SCOTLAND'S MISSING ZOLAS?

FICTION BY WOMEN

1900 - 1940

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Ph.D Thesis
University of Edinburgh
1992
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My particular thanks go to Dr. Cairns Craig for his supervision during the course of my study, without which many aspects of its final outcome would have been different, delayed or deficient. His guidance, and valiant efforts to impart computer literacy to me (largely in vain), have been greatly appreciated.

I am also grateful to the Scottish Education Department, without whose grant the thesis would not have been possible. In addition, my thanks to the secretarial staff of the English department, and the staff of the University library, who have helped me with any enquiries. Special mention must go to the National Library of Scotland, whose reading rooms I have infested for the duration of my research; from the book-deliverers to the porters, the library staff have been unfailingly efficient and helpful.

Sustaining efforts over three years is equally dependent on personal as well as practical supports, and none more so than that received from the network of people with whom that time has been spent. From fellow postgraduate students to my family, and those closest friends with whom I have shared experiences over many years, I express my gratitude for their faith and hope, occasional charity, but especially their company; special acknowledgement is due to Bill and Mary Bolt, who allowed their home to be disrupted in the cause of my work’s completion.

To paraphrase the motto of Aberdeen University, where I attained my M.A., the completion of a degree is the beginning of knowledge, not its final achievement, and in pursuing this thesis I have completed only one small step. But since my endeavours to take that step have so shaped my life over their duration, I dedicate its formal manifestation, in this wee tome, to those most closely committed to its outcome: my parents, Arthur and Evelyn Freeman, and my partner, Susan Bolt.

DECLARATION

This thesis, produced under the auspices of the University of Edinburgh, and the supervision of Dr. Cairns Craig, is an original piece of work; its subject matter, structure, substantial contents and conclusions are of my own formulation, written by myself and based on my own independent research.

20.8.92
This thesis joins in the attempt to open some of the avenues which remained closed to the leading lights of Scotland’s 1920s literary renaissance, establishing the innovative, feminist, and pluralistic intent in the best of women’s fiction in the first half of this century, and locating it in a broader context identified as the “parallel agenda”.

Part One, Parallel Agenda, defines the basis of the thesis, outlining in the opening chapter, Double Marginalisation, the marginalisation undergone by Scottish writers within Britain, and by women writers within patriarchal culture, in general and in the particular experience of the authors studied. It challenges the orthodoxies constructed by the likes of Hugh MacDiarmid and George Blake with regard to the range of work produced in Scotland, and the nature of that produced by women. Chapter two, Women’s Fiction And The Romantic Paradigm, defines alternative criteria by which to evaluate this fiction, relating it to the over-arching influence of Romanticism, in which the tension between individual and society is crystallised, and whose exponents show distinct differences according to gender. The chapter goes on to delineate a diagrammatic framework in which the authors’ narrative strategies will be detailed in subsequent chapters.

The second part is titled Divided Selves, and takes up the issue of individuality as located in the tradition of dualism found throughout writing of the Romantic and subsequent eras. In chapter three, Dualism And Self-Defence, dualism among Scottish writers is considered alongside that attributed to women writers by recent criticism, and the applicability and limitation of each discussed. This focuses on the oldest of the writers, Violet Jacob and the Findlater sisters, and is followed by Dualism And Self-Assertion, reflecting a more assertive attitude to personal aspiration by women, and analogous formal innovation in its literary depiction, in the later work of the Findlaters, and Catherine Carswell. Following this, Dangerous Liaisons: Heroines And Heroes, addresses their rejection of the seeming new rights and expectations regarding female sexuality proclaimed in the culture of the new age, with explicitly feminist content, while continuing relationship portrayals characteristic of the earlier work.

Part Three, The Third Way, focuses on the youngest of the authors, and their place among the ideas and literature of modernism. Chapter Six, The Decline And Fall Of The Romantic Paradigm, charts the decline of the Romantic distinction between individual and society in the light of new knowledge on many levels, and places the authors in a positive line of descent that includes Henri Bergson, and the Scottish philosophy of personalism. Willa Muir is treated in chapter seven, Selves Within The World, her Bergsonian and Jungian influences identified and her feminist commitment elucidated, before their stylistic rendition in fiction is discussed. The final chapter, Worlds Within The Self, examines Shepherd’s thematic relation to personalism, and her innovative fictional narratives. The chapter concludes the thesis with a general application of its theoretical content to other areas of literature, and beyond.
So what was there, instead of those missing Zolas and George Eliots, those absent Thomas Manns and Vergas?
PART ONE: PARALLEL AGENDA

Chapter One: Double Marginalisation ........................................ 1
Chapter Two: Women’s Fiction And The Romantic Paradigm ............ 32

PART TWO: DIVIDED SELVES

Chapter Three: Dualism And Self-Defence ............................... 62
Chapter Four: Dualism And Self-Assertion ............................... 94
Chapter Five: Dangerous Liaisons: Heroines And Heroes ............. 122

PART THREE: THE THIRD WAY

Chapter Six: The Decline And Fall Of The Romantic Paradigm ....... 151
Chapter Seven: Willa Muir: Selves Within The World ................. 177
Chapter Eight: Nan Shepherd: Worlds Within The Self ............... 210

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Plot Summaries ................................................. 254
Appendix B: Narrative Diagrams ............................................. 264

BIBLIOGRAPHY

i. Primary Texts ................................................................. 270
ii. Secondary Fiction ......................................................... 275
iii. Secondary Non-Fiction .................................................... 279
PART ONE: PARALLEL AGENDA

Chapter One

DOUBLE MARGINALISATION

So what was there, instead of those missing Zolas and George Eliots, those absent Thomas Manns and Vergas? What there was increasingly from the 1820s onwards, until it became a vast tide washing into the present day, was the Scots "kailyard" tradition (Tom Nairn)\(^1\)

Apparently, women can be kept in a subordinate position if ignorance of human conduct is imposed upon them as a necessary condition of social approval. It can be inferred that a fearless attitude towards human life is the first essential quality of a free woman (Willa Muir)\(^2\)

In an age of proliferating representation and conflicting realities, questions of cultural identity compel attention in their contribution to the dynamics of the shifting national and international order. Before the century closes in Scotland we may be confronted by some of the same issues haunting other small nations, and be faced with the same choices between exclusivity or diversity, prejudice or plurality, whose restrictive aspects exert visible influence on Scottish life. With


the leisure for debate permitted by recent electoral deferral of the new world's delivery, the time is propitious for the nature of the Scotland we inhabit to be examined on many levels, with the purpose of undoing some of our current inhibiting assumptions, and releasing new ideals. Contrary interests require honest appraisal if the future is to be faced with a progressive and various sense of national identity encompassing universal rights for its citizens. On any level of culture, from the economic to the artistic, the status of women requires consideration, their rights still in need of assertion.

In the luxury sphere of the arts, and the intellectual realm of universities, the areas addressed by this thesis, expansion of journals and Scottish literary study followed the devolution referendum debacle of 1979. These have brought about something of a rejuvenation in the 1980s, making it possible to widen some of the narrower orthodoxies with which literary culture has been burdened, including those established during the 1920s literary renaissance. Joining in the attempt to open some of the avenues which remained closed to the leading lights of that earlier renaissance, specifically regarding women's achievements in fiction, this is a study of six Scottish novelists, whose work represents the best writing by Scotswomen in the period between 1900 - 1940. Much of it achieved popular success, some of it enjoyed critical acclaim, but for all, these were short-lived.

My research has encompassed primary sources and major philosophical developments, popular writing by women and theories of narratology. I have also scrutinised journals through which many social messages about gender are disseminated. This first part of the thesis, Parallel Agenda, will demonstrate the limitations of the prevailing views of Scottish culture, and define an alternative model within which literature, including that by Scots, but particularly by women, may be understood. In our construction of literary culture, and regarding the place of women in it, Tom Nairn's pronouncement on the missing Zolas and George Eliots, and the absent Thomas Manns and Vergas, above, typifies the most visible strand of Scottish wisdom since the 1920s renaissance. The thesis title alludes to his postulation because I seek to destabilise its assumptions. What do each of these writers share, other than being recognised as major figures in world culture? What do their respective cultures have in common, and what is the relation of each individual to it? Nairn asks the wrong question. Confined to a handful of writers, his cultural model is more notional than national. Within these parameters, most cultural production by Scots is either ignored or subject to specious assumptions, among which the work of women continues to suffer its
Nairn and Muir, in these opening epigraphs, exemplify respectively the problem defined and the solution proposed in this thesis.

The second part, *Divided Selves*, addresses traditions of dualism found throughout writing of the Romantic and subsequent eras, and in part three, *The Third Way*, the youngest of the authors are considered in relation to ideas and literature of the twenties and thirties. As a result, the fiction studied in the thesis is placed in a larger pluralistic context, a parallel agenda, which encompasses philosophy and psychology as well as the arts, within Scotland and beyond. Cultural development in this country as it passes through the renaissance may be seen in a broader perspective, one in which philosophical traditions of mutual support receive their finest artistic equivalent in the best women’s renaissance fiction.

More specifically, the thesis demonstrates continuity between its authors as women. Thematic development will be shown among them, occurring chronologically, Catherine Carswell the bridge between the older group comprising Violet Jacob and the Findlater sisters, and their younger successors, Willa Muir and Nan Shepherd. Manifesting identifiable stylistic and thematic features, often in repudiation of "femininity" as socially defined, and of novelistic concerns attributed to women by much previous literary criticism, their achievements culminate the parallel agenda and feminist writing in the first half of this century in Scotland, in a distinctive strand of the literature that came to be called modernism. I intend to show that the younger pair continue on one hand the tendency of their predecessors to utilise devices expressive of social dissent, and on the other to endorse a distinctively Scottish philosophy, in a positive modernist fiction. Willa Muir and Nan Shepherd deserve reclamation as the most advanced Scottish novelists in the period, embodying a striking vision of the nature of interpersonal relations.

Revisiting these writers now allows both a fresh view of cultural accomplishments during the period concerned, and of our contemporary culture. While identifying the parallel agenda, this study enacts an implicit critique of the by now traditional view of twentieth century culture, specifically the emergence of postmodernism out of the ashes of the modernist movement. It offers an alternative model to the category of modernist that has been applied not to the range of formal innovatory activity, but more narrowly to those whose vision appears in keeping with the
logic of reductionism applied in retrospect to life and art during the long decades from the close of the Great War to the end of the Cold War.

The pluralism beloved of Scottish ideals is not so easy to find in cultural practice, with women in the main discounted from representing Scottish culture, that sphere remaining still, in many eyes, the province of select men. Scottish literary examples are said to have included a capacity to remain identified with a small and homogeneous community and at the same time to flourish as a citizen of the world. No small achievement, but the relation of self with others proves tricky in this balancing act. Predominant modes of Scottish culture are distinguished from the parallel agenda by their concentration on self and universe, to the neglect of a model of self and others, out of whose interaction, after all, human life is made.

Women's fiction within the parallel agenda partakes of what has come to be called "metafiction", Patricia Waugh's term for literary devices expressing self-consciousness, and whose foregrounding represents the main thrust of modernist and postmodernist works. Metafiction is a new term, but describes a practice that has occurred at all times, as Waugh remarks: terms like "metafiction" are a reminder of a more general cultural interest in the problem of how human beings reflect, construct and mediate their experience of the world. If, as individuals, we now occupy "roles" rather than "selves", then the study of characters in novels may provide a useful model for understanding the construction of subjectivity in the world outside novels. In the case of women, self-consciousness and the awareness of the mediation of self by roles is an essential part of this fiction. The novel about a chaste heroine and her gender-determined destiny raises and ponders such still-pressing questions as whether intimacy and identity can be achievable at once, whether they are mutually exclusive, or, indeed, other than imaginary. Such a novel explores

the connections between the personal and the social, the private and
the public - by focusing on a woman complexly connected to

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others, who must depend, to distinguish herself, on the gender that delimits her life.5

The construction of worlds reflecting common aspects of women’s reality, and shared attitudes to it, has its own continuity of style and theme. By schematising these facets of narrative we will be able to demonstrate not only the technicalities of prose but also the authors’ various emphases on human inter-relations. Like metafiction, the intellectual seeds of a meaningful plurality exist within cultural practice; it depends where you look.

The parallel agenda constitutes a submerged tradition in Scottish culture of the twentieth century, and has its major exponents in such imaginative writing among women. Since the values they express are pluralistic, they oppose the cultural hierarchies that determine the status of Scottish culture within Britain, and women within all communities. And to assert a feminist case is to extend culture towards the rights of citizenship in a genuine plurality. They therefore espouse a healthy model of group and individual development to consider in this period of reviving nationalisms, conflict and realignment, within and between cultures, in the larger movements arising from the realpolitik of the 1990s world order.

Clearly implicit in this is a model of literature operating both in formal terms and in relation with the reality to which it refers. While the study is a literary, i.e. primarily textual one, the critique of real relations enacted by these texts is important along with the formal means by which they do so. Establishing this connection validates the claim that the values portrayed in imaginative writing have relevance to our world, the way we live.

LITERATURE AND CULTURAL VALUE: CULTURAL PRODUCTION

Usually, in our culture, literature has been envisaged as "rising above" its conditions of production and reception; as transcending social and political conditions and other such mundane matters. Since it contains a feminist reading of literature, this study implicitly locates literature within the social context of its production, and in which context the prevailing values associated with

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"literariness" may be challenged. It is through the stories, the representations of life which we make in the range of cultural production, that we develop understandings of the world and how to live in it.\(^6\) The contest between rival stories produces our notions of reality, and hence our beliefs about what we can and cannot do. The stories by which we structure our lives are everywhere, as Alan Sinfield maintains, from fiction and drama to sports and party politics, science, religion and the arts, and those specified as education for children. They are in advertisements and, in our intimate relations, there are stories telling us who we are as individuals, who other individuals are and how we relate to them. (Sinfield, p. 24)

Rachel Brownstein notes that generations of girls who did not read many other kinds of books, and whose experience was limited by education, opportunity and convention, have gone to fiction to escape a stifling or boring or confusingly chaotic reality, and have come back with structures they use to organise and interpret their feelings and prospects. (Brownstein, p. xviii)

The content of fiction, then, in structuring values within its reader's consciousness, has the potential to confirm, supplement or challenge other stories which inform the reader's reality, and so merits examination in relation to the broader cultural context as well as for its "literariness". As with most fiction, the novels to be studied are about the world inhabited by real people as well as inventions of worlds by their authors. They are concerned with aspects of reality. By these means and others is the culture of our society produced, its standards shaped, its values defined and redefined. Culture in this respect is the production of signs, systems and apparently natural understandings to explain who we are, who others are, and how the world works. Powerful stories, Sinfield concludes - those useful to powerful groups - tend to drive out others. Even so, culture is inevitably under contest.

Among the three meaning-systems Frank Parkin recognises in Western societies, the dominant system is the structure of understandings that successfully claims

normative status. It is the one most fully and authoritatively represented in the cultural apparatus. Members of groups comprising the subordinate system, in this view, may subscribe to the dominant system through deference or aspiration. Parkin’s subordinate meaning-system is in this respect accommodative. Its members adapt to or negotiate with the dominant system, rather than endorsing it outright or fully opposing it. For Sinfield this is characteristic of such examples within the subordinate system as working-class culture and the behaviour of most women towards the gender roles expected of them. A radical meaning-system on the other hand promotes an oppositional interpretation of the social order, challenging the dominant system. We can see in this model the terms on which literature may be viewed as an aspect of cultural production, and in expressing one or other of these meaning-systems it is open to challenge. And since texts may be read in different ways, and different texts may be read, the boundaries between literature and other discourses can be altered, or the category done away with. In keeping with these models, the theoretical emphasis throughout this thesis is on the position rather than any notion of an intrinsic nature of culture, of groups, and of individuals, within their symbolic order. The position occupied by a group or individual does not correspond to any natural, immutable characteristic of those occupying each meaning-system. Marginality is an expression of relative power, not essential nature. Unlike nature, or essence, the position occupied may be replaced, or the category rejected.

The diminution in culture of what does not adhere to the standards of dominant stories contributes to the cultural marginalisation of Scots within the British state, and of women in most societies. As women and Scots, the authors in this study are doubly marginalised from the centres of cultural value. Despite the powerful institutions through which dominant stories are maintained however, there remain those others - subordinated perhaps, but not extinguished. Based on models of Scottish marginality received from the dominant meaning system, the stories in our culture are in a position crying out to be decentred, at the level of serious cultural endeavour, and equally, in the places where that endeavour could be

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7Parkin, Frank, *Class Inequality And Political Order* (London: Paladin, 1972), on which Sinfield calls to support his case, p.34.

communicated to a mass audience, via education, and the communication and entertainment industries.

Obscuring the cultural stories of Scotswomen has been on one hand the dominance of a restricted sector of English society over the diversity of British nations and ethnic groups, as well as over those colonised by the British empire, and on the other the inequality of opportunity permitted to women within society at all times. These have governed not only women’s access to artistic endeavour but the value placed on their achievements, their work usually evaluated in relation to the traditions of writing associated with the dominant strands of society in the English speaking world.

This first chapter will go on to define the double marginalisation undergone by the authors, elaborating firstly the ideological basis from which English literature is constructed, with its consequent stifling of alternative models of thought and social organisation. This will be followed by an examination of women’s marginalisation, from their material conditions to the "femininity" concurrently imposed on them, and in so doing introducing the authors to be studied.

**IN THE MARGINS**

**English Literature And Bourgeois Culture**

Alluding to the rise of the concept of English Literature, Sinfield quotes from Raymond Williams’s description of it, "printed works of a certain quality", citing the retrospective assimilation of select examples into its canon.\(^9\) This has formed a major story of the dominant groups in British life, against which representatives of subordinate groups must judge themselves, either accommodatively or contentiously.

Values espoused by the dominant strands in society have to an overwhelming degree defined culture, shaping both writing and the critical response it meets. By no means neutral, these traditions support particular social assumptions. Acting as reinforcers of bourgeois and patriarchal values, they serve the

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maintenance of the social status quo. Among the range of ideas and literary forms included, the loosely defined concept of liberal, or bourgeois, humanism has gained currency as a principle expressing terms on which the rights and esteem of individuality are founded in our civilisation. With its class stratification and widely divergent cultures, across and within its constituent countries, the notion of a definable individual status and a non-conflicting set of cultural traditions in Britain expressing that status is necessarily highly selective about which elements of these cultures it endorses, and which it excludes from the canon of its self-definition.

Formal histories tell us that on this island the most violent excesses of bourgeois revolutions were avoided because of the so-called "long revolution" of ancien régime to bourgeois democracy, begun a century earlier than most with the Glorious revolution. Out of this grew the nation-state and industrialisation, moulding the social strata with which we are now familiar, with the bourgeois, or middle-classes ascendant over industry and commerce. This bourgeois class was constituted of the mercantile circles and economically-enlightened landlords, financiers, scientifically-minded economic and social administrators, the educated middle-class, manufacturers and entrepreneurs.10

With a monarch still retaining a measure of control in the state, the middle and educated classes often looked to the powerful central apparatus of their "enlightened" monarchy to realise their hopes:

A prince needed a middle class and its ideas to modernise his state;
a weak middle-class needed a prince to batter down the resistance of entrenched aristocratic and clerical interests to progress.

(Hobsbawm,p.36)

Where violent conflict was to occur elsewhere, notably in France, a symbiosis between medieval powers and the business classes emerged in Britain as "the State", and these powers allied most effectively in the imperial effort. The pattern of culture began which continues to constitute the values of the dominant meaning-system today. The culture of these groups, describing the world from their own point of view, imposed from the so-called "Golden Triangle", encompassing London and the universities at Oxford and Cambridge, valued an ideal of civilisation whose literary expression placed the autonomous individual at its heart.

This "liberal-humanism" represented at once an ideal of liberty and a transacted form of human relations, since the "liberal-humanist" individual is the one who can control his (rarely her) environment economically, and liberty is a commodity to be purchased.\textsuperscript{11} Mediated most significantly by the consequences of two world wars this century, the alignment of ruling interests from within these groups persists, against potential claims of the wider society.\textsuperscript{12}

In Scotland the problem for the bourgeoisie which grew during the eighteenth century was that without either an indigenous ancien regime to bolster its strength against, in particular, clerical influence on society, or the ability to construct the apparatus of a nation-state, there grew a dissociation between bourgeois and other interests, from which the much maligned fragmentation of civil society and culture developed. The gravitation of Scottish bourgeois life towards its English counterpart meant, and indeed continues to mean, that what is indigenous to Scotland is deemed marginal both in relation to the dominant meaning-system of English society, and to the dominant meaning-system within Scotland. Lacking one true centre of power, Scotland has several, each subordinate to the English model, chief among them the partial reality of working-class culture. Cultural achievements in Scotland have more often originated from, or been associated with, the working-classes than the middle-classes, unlike the situation in England. But one consequence of this has been the continuing insecurity about the validity of that achievement, since the apparatus which could validate it at an institutional level is thoroughly bourgeois, and confers instead its disapproval of linguistic modes and social concerns, as exemplified in the present by ongoing debate in Edinburgh University about the status of Scots language, and its continued suppression in schools.\textsuperscript{13} Thus, such creativity is simultaneously deemed definitively Scottish and irrevocably marginal, marginal in the terms of the culture whose values are encapsulated in and disseminated by the conception of English literature.


Charting the rise of English literature, Terry Eagleton refers back to its roots in eighteenth century England, when the concept of literature meant the whole body of valued writing in society. The criteria of what counted as literature were frankly ideological:

literature did more than "embody" certain social values: it was a vital instrument for their deeper entrenchment and wider dissemination.14

Only in what we now call the Romantic period did our modern notions of literariness develop. If what does not exist is felt to be more attractive than what does, Eagleton remarks, then it is reasonable to assume this says something about the kinds of society inhabited by the Romantics. What it says, he goes on to outline, is that the visionary and dynamic energies of the Romantics were in contradiction of the crassly utilitarian ideology of the emerging bourgeoisie.

The nation-state formulated between the old and the new powers violently repressed social resistance, and so the Romantics’ valorisation of the imagination is, in the first instance, a form of social dissent. (Eagleton, T., p. 19) Resisting the hegemony of the capitalist middle-class over social structure has always been a stance attractive to intellectuals of that class, as they find their concerns slighted by aggressive commerce. Sinfield indicates the line of critical intellectuals continuous with the present, running through, among others, the aesthetic movement, modernism, Bloomsbury, and Leavisism:

The consistent feature is hostility to the hegemony of the principal part of the middle-class - the businessmen, industrialists and empire-builders. Matthew Arnold was more hostile to middle-class "philistines" than to aristocratic "barbarians" or the lower-class "populace". (Sinfield, p. 41)

Eagleton follows Chris Baldick in citing Matthew Arnold as the key figure in converting imaginative literature into an instrument of class harmony. For this reason Arnold is central to my detailing in chapter two of the scale of opposing values in Romanticism which informs so much nineteenth and twentieth century writing, since, in keeping with his actions regarding literature, he simultaneously advocated both sides of its division.

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Arnold was unashamed in advocating the dissemination of literature, a liberal, "humanising" pursuit, with "universal" human values, as an antidote to what he saw as political bigotry and ideological extremism. It is of itself a serious calamity for a nation, he wrote, that its tone of feeling and grandeur of spirit should be lowered or dulled:

But the calamity appears far more serious still, when we consider that the middle-classes, remaining as they are now, with their narrow, harsh, unintelligent, and unattractive spirit and culture, will almost certainly fail to mould or assimilate the masses below them [...]13

Tom Nairn is direct in denouncing such middle-class dissidence. In its attempt to absorb the potential for social unrest into the interests of the middle-classes, it was anti-machine, anti-money, and anti-city. It was not - of course - anti-bourgeois, or designed to impede the serious accumulation of capital [...] It never intended to stop England becoming the world's workshop; but it did aim to inject into that fate as high a degree of conservative stability and rank as history would permit.16

Or, as Eagleton puts it, if the masses are not thrown a few novels, they may react by throwing up a few barricades. (p.25) English was paradoxically consolidated in the era of imperialist insecurity, confidence in its assumptions inversely proportionate to the urgency of its dissemination. The resurgence of national pride, and the indignant brandishing of the cultural heritage that went with it, acted as a powerful impetus to the establishment of English Studies as a "central" discipline, so that just when it seemed to have been given a chance to become a subject of extended study at university level, as Chris Baldick says, its social mission came to the fore again, namely the binding of class to class, in common respect for the national heritage and all that was precious in it.17

The influential Newbolt Report on English in Higher Education was framed under the slogan "culture unites classes". (Baldick, p.95) What followed from its


recommendations was, in various guises, the reaffirmation by the dissident middle-classes of what is thought essentially English, the culture of the civilised part of that nation, the preferred stories of its dominant meaning-system. The effect of this on Scottish cultural self-confidence, if not identity, has been parlous.

