[47] Hill, *Eighteenth-century Women: An Anthology*, (London: Routledge, 2013) P.23

[48] Newman, 'The Scots Songs of Allan Ramsay: 'Lyrick' Transformation, Popular Culture, and the Boundaries of the Scottish Enlightenment,' P.302

speaker. Moreover, she encourages the male to undertake a life of monogamy in his praise for her. Here the importance of the Scottish female and her service to society is presented in a different way. Arguably this is representative of the positive effect of female influence upon wider society and 'all the World', as portrayed by Ramsay. Ramsay champions the Scottish female figure as important in the advancing of Scotland as a polite nation in her education of its men and wider society.

'SONG to *The Tune of* Rothe's Lament; *or,* Pinky-House'[49] is attributed to David Mallet, being touted as one of his earliest compositions, however Ramsay chose to collect it within the *Tea-Table Miscellany*.[50] This is not so much an 'old' Scottish song, but a new one, a product of the Enlightenment era. In this song, the dying Silvia laments her mistreatment at the hands of Sylvander. Whilst Silvia is shown as righteous in her suffering and is vindicated in her virtue by the end of the song, Sylvander is criticised as cruel in his deceit and betrayal, being assigned the blame for Silvia's death. In the preservation of this sentiment within the song and his choice in disseminating it within his collection, Ramsay continues to argue for the civilising effect of the female. The female is shown as educating the male in her death, initiating him into a form of repentance for his cruelty. This song features classical allusion throughout, evidenced in the very first line situating 'Silvia' within a 'Forrest': "As *Silvia* in a Forrest lay" (l.1) This is continued further in the song, as the naming of characters in a classical mode and pastoral aspects are highlighted in the direct reference to love and swains:

> "To vent her woe alone;
>
> Her Swain *Sylvander* came that Way,
>
> And heard her dying Moan." (ll.2-4).

In the use of classical modes within Scottish song tradition, particularly in naming characters, the song and its message are imbued with an air of sophistication and importance. This not only elevates the content, but also widens the audience likely to consume it. In including such a song, with a strong message yet traditional delivery in form and language within the collection, Ramsay "makes plain that the English of his 'reading' and his 'native' Scots 'tongue' are complementary, not antagonistic.".[51] Whilst the Augustan and neoclassical modes of the song encourage 'polite notice', the inclusion of the song within a largely Scottish collection also serves to assert the validity of the Scots songs alongside it – regardless of linguistic mode, the central message of female importance, on both an individual and societal level, is delivered with skill. As Davis and McLane state, the Scots and English of Ramsay

[49] https://tunearch.org/wiki/Annotation:Pinkie_House [accessed 09/12/2020]

[50] Ramsay, 'SONG to *The Tune of* Rothe's Lament; *or,* Pinky-House' in *Tea-Table Miscellany,* pp.119-120

[51] Davis and McLane, 'Orality and Public Poetry', p.128

are thoroughly 'complementary' to each other within the collection, working to make the same points. Without the inclusion of a song in Augustan English, this point in validating the Scots songs alongside and within wider British literary culture could not be made.

In her sympathetic portrayal, like Peggy earlier in this chapter, oppression of the female at the hands of the male is highlighted. This is demonstrated in Silvia's assertion to Sylvander:

> "Tis plain your Dist was all Deceit,
>
> The Practice of Mankind:" (ll.17-18)

Although she has been effectively killed by mistreatment, Silvia assumes an authoritative tone. She uses imperative language, declaring the truth of the matter and the shamefulness of Sylvander's behaviour in no uncertain terms. This further highlights the endemic issue of male abuse of women in the society in which Ramsay was operating. In attributing such cruelty as a 'practice of mankind', Ramsay places culpability upon the male population. In this sense, this song is allegorical, the action symbolic of the mistreatment of the female in wider society.

Although Silvia does die in the song, arguably the trope of death is used in this instance to empower and free the female after her mistreatment. Death is used as a levelling force, counteracting the corrupt power balance created by the cruelty of the male. In death, Silvia is empowered in her free judgement and criticism of Sylvander. Her death acts as a punishment for him and a cautionary tale to the readership. Glover comments on the civilising role of the eighteenth-century woman in speech and conversation, stating that: "Through the refined arts of conversation, women could act for the good of the nation in helping to mould the supposedly 'rude' male shape into the polite gentleman whose manners and courteous treatment of women signalled the civilised society".[52] In giving Silvia her own speech, through which to criticise the harsh treatment of the male, the song adheres to such a principle of the improving influence of the female upon the male, and subsequently wider society and the 'nation'. In this sense, Silvia parallels Lucky Spence. Although varying greatly in their social positions, both characters are shown as right in their criticism of male abuse of the vulnerable female, a type of abuse frequently denounced by Ramsay throughout his work. In her lamentation, Silvia emphasises the necessity for a more 'courteous treatment' of women within society.

Silvia's death is relayed by her own voice within the song, in emotional terms:

> "Alas! I see it but too late,
>
> My Love hath made me blind.

[52] Glover, *Elite Women and Polite Society in Eighteenth-Century Scotland,* P.84

For you, delighted I could die:

But Oh! with Grief I'm fill'd

To think that credulous constant I

Should by your self be kill'd." (ll.19-24)

Here Silvia represents herself as faultless, ascribing total blame for her death on Sylvander. Her selflessness and altruism in the face of death, as well as her misuse by Sylvander emphasises the semi-divine status of the woman which is juxtaposed with the mistreatment she suffers from Sylvander, continuing to craft sympathy for the female. Hill comments on the eighteenth-century "idea of woman as the nearest thing to an angel upon earth".[53] It can be argued that in this song, the female is indeed positioned as an 'angel' upon the dangerous ground of the 'earth' and society in general.