In 1919 T.S. Eliot could ask the question "Was there a Scottish literature?"\textsuperscript{18} Scarcely known outside of Britain, and treated as intrinsically inferior to English inside these islands, Scottish culture has nonetheless failed to disappear. It has, however, suffered in its relation to the dominant culture of Britain/England. Cairns Craig elucidates a relationship of peripheral and dominant cultures in the twentieth century, which he applies to these putatively national cultures, outlining the way cultural production in peripheral areas is either distorted by or absorbed into the core culture's self-definition:

Not having a culture or a history which is shaped exactly like those of a major European culture (whose are, except major European cultures ?), not having conformed to the pattern of those cultures whose "progress" is taken to define progression itself, we have nothing to contribute to the world's development: we are only the echo of real events, real achievements, real creations that have already occurred somewhere else, somewhere where the parish is, by magical transition, also the world. To live on the periphery of a major culture or on the periphery of Europe is almost inevitably to be parochial. And the consequence is self-hatred.\textsuperscript{19}

The "Scottish inferiority complex" is identified by Craig Beveridge and Ronald Turnbull, via a model which indicates the "inferiorist" disposition of the Scottish intelligentsia to accept metropolitan assessments of Scottish life, resulting in the adoption of discourses which portray Scotland as a dark and backward corner of land.\textsuperscript{20}

Their model manifests an underlying cultural code whose texts can be characterised as a system of oppositions containing some of the following terms:

\textsuperscript{18}Eliot, T.S., "Was There A Scottish Literature?", The Athenaeum, No. 4657, August 1919, p.680.

\textsuperscript{19}Craig, Cairns, "Peripheries", Cencrastus, Summer 1982, pp.3-9, p.3. Page references to this publication.

Scotland:  England:
dark      enlightened
backward  advanced
primitive sophisticated
illiberal  tolerant
barbaric  civilised
parochial  cosmopolitan
savage    mild (p.7)

These exemplify a binary opposition, the theoretical tendency to inscribe relations between objects or concepts in terms of a polarised contrast, with each half defined by what the other one isn’t. But further, this entails attributing strong values to each: good/bad, white/black, powerful/powerless, English/Scottish, masculine/feminine. The former value is better and more important than the latter, and will tend to displace the latter by attracting individuals to its side of the divide. That Scottish values may be portrayed as preferable to English, for instance in an opposition of natural/sophisticated, or friendly/cold, underlines the relativity of such thought, but also tends nonetheless to concede the assumed power of the dominant culture. This is demonstrated by the other side of Craig’s argument, namely, the model cultivated at the metropolitan centre in which all sorts of work originating in the peripheries is purloined, and claimed as a product of the core culture, confirmation of its continuity:

core cultures operate by taking to themselves all significant achievements in the periphery that can be accommodated without too great a stress. The judgement that the periphery represents an impoverished tradition is therefore made inevitable. ("Peripheries",p.5)

Moreover, we can see here the underlying model which typifies many power-relations, the binary opposition whose two, arbitrary portions are conjured into place in support of, and relation to, the central, dominant ideology.

In the age of the Scottish literary renaissance, as national boundaries, powers and values were adjusting to new definitions, literary forms were adapted to express associated concerns. The great uncertainty that both stimulated and characterised much writing following the First World War was linked to the condition of the nation-state in Europe, but was also a continuation of a trend pre-dating the war, and even the century. The social changes that had allowed women the opportunity to claim greater rights in the second half of the Victorian era continued, and writing by women which asserted such rights also increased in this new era of
questioning, the gaps widening in the traditional forms and values of artistic discourse permitting such voices to be inserted. For many though, this resulted merely in the absorption into the core culture as English literature, and the continuing marginalisation of the periphery. It is against this definition that the Scottish renaissance had to pit its energies. The renaissance featured great achievements by its best writers, but the binary oppositions so described persist in its version of "Scottishness". The following section turns to the inferiorist pitfalls into which its exponents often fell, causing their failure to give due attention to the breadth of Scottish literary culture.

The Rise And Wrongs Of The Scottish Renaissance

In the period of the Scottish renaissance, the traditions associated with English literature were attacked by Scottish writers, but certain underlying principles were maintained, reflecting the peripheral self-perception of Scots. The leading male writers were understandably concerned with the state of Scotland, and did much to wrest its literary history back from "British" cultural hands, but the orthodoxy that grew to overhaul the nineteenth century "North British" ethos was stridently assertive, narrowly "masculine" in outlook, and reflected the same immaturity many of its proponents attributed to the literature of the preceding generation.

Centred on the figure of Hugh MacDiarmid, the major tenets of the renaissance owed more to his efforts than any other:

It is now almost a platitude to rank MacDiarmid with Burns and Dunbar as "one of Scotland’s three greatest poets".21

The selectivity of this project has been observed by Ian Olsen:

To clear the stage for a Scottish Literary Revival which would rank amongst the welt-literatur, MacDiarmid was determined to sweep everything off the boards as far back as the medievalists, for he was consumed by the same dread that has crippled Scots like him since the Union - the dread of appearing "parochial".22

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Looking back much later, MacDiarmid himself wrote that his phrase "Not Burns - Dunbar" represented a transitional phase in the renaissance's reassertion of Scottish culture:

Burns, let alone his successors, had to be almost wholly repudiated in this connection.  

But in the 1930s he complained that the term "Scottish renaissance" had been wrested away from its original significance and applied loosely to all manner of activities directed towards a "national identity". Deprecating "the confusion that has thus been caused", MacDiarmid's stance was both proscriptive of existing traditions and prescriptive of their antidotes. If the kailyard of the nineteenth century was not typical (and the likes of William Donaldson have revealed a wealth of literature in unexpected places to partially repudiate its centrality), then the renaissance seems in some respects a betrayal. The extent of that wealth is open to debate, but there is no doubt that the range and depth of literary culture was greater than MacDiarmid credited. Despite claiming repudiation of the dominant culture, the exercise was unable to reform Scottish orthodoxy in a way that would expand the creative space of Scottish culture available to include traditionally marginal groups and locales in Scotland within its parameters. Defining national identity in terms of racial or historical essence, MacDiarmid missed the opportunity to truly confirm its relative, and therefore changeable status. Edwin Muir's view that the adoption of only English language was the optimum direction for Scottish letters, which led to his rift with MacDiarmid, was another straitjacket for cultural potential. Indeed, Muir donned the very

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garment in his own fiction, deliberately distancing the emotional, creative part of his mind from his prose.27

While generously praising a few novels, MacDiarmid expressed the view that the novel was inherently inferior to poetry, with the result that working novelists had to face the scepticism or hostility of the renaissance establishment.28 Exemplifying this prescriptive stance, George Blake diagnosed modern efforts as suffering "a sort of national infantilism", which had nothing to say about modern Scotland.29 More acutely, Tom Nairn's inquiry into what replaced Scotland's missing Zolas, as all the literary worthies had left, is an important, but still simplistic point, informed by the core cultural model, premised on the assumed impoverishment of Scotland's indigenous culture. Nairn approvingly cites the following assertion by David Craig:

during the nineteenth century the country was emptied of the majority of its notable literary talents, men who, had they stayed, might have chosen to mediate their wisdom through the rendering of specifically Scottish experience.30

For Nairn and Craig, the critical orthodoxy restricts their view, and literature is for Men Only. Nairn seeks the alleviation of the problem by imitation of the tenets of the core, especially in trying to fabricate a continuity of the kinds of literature which flourished in nineteenth century metropolitan centres in England and France. That the novels of Dickens were influenced by that fleeing worthy Carlyle, or that the Brontes and George Eliot are quite dislocated from the values of the core, appears to have escaped attention, as do the fictional models of the likes of Neil Gunn, Lewis Grassic Gibbon, Eric Linklater, or even James Barke. Addressing a Scotland outside of metropolitan terms, these authors recognise the problematic relation of their culture to history, and to their industrial reality, and seek a totalising world view through a larger scale of time and community, but


have as often as not been categorised as either a post-Kailyard stage of development or the product of Scotland's own peripheral cultures, Gaeldom and the North-East.

Typifying this, Manfred Malzahn, in charting the growth of that quintessentially "masculine" genre, the industrial novel, reports that as the industrial age came to Scotland, literature was notoriously slow in reacting to the changes it wrought, writers generally preferring to retreat into history or provincial life for their material, thus excluding the experience shared by the majority of Scots.\(^{31}\) Clearly implied in this is the belief that Scottish writers had to address industrial life in Scotland for their literature to be truly national: Blake attempted this in *The Shipbuilders*, with serious limitations in part due to his condescension to the experience he represents.\(^{32}\) Strange that the industrial novel was being advocated when the industrial base to which Blake was so attached should be in a state of either temporary crisis or terminal decline: the demand on manufacturing occasioned by the First World War had passed as the 1920s began, and with it the short-lived reality on which Blake's image of Scottish life was based. All of the major manufacturing industries contracted immediately or shortly after the end of the war, and for most this continued throughout the century:

As a percentage of total output, the traditional staples suffered a steep decline between 1907 and 1935 [...] In 1921 not only did the naval market vanish, but the post-war boom collapsed.\(^{33}\)

Lack of writing about industrialising Scotland is a matter to ponder, but Blake's recommendation is more in keeping with the inferiorist perception of a culture on the verge of demise. It imagines a previous, fixed point where life is real, authentic, omitting processes of historical change from its perception of that point, and so portrays later deviation from it as loss, a sort of industrial twilight to echo the already existing Celtic one. Seeking an essence, all else appears as shadow. This partial perception of what constitutes Scottish experience has continued in our


culture since, despite its maturing literature. Malzahn’s "shared experience" is that of working-class Glasgow. By so maintaining, he perpetuates a geographical as well as gender narrowness that hinders the national culture the renaissance was intended to propagate.

Here is the emphasis on the continuity of the dominant traditions in society. Having been consolidated during the rise of English, the most forceful proponents of this idea in the gloom of the post-First World War years in Britain were F.R. Leavis and T.S. Eliot, the former a middle-class boy accommodating to the dominant culture into which the new age permitted his entry, the latter an American who sought equally to align himself with his version of organic, authentic society. In bewailing Scotland’s missing Zolas, Tom Nairn grieves for an absent tradition of urban realism, a literature which would record contemporary life in the nineteenth century, in order that its totality would represent the continuity of social development, preserving a Scottish culture amid the economic and cultural absorption of Scotland into England’s empire. Seeking the literary history of Scotland, Nairn utilises the tools of the bourgeois-humanist traditions within which Scots are rendered invisible, and implements them in a manner which seeks to render middle-class life in Scotland marginal.

Since most women authors have originated from the middle-classes, their burden of domestic responsibilities sometimes lessened by affluence, their writing is paradoxically obscured by a critical discourse seeking to champion male, urban proletarian writing as the essence of indigenous Scottish culture. Again, when existing centres are broken down alternative centres are constructed. As with MacDiarmid, one set of "worthies" is liable to pronounce upon and prescribe another set of "worthies" as the solution to their perceived cultural decline, missing the point that each is merely building their own wee centre in disavowal of the plurality they may espouse.

The excessive preoccupation of critics with the assertion of their parochially inscribed model of Scottishness has contributed to the prolongation of sexism in the cultural sphere, the double marginalisation of women. Yet a solution is possible: dispensing with the inferiorist codification of culture demands challenging the hegemony of centres, and instead of a select few defining canons of arts according to metropolitan or proto-metropolitan cultural values, in pursuit of the essential culture, the broad range of indigenous traditions and ongoing practices need to be affirmed. Cairns Craig asserts emphatically that there is
nothing wrong with the culture of the peripheries. What we need is to question the health of the institutions which continue to propagandise for a conception of literary tradition within a national framework which has not conformed to the reality of writing in English for over a century.\textsuperscript{34}

Plurality must entail the empowerment of, as distinct from mere representation on behalf of, non-dominant cultures. Empowerment implies handing over the reins of determination to others, all others, and in characterising the parallel agenda those female voices may be heard, and their more inclusive vision identified. Before introducing the framework within which it operates, it is illuminating to consider the specific responses this fiction has received, which have confined it to the margins of "feminine" inscription.

**Women’s Place: Faint Praise And Limited Output**

Why are women under-represented as published authors ?, asks Mary Eagleton. There is no concerted conspiracy by men to keep women out of print, she says, but rather a complex combination of material and ideological factors that inhibit the potential woman writer:

> The catalogue of material problems is long - inequalities in the education system, lack of privacy, the burdens of child-bearing and rearing, domestic obligations - but equally decisive are the restrictions of family and social expectation. Even when women writers solve the material problems that prevent their writing, an anxiety about their chosen role and how they are perceived continues to surface.\textsuperscript{35}

The material conditions in which the authors in this study existed were not favourable to literary careers. Their relation to their society is paradoxical, furnishing their position within the parallel agenda. With some exceptions and some anomalies, and echoed in the thrust of the renaissance, life in Scotland has through most of the last two hundred years, and in most sections of society, revolved around the needs, comforts, ambitions and self-images of men. The achievements of women have come largely as a result

\textsuperscript{34}Craig, Cairns, "Peripheries", p.9.

of women detaching themselves from the impositions of men, or of accepting them as a necessary preliminary to getting on with their own lives.\textsuperscript{36}

On examination, we can also see that the social changes wrought during the period of their careers is related to the distinction between work produced before the First World War and after it, representing the parallel transition from Victorian through Edwardian to writing in the post-war period. The younger authors appear to have been unable to sustain their creative output as well as their elders, though their material conditions were if anything slightly more favourable. While important changes took place regarding women's social status, a literary career did not become easily attainable, and their basic relation to patriarchal society remained that of the marginalised.

Eagleton defines patriarchy as a social system which ensures the dominance of men and the subordination of women.\textsuperscript{37} There can be little doubting the applicability of this description to the Victorian society into which each of the authors to be studied was born, from the still-affluent 1860s to the uncertain 1890s. In both its mid-century expansion and subsequent economic slow-down, the paradoxical relation of women to that society is clear. As the industrial economy grew, and wealth in Britain multiplied, middle-class women found themselves, despite some gains in freedom of expression, locked in a suffocatingly confined lifestyle:

As the Victorian age progressed, conventions became more and more restrictive. Girls could no longer go out and meet young men in Princes Street, or make up parties to attend entertainments. Whenever they set foot outside the house, they had to be accompanied by at least a maid. There was a renewed preoccupation with theology and a censorship of books thought unsuitable for young ladies to read. The \textit{joie de vivre} of the eighteenth century was replaced by a gloomy sentimentality, and women


turned more and more from dancing and the theatre to doing good works.\(^{38}\)

The rights of women in this period were changing, but their circumscription remained enforced. In these conditions imagery of confinement and disease is an aspect of reality to be recorded, underpinning its corresponding literary strategies:

Taking little exercise, spending their lives in stuffy rooms, wearing constricting clothing and with their health often undermined by frequent childbearing, it was small wonder that many of these women had little energy.\(^{38}\)

During these years of economic advance, Marion Reid pitched her plea for the rights of women, pointing out that though in the age of progress woman's condition is happier than among "savage nations", it is not much improved, "if at all, in relation to her Lord".\(^{39}\) But by the period leading up to that of this study, from the early 1870s to the end of the century, the repeated failure of agriculture and stasis in industry set about a new mood, one which influenced the shift to artistic decadence, apocalyptic poetry and pessimism in fin de siecle art:

The past could no longer be looked to as a source of reassuring precedent, while the future, in its turn, boded nothing but failure and despair.\(^{40}\)

Standards of middle-class living had increased enormously up to this period, as Rosalind Marshall notes and, anxious though the authorities were to encourage girls to fit themselves for their future domestic duties, in this new insecurity, "the growing demand for more academic education could not be denied.\(^{40}\) Choice within the restricted female sphere increased as the ideological power of patriarchy weakened, leading to amendments of the law concerning property within marriage. But typically, total financial self-control by women was still withheld, and husbands could continue to administer their wives' property. Influenced by their relative circumstances, the dualisms common to the writing of the nineteenth century are susceptible to distinction by sex into parallel themes, as we shall see in the third chapter. The earlier group of writers, Violet Jacob


and the Findlater sisters, grew up in this context, educated, aware, but without the emancipatory changes to which the younger group were subject.

However, the substantial advance made by women in society did make it possible for some writers to go their own way. Influenced by their traditionalist upbringing, the younger group nonetheless looked out in adulthood on a changing world and social panorama, allowing them advance where male institutions were in retreat. Some suffragists had openly resented the abandoning of their cause for the First World War, but in fact, she says, the war was to so alter society that when it ended, their battle had been won:

They [women] were to be found stoking furnaces, rolling out barrels in breweries, acting as bank-clerks and bus-conductors, and most notably of all, working in large numbers in munitions factories. No-one could withhold admiration for their devoted efforts, and particularly esteemed were those women who were directly involved in the conflict as doctors and nurses. (Marshall, p. 291)

But a caveat to the improvements in women’s rights is always necessary, now as then: as Marion Reid observed, relative disadvantage persists despite advances, and the new world of possibility should not be exaggerated. There remained disparity between personal potential and social acceptability. Women came under pressure to return to the home after the war as the imperial economy stagnated, to resume their subsidiary role despite legal rights to greater choice. While Scotland provides the ideal context for concerns with redefining the world and the place of the individual within it in the age of modernism, the new writing of its women deals with an alienation caused by advance beyond the securities of old bonds, and the hostility of the privileged caste to it. New conditions lead to new visions, and innovative art, but the continuity of relative disadvantage persists: like many a new era, old ways proved resilient, and the basis of women’s writing in a parallel agenda remained in force.

Each author was both beneficiary and victim of the status of her sex. Born into the middle-classes, all enjoyed some ease of choice at certain periods in their lives, but none was unburdened by the moral and economic constraints described. As for their writing itself, it was met with a variety of responses typifying the faint praise by which women’s writing is withheld entry into the canon of "proper" literature. If we break down the categories that are the staple of Victorian periodical reviewing, according to Elaine Showalter, we find that women writers were acknowledged to possess sentiment, refinement, tact,
observation, domestic expertise, high moral tone, and knowledge of female character; and thought to lack originality, intellectual training, abstract intelligence, humour, self-control, and knowledge of male character. Some of this attribution is made to the novels of the parallel agenda, while in the careers of the youngest writers, self-deprecation appears to hold them back. Filtered out from "real" literature, the writing of these women has suffered domesticisation of attribution in accordance with their social position. Various feminist theorists have indicated ways in which critics apply gender characteristics to both sexes. This has been particularly true in the Findlater sisters' case, and more subtly of Violet Jacob.

These three women, the older group of the authors, grew up in the north of Scotland in the second half of the Victorian age, the Findlaters daughters of the manse at Lochearnhead, who moved frequently and lived simply, Jacob a daughter of the house of Dun, whose military marriage took her around the world. Jacob's literary reputation resembles her life by beginning and ending in Angus, since it is her lyric poetry that is best remembered, and remembered principally for its couthiness of diction. We will look at the implications of this shortly.

The three differ from their successors not least in the relatively large body of work they produced. As far as the achievements of the sisters go however, we must keep in mind that, apart from joint productions, the abilities of the two generally differ. Mary, the elder sister (1865-1963), is rightly regarded as the lesser talent. Her predilection for Christian sentimentality restricts her thematic growth, leading to relatively simple character development and melodramatic plots. Heroines struggle thanklessly against misfortune to fulfil familial duty, and their virtue, noted by their narrator, is usually also rewarded by the benevolence of a worthy gentleman. When it isn't, the reader is invited to share the heroine's dismay. Mary only occasionally rises above this moralising convention, and most of her writing does not merit re-appraisal at this distance. She is never devoid of interest though, and in her best novels equals her sister, using unusual stylistic strategies in accordance with the parallel agenda.

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Jane Helen Findlater (1866-1946) is rarely less than impressive. More frequently in her writing, including her short stories, as well as the jointly authored *Crossriggs*, bolder and more complex work is found, creating novels still worth valuing. Jane favours the harsher realities of life, without conventional faith, and sometimes with little hope for the social condition of her heroines.

Like Jacob, both sisters’ starting point is the conventional art of story-telling, in the accepted narrative mode. According to their 1960s biographer Eileen Mackenzie, 

the Findlater stories and novels are unpretentious, simple narratives, not constructed from any exotic or subtle viewpoint [...] They are leisurely in pace, but interestingly near in style to the spoken word [...]"^2

That is, presumably, the spoken word as it reflects "feminine" expectation in polite society. As for the sisters themselves,

they were ladies of the old school [...] fine and sensitive in feature and manner, apt of speech, brimming with intelligence. (Mackenzie,p.xii)

Such judges as Eileen Mackenzie come to praise the women and end by burying them. The Findlaters find their biography conflated with their fiction, producing the conclusion that the old-fashioned "femininity" of their lives, depicted as a pastoral idyll of beneficent charm, could lead only to a modest and moderate writing. As the scope for this kind of peace disappears with the First World War, their novels must inevitably be forgotten. The sisters were approaching their sixties by then, so it is hardly surprising that their ironic vision and productivity dwindled. This the critical fate of writing whose admirers numbered Henry James and Virginia Woolf."^3

Faint praise damns women’s literature, and the achievements of the sisters, separately and together, remain subject to "feminisation". Perhaps preferable to the silence otherwise conferred on the pair by critics since their initial international success, Trevor Royle’s assessment of them nonetheless exhibits the prejudices outlined by Toril Moi in relation to the imposition of gender oppositions in literary

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criticism, characterised by Mary Ellmann as "phallic criticism". Moi recounts the instance of two reviews of the Danish poet Cecil Bodtker, treated initially by her male reviewer as a man, then correctly as a woman. A glowing review abounds in active verbs and has relatively few adjectives, though the ones that do occur are powerfully positive ones: "joyous", "enthusiastic", "rich", and so on. (Moi, 1985, p. 34)

Discovering that the poet is a woman, the same critic describes her second collection as:

no more than "pleasant", [with] three times as many adjectives, and these have not only changed in nature ("pretty", "healthy", "down to earth"), but also show an alarming propensity for taking on modifiers ("somewhat", "a certain", "probably" - none of them occurred in the first review); furthermore, the adjectives "little" or "small" suddenly become central to the critic's discourse. (p. 35)

Royle says of the Findlaters:

By far the sisters' greatest achievement was the novel Crossriggs [...] a romance of upper-class manners, the novel is a light-hearted and frequently humorous examination of village life and is made memorable by its gallery of well-drawn characters. His "light-hearted", "frequently humorous", and "well-drawn" confer the same diminution on an excellent novel, stereotyping its scale, theme and quality.

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Violet Jacob (1863-1946) suffers a slightly different fate. She is recalled as a poet, but her poetry has been subject to the same treatment by critics. Kurt Wittig gives Jacob credit for "strong feelings" in her poetry, remarking that:

though the background is rural, she does try to give it a more universal meaning.46

Like a school report card, she does try, but could do better. Colin Milton, while praising Jacob’s modern concerns, also points to her lack of risk-taking, and in placing her in the folk-tradition, emphasises her marginality. It is the influence of this sort of local and peripheral poetry on MacDiarmid that Milton is concerned with, regarding marginal subject matter as marginal art.47 But in fact his assessment of Jacob’s poetic achievement is a fair one. The point is that the poet’s work remembered beyond her lifetime is that which fits into the framework of the MacDiarmid renaissance orthodoxy, her novels, originally successful themselves, lying neglected until recently.

In each of the forms Jacob wrote in, she utilised progressively more complex moral and aesthetic dimensions, refining technique along with vision. Her meagre portion of fame would imply that the movement in her career to narrativeless, lyrical evocation of longing and loss is her finest, but inevitably limited achievement. As a novelist Jacob embodies much that is common to writing of the late Victorian and Edwardian periods, but she is never as concerned with domestic subject-matter as the Findlaters, preferring unusual adventure-romance formats. Ignoring what does not accord with the "masculine" orthodoxy, critical posterity has then found wanting, not surprisingly, literature which does not fit it. Rejected at the outset for being women, women writers can hardly be expected to equal men in describing men’s interests. Such has been the demand by those engaged with the Scottish-English opposition.

This is Joy Hendry’s major complaint about the likes of Wittig. She quotes MacDiarmid’s own verdict on Jacob, which operates along precisely these lines. The limited application of his view to the totality and diversity expressible in writing by Scots of either sex is apparent in his conclusion: he


attributes her [Jacob’s] "failure to achieve greatness" to the fact that she was furthering an English, not a Scottish tradition, and laments the "divided and, in the last analysis, ineffectual nature of her prose work - as in her apparent obliviousness to the vital problems confronting Scottish nationality today, which a better-oriented spirit with her raciality of character could not have refrained from addressing" [...]

In other words,

the present position of Scotland as a nation has deprived us of all but a shadow of the Mrs. Jacob whom in less over-Anglicised circumstances we might have had.

The implementation of binary oppositions in relation to Jacob and the Findlaters has been of this two-fold variety. From the range of division within the Scottish scene, criticism has been based, on one hand, on the gender attribution which regards writing by women in terms of stereotypical "femininity"; and on the other, it has been subject to the criteria of Scottish versus English characteristics, again overwhelmingly as prescribed by men.

Unhappily for her reputation in her native country, Catherine Carswell (1879-1946), the fourth of our authors, wrote from a thoroughly middle-class standpoint, and her idiosyncratic attitudes to the crisis of civilisation, little connected with class-consciousness, challenge rather than affirm patriarchal orthodoxy. In spanning the pre- and post-war writers, her work ushers in the modernist approach to fiction. Accordingly, her contribution to the parallel agenda partakes of some of the elements which distinguish the later authors, while retaining limitation of the sort found among her predecessors.

Despite the fact that Carswell’s Life Of Robert Burns originally made her popular, and that she described herself as "merely the author of two novels" as opposed to a novelist, Carswell’s two novels are nonetheless her major achievement. Being to a large extent autobiographical, both books contain


much of their author’s experience, including that of Scotland, and especially Glasgow. The social and cultural context she portrays is not that of slum housing or shipyards however, but the upper middle-class milieu of the Edwardian West End, and indeed, though drawn vividly and with sympathy, it is itself a background to be transcended as the author develops her personal vision of life, and female identity within it. Not only did she not write *The Shipbuilders*, but Carswell’s view owes more to William than George Blake, and in particular, is closer to D.H.Lawrence than MacArthur and Long, the authors whose story of gangland urban Glasgow has been so influential in the mythology of that city.\(^{51}\)

Thus does she stand out with the compass of that narrowly focused critical stance.

The youngest writers, placed together in my development of the parallel agenda, are Willa Muir (1890-1970), and Nan Shepherd (1893-1981). Edwin Muir, in his autobiography, speaks eloquently and at great length about his relationship with literature; in her memoir, *Belonging*, Willa recounts equally eloquently her relationship with Edwin. Her own literary career receives no more than a few hundred words sprinkled through the book. Though admirable in its modesty, the author’s reticence here amounts almost to a vice. The vigorous and forthright personality that emerges from her personal correspondence and other papers however, possesses a formidable intellect and disarming wit. Muir shared, along with many other women, the role of support to a husband’s career, and mother to their child, while actively engaged in a career of her own, and acquiesced in the faint praise that regards her as a mere adjunct to Edwin. Another common factor in women’s marginalisation, failure to self-promote is interpreted as permission to withhold attention. Recognising her divergence from the bespoke design of the renaissance, Lewis Grassic Gibbon proclaimed that Muir had the promise to become "a great artist. But a great English artist".\(^{52}\) Though intended as praise of Muir’s internationalism, Gibbon again confirms the polarised choices, using "English" and "international" synonymously. The critical attitude to the Muirs acts as a microcosm of the orthodoxy of the renaissance, and is repeated in critics’ greater interest in Carswell’s friend D.H.Lawrence when discussing her.

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\(^{52}\)Grassic Gibbon, Lewis, "Literary Lights", *Scottish Scene*, pp.194-207, p.201.
No such problems befell Nan Shepherd as she embarked upon a literary career. She was instantly successful, regaled with critical plaudits from various sources. Eulogised by the *New York Weekly Book News* for her first novel, Shepherd was, in the reviewer’s words:

an author of unusual importance, a novelist to put alongside Sheila Kaye-Smith, and Mary Webb, Kathleen Coyle, Willa Cather, Virginia Woolf and Ellen Glasgow.53

Of middle-class roots in the north-east, Shepherd was content to remain there most of her life, teaching and helping her students, her work as editor of the *Aberdeen University Review* typifying the unglamorous, non-individualistic work undertaken by many women to no great reward. It was after the initial flush of publication that she found her motivation waned. Her description of her achievements later in life reflects the same modesty shown by Muir, and indeed the same willingness to share which characterises their literary vision. But in neither case does it betoken ignorance of the realities of their world. In the course of her editorial vocation, Shepherd wrote in praise of MacDiarmid’s rising star, but well understood the selective criteria of his project, by which the likes of herself would be vanquished. Approving a sceptical review written of MacDiarmid, in a letter to its author, Alexander Keith, she comments:

Folk who set up arbitrary standards and who condemn all those who don’t conform to them require a few stabs to bring them to sanity; though, to judge from his [MacDiarmid’s] plaintive remark that all his critics except you [Keith] appreciate his efforts, the gentleman seems to have too tough a hide for the stabs to be very effectual. He’s fair clorted wi’ conceit.54

The awareness is present, the parallel agenda a strand of literature in Scotland posing an alternative to the narrow path of class or gender ideology, resisting the orthodoxies by which the many are held in thrall of the few. From latent tendencies and partially developed themes in some of the earliest novels of Jacob and the Findlaters, the stylistic devices and social issues which constitute their best writing are utilised more overtly in the sisters’ Edwardian fiction, developed more fully by Carswell in her unusual style, and culminate in the work of Muir and Shepherd, their different resolutions of the paradoxical relation of women to community characterised as their "third way", which occupies the third section of


54 Shepherd, Nan, in a letter to Alexander Keith, January 1930, located in M.S. 3017, Department Of Special Collections, University Of Aberdeen Library.
the thesis. The earlier work is in effect treated as foreshadowing the greater achievements of this pair. Concerns about the plight of individuals curiously deconstruct the adventure stories of Jacob and Christian sentiments of the Findlaters, but the form and content of the third way is fully integrated for its purpose, and deserves acclamation anew.

That each of these women not only asserts the rights of her sex but affirms the plurality of community is at times a tricky balancing act, manifest in a variety of approaches to the vexed questions of how society functions, how women are treated in it, how interpersonal relations are performed. Yet from their basis of traditions common to female authors, and specifically favoured by Scots when addressing their historical and political condition, their place in the parallel agenda marks out a singular expression of a strand of culture much needed and worth upholding. From this evocation of the basis of the author’s double marginalisation, we can proceed to define the terms on which their fiction operates.
Chapter Two

WOMEN'S FICTION AND THE ROMANTIC PARADIGM

Thus a circle would be completed in which woman seeks to express the infinite in terms of the individual life, while man seeks to express the individual life in terms of the infinite (Willa Muir)\(^5\)

Dominant groups maintain their status over others by defining their separateness from them. The broad canvas of historical continuity, as seen in chapter one, has its personal analogue in the liberal-humanist conception of individuality as complete, consistent, sealed and autonomous. Based on political and economic power, these models exclude women, relegating them to their peripheral position. Chapter two elucidates the alternative paradigm applicable to marginal groups generally and women in particular, among whom collective and individual identity derives from quite different principles.

Elaine Showalter derides sexism in literary history, and seeks a positive representation of women, in writing by women, but in so doing she commits a similar prescriptive error to that of the 1920s Scottish renaissance. Commenting on Patricia Stubbs’s similar complaint against all novels written by both men and women in the period between 1890 and 1920, Toril Moi says:

Stubbs echoes Showalter’s objection to [Virginia] Woolf's fiction when she claims that in Woolf "there is no coherent attempt to create new models, new images" of women.\(^6\)

However, this demand for new, realistic images of women takes it for granted that feminist writers should want to use realistic fictional forms in the first place. What feminists such as Showalter fail to grasp, Moi maintains, is that


\(^6\)Moi, Toril, Sexual/Textual Politics, p.5.
the traditional humanism they represent is in effect part of
patriarchal ideology. At its centre is the seamlessly unified self -
either individual or collective - which is commonly called "Man"
[...]. History or the text become nothing but the expression of this
unique individual. (Moi,1985,pp.5-6)

This is the expression of the individual in terms of the infinite, liberal-humanist
individualism, as alluded to by Willa Muir in the above epigraph. Recent feminist
thought has moved on from the "images of women" debate, to question the notion
of the unified self, seeking to undo the associated binary opposition enacted
between "masculine" and "feminine" attribution to objects, actions and individuals,
and a non-unified model of self is the basis of Moi’s acclamation of Woolf.

Taking Showalter to task over her liberal-humanism, Moi says Showalter’s
assumptions lead her to strongly favour the form of writing commonly known as
critical, or bourgeois, realism. It is no coincidence that the only major literary
theoretician Showalter alludes to in her chapter on Woolf is Georg Lukacs. For
Lukacs,

the great realists succeeded in representing the totality of human
life in its social context, thus representing the fundamental truth of
history: "the unbroken, upward evolution of mankind [sic]."
(Moi, 1985, p.5)

Since the notion of autonomous identity has risen with the ideology of progress,
writing which undercuts it implies a philosophical challenge to progress’s
hegemony. Woolf herself reveals a sceptical attitude that radically undermines the
conception of the unitary self, for instance in the merging of land and sea, and of
light and dark into new shades of grey, by which binary oppositions are collapsed
in To The Lighthouse.57

It remains in patriarchal interest to confuse the terms "female" and "feminine",
to convince people that there is such a thing as a unified structure, an essence of
femaleness, called "femininity", Moi argues. Though women are undoubtedly
female, this offers no guarantee that they will be "feminine":

Published 1927).
Essentialism (the belief in a given female nature) in the end always plays into the hands of those who want women to conform to predefined patterns of femininity. Should feminists develop another set of "feminine" virtues, however desirable? It is, again, the undoing of a binary oppositional relation of male to female, "masculine" to "feminine", which challenges the marginality of the latter. Helene Cixous is the most influential feminist writer on the subject, exemplifying some of the following oppositions, which arise from binary oppositional attribution between the sexes:

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<td>Emotion</td>
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<td>Intelligible</td>
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<td>Logos</td>
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Each opposition can be analysed as a hierarchy where the female side is always seen as the negative, powerless instance. But attempting to bestow an alternative set of characteristics upon the entire female sex is no less essentialist than those they replace, and no less oppressive to those women who do not want to play the role of Earth Mother: "continuing to advocate binary thought, implicitly or explicitly, is self-defeating". (Moi, 1986, p.212) Thus we return to the question of position. Defining "femininity" in relation to position in the symbolic order avoids postulating a unified, "feminine" essentialism. This does not of course finally resolve the matter, since if we deconstruct the female out of existence, then the basis for addressing women's reality disappears also. But it remains crucial to retain this theoretical model plus a defence of women, as women, and in so doing, to understand that each sex is placed within metaphysical gender categories, containing differential status which, like all stories, literary or social, may be read in many ways, may be altered, or replaced entirely. (Moi, 1986, p.214) Self-identity is not reducible to an essence, but results from an amalgam of myriad influences, and, most importantly, has the potential to change.

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A non-essential conception of selfhood lies at the heart of the fiction of Zola’s female alternatives in Scotland, and is both the cause and consequence of the narrative strategies whose combination contributes to the parallel agenda. In common with Woolf, the continually re-definable nature of self is implied as each writer engages with her social context, and this implication comes to be expressed as a positively feminist assertion by Woolf’s contemporaries, via the elements of a framework which this chapter will define. The non-unified model of self emerges from narratives, sometimes inconsistently, in others by design. It presents a deconstructive quality in texts, utilised in ways largely different from, at times similar to that of Woolf’s modernist writing. The post-war group makes increasingly positive use of this quality, asserting the theoretical potential to re-define "feminine" and personal identity beyond the still relatively disadvantaged social position women are located in, and defined by. But their writing does not simply reflect the opposite of the fixed, autonomous subject, a non-existent self: rather, this non-unified identity occupies the territory between, creating a new option which confirms the contiguity of, and therefore, in Muir’s epigraphic phrase, the infinity within individuals. The best critical appraisal of the novels studied herein features acknowledgement of certain recognisable qualities in their style, without overall appreciation of intent, and consequently lacking full comprehension. In order to comprehend that context and the content of themes and their stylistic structures as they render this non-essentialist conception of identity in novels, it is necessary to analyse them within a framework of traditions common to women, growing in the age of Romanticism.

**THE ROMANTIC PARADIGM**

We ourselves are post-Romantics.(Eagleton, T.,p.18) Writing by women shares some of the concerns expressed in the paradigm of much of Romanticism, with its deep insecurity about the nature of social organisation, but with their own reasons, their own relation to social organisation, their own strand of the parallel agenda. By defining the paradigm, we can define the divergent relation of the sexes to it. During the evolution of Romanticism key values arose which informed much literature well into this century, only undergoing their greatest revision in modernism. The paradigmatic model of Romanticism features oppositions between the increasingly secular modern world and the aesthetic ideals of artists, between the harsh philistinism of material progress and the need to reaffirm universal significance in human experience. Yet the values of progress
and those of Romanticism grew simultaneously out of similar assumptions about their new, Enlightenment age.

The period in question witnessed more rapid change than most others in history, a relentless trend to urbanisation at the expense of a rural population, and industrial labour over agricultural occupation, which itself was greatly reorganised in accordance with modern methods. In Scotland, whose juxtaposed land and cultures provided the basis for literary Romanticism, inspired by MacPherson's "discovery" of Ossian in the midst of the Enlightenment, the initial phase of what was later to be called the industrial revolution had its most dramatic effects only by the end of the eighteenth century, in the main textile industries of cotton and linen. The industrial transformation of the country was taken a step further when steam replaced water as the main source of power, and still further after 1838 with the development in the iron industry of Nielson's hot blast technique. The significance of this was to swing the weight of population to the south-west of the central valley, where urbanisation became a significant feature by the second decade of the nineteenth century, later than in north-west England, but with compensatory speed. Glasgow expanded to accommodate displaced people from Ireland and the Highlands, its trade and then heavy industries dictating the pace and shape of life, of which could be said:

the manufacturing system as it exists in Great Britain, and the inconceivably rapid increase of immense towns under it, are without parallel in the history of the world.

For the proponents of progress the changing face of the country manifested their profound belief in the upward evolution of the race, expressed in the Scottish Enlighteners' concept of "conjectural history", the story of the inevitable advance of civilisation. David Hume declared that this was "the historical age, and this

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Hume's historiography works backwards, explaining each age in terms of its successor. "We look back on the savage conditions of our ancestors", wrote Thomas Warton, premised on the development of those few decades, "with the triumph of superiority". Progress in this view is the justification of the perfect civilisation of the present, rational and orderly, "the great antidote to the poison of enthusiasm and superstition".

But:

out of the philosophical scepticism and the social turbulence of the French Revolution and the American War of Independence, [Romantic irony] posits a universe founded in chaos and incomprehensibility, rather than a divinely ordained teleology. Hume it was, in his greater capacity as philosopher, who placed the time-bomb under the Enlightenment, informing Romanticism in the succeeding generation. By his rigorous empiricism, Hume reduced experience to casual fragments of conscious perception, on which the notion of causality is imposed and, likewise, in characterising history as the ordering of random complex events by imagination, he undercut the concept of progress while defining it. For Hume's successors, the garden was not rosy. In fact, it was in danger of succumbing to urban blight. Rationalist and humanist principles are said to have flourished because Scottish society was an organic society, not one based on compartmentalised organisation. Yet within Scotland progress as manifest in urbanisation seemed to contradict this, and was not necessarily so appreciated by those required to inhabit the new urban sprawls, and the vast enforced displacement of peoples north of the highland line has proved an act of depopulation from which that part of the country, and culture in all parts, have never recovered. Evocation of the Highland Clearances continues, in repudiation

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63Quoted in Ferguson, William, Scotland: 1689 To The Present, p.214.

64ibid, p.215.

65ibid, p.215, quoting Adam Smith.


of the alleged benefits of progress to Scotland. Progress brought with it three significant effects which troubled Scottish Enlighteners: the division of labour, without which the progress of society would be impossible; the social inequality which results; and the political tranquillity which is the result of commercial and industrial progress, and necessary for its continuance. For the imaginative writer, these new structures constituted an obstacle between the individual and the universe made by God:

For eighteenth century thinkers the universe as a well-made clock had seemed a cheerful argument for the existence of a divine Maker. On the other side of the industrial revolution, however, the metaphor has become a steam engine, [...] a "Mill of Death" - powerful, mindless, insensate, and automatic. The solution was to redefine the primacy of spirit and the power of the mind [...] The here-and-now obscured God's provenance from human view, leaving the transcendental ego of the autonomous human subject with nothing external to confirm its spiritual actuality. The transcendent act became in effect one of escape from, rather than affirmation of, the self in its material reality. Romantic artists disavowed this world, in favour of another one, simultaneously above and within. Having been severed from the land, from nature, from faith, from God, the Romantic countered by constructing a set of oppositional values, demeaning progressive qualities in favour of their opposites. In effect these codified their own values in a binary opposition comparable with that of Scottish or "feminine" inferiority. Oppositions include:

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<th>Progress:</th>
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<tr>
<td>society</td>
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<tr>
<td>rationality</td>
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<td>the present</td>
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<td>urban life</td>
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<tr>
<td>sophistication</td>
<td>simplicity</td>
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<td>affluence</td>
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Celebrating the primacy of the *imaginative* grasp of God’s universe, the social plane is eschewed and the natural domain in which it is located sought out. Thus the first four of these oppositions. But that the preferred "natural" realm is in fact beyond the phenomenal, a projection of the mind of the poet, effectively reduces contemporary life to caricature, leaving nature as a fiction. In attempting to evoke a living spirit in the universe, Wordsworth parts company with the radical implications of Burns, positing honest nature not only above, but beyond sophisticated society, claiming poverty as an ideal state. His Cumberland beggar is drawn as a natural phenomenon:

Reverence the hope whose vital anxiousness
Gives the last human interest to his heart.
May never House, misnamed of industry,
Make him a captive; for that pent-up din,
Those life-consuming sounds that clog the air,
Be his the natural silence of old age.  

We may not require "positive images" of life from such a work, but by abstracting it from reality, the poet ultimately patronises and reifies his subject matter. Upholding a schematic natural world, Wordsworth illustrates the oppositions of the Romantic paradigm with, in particular, its emphasis on mind, above, beyond, and separate from, material reality. This aspect in Romanticism by-passes social issues because it is premised on conjectural history, it has conceded the basis of progress. Detached from that social progress, but unable to argue with it, material values are rejected in the Romantic paradigm, the constructed spiritual and aesthetic realms of the artist sought as refuge. Personal reality takes on a divided quality, and the valued, "true" self is located in the imaginative realm, free of the influence of society. Despite the implicit mediation of external influence upon the speaker’s attitudes and the old beggar described, selfhood remains the autonomous conception of the individual. The relation of past to present in this paradigm informs its exemplars’ treatment of the linear form of time and history, whose characteristic use by women forms the second plank of the framework of this study, and which we will discuss after considering the first, the concept of Romantic irony, which grew out of this paradigm in so much nineteenth century literature.

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IRONIC SPEECH ACTS AND THE SEARCH FOR PEACE

Romantic Irony

Irony has a pedigree encompassing literary history, and presumably pre-dates the earliest written culture. It is an instrument for the delineation of all contradiction. David Amante posits ironic speech acts as the simplest form of irony, entailing what he calls a simple reversal plot in which a projected set of expectations is overturned, for example when at a business dinner one lowly, anxious employee spills his drink over the managing director, and a colleague remarks "smooth move". Ridiculing the spiller of the drink, this simple piece of sarcasm confers judgement based on social expectation, and so is conservative in its effect. But irony extends all the way into literary deconstruction and reconstruction, predating and facilitating the ontological insecurities of later literary generations; it helps to express the decline of philosophical and religious certainties that grew after the European renaissance, predicating insecurity as a major artistic focus, from the baroque to the postmodern. To the German Romantics and the Victorians in Britain, forms of irony provided a means to express the paradoxical nature of reality, since they could suggest the polarities which post-Kantian philosophy found everywhere in experience. As the nineteenth century unfolded, the concept of Romantic irony became central to literature, a significant part of the spirit-of-the-age,

a recurrent sceptical reaction to the egotistical sublime of Christian fundamentalism, apocalyptic poetry, and Victorian myths of progress and imperialism. (Mellor, p.vii)

Uncertainty undermines absolute values, making some people cling to them more frantically, while others apply flexible models to their ideas. Romantic writers sought the latter way to proceed, building the artistic illusion before revealing that the artist is the arbitrary creator, undermining the artist's implicit status as higher deity over the fictional world. Typifying this in his fictional work Sartor


Resartus, Thomas Carlyle contrasts his putative editor with the lyrical philosopher-prophet Professor Teufelsdrockh, the latter’s philosophy of clothes acting as a rich and sustained metaphor in his critique of contemporary utilitarian practices and political expediency, which in turn shifts and changes with the mood of its fictional creator, and is subject to the interpretation of its baffled editor. Visionary of the Victorians, Carlyle constructs his text out of the unstable relation of mind and world. From its earliest classical forms to present day usage, the concept of irony retains at its heart this awareness of contradiction in experience. Its applications are far-ranging and profound, yet it is at its slightest degree of profundity that ironic awareness is acknowledged as a tradition among women, by men. Douglas Gifford identifies in writing by Scottish women the tendency to remain within an ironic and comparative tradition, unconsciously mirroring the tensions within Scotland between a sense of traditional manners and language, and a growing sense of the worth of aspirations to "North British" (and eventually downright English) identity.

Such a tradition, encouraged in the nineteenth century by Blackwood’s Magazine, continues Gifford, is based on this implicit measuring process, in which the author’s eye moves back and forward between the polite and the vulgar, the exotic and the familiar, the English and the Scottish, in ways which present Scottish types, like Smollett’s soldier Lesmahagow, as parodies of the native. The mode is exhibitory, the audience meant to compare their own implied superiority with the inferiority of the subjects described. (p.237) The Scottish characteristics in "improver-satire", as he calls it, are demeaned. But he points out that, regarded as a trend in women’s writing, authors created their own ironic tradition, addressing common concerns of their sex. This "measuring process" after all, still retains the ironic awareness of conflict in experience, expressly basing its evaluation on the relative status of the two sides of its comparison. Even on its restricted level of operation, the connection of irony with power and powerlessness, and its relevance to women, is implicit. But it is in a more demanding context that women’s irony is at its best, one that coincides with the


maturing of "improver-satire" into a more insightful, self-reflexive form towards the end of the nineteenth century, and Gifford concludes by asking for more in-depth study of women's literature in Scotland.