Male violence and perverse power is highlighted as all the more horrific in the ultimate fate of death. The corruption of the male, however, does not go unpunished. Sylvander, representative of perverse male power, suffers because of his actions:

"*Sylvander* then began to melt:

But e're the Word was given

The heavy Hand of Death she felt,

And sigh'd her Soul to Heaven." (ll.29-32)

The civilising effect of the female and her virtue is displayed even in her death and dying breaths; her actions and speech influence the male to reform him. As such, the importance of autonomous female thought and speech, especially in issues of oppression, is championed by Ramsay in his collection of this song as a positive and educational influence. This representation aligns with the view of James Forrester: "Forrester went so far as to argue that politeness could 'be no other Way attained' than through the conversation of women."[54] Silvia's speech, representative of the 'conversation of women', is portrayed as thoroughly moral. As well as this, the theme of death allows for full vindication of the female character in her ascension to 'Heaven'. Although she is unjustly treated on Earth by men, she is rewarded with the ultimate honour in her acceptance into heaven and the assurance of the safety of her immortal soul. The female is portrayed as a positive asset in her

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[53] Hill, *Eighteenth-century Women: An Anthology*, P.18

[54] Glover, *Elite Women and Polite Society in Eighteenth-Century Scotland,*, p.49, referencing James Forrester, *The Polite Philosopher: Or, an Essay on that Art which Makes a Man Happy in Himself and Agreeable to Others*, (Edinburgh, 1734) p.45-53

education of the male figure: even within her death she initiates him into a respectable and more godly mode of thinking, confirmed as righteous in Sylvander's 'melting' and her soul's departure into heaven.

Although there is less in this song to suggest Scottish identity than many of the previous songs in this chapter, strong points continue to be made about the role of the female in society. Even if the action is not specified as Scottish, the allegorical nature of the song points towards a larger universal 'truth' or 'message'. Indeed, the positioning of the female and such a message within the genre of song arguably encourages associations with Scottish identity. As Perry comments, "Ballads and songs had begun to represent some intangible but essential Scottishness."[55] Beyond this, however, in his ensuring to cater for a British audience (less culturally attuned to Scottish modes), Ramsay ensures that his message within the collection is spread further. Ramsay worked with the current literary and political conditions, described by Benchimol as: "a wider struggle in the early eighteenth-century national public sphere between the pressures of cultural assimilation heading north from London and the assertion of domestic cultural autonomy in Scotland's capital."[56] Ramsay acknowledges such pressure of assimilation in his writing within the traditional Augustan mode, but in positioning such a song within a thoroughly Scottish collection, he ensures the retention of a Scottish cultural presence.

In all songs within this chapter, Ramsay places the female as important and worthy within the Scottish progress narrative in either his writing or his collecting and editing of songs. In Courtship and Marriage, women are upholders of Scottish culture and tradition, in the positive associations that the cultural symbols around them bring. In Domestic life, women are also important cultural figures in their advancing of Scotland as a polite nation; their cultural awareness and the acquisition of luxury items is portrayed as a progressive endeavour, spearheaded by the female members of Scottish society. In the Death section, although the Scottish identity of the women is not clearly asserted, Ramsay continues to champion them as civilising influences and positive forces upon the male figures and society more generally. Davis writes of how "collections of Scottish music and song served varying ideological purposes".[57] In his *Tea-Table Miscellany,* Ramsay arguably had the set purpose of asserting Scotland and Scottish culture as valid and worthy, whilst vindicating the Scottish female as an important cultural disseminator and upholder of tradition, as well as a vital figure in the advancing of Scotland as a polite and civilised society. Ramsay uses the generic precepts of the genre of song to promote the female as a positive force within Scotland. She is shown as civilising in her effects upon the male, as well as wider society, in her upholding of and disseminating of Scottish culture and

[55] Perry, 'The Finest Ballads": Women's Oral Traditions in Eighteenth-Century Scotland', p.85

[56] Benchimol, 'Periodicals and Public Culture', P.88

[57] Davis, 'From Fingal's Harp to Flora's Song: Scotland, Music and Romanticism', P.94

tradition. As Campbell and McCue state, in Ramsay's publication and thus elevation of such songs, "the song is being lifted from the street to the parlour."[58]

[58] Campbell and McCue, 'Lowland Song Culture in the Eighteenth Century', P.96

Conclusion

In all genres of Ramsay's work, the Scottish female is portrayed as a vital player in the preservation and dissemination of a valuable Scottish culture and its traditions. Whether it be through their domestic activities like singing and dancing, their familial roles as brides, wives and mothers, their professional working lives, or in their deaths, Scottish women are championed by Ramsay as absolutely necessary to the functioning and growth of Scottish culture and Scotland as a nation. Women of all classes, from the aristocratic ladies of 'The Fair Assembly' and the idealised pastoral shepherdesses in *The Gentle Shepherd,* to the sex workers of 'Lucky Spence's Last Advice', are vindicated by Ramsay as playing equally important roles in Scotland's progression. Ramsay praises the women as playing a crucial part in the development of Scotland as an enlightened and polite nation. The women allow for Scotland and its culture to be portrayed as a valuable partner within Great Britain, culturally separate yet compatible with all attractive features of a modern eighteenth-century Britain. Whilst the role of women in Enlightenment era Scotland has historically been diminished, this dissertation argues that 'Ramsay's women' are championed as domestic pioneers in the crafting of a progressive Scotland, supported by its strong and individualistic cultural identity which is preserved and disseminated by the female characters in Ramsay's work.

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