Women's Realm

Beyond the domestication imposed upon it, women's ironic vision shares in Romantic irony, endorsing its oppositions of self and society, while reaching in directions distinct from male contemporaries. The problems of the Western world signify differently in key respects between the sexes. Each is concerned with power, or at least control of themselves within their world, but each regards the matter from distinctive viewpoints within the symbolic order. Characterised by the effects of commercial expansion and private wealth, the Victorian era featured division between private and public, between overt ideals and covert practice, enforcing the double standard. Christian morality formed the surface value of society, but surplus value was at its core. Here the divisions in experience encountered by the sexes are predicated on their divergent relation to wealth, women's social and personal spheres determined by their greater dependency in the socio-economic nexus. As Fraser Harrison puts it, the inter-dependent relationship that exists between a society's economy and its culture may be discerned in the similarity of attitudes adopted by the Victorian middle-classes towards their spiritual and financial investments. The commercial thrust of society dictates the possibilities of success, with marriage as the clearest example of investment and reward:

The penetration of sexuality by money was the factor which determined the character of relationships between middle-class men and women. The sexual appeal of women had become inextinguishably associated with their material worth, and similarly, male virility was inseparably identified with monetary power. It is by this basic scale of bourgeois values that mid-Victorian marriage must be assessed. 77

Experience was privatised, formal relations a business, and women's use of irony was engendered on the terms around which marriage was organised. Acknowledging the conflation of sexuality with marriage in this passage, and that the later years of Victoria were marked by insecurity in these arrangements, it is fair to say the bulk of individuals were disposed to accept this thrust in their

77Harrison, Fraser, The Dark Angel, p.26.
society. The gamut of ironic potential, all the way up to the deconstructive effects achieved by Carlyle, belong to women as an element in their paradoxical relation with the reality they inhabit. Material facts of life in the first half of the century, where "Perfect woman" was officially idealised as the "Angel in the house" and subversive feminism gathered its forces, in Brownstein’s words, served to intensify the novel’s preoccupation with women’s lives, and the self-reflexiveness with which it was inclined to pursue the subject:

becoming a heroine seemed more than ever fraught with ironies, in fiction as in real life. (Brownstein, p. 147)

Susan Ferrier’s *Marriage*, written in the early nineteenth century when the expository mode was being cultivated, provides an illustration both of "improversatire" and the connection with Romantic irony.78

Portraying the travails of a young woman unfitted for the superficiality of social expectation, Ferrier’s novel exemplifies the ironic and indeed sarcastic comedy of manners alluded to by Gifford, but within this expresses the tension between self, society and God’s universe typified by Romantic irony. The lower class of Scotch manners is held up for ridicule as a “flock of females” descends on their visiting English in-law, Lady Juliana, who is repulsed by the grease-laden "homely fare" of her new relatives’ soup.(p.12) Purple-armed and brawny young women mingle with their silly, unworlly elders, from the "sapient" Grizzy to the "Jove-like" Jacky. In their highly unfavourable portrayal, containing the implicit double standard by which actions are measured, the conception of Scottish homeliness is irrevocably patronised. The narrator’s ironic detachment operates equally against the vapid Lady Juliana, who embodies all that is superficial, immediate and indulgent, the appetite of self repudiated by Carlyle’s Teufelsdrolck. Further exemplifying the division of self versus society, the heroine Mary is endorsed in opposition to her mother, Juliana, and the social set of London; she is at one with nature, out of tune with society. This is conveyed in particular by the simple device of revealing her inner life in its oppression and forbearance:

Mary knew, that to breathe a hint of her own unhappiness would be to embitter the peace of those she loved; and she therefore strove to conceal from their observation the disappointment she had experienced. (p.241)

The private experience of the heroine is relayed by her narrator, outwith the ken of the other characters. The narrative does not impose order on chaos, but mediates the conflicting demands of secular society and spiritual inner life, moving between the degenerate external environment and the noble private experience of the heroine. Marriage is conceived, not as an "emotionally rewarding personal relationship", so much as a "social and economic nexus which may or may not be supported by some warmth and affection". Ferrier’s novel nonetheless remains within the class standards of her time, its conclusion endorsing the institution of marriage, albeit within a Christian framework as opposed to the secularised version influencing social reality, and in which woman will be fulfilled to serve her God and her husband. Good works are championed, devotional activity preferred by Mary to self-indulgence, sincerity to calculation of reward. But reward there is, in the form of the marriage she deserves. The tendency to remain within a moral framework which side-steps the material arrangements depicted in the work is the limiting factor in much later fiction of the sentimental kind, the implications of depicted social oppression neglected for the sake of moral platitude. Social values are implicated, but the solution is conservative, in fact reactionary in its avoidance of the issues it raises.

But what we see of interest in Ferrier’s leading female characters is their inner life portrayed as distinct from the roles they are allotted, their contemplation of circumscription, questioning the nature of the society they must inhabit. Their portrayal exemplifies the Romantic’s separation of secular society from the inner nature of people. This continues the tradition associated with Jane Austen, the first to master a judicious blend of authorial omniscience and limited viewpoint, in David Lodge’s words, sliding subtly between direct narrative and free indirect speech. In so doing, the technique permits the novelist to manifest the “double perspective of private and public experience”. Here we see women’s


connection with Romantic irony, the tension between private self and public role, the former determining personal worth, social status deriving from the latter.

While economic expansion continued, social arrangements fitted the commercial exchange. With recession shaking confidence and impelling imperialism from the 1870s onwards, social strictures were less confidently enforceable. But the gap between the individual woman and her socially ordained norms remained. So while men expressed newly realised insecurities in their spirit-of-the-age, women were finding the opportunity to articulate their own position, one by no means new in their history. The crucial differences between these forms of ironic vision are easily distinguished.

Among male writers whose work expressed ironic detachment while remaining within the accepted terms of bourgeois literature, the poetry of Matthew Arnold includes such a device, since his "stylistic pose which separates itself from what it describes" is not turned on himself, and so constitutes a means of "not being swallowed up by the world". The expression of contradiction and conflict in experience represents the historical norm for the female sex, whereas in nineteenth century men's Romanticism it presents a puzzle: British Romantics not only identify contradiction, they must resolve it. Victorian and fin-de-siecle literature is littered with the traumas of insecurity as belief-systems appear to collapse, and many writers come to find themselves on the verge of an isolated despair, from the anti-utilitarian ideals and poetic gloom of Arnold to the private realms constructed by Tennyson and Charles Dodgson (Lewis Carroll), and from Kipling's contrasts of the sanguine and the sorrowful (e.g."Recessional") to Hopkins's holy terrors. This is the logical progression of the spirit-of-the-age, people feeling detached from the cultural centre, from external history, from common meaning. However, it is founded on the essentialist conception of self, the self that assumes an intelligible phenomenal world, which either sits astride history or is nullified by it, determines the development of civilisations or is enslaved by it, and especially relevant to the following section, is at the centre of the flow of time, or is isolated outside it. Since their sex lacks these options in the patriarchal scheme of things, women writers in the same period express not only their detachment from external values and rewards, but also the commonality

of that experience among their sex, and so, as witnessed in the novels of Margaret Oliphant, tend less to despair, and more to the assertion of the validity of that reality. In the light of the problems of the male novelists, achieving a positive rather than a tragic resolution of difficult themes is the most striking characteristic of women’s novels.83

From a tradition common to women, self-awareness in writing about female experience predicates the developing feminist stance which emerges and becomes explicit in the period to which the younger women in this study belong as, deconstructing context and self, ironic defence becomes ironic attack. But it does so only as the self-consciousness of the Romantic artist extends to the conventions of the nineteenth century novel, and the experimentation which challenges the linear model of history. This leads us to the second plank of the framework, that of non-linear narrative, another means of implying alternative stories.

**NON-LINEAR NARRATIVE:**
**REDIRECTING THE RIVER OF PROGRESS**

*Narrative Teleology*

Non-linear devices in narrative have various uses, but are especially helpful to express the Romantic concern with spiritual dislocation, and their particular use characterises women’s fiction in the parallel agenda. Reinterpretations of historical progress by reference to ancient, or merely older, forms of social organisation are found among such diverse writers as D.H. Lawrence and Alice Walker, both addressing their perceptions of powerlessness, while the conjectural historical model of progress has had amongst its most recent applications Francis Fukuyama’s claim that history (as ideological struggle) has ended, with the triumph of liberal-democracy.84 The lack of a Scottish Zola is the starting point for many a critical assessment of Scottish literature, but only recently have critics begun to recognise potential value in non-linear, non-realist narratives.

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In his 1979 essay, "The Body In The Kit-Bag: History And The Scottish Novel", Cairns Craig addresses the realist tradition so desired by the earlier cited critics. Craig identifies the analogous teleology between narrative and history. History is the construction of story out of the amorphous, fragmented, hypothetical totality of what has happened to occur. Narrative, however, is essentially teleological: it is chiefly in terms of the conclusion - eagerly awaited as we read forward, and accepted at the story’s end - that we feel and appreciate the unity of a story; and the ultimate teleology of the historical story is the present. To be studied as history, a set of past human actions must be felt by members of some human group to belong to its past, and to be intelligible and worth understanding from the point of view of its present interests. The writing of history and the writing of novels developed side by side. Each is the attempt to understand the present by the construction of a narrative which leads to, which explains or justifies its given nature.(p,18) Citing Walter Scott’s depiction of nineteenth century progress, which represented its contemporary history as a "silent drift, unparticularised by name or deed", Craig concludes that Scott divorces Scotland from history.(p.19) Scottish national identity again, in other words, is excluded from the terms of "British" progress, and from the bourgeois culture which grew from it, in justification of it.

For succeeding novelists to make events in a Scottish narrative meaningful in relation to external history, they must present alternative teleologies to that enacted in narrative. Craig indicates two common strategies: the intrusion of a major historical event, like the First World War, or the validation of a mythic pre-history. The former of these represents capitulation to the progressive model, updating the belief in validation through urban realism. An event in which conjectural history acts within as well as upon the community is brought to bear, perpetrating the illusion of participation in history/progress. But urban realism still fails to confer significance within conjectural history, a fact also implicit in other examinations of the tradition, for example the inability of the urban novel in Glasgow to discover a viable sense of community life.86

85Craig, Cairns,"The Body In The Kit-Bag: History And The Scottish Novel", Cencrastus, Autumn 1979, pp.18-23. Foregoing paragraphs summarising this essay. Page references to this publication.

The latter strategy is relevant to the present case regarding women’s history. It posits a level of meaning in narrative that is outwith the terms of both literary realism and narrative’s teleological dynamic. This is manifest as a tension within the linear sequence of events, for instance their interpretation requiring reference to elements in the text that go against its forward movement, such as the beliefs of past communities. Writers portraying the Clearances frequently evoke mythic pre-history as part of their critique of progress. In the case of Iain Crichton Smith in Consider The Lilies, for example, the ability to tell ourselves stories allows the non-material to inform our conception of the phenomenal world.\(^87\)

Despite his elevation as the originator of the historical novel and bourgeois realist tradition, Scott’s historical novels often manifest the Romantic vision as well as the progressive one. Regarded in his Enlightenment guise by Georg Lukacs, Elaine Showalter’s preferred theoretician, Scott’s "historicism" lies in the recognition that social development was a resultant made up of the components of ceaseless class struggles and their bloody resolution in great or small, successful or abortive uprisings:

> The enormous political and social transformations of the preceding decades awoke, in England [sic] too, the feeling for history, the awareness of historical development.\(^88\)

Thus, the "upward evolution of mankind" alluded to by Moi. In his rich portrayals of the collisions of forces in historical conflict, Scott forges his via media, the moderate passage by means of which nineteenth century progress is justified. But that progress is incomplete, and the author’s Romantic, ironic mode emerges, linear movement frequently failing to dispense with the non-rational, the savage, and the superstitious. In The Heart Of Midlothian, the Romantic paradigm is exemplified in the pastoral idyll in which Jeannie Deans finds peace after her ordeals in modern life, and where the forgotten son returns with animal intrusion to visit atavistic savagery upon his father in the present.\(^89\)

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Again, linear progress is undercut in a Scottish version of the Romantic’s dissent from progress, the literary act of mythic regeneration.\textsuperscript{90}

As the age of progress undermined itself, its contradictions became amenable to literary expression. These conditions predicate expression in narrative, especially when used to portray individuality circumscribed by an alien and hostile value system. For women, as the linear progression found in history excludes their voice, so finding a way to disrupt narrative progress provides analogous dissent from history’s patriarchally ascribed teleology. In her tribute to the writer Agnes Mure Mackenzie, Nan Shepherd wrote of Mackenzie’s adaption to deafness, that she, to whom so much of everyday converse was shut, should place her novels in the past is understandable. But the past was not being evoked for its own sake: each novel is a piece of spiritual experience, embodied in persons of an earlier time,

because thus she could disentangle her perceptions of inner experience from the untidy present.\textsuperscript{91}

Focusing on the gaps in experience aligns with Romantic irony, but also takes the writer further. By allowing the insertion of women’s voice into the fissures opening in the cultural discourse, its patriarchal ideology is weakened, since to identify such a gap is to contribute to its widening. While men bewail their loss of security to the movement of progress, women in so doing paradoxically take the opportunity to assert their own, alternative history. All of which brings us back to the issue of identity as distinguished between the sexes. Their different standpoints are exemplified in the poetry and criticism of Matthew Arnold, Romantic prophet and progressive thinker.

\textit{Recurrence And Contiguity}

Arnold, astute observer of his age, presents a good comparison because he enacted his own formal subversion of linear progress. Intending to heal the divisions in British society, he confirms them by his failure to confront his own place inside

\textsuperscript{90}"Mythic regeneration" defined in Gifford, Douglas, "\textit{Myth, Parody and Dissociation: Scottish Fiction 1814 - 1914}", \textit{The History Of Scottish Literature, Volume Three}, pp.219-232

\textsuperscript{91}Shepherd, Nan, "\textit{Agnes Mure Mackenzie: A Portrait}", \textit{Aberdeen University Review}, Volume 36, Number 113, Spring 1955, pp.132-40, pp.136-7.
the social nexus. Thus when approaching the most pressing problem of practical politics, that of class conflict, Arnold simply expresses impatience with all discussions of capital and labour, since these have small existence for a society that has resolved no longer to live by bread alone. (Baldick, p. 43) Arnold’s view should be society’s view, society will concur with Arnold. The higher and unifying principle is the mind of the poet, and in particular the mind of this poet, Arnold himself, his binary oppositional model of history coloured by self-reference. The inward condition of culture, and the inner restraint encouraged by it, are more valuable to Arnold than a new institution that would in all likelihood be overrun by Philistines. (Baldick, p. 45)

While defending the progress of the metropolitan centre, Arnold simultaneously expends much energy in his poetry and criticism articulating the alienation he feels from it. In particular, he portrays time as a river, which passes him by. His defence against this is to re-schematise his alienation away. Instead of a flow which leaves the individual behind, Arnold depicts history as an alternation between periods of expansion and contraction, of growth and decline. History for him is cyclical, and the river will return, to include him in its current; this is Arnold’s affirmation of the alienated. But he regards a place within that flow as his natural entitlement, and his own voice as a lone one. And there’s the rub: the Romantic male perceives himself to be alone, isolated and apart from a mysterious world. His redefinition of its meaning begins from his sense of himself, and that self is intact, essential, unchanging. These are the options perceived by those occupying the cultural centre. Carried within or cast aside from the river, the river never flows through him; having missed it the first time round, the essential self can wait for the flow to recur. Following Arnold, and exerting a major influence on his own and later generations, Friedrich Nietzsche utilised a similarly cyclical model of time while elucidating a quintessentially phallocentric Romanticism in his constitution of the "ubermensch". Its radical subjectivity, growing logically from the Romantic desire to do away with the contradictions in nineteenth century experience, reflects the solipsism that limits

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many of his poetic predecessors, and which became a thematic preoccupation of the following generation's male poets.

For womankind the river of progress passes permanently by. Women's engagement with its movement must therefore take into account alienation of a different sort, and define a different basis for identity. So, they define their sex's continuity of experience, but a continuity that does not follow a linear path, acknowledging the complexity of interaction between an individual consciousness and the generalisations of which history is made. Women's fiction therefore represents neither a separate and compartmentalised tradition nor a replica of dominant, patriarchal ones, but in its relation to the progress from which most of nineteenth century culture felt peripheral, it expresses a history of the historyless.

The cyclical mode of time that Arnold adopts has a fuller and more shareable application to the lives of women in particular because of the central paradox which childbearing and its associated roles enact in their lives. But, a crucial caveat: strategies adopted by women should not be regarded as feminist just because they portray women's experience. The experience of childbirth or period pains is neither common to all women nor apt to inspire a desire for political liberation. (Moi, 1986, p.207) However, because the non-essential model of identity found among the pre-First World War writers is the same one on which the feminism of the post-war group is founded, their related literary manifestations of it provide the common thread within their literature of female experience, out of which the avowedly feminist post-war work grows. The biological distinction between the sexes based on gestation is perhaps the only remaining one which has an absolute basis in this decentring century, and it is this which is clung to by reactionary voices in defense of the sexist gender oppositions inherent in the social order. The regenerative act is, after all, crucial to self-definition, is related to social place, part of what Beauvoir terms women's "immanence".94 Whatever the values and preferences of the individual woman, she is less able to abstract herself from the regenerative act in the way men can and do, physically, psychologically and ideologically. Patriarchal categorisation seeks to keep women imprisoned within a reductive biological essentialism which glorifies childbirth as female destiny. It extends from the function of childbirth in women's lives into

maternity's ambiguous social status, combining increased responsibility of mothers for their off-spring with decreased rewards and diminishing alternative choices. Used to anchor the differential position within social organisation throughout the ages, gestation inevitably predicates different terms between the sexes from which to look out upon life.

A non-linear scheme of history is a helpful model for many women to investigate their individual and collective place in nature and universe, as well as in society (especially when that society is losing its confidence in the ordinance of God over life). Life presents its recurrent paradox of generation, regeneration and degeneration: "regeneration is the beginning of dying". Hillis Miller quotes Joyce while discussing one of the great examples of female Gothic literature, *Wuthering Heights*.95 The generations follow one another

in endless propagation, and the sexual union of parents is an image of death in which each parent momentarily loses his [sic] separate identity for the sake of the creation of a new individual. (Miller, H.p.207)

In Joyce's terms this still implies a straight choice between existence on one plane or the other. More often in the parallel agenda we will see that these logical extremes in the Romantic paradigm, of submersion in or isolation from the river of progress, are compromised for the sake of a comprehensive, perhaps because more pragmatic, personal connection with the universe. The self more often has the possibility of inhabiting both realms simultaneously, acknowledging the interconnection, the contiguity of individuals in the flow of time. The present is validated by reference to other times and places, the past and future inhabiting the immediate experience of individual heroines.

Subversion of narrative progress serves as a reminder that there are various ways of experiencing the world; there are many voices within cultural discourse, many ways to tell a story. The combination of irony and non-linear narrative provides the basis from which to identify elements of women's agenda in fiction in Scotland. Exceptions to all such frameworks exist, everywhere, and similarities to them are to be found among other, non-relevant groups, but the trend which emerges from the work of the women in this study supports the case for their

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recognition in the terms of that framework. The directions this agenda lead in have parallels with male contemporaries, as we have seen, and at times anticipates them, since the essential powerlessness underpinning its uses is of fuller consequence to women’s lives, in an age whose reality shaped the development of the arts towards increasingly pessimistic visions of life in the human community. However little autonomy men experience and express in their literature, women have been there first.

Reductive and solipsistic, much writing common to men’s modernism, while atomising the patriarchal world order, further isolates the individual within it. While in the mid-twentieth century the question of the unity of the subject became central to cultural analysis, as the so-called postmodern vision arrived at this degree of relativism, Virginia Woolf’s thematic strategies have been afforded new appreciation. She and many of her contemporaries enact such a relation within their ironic and non-linear narratives as they examine their own realities. The teleology of history does not include women, but the irony of detachment cannot entirely separate individual from context, and nor can the individual possess closure when located in cyclical time schemes. In a world where local attachment and cultural pluralism seem essential to human survival, these need no longer be a cause of dismay or denigration in Scotland, in the words of Francis Hart. But the successful tackling of the paradox of self and universe frequently stops short of resolving the paradox of self and others, especially when male authors characterise the opposite sex. Despite the community vision of the likes of Gunn in his fiction, the great presence of his female characters tends to evaporate when sexuality arises, at which point they become alarmingly subject to "moon" and "river" attribution of "otherness", with a pedestal close at hand on which to elevate them. The breaking of binary oppositional modes of perception in the social sphere by men remains open to question in the present, and was too often closed to consideration in the renaissance. If addressing this dilemma, rather than enacting urban mythology, is the heart of Scottish art and thought, then resolving it during the renaissance is principally the achievement of those women novelists pushed to the periphery of that movement. The parallel agenda then is not exclusively female, far less feminist, but the concerns and literary devices of the best women writers are predicated by the feminism which grows in the writing of


the renaissance. This vision constitutes the finest imaginative realisation of an ideal of community in which its members’ citizenship of the world is contingent upon freedoms granted to each other.

In elucidating the novelists’ narrative modes I will utilise a scheme well-suited to represent both the distinction between narrators and characters, and their shared spaces, by which the themes of the parallel agenda are stylistically realised.

VISIONS AND SCHEMES

Polarity And Personalism

The vision expressed in the parallel agenda postulates in human relations both material immanence and transcendent potential, the resolution of the paradox underlying the Romantic paradigm. It is in this respect that these authors connect with little-recalled philosophic traditions in Scotland. The alternative to the two sides of the model of progress was advocated by Adam Ferguson during the Enlightenment, when he said that a sense of belonging to a group gives humankind an extra power and energy - not just a herd instinct - and that real social civility depends on community.98 By this path, eschewing the poles implicit in Romanticism, the construction of the human subject is non-unified but avoids theoretical nullity. The right to self-advancement for the female sex as it is addressed by the writers remains associated with awareness of the non-essentialist contiguity of that self with others, and the post-war work reflects that continuity, while utilising modernist ideas connected with the new psychoanalysis, especially the philosophy of Henri Bergson, which will be elaborated in relation to Willa Muir, and that of John Macmurray, detailed in relation to Nan Shepherd.

Freud’s formulation of a theory of the unconscious is one of the major contributions to human knowledge, but his writings have proved difficult to interpret over the course of this century. The sexism attributed to it has been subject to reinterpretation by recent feminists, its constructionist possibilities used to illuminate the metaphysical attributes of gender differentiation: the idea that one is not born, but becomes, a woman, in Beauvoir’s words.(de Beauvoir,p.295)

What is universally clear in the post-Freudian world is that acknowledgement of the unconscious mediates the validity of the unitary self, the subject-self. For Freud, unconscious drives and desires exert pressure on our conscious thoughts and actions, and in psychoanalysis the human subject is regarded as a complex entity of which the conscious mind is only a small part. In repudiating the circumscriptive conventions of their society, as all the studied writers do in some way or other, they show themselves to be aware of the internalisation of attitudes from parental and other external sources, which contribute along with genes and bio-chemical material to the construction of "individual" character, temperament, personality.

Constructionism following from the impact of Freudian theory is the bridge leading down from the Nietzschean mountaintop into the advanced narratives of the later group of authors. Less widely influential than Freud, Carl Jung was nonetheless a major figure in characterising the unconscious, and his models of inner organisation have their own place among several Scottish thinkers and writers, not least the Muirs themselves. Associated with the collective emphasis of Jung, and a common thread linking the thoughts of writers on each side of the First World War, is Henri Bergson’s philosophy of freedom. Bergson is referred to by name in Willa Muir’s novel *Imagined Corners*, and was read by the Findlaters.99 He developed a major body of thought based on subjectivity and relativism, opposed to the limitations of rationality and linearity, but unlike Friedrich Nietzsche he seeks inclusiveness, and not isolation, openness not closure. Bearing interesting similarities to Bergson’s view, the philosophy of John Macmurray offers another means of avoiding the autonomous extremes of selfhood.

Macmurray is a key figure in Scottish thought in the period following the First World War. His philosophy of persons, or personalism, has remarkable parallels with not only the work of his contemporaries Muir and Shepherd, but to the strategies by which the earlier authors address the Romantic paradigm. His plea for a democratic, shared response to the crises of that era proffer a vision based on the optimum growth of personal freedom within the community. He affirms the need for a democratised society to emerge from the institutional calamity of the war, and this forms the basis of his notion of community, the well-spring of individual freedom, in which persons act in practical relation, avoiding the

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99Findlater, Mary and Jane Helen, *Crossriggs*, Introduction, p.xi-xii.
absolutes of isolation and dissolution of identity. The context of ideas in which the parallel agenda of women novelists develops, and the means by which they realise them in narrative, are at the heart of this study. It remains to delineate the narrative scheme by which to represent these visions’ fictive realisation.

**Story And Discourse**

From Wayne Booth and Gerard Genette to Gerald Prince and Mieke Bal, theories of narratology place their emphasis on the unreliability of narrators, the preferred means of expressing uncertainty of belief in modern reality. The first person [narrative] method continues to be favoured by realistic novelists throughout the twentieth century, observes David Lodge:

>This might be explained by reference to the collapse of confidence in history in our time - confidence in the onward march of progress, in the responsibility of reconciling individual and collective aims, in the responsiveness of public events to private actions [...]"[^100]

We’ve been here before: first person narrative favours the option of being totally true or totally false, reflecting the historical model of narrative as the expression of a single reality, a common truth, lodged within the words of the narrator or in clues provided around the narrator in the text. Absolute certainty about the fictional construct is placed with the reader instead of the narrator, and a transcendent source of judgement lodged in the reading of the text all the same.

But if we perceive "truth" as something less certain, without this transcendent source of verification, then another model of narrative is required. And in women’s novels, the complex vision of their irony is more often mediated through a reliable narrator, who can develop the issue of "truth" from a single vision into something that resides in the complex of influences acting upon groups of individuals within her story. Among the range of writing undertaken by the six authors studied, from the historical to the symbolist novel, whose symbolist texture itself varies between the younger three, there is a consistent level of narrator-character relationship that is central to thematic development, which corresponds to metaphoric or symbolist devices in each novel, and which is

susceptible to demonstration by means of diagrammatic representation. The books studied in the following chapters largely share this level of narrative technique, which will therefore receive the most consistent attention in the thesis, but other aspects will nonetheless be treated in discussion of a novel where they are crucial to its reading.

In formulating a scheme it is necessary to begin from this distinction between the reliable narrator and her fallible characters. My scheme is therefore an adaptation of that constructed by Seymour Chatman in his analyses of story-telling devices in film and fiction. In the first of his studies, Chatman utilises the terms "story" and "discourse" to distinguish between the content of a story, and its mode of expression, or discourse:

- every narrative is a structure with a content plane (called "story")
- and an expression plane (called "discourse").

We can locate the commentating activity of, for example, Ferrier's narrator on the discourse plane, and the consciousness of her heroine Mary on the story plane, because Mary has no awareness of her role in a piece of fiction. This differs from unreliable narration, in which the implied author constructs a narration that the implied reader must call into question, as Chatman's later, updated diagram of his theory indicates (Diagram 1):

Diagram One: Seymour Chatman.
Initial diagram representing the form of irony perpetrated upon a first person narrator, whose unreliability is signalled by the indirect message of the implied author. The dotted line signifies the message transmitted from the implied author to the implied reader, outwith the ken of the narrator.

![Diagram](image)

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The broken line indicates the secret ironic message about the narrator's unreliability, maintaining an emphasis on absolute truth within the text. Chatman goes on to posit terminological distinctions occurring between these two loci of point of view,

that of the narrator, and that of character. I propose *slant* to name the narrator's attitudes and other mental nuances appropriate to the report function of discourse, and *filter* to name the much wider range of mental activity experienced by characters in the story world - perceptions, cognitions, attitudes emotions, memories, fantasies, and the like. (p.143)

So, the area of discourse, outside of the story events, we can call *slant*. Slant, says Chatman, well captures the psychological, sociological and ideological ramifications of the narrator's attitudes, which may range from neutral to highly charged [...] the slant may be expressed implicitly or explicitly. When the narrator's slant is explicit - that is, put into so many words - we call it "commentary", particularly "judgemental commentary". Such commentary should not be confused with the characters’ comments, anchored as they are to an observational post *within* the story world. (p.143)

Characters and their opinions are fallible where the narrator is consistently in control, and despite variation of narrative viewpoint and detachment from particular characters, the line between narrator and all other elements of the novel is fundamental. Attitudes, of course, are rooted in ideology, and the narrator is as much a locus of ideology as anyone else, inside or outside the fiction. As we saw in Ferrier's novel, a narrator may be ideologically questionable, despite her repudiation of aspects of female roles.

Filter, on the other hand, seems to Chatman a good term for capturing something of the mediating function of a character’s consciousness:

perception, cognition, emotion, reverie - as events are experienced from a space within the story world. The effect has been well understood since Henry James. The story is narrated *as if* the narrator sat somewhere inside or just this side of a character’s

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consciousness and strained all events through that character’s sense of them. The very word "inside" implies, logically, the discourse-story barrier discussed above. And the barrier, structurally, remains, whether the narrator continues to speak in [her] own voice or falls silent for long stretches or for the entire text. (p. 144)

And to confirm the importance of this distinction finally, Chatman avers that it is important for a proper understanding of reliability:

in particular it [the distinction] helps clarify a certain confusion about the locus of reliability. We must distinguish between two kinds of "untrustworthiness". In the first, the narrator's account of the events (including what any character says or thinks) seems at odds with what the text implies to be the facts. This is what is generally meant by "unreliable narration". In the second, a character's perceptions and conceptions of the story events, the traits of the other characters, and so on, seem at odds with what the narrator is telling or showing. (p. 149)

In this respect, Chatman concludes, we cannot blame a character for being unreliable, for misrepresenting events, since no character is attempting to represent the story, but rather is living it. (p. 150) This he calls fallibility. In fallibility, the narrator asks the narratee, his or her interlocutor in the discourse, to enjoy an irony at the expense of a filter character. The message about the character's fallibility goes from narrator to narratee, and is not countermanded by the implied author. The narrator reports the character's thought or speech but in addition implies or asserts a certain unacceptability about it. (p. 151) Here we have confirmation of the relevance of this scheme to women’s narratives, and the divergent intention of such narration from that mediated by an unreliable narrator. We are not concerned with veracity or deceit, because we are not concerned with an absolute value called truth.

I will begin from Chatman's representation of fallibility, modified as follows to include representation of the narrative development across the parallel agenda, with appended terminology to represent the key features shared by the authors (Diagram 2; see over). The territory designated discourse contains all narrative activity outwith the story, not only the narrator’s commentary, in narrative slant, but structural devices and indirectly communicated values of the implied author. That the narrator is reliable, and the disseminator of authorial perspective, permits the representation of narrative commentary as a like interest to that of the implied author, in discourse generally.
Diagram Two: **Story and Discourse.**
Additions to Chatman's scheme for reliable narration and fallible characters, or other story elements

![Diagram](image)

** Filters:** characters' attitudes and actions, located within story. Susceptible to ironic or other evaluative comment in narrative discourse.

**Level 1 discourse, or irony:** structural effects, e.g. chapter headings or epigraphs. Located in discourse, outside of story. Though often significant to the implied reader, this level of discourse is not within the territory of the narrating voice, and so does not require encodement in the diagram to represent its development.

The use of these diagrams will define the relationship between narrators and characters. Each of the diagrams and terms used are placed together for an easy overall evaluation of the development they represent, in Appendix 2. As we proceed, we can identify shifts of alignment between narrators and their heroines, revealing tensions between the roles ascribed to women as depicted in stories. Inner selves depend on the narrator's discourse for their revelation, and to be given a context for comprehension other than those of the society portrayed. Out of this relationship we will define the shift from the Romantic paradigm to the alternative non-unified self, and from its uses by the earlier authors to the most striking forms of Muir and Shepherd, in what I call their third way. In this lies
the undermining of binary oppositions and their reconstitution in a positive, new territory, analogous with Woolf’s shades of grey.

This then introduces women’s fiction in the parallel agenda. Harnessing positive strands of the newly emergent science and philosophies in the transition from Victorian to modernist, the women in this thesis enact via their common narrative framework thematic and stylistic development scarcely appreciated in the cultural context of Scotland. The deconstruction of binary oppositions is undertaken, and their reconstruction in a positive territory. They serve their national culture, if that culture can serve women by being defined in non-patriarchal, non-parochial terms. And they serve the cause of feminism and other pluralistic ideals in any Western context, if such causes can be focused on a national culture so subject to presumption.
PART TWO: DIVIDED SELVES

Chapter Three

DUALISM AND SELF-DEFENCE

The conventional woman hangs conventional ideas between herself and her own nature, negating her deepest instincts. She despises and represses part of her own humanity (Willa Muir)\(^3\)

The Romantic paradigm favours the expression of ironies, tensions, or divisions, within experience, of the contradictory nature of existence, in keeping with the spirit-of-the-age, from the nineteenth century onwards. Part Two, *Divided Selves*, addresses dualist literary attitudes to the paradoxical relation of women and their society, in a period featuring reform from Victorian conventional rigidity to alleged new freedoms for women in the aftermath of the First World War. The authors’ responses to the changing mood are connected by consistent scepticism about claims of common interest between private individuality and the wider society. Portrayal of characters participating in social action often manifests this tension, or division, between the private and the social in experience, betokening awareness of social convention as the selective code that imparts the expectations of dominant meaning systems, habituating individuals to them, as Muir notes, above.

But there are dualities which imply closed, fixed individuality and there are those suggesting open, fluid, interactive relations between individuals, and literature adhering to the parallel agenda, despite personal differences among its exponents and shifting expectations for women between the generations, tends to exemplify the latter.

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\(^3\)Muir, Willa, *Women: An Enquiry*, p.32.
Scotland, it appears, predisposes artists to elucidate divisions of nation, community and self. Focusing on the earlier group of authors, the Findlaters and Violet Jacob, whose pre-war careers had their foundations in the Victorian age, in this chapter we shall consider the divergent contexts within their native country, despite unifying claims, and examine the polarising and the open possibilities expressed in dualistic models. Likewise, in criticism of women’s literary traditions, there are theories which imply polarity, and those which undermine it, replacing it with a more positive, sophisticated interpretation of group and individual relationships. The chapter will argue that depicting division or incompleteness rather than unity in identity is not necessarily symptomatic of cultural failure. Despite portraying the repressive realities of women’s lives, authors embody models of individuality which reject binary oppositional interpretations of experience, and avoid specious myths of social harmony or personal autonomy. In narratives exemplifying open models of division the relation of individual and society becomes *inter-penetrative* and *variable*; the "true" self of the Romantic paradigm, postulated beneath a false, social self, is undermined in novels, and the non-essential model is always latent. A glance at Violet Jacob’s *Flemington* helps to introduce this issue.

**FLEMINGTON: AN INTRODUCTION**

Lauded by Douglas Gifford for its contribution to the dualist and dissociative traditions in Scotland, identity is the major theme of *Flemington*, Violet Jacob’s remarkable historical novel. At the level of national metaphor, the author has selected a key historical moment, its characters’ internally riven condition not only representing, but more importantly for this discussion, interacting with, the social and political life of the nation.

The course of great political events is not Jacob’s primary interest, and indeed she treats historical processes as working against the individual, having a destructive effect on individual lives. In this respect as well as its historical setting, the novel finds echoes in Naomi Mitchison’s *The Bull Calves*, which portrays division

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imposed on a community of families. Cynicism and power rather than civilisation prevail amid the strife of the 1745 Jacobite uprising, whose resolution is a principleless victory the reader is invited to despise. Jacob dismantles both sides of the opposition between past and progress, power in Scotland won over from decadent, corrupt Jacobites by decadent, corrupt and inhumane Hanoverians.

Loyalty and personal values are reduced from absolute to unstable status, reflecting ontological depths of anxiety among the book’s main characters, in whom duplicity undermines inner identity, and power determines belief. Trustlessness and scheming are the prerequisites for survival in Flemington. Why does Christian Flemington switch allegiance from the Chevalier to the Whigs after close association with the former? Not for honour, or out of emotional consistency, but from the bitter desire to avenge the Stuarts’ treatment of her son. Dissembling the savage within the Whig beneath the Jacobite, the ironic connotations of Christian’s name are seen as she exemplifies an archaeological model of identity. The duality of her political beliefs resolves into a multi-layered, protean self containing all levels of life, entailing the savage and the saint, beauty and formidable power, assertiveness and passivity. Far from exhibiting the traits of one gender, Christian manifests "feminine" passivity only as strategic weakness dictates, and she is as correspondingly "masculine" as power permits. The key point about Christian’s characterisation is that her selfhood encompasses all of these traits, and her social identity is liable to alter as the exigencies of her position require.

But before reaching conclusions about the novel’s unusual telling of the forty-five, this chapter will examine the contexts within Scotland, and its traditions of dualism, as well as dualities attributed to women as a group. The implications of a dualism that goes beyond a single and fixed division will be explained in relation to the particular strategies adopted by the authors, with their emphasis on the social relations (as well as inner, theoretically "natural" means) by which individuals are constructed and constrained. These will make clear the concluding remarks on Flemington.

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**DIVIDED STATE, DIVIDED SELF**

Why complain that the past lacks a unifying representation when it has never been unified? We have seen the imposition of unifying ideology over inner conflict in English Studies. England no less that Scotland features natural and human divisions as a constant factor in its existence, but is distinguished by the institutional power of its dominant groups over the rest of the population, and the existence of formal structures of national definition. What Scotland lacks by comparison is just those institutional, formal structures by which national identity, among other levels of identity in its natives, is validated, and while this remains so, in a world made up of nation-states, insecurity about division and disunity within will remain a preoccupation in cultural practice. It is perfectly appropriate that contraries should feature in literary engagement with the world, since reality is made of complex interactions. But, lacking the institutional validation of national commonality, another level of confusion is added to the complex reality predominant in imaginative portrayals of life, in this multiform country, comprising multifarious individuals and disparate groups.

Despite this, in asserting a racial continuity to counter the reality of Scotland’s relationship with England, the myth of the Scot as a national “type” is influential, associated with assumption of the historical and cultural wholeness of Scotland. But like all territories, within that of Scotland, as any cursory glance at its past and present confirm, disparate groups have always interacted, in co-operation and conflict. The Picts, Scots, Britons and Angles thought to be the earliest inhabitants of the country were separated by geography. The boundary of the highlands approximately demarcated the racial division of Teuton and Celt, and enforced the linguistic one between English and Gaelic:

> The lowlander considered himself [sic] to be racially, linguistically and socially distinct from the highlander, and, as lists of the inhabitants of any Scottish district very readily show, there was hardly any intermingling of the two peoples. The distinction increased alongside the rise of the House of Canmore, with its feudal organisation and

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initiation of the burgh system.  "Inglis" became the common, or commonest language, increasing the schism between different linguistic communities as trade, commerce and then industry shaped the growth of lowland, especially central belt, society, while agrarian communities became subject to control by people and forces outwith their domain.

Class stratification within the industrialising societies became entrenched, associated with the loss of national institutions to "British" control, and the anglicisation of aspects of Scottish life. By the turn of the nineteenth century a new generation found itself exhorted, manipulated and, if required, coerced into fighting for the very people who cleared them from their land, or were compressing them into profit margins. Partaking of opportunities offered in administration and trade, and for the nineteenth century entrepreneur in manufacturing, leading to the increasing predominance of the heavy industries, the bourgeois ascendancy required the restructuring of the lives of the lower orders to serve as the engine of this success. That the State understood the implications of class composition before the members of the new proletarian classes led to the forestalling of the feared revolution by a mixture of repression and reform of the sort envisaged by Matthew Arnold. But the dynamics of class which grew in this period continue to disfigure modern British society today, beneath its unifying mythologies.

The patriarchal conventions of Scottish communities share other nations’ sexism, while intermixing with the rational, prescriptive teachings of Calvinism, even as religious institutions fell into competition for souls increasingly undesirous of the salvation they transacted. The Disruption of 1843 followed many years of dispute about the correct conduct for which salvation would be the reward, and continued for many decades afterwards, precluding the various Kirks’ ability to address the people of Scotland in one voice. The land, its people, their histories and senses of identity have never been amenable to the linear model of history cultivated by the historians of the Enlightenment, which eclipses Scottish reality. Within a broad cultural canvas, conflicts of interest are inevitable. All-embracing unity constrains cultural variety, denies diversity, and cannot fit.

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Yet unity under a single banner remains precisely what is sought by many literary theoreticians for Scottish life, in imitation of core cultural ideology. Core cultures in the present age, from small nations like Serbia to the biggest of all, the U.S.A., demonstrate the effects of falsely constricting myths of unity common to nationalisms worldwide, in the confusion and intolerance manifest by many of their inhabitants towards fellow citizens and foreigners alike. Unifying ideology denies the diversity of life by its restriction to all-or-nothing choices. These operate by the imposition of various forms of binary opposition between "us" and "them", with Blacks, Asians, Muslims, Gays, Communists, and any other group outwith its parameters prey to its excluding, stigmatising force. Women acting on their own behalf of course fit neatly into this model, perceived as troublemakers belonging outside social norms, or, when retained within, cleaved into angels and whores.

In Scotland the diversity within is great, but the lack of national and political boundaries predicates only the defensive pre-occupation with the larger neighbour whose casual institutional intrusions into Scottish life cannot be prevented. Scotland is condemned to be regarded as provincial as long as its thinkers continue the example set by MacDiarmid and company, locking "Scottishness" into the a binary opposition with "Englishness" which ultimately enforces the weaker attribution of Scottishness, judging it by metropolitan ideologies, indifferent to complexity or changeability within, its more challenging connections carrying less clout. The simplistic reification of these concepts influences our modern culture enormously, and the correspondence of "Scottish" to "feminine" in that opposition includes the falsifying and trivialising of its ascribed features, whose value cannot be defined without reference to the other, more powerful side of the equation. None of the differences worth investigation within Scotland has so preoccupied male writers, and the mythologising of "Englishness" which this has led to perpetuates the stigmatisation of concern with other conflicts of interest within Scottish life, designated parochial in the face of obsession with the spectre of England.

The extent to which forms of dualism obsess writers and subject matter is more intense and ubiquitous in Scotland than anywhere else, barring the related American Puritan tradition. What dualities of personal identity have Scottish

writers created? The tradition of dualism is recognised as international throughout the nineteenth century, and through its literary manifestations is regarded as expressive of the general spirit-of-the-age, as well as factors particular to each culture in which it appears. Though the expression of dualism in psychology, philosophy or other arts is significant, it remains through its literary manifestation that the parallel agenda of women in this period can be best recognised. Dualism, indeed, is part of the expression of uncertainty whose implications allowed women to break their fetters within the conventions of social order, from the Romantic age onwards.

The double stands at the start of that cultivation of uncertainty by which the literature of the modern world has come to be distinguished:

Duality was to take part both in the Freudian and in the Russian revolutions: to the second of these it brought the dialectic of Hegel, with its progressive leaps and interplay of opposites, and it also brought the quasi-religious duo of exploiters and exploited [...] Carlyle lived at a time when it could often be devoutly held that all things are double and that there is an innate duality of man [sic]; and there was a time to come when an infinite contradiction, a boundless empire of irony and uncertainty, began to be credited.\(^{110}\)

The double then is a "dynamic metaphor" for contradiction, an outgrowth of Romantic irony, a device representing non-commitment to the external world of social organisation or to the belief-systems by which it is governed; it is one chord in the voice which emerges from the Romantic paradigm to articulate the limitation of the individual in the world, and signals recognition of the multiplicity of voice in art and society from which the modernism of the succeeding age grew. Karl Miller traces the connection of James Hogg and Robert Louis Stevenson with the "Romantic lyric, in which the voice of the grand exception can be heard".(Miller,K,p.1) These two enact differing dualities within the tradition whose basis is the metaphysical division imposed on a whole. Hogg’s divided mind is expressed by the division of his novel, the Confessions, roughly

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speaking, into two halves. The editor in his narrative believes in reason and utility, sides with Robert Wringhim’s enemies, and characterises Wringhim’s half-brother George as a generous-hearted, gentleman-like “spark”; Wringhim’s narrative, on the other hand:

describes how his own wild ideas of freedom and election are confirmed for him by a distinguished stranger, Gil-Martin, who behaves like some foreign potentate but who turns out to be the devil in disguise. (Miller, K., p. 6)

The two halves of the narrative operate by binary opposition between the rational, scientific mindset favoured in the Enlightenment, exerting control over the irrational, arcane and emotional mind portrayed in Wringhim’s narrative. The editor’s intention, revealed indirectly by him in his portion of the book, is to impose order on the non-rational, non-progressive elements encountered; he attempts to cordon them off, enclosing them in his own rationality. But in fact his opposition collapses on itself as the narrative portions come to interpenetrate. Ultimately the editor concedes that he has sought out the corpse of the unfortunate Wringhim in fascination with the Wringhim legend, and desecrated his grave for the satisfaction of a prurient obsession with its wild, non-rational implications. Editor and sinner cannot be separated from each other, by time, space or psychology, and nor by the artifice of the editor’s textual structure.

The remarkable thing in Hogg’s text is that the divisions within individuals break down, the oppositions between them are suspect, and the unitary nature of the self multiplies beyond duality, as the relationship of the two halves of the novel denies their separateness, or the ascendancy of one over the other. This condition is also present in Stevenson’s completed adventure of dualism, The Master Of Ballantrae, whose two brothers’ powers and personalities appear interdependent, relative, protean, and to signal the instability of both moral values and the notion of an essential identity. Closure on any level is precluded, characters’ fallibility implying multiple perspectives within the individual and upon events. These are decentring texts challenging the established intellectual values of their

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time. They contribute massively to modern understanding of the nineteenth century preoccupation with dualism, and most importantly, predicate further fragmentation of suspect individual autonomy.

Not so, the morally based opposition from which the physical split between Stevenson’s Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde arises. For Stevenson here the fundamental binary opposition from which physical metaphor follows is the *de facto* metaphysical one of Christian morality, good against evil. The fallibility of subjective experience of self and others on which the previous oppositions are founded is eschewed in Stevenson’s most famous story, whose moral scheme is in keeping with the rational delineation of human experience. The good lawyer Utterson perceives his own lack of emotional development, and the darker side of all individuals is acknowledged, but inner identity remains demarcated in accordance with morally opposing halves. In other words, rather than a fluid place interacting with received social conventions, the inner realm replicates conventional moral metaphysics. Stevenson in this instance is closer to the simple oppositions of the Romantic paradigm than Hogg, despite the classic Romantic features used by the earlier of the authors. The collapse of the unitary self in Stevenson’s shorter story remains restricted to the pair, the binary opposites, while in the *Confessions* and *Ballantrae* fragmentation and inter-penetration are in process throughout. These models are examples from the range of dualisms created in the Scottish context, and imply the different bases of self from which division may be enacted. The *Confessions* and *Ballantrae* have greater relevance to the fiction in this thesis than *Jekyll and Hyde*, since the dualisms of the parallel agenda express the non-essential self in a way implying absence of closure between individuals.

The Scottish context favours division as the expression of incompleteness in its culture, but within division there is that which leads towards isolationism, and that which leads into positive conceptions of human development. It is possible to trace the development of models of division, based on both non-unified and unitary selves, through the nineteenth century, into the twentieth, with its positive assertion, alongside modernist projects, of Scottish nationhood and selfhood. The use of the essentialist self in such dualist literature carries on from Scott’s

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Redgauntlet to Stevenson, Douglas Brown, MacDougall Hay and the renaissance notion of the "Caledonian Antisyzygy": each sees two selves in one, but closure between individuals.\(^\text{114}\)

The line of development following Hogg's *Confessions* leads through the work of women, for the reasons described in chapter two. An essentialist conception of self defies location in female consciousness when that consciousness examines the contradictions and the incompleteness of her humanity and gender in their historical and social marginality: again, parallel but distinct. Indicating deep plot structures common to dualist writing, Douglas Gifford cites Jacob's *Flemington* as one of the best specimens of the type. In Gifford's words, it shares with the dualist tradition the focus on divided self,

within a broken and divided family and nation. It has a version of the recurrent theme of the brutal parent whose unfeeling egotism and material calculation destroy a sensitive, indeed hyper-sensitive, child. Its major themes involve confrontation of Past and Present, Disorder and Order, and a cause of passionate personal involvement and a "cause" of calculating and arid expediency. *Flemington* is part of a tradition which examines deeply embedded dualism and divided loyalties as inherent in the Scottish mind.\(^\text{115}\)

In the closing section of this chapter we will analyse the characteristics differentiating the novel from the essentialist side of the tradition, whose themes lead unwaveringly into closure and pessimism. We will see the way in which, despite its prevailing gloom, Jacob's best novel straddles both the pessimistic vision and the open-ended possibilities of identity, being based on the non-essential model of self, a world composed of self-and-others in action. But next we will discuss the model of division formulated by Gilbert and Gubar, and novels by the three oldest of the writers, to see how they address the issue of social disease using their non-essentialist construction of identity.

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FEMALE DUALITIES

The division between self and society, manifesting dissent from the reality of social status, arises from the predicament of women as it occurred in Scotland. What was distinct about confinement experienced by women in Scotland? As we saw, such confinement characterised the changing world of the mid-Victorian era into which the three authors were born, sentimentality and pious religiosity adding burdens of restriction to the lives of women. The "feminine" role was becoming more passive than ever before for the middle-classes to which they belonged, influenced by the notion, which gained wider currency as bourgeois wealth expanded, that domestic labour was demeaning. The lot of the middle-class woman was to be "ornamental rather than directly useful, but ornamental in a moral, pious manner". (Marshall, p. 247) Calvinist Scotland excelled at such restrictive piety. While some women were content enough to be relegated to a life of virtuous idleness, others always found it irksome, as Rosalind Marshall notes, quoting Jane Welsh's opinion on the matter. "Shame that such a malady [enmui], should exist in a Christian land", she exclaimed:

should not only exist, but be almost universal throughout the whole female population that is placed above the necessity of working for daily bread. (Marshall, p. 248)

Such a lifestyle might seem desirable enough to a woman enduring the rigours of working-class poverty, who may have faced the daily necessity of working for bread over long hours and for little reward, along with onerous domestic duties. But the effect of enforced idleness, the torpor of ennui, is undeniable, and from the confinements of that lifestyle follow the consequences of physical frailty and depression.

Also, the burden placed on women by childbearing was eased by contraception later in Scotland than in many other European countries. Women of all classes share the task of childbearing, despite divergent material surroundings and, whether because of virtuous idleness or unrelenting domestic and financial labours, many women in the nineteenth century were unequal to the burdens it placed on them. Despite the decline in the birth rate which followed the campaigning of Annie Besant and Dr. H.A. Allbutt in England, the distribution of birth-control information and materials in Scotland didn't achieve significant reduction in births among working-class families until after the Second World War:

Artificial contraception was sternly denounced by all the churches, not least by the Presbyterians, who spoke of the "withering blight
cast over humanity" by its practice and demanded that the manufacture and sale of anti-conception materials should be "rigorously repressed" [...] and the Catholic lobby successfully extracted promises from I.L.P. candidates to oppose birth-control in return for support at the polls.\textsuperscript{116}

The frequency and accompanying traumas of regular childbearing could only add to the defensive, ill-at-ease depiction of female experience in literature:

Apart from being painful and frightening, childbirth was in those days downright dangerous. Gynaecology was a neglected sphere of medicine, and in any event most working women had no choice but to rely on the doubtful expertise of neighbours and relatives.\textsuperscript{117}

And despite their material advantages, women of the middle-classes had little more knowledge or practical techniques to alleviate the difficulties of childbirth. Among the middle-classes reduction in the birth-rate occurred earlier, but still over two decades behind the same process in England. Despite people's enthusiasm for contraception, social conservatism remained effective in working against women's interest in this area after other rights were won.

The picture then is of unwanted lifestyles in which the physical and social characteristics of "femininity" act to constrain individuals to the point of illness, and often rapid decline in their maternal years, contrasting with the newly emerging potential quality of life which education, property rights and contraception seemed to offer by the time the authors took up the pen. As real gains in freedom were restricted by this conservatism, despite the active women's rights campaign in Scotland, the conditions of women's lives ensured the continuing polarisation of personal experience and social expectation. The "feminine" role came to be experienced by many as an externally ordained construct, and literature expressive of dissent from these social realities is found in narratives, within their ironic and non-linear narrative modes. In exemplifying them we will also see, precisely because of their awareness of external influence on personal development, their divergence from the terms ascribed by Gilbert and Gubar to female selves behind social roles.


\textsuperscript{117}Harrison, Fraser, \textit{The Dark Angel}, p.185.
Lacking the pen/penis which would enable them to refute one fiction by producing another, women in patriarchal societies are historically reduced to mere properties, according to Gilbert and Gubar. The roots of "authority", the authors continue, tell us that if he authorised her she must be his property. The problem is how can women define themselves in patriarchal society, and how to express that self-definition?

Specifically, the pair say a woman writer must examine, assimilate, and transcend the extreme images of "angel" and "monster" which male authors have generated for her, those dual aspects of a false, metaphysical self:

The images of "angel" and "monster" have been so ubiquitous throughout literature by men that they have also pervaded women’s writing to such an extent that few women have definitively "killed" either figure. Rather, the female imagination has perceived itself, as it were, through a glass darkly: until quite recently the woman writer has had (if only unconsciously) to define herself as a mysterious creature who resides behind the angel or monster or the angel/monster image that lives on what Mary Elizabeth Coleridge called "the crystal surface".(p.17)

Women, then, have produced texts whose designs conceal or obscure deeper, less accessible (and less socially acceptable) levels of meaning, thus managing the difficult task of achieving true female literary authority by "simultaneously conforming to and subverting patriarchal standards".(p.73)

Gilbert and Gubar go on to exemplify strategies relating to their thesis, expressing the dualism between women’s patriarchally ordained roles and their "true" selves, located beneath the surface of texts. The division found in the work of the Bronte sisters leads the authors to conclude that it clarifies the relationship between imagery of enclosure and the use of the double in women’s literature. Both are complementary signs of female victimisation:

Confined within uncomfortable selves as well as within uncomfortable spaces, her [Charlotte Bronte’s] heroines cannot escape the displaced or disguised representation of their own feared impulses.(p.443)

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Dualism in this respect expresses the division between self and society, but also within self, and the deconstructive potential that this entails takes it further than Gilbert and Gubar claim for it. Toril Moi rejects the reductionism of their thesis which postulates that, under the manifest text, which conceals or obscures deeper, less accessible [...] levels of meaning lies the truth of the texts.\textsuperscript{119} Only a more sophisticated account of the contradictory, fragmentary nature of patriarchal ideology would help Gilbert and Gubar to explain the matter, Moi maintains. As with the restricted application of a simple dualist model in the Scottish context, Gilbert and Gubar's thesis exemplifies the weaknesses along with the strengths of the Romantic paradigm. Valid for much Romantic writing, it doesn't account for the more complex level of identity implicit in much writing by women: why should a "true" self, capable of existing outwith social ascription, be mad, other than that it needs social formation to be complete? In effect, this is the inverse of the solipsistic autonomy of the male self that stands beyond external forces, a female which is dissolved, a shadow lurking behind material texts, a non-entity.

Just as female writers are not actually prevented from writing, neither are female characters denied a place in the fiction women construct. The very dis-ease women are portrayed as suffering from signifies the untenability of the model of division which cleaves the self of private experience from the self of socialisation and social action. Because these novelists write about personal experience as and of women, they inevitably depict the influence of social existence on an individual's identity. Selfhood is at least partially that which society, as well as other external influences, so constructs. However much it may disapprove of society, the self cannot be abstracted outwith its symbolic order.

The positive assertion of the potential liberation available to non-unified selves is not yet present in the earlier group of writers, and awaits the post-war authors to develop it. The dualism of self-defence is premised on the Romantic division of the true, inner female world from the external, patriarchal one, but is accompanied by narrative features which compensate for the simplicity of the model, undermining it, implying more complex factors in personal and collective identity. In the following novels, woman is neither submerged beneath the text, nor a complete individual character within it, but is fragmented among various female

\textsuperscript{119}Moi, Toril, \textit{Sexual/Textual Politics}, pp.61-2.
characters, whose limitations, informed by patriarchal circumscription, are manifest among inner as well as social existence. To approach this, we can distinguish the simplest level of division, beginning with structures of level 1 irony which frame story material, before following through to see how the simple opposition is rendered more complex by story/discourse arrangements.

**IRONIC DETACHMENT**

The spirit of ironic detachment, so distinctively cultivated throughout the age of progress, forms the basis of portrayals of social existence in which externally endorsed conduct is inimical to the author, and over which she cannot exert full control. From the non-linear frame and its use of carefully weighted narrative irony, distance between narrator and her constructed world is the result of several devices applied to the broad canvas of the novel, and within particular characterisation. The first of these is what I termed level 1 irony, or the use of structuring devices to colour the reader’s interpretation of the content plane, or story. Jacob and the Findlaters frequently adopt chapter headings and epigraphs to signal thematic intent above the heads of the book’s characters, or to indicate ironic discrepancy with the perceptions described in the chapters. Often these are tragic in their resonance, expressing the place of pain in life’s cyclical and transient interpretation:

"O Time,
That Cut’st down all,
And scarce leav’st here
Memorial
Of any men that were". (Herrick)

"That’s a melancholy tale", said the merry-faced gentleman;
"It’s a tale of life, and life is made of such sorrows",
returned the other."(Nicholas Nickleby)\(^{120}\)

Many allusions to the Bible or to Shakespearean tragedy are located in chapter headings, and may carry the non-linear resonances of level 1 irony into the plot from discourse, while the narrator retains her distance in the telling. Jacob is particularly pointed in her use of this device, her first novel *The Sheep Stealers*

for instance worked out against background allusion to the *Book of Revelations*, with its references to descent and renewal of life in the world.  

In the chapter titled "The Seven Snowmen", Mary Vaughan reaches her nadir in the wake of the deaths of her father and two-week old child. Preparing to kill herself she is saved by another unfortunate, George Williams, and together their humanity is vindicated. The significance of the regenerative paradox, seen as our shared human mystery, is overt in this chapter, placing the reader, and indeed the narrator, at a remove from the action taking place in story, her discourse providing a frame of reference through which to look favourably on the plight of the characters.

Anxiety of authority is signalled in this narrative detachment, which betokens her presumed inability to control the reality she depicts, and the common consequence is that the author leaves her heroine to the mercy of that world. The conditions portrayed in story are shown as the truth of social roles to which women are subject, the detail in story treated realistically, while the narrator’s disavowal of the role continues in the ironic frame of reference of her narrative discourse. In Mary Findlater’s highly successful *The Rose Of Joy*, Mrs. Crawford is seen as a victim of mental deprivation and excessive child-bearing:

> When Mrs. Crawford married she possessed a fresh complexion, good teeth, and abundance of hair; also a pretty power of blushing and sitting silent. By thirty-six her complexion had lost its bloom, and her hair was thinning fast; at fifty hair, complexion and teeth were alike gone; her husband was gone too [...] but seven children, all living, formed her solid contribution to society.  

Solidity is found in the dull family at the expense of the no longer solid mother, in whom the paradox of regeneration bodies a stark image of mortality. Christian sentimentalist though she could be, Mary here, with the sardonic diminution of tone in the phrase "solid contribution to society", points to the plight inflicted on the bearer of such a burden, for which society may be grateful but which is not in the interest of Mrs. Crawford. That which occurs in story is society’s progress, a form of history. Narrative discourse is dissent, the narrator detaching herself from the socially ascribed role enacted and suffered by her characters. This can

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be represented by a diagram indicating the narrator’s activity and its distinct sphere of operation, outside of the conventional, and realistic, events of the story enacted by the characters, in Diagram 3:

Diagram Three: Self/ Roles.

F: this box encompasses female identity as constructed by whole novel, as opposed to the limited versions permissible in society, and which are enacted in story. Female requires both discourse and story for its completion, which is not attainable within a single character in these narratives.

self: Putatively "true" female identity as provisionally postulated in models influenced by the romantic paradigm; implicitly suppressed beneath socially permissible roles. Constructed outside of story, in narrative discourse.

roles: actions and attitudes of female characters within story. Comparable with socially endorsed "femininity".

--- : distinguishing line between selves and roles as constructed in story and discourse. Because it is never truly complete in narratives, the distinction is represented by a broken line.

Mrs. Crawford and her like are filter characters, limited subjectivities located purely in story, the judgemental perspective provided in the narrative for the narratee, and therefore reader, beyond their ken. Narrative distance is maintained by regulating the ironic tone of such comment upon filters’ actions and attitudes, from level 1 structural irony of epigraphs and chapter headings, to the value-judgement implicit in the phrase "solid contribution to society". Thus we can say that the sum of the narrator’s activities in discourse, and the roles enacted by
female characters in story together constitute the totality, though never unity, of the Female, represented by F. The demarcated area encompasses both aspects of narrative, among which the sum of female potential is distributed. From this fundamental split follows the dualism of self-defence.

Coinciding with the boundary between discourse and story, the dissenting commentary of the narrator constructs the notional "true" female self, distinct from that conforming to socially ordained roles, as represented by the terms "self" and "roles" within the area of the Female. Unlike the scheme of Gilbert and Gubar which sees the Female simultaneously as an essence and a shadow behind the surface of a text, here we can posit the Female as something both incomplete, various, and located in concrete terms, among story and in discourse. The dotted line represents the division between self and roles, the choice of an incomplete line between the two reflecting the fact that this division is itself never genuinely complete, and becomes untenable when used in increasingly sophisticated writing. The artificiality of the split between gender attribution, or role expectation, exemplified by Mrs. Crawford, and the fuller potential of the female self, abounds in these portrayals. In recurrent scenes, female characters are incomplete by dint of their imprisonment within patriarchal parameters. The authors register their awareness of the embittering effect on character of constant repressive efforts, and such women inevitably fail to meet their gender expectations. Those accepting the un-real, social side of the divide are usually seen to manifest severe versions of the "unfeminine" traits concealed or disguised as their roles require of them: the selfhood is distorted by the space allotted to it, its ascribed role. But the alienation of such portrayals from female potential in the imaginative, physical, or sexual aspects of their lives leads our discussion beyond the single Romantic dualism of self and society, towards a more sophisticated model of female fragmentation.

THE FRAGMENTED FEMALE

The Isolation And Dissolution Of The Self

The model of the duality of social and private selves is implicit in the ironic tone of narrators towards the manners and action they depict, but it inevitably goes deeper. The thesis of Gilbert and Gubar tells us that women's literary strategies engage with the dis-ease they themselves feel, and the contrast between defined
"femininity" and the underlying person operates as much within individual characters as between their external conduct and private wishes. Between the extremes of victims and vixens, the distortions of self-conscious identity begin to fragment beyond their initial duality. Like Hogg's model, they elude the closure attributed to them, necessitating additional tactics to express the relation of individual and society.

Again, the difficulty characters face in knowing their real selves corresponds to the spirit-of-the-age, the broad problem of late nineteenth century confidence common across Victorian Britain, as well as that of female experience within it. The distortion of identity defies attribution to a single inner division, opening consciousnesses up to a range of influences. This is seen in Mary Findlater's last novel, *Tents Of A Night*. The story of romance flourishing and dwindling amid the travels of a bourgeois Scottish family, it features a plot that is episodic and ephemeral, emphasising the transience of the characters' lives and their estrangement both from the world and their inner feelings, experienced as a convergence of incomprehensible forces. A group of people tour France on holiday. The heroine, Anne Hepburn, is tempted by romance but is too uncertain about her life to opt for marriage. She and the others discuss their situation, obsessed by its instability, as they wander seeking new sensations. This plight of the Victorians, their progress undercutting spirituality, is expressed by characters and narrator: describing a ship coming into a harbour, Anne says: "she's like Hope, she's like Modern Progress". "Vulgar, but advancing, eh?", replies her Uncle Peter, less convinced of its value. (p.7) The train of the Digue connects the once sacred place with all that is most vulgar and profane, the narrator notes, and Anne finds herself on a beach echoing the words of that dissenting progressive, Arnold:

> All was dark as Egypt [...] Anne could see nothing; only sitting there, she could hear how [the tide] came down like a trampling army, thundering over the sands [...] "Overtaken by the tide" would never be a meaningless phrase to her again. (p.92)

Loss of the sacred leaves the people anchorless in the tide of time. Endlessly pondering how other cultures, other eras experienced life, Anne comes to embody the relativistic, doubting perspective that cannot connect immediate sensation with continuity. Over-committed to social action, hers is an existence of the immediate

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moment only. She cannot learn fully that her linear model precludes comprehension of the variety of life her family's material wealth allows her to move through. Uncle Peter, on the other hand, seems to have transcended it. The contrast recurs, as we see when Peter spends his time in "ultimate rest by the hotel door", while Anne and young Barbara act upon their restless wish to examine things for themselves, "and in spite of all they could read and hear, the question seemed unanswered still". (pp.160-1) Unconvinced, Anne fails to cure her ennui, remaining disconnected from her notion of time's progress. This conceptualisation is her self: for all of her dissatisfaction she can discover no alternative inner sphere beneath the thought patterns and attitudes she has had instilled in her, no essence to validate her identity. She participates in the linear movement of story while seeking a validating discourse. Reversing Anne's problem, the main characters of the novel The Green Graves Of Balgowrie must suffer the consequences of being sealed within their private realm, outside the social order.

Jane Helen Findlater's first novel takes this further, demonstrating the interpenetration of self with context, culture and time, and the impossibility of an existence that does not seek validation in social participation, in other words, the impossibility of discourse minus story. In The Green Graves Of Balgowrie, the main characters suffer marginalisation from the cultural mainstream. Their plight particularly enforces the non-linear case, undercutting the basis of progress, and autonomous individuality as defined by it. They are simultaneously lost and found.

The widow Marjoribanks wilfully seals herself and her two daughters out of the community, to carry on a strange, schizoid existence. Even their sole servant lives up to his name, John Silence. The movement of history is elsewhere than Balgowrie, and the lives of the characters are ineluctably denied inclusion, their consciousnesses unable to enter into social existence. Green Graves invites the reader to join the narrator and her characters in rejecting the linear progression of narrative/history. It is a literary objectivisation of the subjectivity of our relation to time and to history, in which no-one is entirely inside or outside of its movement.

The wee Scottish community's marginalisation from the British mainstream is apparent in the comparison of village life with urban life, but the distancing of the individual consciousness is far more substantially dwelt on. Unable to cope with
Edinburgh, far less London, uncomprehending of the social nexus around them, the two sisters, a partnership of corresponding incompleteness, denied participation in the world of people, are in a sense not part of life. Their existences are sacrificed for the dying, as the teacher/minister Dr. Hallijohn protests to Henrietta, the elder sister: "Madam, 'tis a false system to sacrifice the living for the dying". (p.271) As with Wuthering Heights, so with Green Graves: the teleology of the individual life as derived from the Brontes’ Methodism, or the Findlaters’ Calvinism, requires that all joy be deferred, since life’s purpose is to glorify God and enjoy him forever. But lacking value for itself, the existence allotted the girls cannot begin, and thus do they suffer their death-in-life. Lucie’s realisation of this truth is the key scene in the novel: "So this was life", she thinks, confronted by a London theatre crowd:

Had all this pomp and brilliancy really been going on always? It seemed to her a sudden creation; but she knew that of course it had always existed through the dead years of her former life, and away back and back before she had even lived. The great and noisy and moving world had been rushing on while she and Henrietta had lived unaware of it, buried deep as if they were in their graves, at poor sleepy old Balgowrie !(pp.186-7)

Not only is the dead centre of Scottish life to be found at Balgowrie, it reaches into the very hearts of the young women, who are scarcely Scottish since they scarcely participate in the communal life which can accord such an identity. In this isolated, static existence that cannot comprehend social movement, never mind that of history’s ideologised progress, the fault of the widow is to sacrifice her children not merely for herself, but for ideas associated with that progress: "Wherever opportunity offered, she placed herself in opposition to established use and wont". (p.14) Ruined by this, the daughters’ insignificance to all but themselves and Dr. Hallijohn is poignantly conveyed in the teleology of a narrative that itself leaves them behind.

Simultaneously of course, the closure of the girls’ existence is refuted by their failure to go away, the story’s forward movement disrupted by its narrative discourse. Various devices break the progress of the narrative and cast doubt on its definition of beginning and end. The book’s opening chapter consists of several curious distancing devices, emphasising that in one sense the story belongs in the past, not unlike Barrie’s Thrums. But unlike that sealed, irrelevant past, Balgowrie comes to interpenetrate the present. The passing of the story to the narrator, across two generations, is related by her, with the claim that the story
is true: "Ah life, there are stranger things in you than were ever written", I said".(p.9) She tells the reader that the inscription made for the two girls on a window frame in 1775, in the middle of the story, still exists. And as the tale unfolds, life goes on to belie the formal progress of narrative/history. The girls are frequently perceived as ghosts, or ghostly: Lucie’s erstwhile suitor comments that she might already be on the other side "of the grave...you little white ghost !".(p.106) Their story continues for twenty pages and thirty years after their death, which is still a century behind the point of the story’s commencement with the narrator’s grandmother. The beginning occurs, in chronological time, after, and in consequence of, the conclusion. No coincidence that almost all of the scenery in the novel is described in terms of its seasonal changes and regeneration. Time is cyclical in this structure, not linear, and the graves of Balgowrie remain green. The girls are not fully alive in their own span, but not entirely annulled outwith it either, extending into dimensions beyond temporal space. Denied a place in their present time, the girls are affirmed in Romantic manner by their narrator in discourse.

Identity, however, is incomplete. Again, the Romantic split of private self from social meaning is portrayed as untenable, producing the distorted form of the mistreated young women. The novel takes private, disconnected inner experience and makes it the subject of story, demonstrating the untenability of a notionally "true" self outside of social meaning. Being out of history may be compensated for by rewards in eternity, but the existence of the girls, out of society, leaves them more out of their minds than free within them, fulfilling the full import of the madwoman thesis. The dualism of self-defence confers only this limited refuge on an assailed identity, and the Romantic paradigm cannot sustain its distinction between self and society. Unable to exist outside of social relations, and impaired within her patriarchal terms, the potential totality of the Female is not to be found in one character, but by the sum of the various roles and minds the author chooses to portray: the fragmented Female. Identity can only be conferred by action in relation to the otherness of relationships and social meaning. Stuck without the option of abstracting themselves to some other realm, or triumphing over the demands of their society, the authors, since they are writing about their experience of reality, express acceptance of the need for a practical via media between theoretical extremes. More than division between discourse and story, the Female comprises the sum of a fragmented series of individual characters, among whom the heroine must exist.
Authors array their novels with examples of imperfect individual development, which, when portraying relatively young heroines and associated characters, falls into two particular strategies. The first entails the characterisation of a pair of diametrically opposed young women, whose differences exemplify social "femininity" on one hand, and a "natural" self on the other. Their pointed comparison, with its roots in the Romantic paradigm, highlights their authors' preference for the "natural" over the socially oriented model of woman, but also, importantly, the restriction of potential suffered by both. The conventionality of the secondary female characters often serves as a foil and display for the unconventional attributes of talented heroines. Minor female characters pose various kinds of frustrations to the sensibilities and aspirations of talented heroines, not only illustrating how the talented heroine departs from stereotyped patterns, but serving the critical function of exposing the follies and illusions of the talented heroine. The second technique is to place two such types in a cooperative partnership with each other, their mutuality implying the need for an integration of the two, and the relational basis of human identity.

**Corresponding Opposites: Competition And Co-Operation**

The best example of the first of these is in Jacob's *The Sheep Stealers*, where the traditional conception of love runs into sharp conflict with economic and social ambition. Isoline Ridgeway, recognising her "feminine" role for what it is, nevertheless opts to follow it, lock, stock, and *haute couture*. She enacts her romance along the lines of convention, invariably to be ridiculed by her narrator. In cases of Isoline's sort we see the gamut of values attached to the ideology of patriarchal commercialism, the woman as commodity.

The romancer is young *ingenue* Harry Fenton, whose grave error is to attempt to live by romance notions minus reality-testing. Treated ironically by his narrator when attempting to demonstrate his "masculinity" in terms of chivalry, Harry is bewildered when encountering the internal contradiction between the active, and the passive, vestigial form of drawing-room politeness. For Isoline, the object of his adulation, the material trappings of social status and "femininity" are everything, the rhetoric of romance serving her as another form of window-

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dressing in the market-place of marriage. Limited social roles constantly impinge on the pair's desires. Harry's enjoyment of the coach trip the pair undertake together is impaired by the realisation that in his exhilaration he is neglecting the somewhat less excited Isoline. For Isoline, the narrator reports, "the country conveyed nothing", and the reasons for this are given with carefully maintained distance between Isoline's justification and narrative stance:

It was cold, Harry's want of appreciation was anything but flattering - and she was accustomed to think a good deal about what was flattering and what was not; it was rather a favourite word of hers. (p.94)

The narrator goes on to diminish the worth of the character, telling the reader what to think:

How could we wonder at her [Isoline's] want of interest in ideas and things of which she had no knowledge? To her town-bred soul, outdoor life was a dull panorama, seen at intervals through a plate-glass window. (p.94)

Isoline's character is rooted in its socio-economic and patriarchal context, suggesting her allocation of ornamental circumscription. But the narrator, as is usually the case, goes on to emphasise the distance between women who choose this role and those on the other side of the divide. Isoline is disparaged with relentless wit:

Nevertheless, had it been otherwise, she [Isoline] would not have changed her point of view much, being one of those women whose spirits rise at no exercise, whose blood is stirred by no encounter; you might have run the Derby under her nose without taking her mind from her next neighbour's bonnet. (pp.94-5)

In Isoline's case there is no conflict between what she would like to do and what is permissible, the two being made for each other, but contradiction arises between the construct of "femininity" and the personal characteristics that don't fit into it.

In order to reconcile the contradictions she experiences between her self and her "femininity", Isoline's main mode of contact with the external world is calculation; calculation of what is seemly, what is "feminine"; of what is diverting and what can be used to evince personal flattery; and calculation of what might constitute an advantageous marriage (and for most of the novel Harry Fenton is not it). The narrator has fun with this portrayal, but we can see that Isoline is no mere vixen in sheep's clothing. She is a female type whom her narrator wishes to rid herself of for selling out to the conventionally constructed side of the
division she depicts. Clearly implicit in this is that Isoline’s identity cannot be located in roles only, since she has to think in order to accommodate the expectations of “femininity”. The symbolic implication in her name is fulfilled by her choice of conduct, isolating herself from other women, preferring cold ambition and social reward in exchange. Characters like Isoline receive the severest treatment from their narrators who point insistently to the betrayal of their sex enacted by their calculating artificiality.

This leads us to the second of the youthful characters’ recurrent dualities. Portrayed as larger than the parameters of social codes, the heroine communes with the greater nature beyond. However, the Romantic heroine is not only inadequate to cope with the demands of society, she is incomplete in herself. A frequent adjunct to her constraint is a friend, or relative, with whom the heroine finds herself in a relationship of complementarity, demonstrating the correspondence of their differing values. The heroine of The Rose Of Joy, Mrs. Crawford’s eldest daughter Susan, exemplifies this in her relationship with her new found friend Juliet.

Fashion in clothing represents a recurrent metaphor to the authors of the narrow, confining effect of “femininity” on such heroines, and their incompleteness when estranged from it. Uns suited to the world of fashion and domesticity, Susan is in tune with the natural world beyond. Discussing her dresses and their lack of style, Susan tells Juliet she doesn’t mind being thought to have ugly clothes:

I would put on anything to please you, but I do not understand about these things; they don’t exist for me.(p.66)

The pair attempt to buy some items for Susan to wear, but Juliet found it hopeless:

"she will like one thing because it’s like a leaf, and another because it’s like a beetle’s wing, or some such idea", she [Juliet] said to her uncle, after one of these days of effort. "Always something away from the matter in hand".

"And what is the matter in hand ?"

"Why, to get her decently dressed, like other people, of course".(p.66)

Pointing out the contradiction of wanting Susan to look the same as others while Juliet always seeks clothes that are different, the kindly uncle, whose benevolent commentary is another frequent accompaniment of these plots, elicits this response from Juliet:
"Yes, you're quite right", sighed Juliet. "It's a mystery. Fashion's like the moon, it's no sooner full than it's on the wane. But Susan will never trouble herself about that; perhaps she is wise". (p. 67)

Shortly after this exchange, the two young women attend an art exhibition, and are joined by Colonel Hamilton:

He came up to Juliet, who was sitting near the door. She silently directed his attention to Susan. He saw - even a man could not help noticing - how shabby she looked, the way that her black jacket bulged on the shoulders, the badly hung skirt, and the clumsy shoes. Juliet crossed the room to stand beside her, and as she turned to speak, he saw Susan's face uplifted, fresh, lighted with pleasure as if by some inward lamp, and it astonished him. (pp. 68-9)

The lamp could not more overtly represent the inner self, the "real" value the author endorses. Patriarchy may cause Susan's body to appear and feel awkward, but her mind transcends its definitions. Portrayed in this way, the social value system expressed in the attention given to dress appears ersatz, but indispensable: both women are subject to it, and Susan must go on to learn about this aspect of existence.

Juliet and Susan enact their counterpoint in a way repeated among many novels which are premised on the opposition of self and society. Representatives of each side of the division of "feminine" and "real" selves, these partnerships contain the woman who, in her natural growth, greater than the confines proffered her, is belittled in society's eyes for it; beside whom is the woman, slight of spirit and lacking in individuality, receiving the plaudits of a grateful community. Attempting to fit herself into the role of "femininity", this character seeks the socially ordained path of romance and material advancement in marriage, but in so doing demeans her value in the narrator's, and therefore in her reader's eyes. And yet, in terms of the structure of the novel, the heroine depends on her friend to point her in the right direction, to prevent her from complete humiliation in social activity, to make her aware of herself as a physical presence on a material plane. Along with the other groups identified, these two character types operate a relation to reality expressive of their incompleteness. For all of them personal potential is compromised by the ideology of their "femininity". Irreconcilable with the desire to grow, this ideologically informed role prevents the representatives of both sides of its divide from attaining their own totality. A kind
of teamwork between the pair is elicited, the narrative positing in their differing orientations the territory in which the Female exists, natural and social, spiritual and physical, in detached, self-preserving abstraction and subjectively limited in the here and now.

In all cases, while portrayed in her relation with another female character, the heroine is privileged by the narrator, the inner life of her "true" self revealed and endorsed in discourse; the heroine therefore exists both as a filter character in story, but also as part of the narrative discourse. The limitation of the social reality portrayed dictates not only that the heroine cannot assert this inner self over her external situation, but that her selfhood is the product of the inter-relation of social and personal factors, cannot be defined without both, and is never a fixed, autonomous entity. Thus the significance of the partnership between female characters, in the above cases, and more importantly, between heroines and their narrators. Couched in narrative arrangements involving shifts between story and discourse, inner thoughts and social potential, selves cannot be said to reside simply in their attics, enclosed, divided into a simple "true" versus external self.

Diagram Four: The Fragmented Female.

H: the heroine. Privileged by her narrator in discourse, whose commentary elucidates her "true" self, and its relation to the social roles carried out by the heroine in story. Heroine therefore exists as the sum of her parts spread between both story and discourse. She is characteristically unable to assert her self in story.

C: the secondary female character with whom the heroine enacts a corresponding relationship. The Female consists of the various female characters, including the heroine, arrayed among story and discourse.
Diagram 4 illustrates this array of the fragmented Female, in which the privileged heroine, interdependent with another woman, can also be found in discourse as well as in story, the simple Romantic opposition requiring to be dismantled by the authors, and the addition of a different model of contiguity between selves formed from the interaction of story and discourse, of inner worlds and social reality. This is where the potential for self-assertion is found, and where the parallel agenda leads to in the fiction of the younger writers, and the later work of the Findlaters and Jacob. Unsustainable either as an entity outside of social action, or without an inner life, encompassing the sum of heroine, friend, and narrator’s commentary, lodged irrevocably within human interaction (and subject to its patriarchal norms), the non-unifiable totality of identity contains contradictions that cannot be resolved.

Which brings us back to Jacob’s *Flemington*: on reading in the light of the foregoing discussion we can see that the book’s duality leads the non-essential self through the distortions of internal division to recognition of the effect of national politics, family attitudes, and gender attribution, on selfhood and the roles people undertake.

**FLEMINGTON: OPPRESSION AND FLUIDITY**

Populated by proteans, clearly *Flemington* is no ordinary adventure in history. If the novel form addresses the relation between inner perception and social action, acting as an organised forum for the diversity of social speech types, the diversity of individual voices, then this novel is concerned with just those collisions and interactions of individuals which constitute the social nexus, and out of which human development arises.¹²⁵  *Flemington* enacts the fraught interaction between disparate elements of experience, social and personal, shared and private. Thus does its author repudiate historical novel attribution as it was promulgated by Walter Scott, and unlike John Buchan’s historical novel *Witch Wood*, the forces that shape the individual are not revealed with accompanying Jungian allusion in order to be repressed; the self is not drawn in its divided form

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only to be withdrawn into an autonomous closure. Identity for Jacob here is neither one thing nor the other, neither a fixed entity hidden beneath its social roles, nor the sum of those ascribed roles. Instead, it shifts between the two in ways not always within individual characters’ control. For Scotland, for Christian Flemington, and most tellingly in the book, for Christian’s grandson Archie Flemington, inner division leads to the ongoing deconstruction of a sense of self.

Identification by surface becomes a game in which layers of falsity are cultivated, but in which no essence is discoverable. Changes of surface identity are profoundly motivated, as in Christian’s case, or expedient to the extent that no depth beneath the surface is discernible, as with the chameleon bourgeois of Whig-Jacobite-Whig Edinburgh. In an environment requiring protean changes of identity, Archie Flemington anticipates the same dissembling self-preservation by Balnillo that he himself enacts, noting that the older man

seems to be silly, virtuous and cunning all at once. He is vain, too, and suspicious.(pp.33-4)

The events of the story centre on espionage in the cause of political struggle. Espionage depends on subterfuge, and subterfuge requires emotional detachment. Yet characters manifest an alarming propensity for replacing that detachment with intense affections and antipathies, having causal effect on each other, directly or indirectly, identity the ever variable outcome of personal as well as abstract loyalties.

Two related features bear this out. The first is a recurring motif of incomplete physical or psychic individuality. Characters are damaged or otherwise impaired, in ways emblematic of their lack of closure, or self-sufficiency. These range from the curious hair-lip of James Logie, the Jacobite organiser, to the concealed emotional wounds of Christian Flemington. They include the analogy drawn by the narrator between the burn inflicted by Logie on Archie Flemington’s wrist, and his later emotional effect on the young spy; and the figure of Skirling Wattie, the very embodiment of a shifting, non-autonomous identity. With his body crippled and distorted by engagement with the world, opportunistic, vacillating, minus his legs (and frequently legless), Wattie’s protean, incomplete self moves with the flow of life, pulled by his dogs, pushed by his essential dependency on others. Balnillo’s projected portrait encapsulates the situation figuratively, as artist

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and subject disingenuously negotiate an outer form different from inner reality, and susceptible to change: "There is no fraud about it! It is not as if a man deceived his sitter". (p.28) Modified to fit the negotiated preferences of the two men, the portrait can never be completed. Inevitably it is cast aside as events unfold.

The second feature is the emotionality of perception. Where reason and balance are favoured by Scott, Jacob depicts the more awkward truth of experience. Rationality is present of course, but the story proceeds in terms of scarcely conscious feelings, fears, anxieties and attractions. From the loyalties of politics to attachments engendered between individuals, characters exhibit a powerfully emotional orientation towards the external environment whose living and inanimate obstacles they attempt to overcome. This is the point on which the plot turns.

Archie exemplifies relativism, contradiction and fluidity of character at levels beyond their initial binary oppositions. His physical disposition and courage are part of a sensitive mind, located in a body described thus:

The soft darkness of a pair of liquid brown eyes which drooped at the outer corners, and were set under thick brows following their downward lines. Gentleness, inquiry, appeal were in them, and a quality which the judge [Lord Balnillo], like other observers, could not define - a quality that sat far, far back from the surface. (pp.23-4)

In this curious description, Archie appears to share the traits traditionally associated with both heroes and heroines. His relationship with both his grandmother Christian and James Logie also highlight this relativism. For Archie, emotional ties to Christian are ongoing and uncontrollable, even as they are subject to manipulation by her, for her own needs. In this, they are inside each others’ heads, mutual aspects of identity. But of course no-one can be a mere replica of another in these complex terms:

There was a gulf of evolution between them [Archie and Christian], unrealised by either. Their conscious ideals might be identical; but their unconscious ideals, those that count with nations and individuals, were different. (p.121)

And in that difference is accommodated the emotional contact offered by Logie.

The fear of violation is opposed by the need for emotional contact in the emotional configuration of both Archie and Logie. Following their dialogue above Montrose
harbour, Archie feels his psyche opened up as surely as his arm had been burned by Logie's tow:

Archie stood before him, dumb, as James held out his hand. He grasped it for a moment, and then turned from him in a tumult of horror and despair.(p.99)

Experiencing the ambivalence of affection while intending harm is torture enough, but standing truly alone, without bonds, is hell: banished by his grandmother, and compelled by her emotional blackmail to pursue Logie, Archie feels he has no chance "to be true to anybody",

and it was being revealed to him that, in these circumstances, life was scarcely endurable.(p.170)

Within such a narrative, psychosis or death are the only means of closing the door between the private and social realms. Otherwise, the integrity of the individual is open to violation. Refuting the terms of the binary oppositions the novel dramatises, identity in Flemington has no autonomy, the dis-ease experienced by characters expressing their lack of closure. Having betrayed the trust invested in him by Logie, Archie has no compensating purpose in his life, and so can only end the story by fulfilling his perceived obligation to the man he set out to manipulate, their mutuality penalised by the circumstances of historical conflict.

Archie forfeits his life as the only solution to the contradictory ties in his subjectivity, since continued action could only advance his fragmentation. Through attachment, loss, and loneliness characters such as Archie Flemington appreciate their human condition. It is the same problem faced by female characters throughout the writing of the parallel agenda, the partial commitment to, and detachment from, the society they inhabit. Ill-at-ease with their place in the world, unable to control it, they struggle to comprehend who, and what, they possess; and to what, and whom, they belong.

To this extent, alienation is the subtext of all the novels discussed in this chapter. The dualities they enact dramatise the plight of the late-Victorian era, the historical truth of Scotland, and primarily the dis-ease experienced by women within their confined, but changing, social circumstances. Manifesting detachment of selves from ascribed "femininity" in particular, dualist devices of the kind we have seen express the incompleteness they are subject to, the estrangement of self from self. But in the deconstructive tendency of these dualities, the potential for a self so ill-at-ease to be opened up, reconstituted, begins to emerge. In the next chapter we will discuss the way, within the framework, authors begin to bridge
the gap between these defensive strategies and the advanced form of self-assertion, to move from female towards feminist literature.
Chapter Four

DUALISM AND SELF-ASSERTION

An ideal of womanhood cherished in man's States, which has for its essential elements, ignorance of life and a debased conception of sex, can be regarded with scepticism (Willa Muir)\textsuperscript{127}

The dualism of the previous chapter expressed the ill-at-ease experience of self in "feminine" identities, its devices in narrative discourse providing inadequate refuge for the heroines it was used to portray in story. In this chapter I want to show the development of these devices by the Findlater sisters and Catherine Carswell to attack the terms on which the "feminine" social roles they depict have been allotted.

In continuing the argument that writing is informed by the conditions in which it is produced, I will outline key social changes which distinguish the work grouped in this chapter from that in the last, reflecting the ongoing decline of the hegemony of "progress", which made more overt the tension between what rights and freedoms were permitted to women in law on one hand, and the way convention remained a conservative force on the other, governing the practice of female lives nonetheless. The point of the distinction is that with more rights than ever before in Britain, the literature by these women enacts dualities of a less apologetic, stoical sort, as their characters reach from Victoriana towards freedoms which, several years after they had become formally recognised as theirs by right, were less distant from ordinary lives, but still tantalisingly out of bounds. In this respect their dualisms accord with the Edwardian sense of transition to a new age.

THE SHOCK OF THE NEW?

As with most of the century that followed, the sense of transition rather than stability of values is what characterises the Edwardian period as it was lived by large numbers of people, new values struggling with the old. Transition is never smooth, and the Victorian imprint on British life was not, indeed is not, easily removed.

Demonstrating this tension is the response of a Scotsman reviewer in 1906 to The Ladder To The Stars, Jane Helen Findlater’s final novel. Enraged at the moral tone of the book, with its implication of freedoms due to women, the reviewer is scathing about the premises on which it is based. It may be difficult, but should not be impossible, he or she avers, for the story-teller to carry the reader on, step by step, till it seems quite a natural thing to leave the young woman up among the stars; for the realisation of this task, the reviewer continues, everything depends on what the young woman really is (my italics). And the value-judgements the reviewer brings to the book are revealed:

Now, Miriam Sadler, the heroine of this novel, is an egotist, whose most impassioned appeal to Deity is "Oh God, help me not to make a fool of myself". She is plain-featured, ill-mannered, bad-tempered, uneducated and unaffectionate. She lives with her poor but vulgar, widowed mother at Hindcup-in-the-Fields; is useless and restless in the home; ashamed of her relatives; rude to the Wesleyan Minister, and insulting when her mother wishes to marry again.

What are these failings attributed to?

She is wholly absorbed in the cultivation of Self - without nice perceptions, curiously untender.

The reviewer goes on to itemise various of Miriam’s manifest errors of conduct. Noting that she borrows books on democracy, mixes with, amongst others, an actress, a musical genius who is separated from his wife, and an editor "of the Bohemian type", the reviewer wonders whatever the stars may say to each other when they look down on daughters such as "this self-centred young lady":

128The Scotsman, Monday, 24 September, 1906.
Self-culture is not, after all, one of the noblest occupations. It is indeed not so far removed from self-gratification as to make a strong enough contrast between this gawky heroine and her tempter, the musical celebrity, who tempts her in such bald black and white.

What is Miriam’s crime? She rejects the suppression of self, as morally prescribed for her, the deferral of all that makes her alive. She might even enjoy sex. Exemplifying perfectly the hangover of the Victorian moral ethos, the reviewer condemns the heroine on precisely the terms Miriam is seeking to overthrow in the book. Expecting to see virtue in a woman, he or she bewails individual choice. Demanding duty be done, tresses are rent in horror of sexual potential (only potential, mind you).

Note the oppositions the reviewer enacts, between on one side the petit-bourgeois values of emotional restraint, seemliness, and the appropriate sense of duty: ideals repressive, conservative, closed to experience. While on the other side, characterised by the reviewer as exotic, indulgent and immoral, are the "bohemians", whose sins include the discussion of democracy, demonstrative emotional engagement with music, and of course, marital estrangement, a sure sign of the laxity from whence self-indulgence flows. It goes without saying that a young woman should contrast with such conduct. And simply "mixing" with an actress is enough to merit censure: well, we all know about actresses’ morals. This is a repressive opposite of the Romantic paradigm, in fact. Note also the basis on which the heroine is attacked: her "uselessness" at home, her failure to observe due deference to her mother, and her absence of pious respect for a man of the cloth. "Plainfeatured", "untender", neither looks nor charm to offer, Miriam is not properly "feminine". She will not serve: she is a non-woman. Locked into hapless moral certitude, "self" is the opposite of "feminine" for this reviewer, enacting the grim ideology of the Victorians.

The voice of reaction requires awareness of change, and the new century allowed its acknowledgement, if not its endorsement. And of course those least able to represent themselves were least liable to partake of its opportunities. But "self" development appeared on the verge of possibility for some women in the final, dolorous years of Victoria’s reign, and formed part of the transition undergone by society in the newly dawning century her death ushered in.
EDWARDIAN TRANSITION

The difference between writing produced before the First World War and that following it is at least partly attributable to the greater influence on the younger generation of the changing world as it led towards that cataclysmic event. As we have seen, riven with economic and ideological uncertainty, the later Victorian decades were subject to change like any others, and on their shifting ground those born in the 1860s ploughed their particular furrow. The dawn of the new century however brought with it not simply continuing change, but a new monarch, and the feeling that a new age was accelerating upon the country. A common denominator was the reaction against the Victorian outlook rooted in evangelical piety and middle-class political and social morality:

"dissatisfied with the long ages of convention and action which arose out of precedent, many set about testing life for themselves". 129

The advance of new ideas at the expense of older standards had fewer formal barriers now, but as always, as we have glimpsed, social conservatism did not give way easily. For women, life in the new century was fraught with the tension between potential and permissible attainments in life. Experience of the social conditions of Edwardian life provided the background to the formative years of those writers born post-1870s. The difference between the work of the older group and the younger authors is the distance between adolescence and middle-age, ambition and endurance. The literary transition reflecting this is exemplified in the best Edwardian novels of the Findlaters, which represent the peak of their thematic and stylistic maturity, and those by Catherine Carswell as she wrote about the Edwardian decade, looking back after the war.

So, the Edwardian age an age of transition: in one respect it gave rise to new hopes, new enthusiasms, new developments. But it was also one of continuing underlying pessimism and insecurity. Recalled by many as a halcyon era of golden summers, these were best appreciated from the vantage point of social luxury which imperial trade permitted the privileged few. Cherished principles about class and order, epitomised by Samuel Smiles and long practised by the

Victorian bourgeoisie, had moulded the minds of even the humblest.\textsuperscript{130} No matter that in this decade just about twelve million people, or 30\% of the British population, were living in a state of chronic poverty.\textsuperscript{131} The economic insecurity of the previous decades, resulting from lack of research, of applied scientists, and the failure of management to appreciate their deficiencies, was obscured by the demands of the war machine.\textsuperscript{132} Consequent lack of genuine growth of the economic base continued beneath the superficial air of a new start, lessening the gloom in the new century, but precluding modern democracy.

Progress brought its rewards, but was also responsible for the underside of British fortunes. The Edwardians’ aspirations ended as they began, embroiled in imperial war. And all major wars reflect and produce instability of values, of ideology. Into this deeper uncertainty underlying the complacency of the affluent, the direction of change could not be easily guided, by progressive or reactionary forces. The opening decade saw little coherence on either side as Suffragism and Liberalism struggled to give substance to their sense of a new dawn, while traditionalists propagating unity by reference to national heritage dismissed the need for laws enshrining rights for women to be implemented at all, never mind updated. But significantly, despite its relative lack of effectiveness in the years leading up to the new century, it was nevertheless industrial innovation that proved the most telling engine of change, including expectations in women’s daily lives.

Many technological advances begun in the Victorian years came to fruition in order to serve the war machine in which economic investment was increasingly diverted, and whose indirect beneficiaries were the members of the leisured classes whose appetite for domestic consumption flourished with their personal finances. Duncan Crow writes that industry had sifted through the discoveries of science and was creating the new technology. Explosive shells grew beside the


kinematograph, submarines by the phonograph. Tied to its imperial purpose, the achievements of slowly adapting industries was symptomatic of the dubious progress made in the age. Also beginning in the 1880s as an adjunct to the already flourishing consumption orientation, and reaching sophisticated levels by the turn of the century, utilising improving mechanical production-line methods and distribution, was the popular press, which specifically targeted a female readership after identifying that sex as constituting its major market. In other words, this was the beginning of the characteristic Western twentieth century economy, mass communications media in close association with conspicuous consumption, and with the home and the female sex an expanding new field in which to encourage purchases. Women, or at least "ladies", saw new vistas opening before them.

But these were vistas of limited range. Substantive new rights of the sort attained in the seemingly darker earlier decades were not repeated. The legal changes embodied in the Property Acts passed from the 1870s to the 1890s, and restricted voting rights granted in the 1880s, had formalised the changing social outlook, confirming in law the elevation of women from chattel status. Attitudes to change were themselves changing, and ferment for the new continued. Witness the Divorce Act, passed back in 1857, suddenly becoming a matter for great concern, supported by, among others, Arthur Conan Doyle. But the Edwardians saw the impetus to legal change abate, overlooked in the Liberals’ programme of welfare reform, and neither the implementation of existing rights, nor the legal enshrinement of new ideals, were to take their place alongside the nominal power of the consumer. This then is the main characteristic of the period, greater diversity of interest implicitly acknowledged in society, the old ways in transition. Many conventions were being overhauled, but without yet formulation of replacements.

Consumption-led change has its own curious timetable of course. With female interests being both sought and manufactured the specific changes this led to are worth consideration. That social values were modified is certain, but into what exactly is more difficult to define. Such change provides no substantive measures of its effects, no achievement aimed at a recognisable goal: a featureless river of progress indeed. Among consumer-orientated innovations, significance can

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perhaps be seen in the appearance of the vacuum-cleaner in 1901. A response to the notorious "servant problem", its popularity as the decade advanced betokens altering domestic arrangements among the upper classes, and new employment patterns among the previously stable "servant" classes, for whom service had been a respectable occupation. Likewise, female-orientated popular literature both reflected and contributed to the expectations of its readership. With its focus on and exploitation of perceived norms and desires among women, this section of the popular press has had a part in the commodification of "femininity" throughout the succeeding century. The point about such market-mediated events is that the values they espouse may well reflect the current climate, but, because they are intended to stimulate demand for the possession of more and different goods, they are invariably pitched beyond the realities of everyday possibility. Progress via Edwardian patterns of consumption was as questionable as ever.

The literature examined in this chapter manifests a tension between those aspects of women’s experience seen in the dualism of defence, and the genuine desire for the attainment of new freedoms, and it is these that distinguish the thematic content of the Findlaters from Carswell, the younger woman. This can be seen in the light of particular techniques and issues recurring in their novels, shared by them to greater or lesser degrees, which point toward the final, explicitly feminist resolution Carswell adopts in her second novel *The Camomile*.

The first of these is the progress heroines make over a course featuring the polar oppositions of personal isolation from, and absolute absorption into, socially endorsed self-definition. Following from this is the particular heightening of the ironic perspective displayed by narratives towards the norms with which they furnish their communities, and which increase understanding of the fraught interaction between self and society. Lastly, and constituting the core of the dualism of assertion, is the relationship between heroines and their narrators, who alter their distance in narrative discourse to act as the personal advocates of heroines’ interests in story. Flowing from this discussion, a reading of *The Camomile* will indicate the sharpening of many of the issues these devices raise.
POLARITY AND VIA MEDIA

Duty Or Joy At Crossriggs

In this novel the sisters together create a texture to render the complexities of ordinary life beneath the surface of its conventions, in a way reminiscent of the early work of their admirer Henry James. It shares with earlier novels concern with the forms of incompleteness society imposes on its members. Its advance towards assertion is marked by the fact that the heroine Alexandra Hope, rather than representing a distorted, incomplete pole herself, charts her compromise course between polar opposites located in other characters, and attitudes. The fragmented, limited models of the female constitute the poles she moves between. Alex is the victim of her society, unable to abstract herself from that society, but nonetheless a full character in herself. Such is the novel's tragedy, but in the terms of the present discussion, the portrayal of Alex manifests the transition between the restricted selves of the older group of writers, and the bolder goals of their successors.

For Alex, life requires the balance of the spiritual and the secular. She attempts to avoid the extremes of absorption within or isolation outside of the processes of society, the polarities created by the restrictive ideologies practised in mid-Victorian times, when the story is set. Characters' failure in the novel to achieve fulfilment is connected to their attempt to live by the values endorsed by their society. Historically, the "City of the World" was expressed in the commercial society of "getting and spending", which grew up with Christendom. Cut off from God, commercial society was dedicated to its own ends, based on calculating co-operation of individuals. Victorian stratification within industrial capitalism, with its circumscription of instinctual expression, and ethic of duty for women, would appear to be this city's apotheosis.(Miller,H.,p.186) Commercial and Calvinist transactions dominated life, particularly middle-class life, projecting onto it a dour, shallow concept of service with, as Rosalind Marshall noted, a gloomy sentimentality that simultaneously stifled the authentic expression of individuality. (Marshall,p.251)

The novel's narrative, in form and content, dramatises this tension. Non-linearity is endorsed by narrative form even as it concedes faith to the ideology of progress. In one sense ending where it began, with the village sleeping, the story is laggard in the movement of progress, the "former generation in possession still". (p.4)
The "near-numinous sense of creation" permeates the background, indicating the greater scheme of recurrence. Numinous the intuition of the eternal must remain, however, like the rainbow evoked on the opening page, "always a little away from where you stand". (p.3) In fact, severed from the eternal, nature in its degenerative stage attaches to the community membership. Robert Maitland, the married man with whom Alex is privately in love, suffers a loss of vigour that, "like frost in the night, had turned summer into autumn without a sound". (p.20)

Ideology casts the kingdom of heaven out of the City of the World.

Similarly, characterisation manifests the strain between the secular and the spiritual. Alex's father, "Old Hopeful", exemplifies the value and limitation of a contemplative existence. Ceaseless hopefulness sustains him in the face of many trials, "fruitarianism" affirms his belief in nature, yet he is also the source of most of the difficulties the family encounter. Practical inadequacy wreaks suffering on his dependents, and it invariably falls to Alex to salvage the situation. Again, it is really forbearance that the old man practises, the pragmatic line between the stoic and the mystic. Father and daughter receive their due reward, but even that is financial, bringing them no closer to their glimpse of nature's numinousness, their struggle for a more positive philosophy imploding on the transacted nature of people's lives. The non-material world of the inhabitants of Crossriggs is tied to its particular cultural characteristics, and their ideals are unable to soar to a higher place. Rather, like an overloaded aircraft, they are weighed down by the baggage of social organisation by commerce, wealth, class and gender.

Just as Alex cannot realise her spiritual aspirations, neither can she free herself from the social delineation of women's roles and status. And here are the poles between which identity must be forged. "Femininity" and Christianity are shaped according to the class/commercial standards of the time. The individual woman internalises both in the concept of "virtue", and virtue is expressed principally through the adherence to "duty", or "service". Virtue is connected with the denial not only of spiritual fulfilment, or joy, in this world, but in the case of women, of social privileges. No accident that the patriarch in the sky looks suspiciously like the one in the drawing-room, and that a woman's duty is the deferral of self-interest, for the greater glory of God the Father, or husband. Female non-selves are the domestic anchor of the oppressive/repressive Victorian framework.
Alex’s sister Matilda represents this extreme. Describing the great Victorian artist Frederic Leighton’s painting *Venus Disrobing for A Bath*, Fraser Harrison observes that Leighton rendered her sexuality “absolutely powerless by driving a shaft [her arm] through the centre of her body”. (Harrison, p.87) Power and powerlessness in ideological terms require that the subject be aware of its inferiority:

[Leighton] rendered her not only physically, but psychologically powerless by twisting her head so that she is forced to survey her self-inflicted castration. (Harrison, p.87)

The placidity of Matilda renders her sexuality well and truly safe, vested in child-bearing only. Her virtuousness implies selflessness, and without a self to own experiences like sexual passion, that sexuality can only be servile in interaction with man. Matilda accepts the self-deferral intrinsic to this model of her gender, what Gilbert and Gubar characterise as the nineteenth century conception of the "eternal feminine":

the angel in the house, to be selfless is not only to be noble, it is to be dead. A life that has no story [...] is really a life of death, a death-in-life. (Gilbert and Gubar, p.25)

The progression from earlier applications of the madwoman thesis lies in what the novel makes of its eternal feminine. While passing judgement on the hapless Matilda, narrative irony points up the contrast with the able Alex. For example, Matilda’s experience of love entailed an easy little courtship, ending in an ordinary little marriage, crowned, in the space of ten years, by a more than sufficient family. Peter Chalmers, her husband, was a delicate young man, with no prospects and no money at all except his salary. But Matilda had been blessed with a good share of her father’s temperament, so I suppose neither of the parents worried much about the future of their children. (pp.6-7)

The moderateness of the adjectives used by the narrator in her commentary give the passage its cutting edge: "easy", "ordinary", "little". Use of "crowned" in this context provides the irony, the narrator creating a scale of achievement by which to judge Matilda’s marriage. To be crowned by a "more than sufficient family" is somewhat less than extravagant; indeed, couched in this manner, it appears less than just about anything. That the crown of achievement was attained within ten years suggests anti-climax thereafter, with the final "I suppose" concluding her diminution of the affair, damning it with faint, unfelt praise. Unlike the earlier narrators, in *Crossriggs* positive alternatives are located in story, to which the narrator’s discourse can refer. The succeeding paragraph
begins: "There was that about Alex which compelled your interest [...]". (p.7) No belittlement here, by contrast. "Compelled", and "your", rather than the impersonal pronoun, draw the reader closer, creating a strong sense of Alex’s presence. So much for life deferred, in the narrator’s values.

What is the opposite of self-deferral? The denial of any connection between the moment and the millennia. Narrative disapproval is heaped on this extreme of *Carpe Diem*. Sexuality that seizes the moment and rips it from the continuum also removes it from true validity. Without a relation to time, it is portrayed as a destructive force. Dolly Orranmore is the embodiment of that force. When she runs freely at the Admiral’s dinner-party, she seems to puncture the cocoon of dead air surrounding the community, but the outcome is not a refreshing one. Sighted by Alex in passionate embrace with a married man, Dolly grasps life as she desires. Animal power characterises the language of her portrayal. Exploiting the potential power in her sexuality, seen in its animal force, Dolly subjugates dogs and cattle, before coarsening and crushing the life from Van Cassilis after their marriage:

In the few months since she [Alex] had seen Van Cassilis, his young plastic features had hardened and coarsened unbelievably. Some deteriorating influence had been at work. (p.299)

And later, Alex sees Dolly,

dressed as usual in rather showy but beautifully made clothes. Two or three dogs were leaping about her knees; she would flick at one and another with the whip she carried, and then evidently becoming more impatient, she put the whip handle to her lips and whistled again, long and loudly. "To heel", said Van, in an undertone. (p.301)

To make the most of time in this way is to reduce it to mere passing sensation; to enclose the soul rather than extend it. In quoting Joyce’s "regeneration is the beginning of dying", Hillis Miller elucidated how the two elements of this symbolic figure are precisely combined when a mother dies in childbirth. By the same token, the opposite may be true in fiction when a child dies being born. In this instance Dolly draws the life from Van, and cannot bequeath it to her baby, who also dies. The essence of Dolly’s life-force is again the sacrifice of the living for the dying.

The poles embodied in Matilda and Dolly correspond to the notional division discussed in the previous chapter, their extremes untenable, the actuality of human
relations and social praxis precluding fulfilment of their implicit values. The degeneration enacted by Dolly, and the docile self-deferral given flesh in Matilda, provide markers between which the heroine tries to chart her course. In so doing, Alex’s is a double-edged achievement: not stoicism, because her resentful frustration is clear; not transcendence, because she knows the material nature of her progress. It is simply endurance, the secular reduction of spiritual aspiration, whose Neo-Platonic allusions, like candy-floss, melt away at reality’s touch. The sisters’ occasional interest in Neo-Platonism appears based on its intimation in mortal life of the eternal world beyond, a religious via media. However, the story depicts its ineffectuality in Alex’s life all the same. There is no option to exist out of the social nexus, in some abstract spiritual or life-denying state, and there is no untainted area within it. Crossriggs is a map of the mental territory between those poles of wildness and aridity, ill-used but with strong roots in place. Alex’s self inhabits the depicted reality more fully than those in earlier novels of division, and more than those of the two women between whose polarity she acts. The space occupied by Alex, her via media, defines the area of experience which may engage with, and resist if not triumph over, ideology. Her characterisation, and the increasing intervention of her narrator, mark the basis of assertive dualism. This is taken further in the ironic devices used by the younger of the sisters in her 1906 novel.

Irony On The Ladder To The Stars

Jane Findlater, in The Ladder To The Stars, asserts this area of experience, her via media, over the same extremes set out in Crossriggs. The basis of the novel is ironic, as she sets about the restrictions imposed on women in ordinary British life with vigour, charting in full awareness the rejection by its protagonist of the social bonds of gender and class, with concomitant costs. Unlike many of the sisters’ novels it is set in the present, and does not span generations. It does however span the differential values of the two ages, Victorian and Edwardian, exploiting the tension between personal control and external imposition on experience, the standards of the author’s youth and those of the new age.

134The sisters’ interest in Neo-Platonism indicated by Paul Binding in his Virago introduction, p.xi.

In keeping with Romantic irony directed at social organisation, nature forms a background against which the heroine Miriam Sadler feels natural, connected to God, and it is the problem of her relations in the social nexus that discomfit her. As the book’s ironic narrative unfolds, Miriam recognises the expectations of society to be the codification of an inimical ideology in whose terms she cannot be entirely free. What is wrong with society is explicitly what oppresses Miriam.

True to the indignant account provided by the Scotsman reviewer, Miriam, in her frustration with her life, must reject much of it in order to develop to full potential. In her adventures we see her personality as the product of ongoing social relations, choices and efforts, growing rather than fixed. She is also a moral person, one who foregoes sexual gratification with "her tempter, the musical celebrity", precisely not the kind of self-gratifying conduct for which the reviewer pillories the book. Indeed, as the character strives for growth, it is to a Christian moral scheme she reaches, unlike the hollow social expedients which surround her. Such is the author’s ideal of personal growth, seeking not a secularised world, but a Christian one in which self-development is possible. The irony of the narrative discourse goes a long way towards undercutting faith in the heroine’s stance though, as she comes to understand how lives are formed from the influence of the values transmitted by their society. Miriam identifies the socially conservative ideology underlying the religious, the aesthetic, and the sexual values around her. Resisting the harmful values of her patriarchal community, Miriam is compelled to seek validation of her experience by alternative means. In her portrayal we find a heightening of the narrator’s commentating irony, picking out the tension operating between forms of social conduct and their alleged meanings. This entails provision, at the technical level, of a safe space in which the consciousness of the heroine can be revealed, and may grow. We can identify instances of both of these developments, in narrative discourse and in the particular alignment of narrator with heroine. Featuring the occasional use of free indirect speech, whose purpose in earlier novels is usually to allow discredited characters such as Isoline to be judged out of their own mouths, the alignment of narrator with character signals their author’s resistance to what she has identified as inimical ideology in human relations.

Teasing out the disjunctions between manifest and covert meaning in characters’ conduct, the narrator arrays the codes of socially endorsed lifestyle alongside the more gross qualities associated with petty ambition. "Right" and "wrong" as Miriam comes to understand them in a Christian-ethical sense, are transmuted
among other characters into "respectable" and "disreputable", terms epitomising appearance devolved from inner significance. We are shown religious belief among the cast to be generally slight, revivalism strong among a conservative minority, and the act of worship in large part a hollow ceremonial, necessary for the maintenance of respectability. When a prayer is offered up for Miriam by the revivalists, the narrator remarks:

but prayers are not always answered exactly as we wish them to be,
and this is one of the puzzles of the faithful.(p.15)

No better example of this irony of social definition is found than in the portrayal of Miriam's cousins, characterised as shallow, vain, calculating and snobbish. They compete to be the most "feminine" in terms of domestic accomplishment, and of sexual attractiveness, in all its passivity of personality, and measure their success by wealth. Disdaining their Aunt Pillar's status as a housekeeper, albeit housekeeper to the nobility, but "a servant nonetheless", the cousins slavishly follow her guidance, based on the habit and manner of her employers.(p.26)

The cousins enjoy their Aunt Pillar's titbits of gossip thus:

The young women feasted on these scraps of information as eagerly as hounds on meat.(p.26)

Progress has produced the social value system whose restraint is becoming untenable, and irony emerges from the interstices appearing in its ideology. Unable to maintain the repression of those lower, allegedly superseded elements, we find peeping through the facade of socially acceptable expression, elements of the allegedly barbarous. Invoking Darwin in her dismay, Miriam wishes to "relapse into the primordial slime whence I arose".(p.125) Further, she frequently experiences "savage feelings of revolt from her surroundings".(p.10) Resistance to her role in the community is lodged with reference to the hidden savage, within Miriam and in the village, polarised into binary opposition by the values of polite society.

The City of the World as depicted proffers a consumer-oriented package deal of values and conditions embracing most aspects of experience, as well as the material rewards accorded its adherents. In the narrator's treatment, it is the City of the World against which Miriam revolts, to seek her alternative values. At the heart of this package, marriage is the most implicated element, serving social, patriarchal needs, right down to internal perceptions of attractiveness, romance, and love. This is hardly surprising, since marriage was still the single crucial determinant of future fulfilment or otherwise. In this Edwardian context, marriage
arrangements are more flexible than among earlier generations portrayed by the author elsewhere, but remain based on the material values deriving from wealth, and the rules within partnership still reflect the transaction of service for security.

Continuing the Isoline character type of the woman entirely given over to external ascription, Cousin Emmie best exemplifies the internalisation of passive/assertive and materialistic power relations, in her pursuit of an appropriate marriage. Devoid of real malice, Emmie ingenuously calculates and displays her attractions and their rewards, her valuation of her own prettiness and dress-sense in keeping with patriarchal expectations of market-influenced "femininity". When Emmie thinks a man of sufficient status has been located, in the shape of a young doctor, Sydney Pratt, no less a traditionalist himself, flirtation is prescribed and administered in frequent doses. Talking with Mrs. Sadler, the young Pratt, describes his new fiancee as "a jewel":

"Yes indeed", replied Mrs. Sadler, bitterly, "a fine womanly young girl, clever with her needle, such a cook, and a born housewife". (p. 138)

Precisely what a man would want, Emmie is a woman who is there to feed an appetite, not to have any of her own. Narrative treatment of Emmie indicates both the increasing externalisation of "femininity" in the period, and the shift from defence to assertion. From the implicit and unwanted partnership of incomplete heroines and their externally orientated opposites, Miriam gains a subtle but distinct ascendancy over her cousin, outgrowing their correspondence with her narrator's endorsement.

Supplementing this sharpened narrative commentary, as Miriam feels imprisoned against her will, we find her narrator beginning to move into closer alignment with her. Burdened by the lonely knowledge of her inability to accept life on conventional terms, Miriam receives the sympathy of the narrator:

Miriam did not know [the] sweet use of adversity; it seemed to her that all the petty visitations of her life at present were for no good end at all, and could never be turned to any account. And yet they were surely leading her on to the larger events of her life. (p. 149)

When Miriam compiles her personal manifesto, asserting that she will affect nothing, nor be ashamed of her class background, the narrator calls it "an extraordinary document". (p. 93) And again, feeling despondent, Miriam perceives

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herself to be like a branch blown against a brick wall, which the narrator remarks as "rather a morbid thought for a young creature to indulge in, but it was true enough". (pp.34-5)

Narrative detachment from the depicted world is forsaken by the narrator, a side clearly taken, narrator and heroine together against the adversity of the world at large. The artistic illusion constructed as the refuge of the Romantic ironist aligns with her dissent from tenets of human-made society. In the safety of the space shared with narrator, Miriam is granted small victories of ironic perception, victories visible only to herself, narrator and reader. For instance, Emmie lectures Miriam on "femininity":

"Sydney says he wants a pretty little plaything; not someone to talk philosophy with him."

"I didn’t know he talked philosophy", said Miriam.

"Sydney can do anything. But, as he says, what he wants is a wife, not a philosopher."

"I dare say that’s quite true", said her cousin. (p.141)

In learning to engage with rather than shy away from social participation, and in the technical relationship with her narrator, Miriam represents the rejection of the values that oppress her, and the identification of the connection between expectations placed on, and in women, and the strictures of social class more broadly.

The values she overcomes are ideological and mutable, not absolute and divine. The word most frequently issuing from disapproving mouths is "class". Whether servants, middle strata or landowners, Miriam is perceived as transgressing the natural order, but the complaint always resolves into one upholding the material distinction between classes, including those of men and women. From the Wesleyan Christianity practised by Mrs. Sadler to the utilitarian view of art held by the local gentry, class ideology permeates all value. One of Miriam’s earliest pronouncements on the matter occurs at the annual village fete, organised by the gentry:

One class making believe to be friendly with another for one day, and all for its own ends. (p.43)

Ideology informs the value-system to be resisted. Miriam is an inhabitant of, but not an adherent to, the City of the World, a city which can no longer isolate female dissenters in their attics. Coming down from the attic and into the world,
the heroines of the younger writer Carswell represent the further expansion of personal experience at the expense of ideological distortion.

**Teamwork In Open The Door**

Written over a lengthy period and the recipient of a first novel prize in 1920, *Open The Door!* is concerned with the choices faced by a young woman growing up in the Edwardian years. It follows most of Carswell’s writing in its movement towards new horizons without entirely losing sight of the old, a fact determining the limit of her incipient feminism. The author did not regret her upbringing, and in her unfinished autobiography *Lying Awake*, having acknowledged its shortcomings, excuses them, with the justification that her parents were good people who knew no better. In part a continuation of their liberal Christianity, carried on from a world whose securities were its limitations, the author’s attitudes also partake of newer ideas, and her novels exemplify the transition of the age she depicts.

Of particular relevance to this discussion is the author’s explicit alignment, technically and thematically, of narrator with heroine. Massively more wordy than its successor, the novel’s resolution is reached through a sifting of its heroine’s experience. In this, the question put by the author’s son in his introduction to the Virago edition - how much of Joanna, the heroine, is Catherine, her author? - becomes of literary interest when we examine that relationship technically. The omniscient narrator begins the story in the traditional manner of the classic nineteenth century novel, outside events and inside characters’ minds, informing the reader of each character’s perception of their imminent trip to Edinburgh, and providing the required interpretation of events. The family having missed their train we hear:

"Oh! But I feel sure there must be a train before then", she [Juley, the heroine’s mother] urged, as if by sheer hopefulness she could belie the timetables.

"Let me see the board".

And she began a cumbered descent from the cab.(p.6)
Juley's misplaced hopefulness and maladroit physical grace are deftly associated, and the narrator goes on to underline her physical ineptitude. In this way we see something of Juley's character, our view coloured by narrative language. The children's scorn is couched in equally judgemental terms:

"Why will mother move like that?", she [Joanna] questioned in childish vexation. (p.6)

As the picture of maternal faults and childish exasperations is constructed, there is a glimpse of something more:

And driven by a strong craving, she [Joanna] stared away from the imperfection facing her, and set her eyes instead on a patch of the blue, perfect sky of May which had shone out suddenly between showers above the house-tops. (p.6)

Having drawn the "imperfection" of Juley, the narrator then indicates the perfection of the sky, but Joanna it is who shifts her vision between the two. The story's theme is expressed in this tiny movement, Joanna seeking beyond her environment for a better relationship with the world. This key perception is shared by narrator and character, its significance implied in the juxtaposition of the qualitative terms imperfection/perfect.

As the story continues, we see the narrative view increasingly merging with the view of Joanna, through the specific use of free indirect speech. For example, as Joanna slips off alone at the countryside retreat at Duntarvie:

At that moment the twelve year old child entered deeply into Nature's heart, and for the first time it came to her that she might make of her rapture a place of retreat for future days. It was a discovery. Henceforth she felt that nothing, no-one, would have the power to harm her. For all her life now she would have within herself this hidden refuge. Even if she were to be burned at the stake, or flayed alive like the people in Foxe's *Book Of Martyrs*, she would be able to fly in spirit from her torturers to this reedy water; and they would wonder why she smiled amid the flames. (pp.32-3)

Though in straight narrative, the first half of this passage becomes lyrical in tone, preparing the way for the shift to Joanna: "[...] it came to her that she might make of her rapture [...]". Still the voice of the narrator, but the crossover to free indirect speech occurs in the sentence: "For all her life now she would have within herself [...]". Because of the subtle narrative craft here, we experience the immediacy of Joanna's consciousness, its growth in her secret place. Romantic,
excited and self-referential, her sentiments of noble martyrdom as depicted in a book she has read remind us to retain the external perspective supplied by the narrator at the beginning of the passage, regarding Joanna from the standpoint of an adult viewing a twelve year old. Fallible but worthy, Joanna's emotional centre is exposed in such ways throughout, laying bare the character's vulnerability, and requiring both judgement by the reader and understanding sympathy, in a constant double-perspective. By placing her focus in and through Joanna, the author locates the character's growing consciousness at the centre of the book. In this is the assertion of female experience of self. A crucial example is found in the scene of Joanna's engagement to Bob Ranken, where the heroine's expectation of shared joy is quickly dispelled by their conflict of interest in the arrangement. Bob's conventional standards are threatened by Joanna's conception of individual freedom within their bond, and her valuation of the engagement ring leads her new fiance to fret about its price. Differences over Joanna's revelation of the engagement to her mother and cousin Mabel are revealed by the narrator:

In the little silence she stood up and began to tidy her hair at the mirror over the mantelpiece. "And Mabel?" Bob asked presently. Joanna turned, smiling broadly, with her arms still raised, and she had never been more attractive to him than at this moment. "Mabel asked me to show her my ring", she replied. "So that's why you want me to give you a ring?"
"Don't be a silly, Bob! I only want to wear something you've given me".

"Do you think I haven't thought of it?", said the young man wretchedly. "I haven't got any money now, but as soon as I have -"
"O Bob, dear!" Joanna sang to him with ringing sweetness, "it isn't a real engagement ring with diamonds I want. A bit of string or an elastic band would do perfectly if it could be made to last. That's why I got you to bring the penny today. Show it to me again".

Coming close to him she collapsed softly on the floor with her hands on his knees, and she looked up at him with shining eyes of false worship. (p. 68)

What is the relation between narrator and Joanna here? Her singing, ringing sweetness is an external perception of an action. "False worship" is not an action but an attitude, and so represents a shift of the omniscient view from outside Joanna to inside her mind. In so doing, the narration parallels the idea we have seen developing in all the previous books. Not only is self experienced from the inside, in problematic contradiction of its prescribed external expression, but
consciousness itself involves the perception of self from within and, in a sense, from the outside. We experience ourselves as subject and object. The inevitable disjunction for women lies in the extent to which the latter, external self-perception is antithetical to the former, being fashioned according to the predominant, i.e. patriarchal, cultural values. In this scene the external, narrative view is a female one also, and points to the incongruity between the moral standard Joanna attempts to express verbally, and the patriarchal standard for which she alters her manner. Narrator and character in close alignment represent two sides of a more potentially harmonised whole, as yet precluded by the inimical perspective retained by Joanna. The narrator is guide and example in discourse to heroine in her pursuit of personal development. We can locate Joanna’s construction in relation to the self-roles divide in a narrative diagram (Diagram 5):

Diagram Five: Open The Door!

Story encompasses part of the "true" self, which is no longer submerged beneath story and reliant purely on discourse. The narrator’s slant aligns with the heroine, and this discourse activity remains necessary for the portrayal of the fullest experience of the Female, indicating the relationship between inner and social, conscious and unconscious experience of self. The distinction between slant and story is always maintained, the heroine remaining within story, subject to the influences of her society. Thus, her identity, and that of the Female, is the outcome of influences in three areas, slant, roles and self within story.
Potential for improvement is implied in the narrator's criticism of her character, who does not have to remain in thrall to conventional standards. Though encouraged to act according to the division between social roles and a consequently distorted self, Joanna is able to choose for herself in the story. She still requires her narrator to reveal aspects of her identity in discourse, particularly those in her subconscious, but the area of her putatively "true", inner self is now also accommodated within story, or social action. The story in fact is about the problems associated with its assertion at that time. Story encompasses part of the formerly "true" female, which is now implicitly more fluid in its form, no longer needing to be submerged in story and reconstructed in discourse. The narrative slant is in close alignment with the heroine, acting as a critical advocate of her attempt to unite the division of self-roles into a potential whole.

Physical appearance is the interface between people and between these two perspectives, so it's appropriate that, in trying to bring her own and Bob's feelings back into harmony Joanna should regard her image in the mirror, tidying herself in placating Bob. Thereafter her behaviour is a performance attuned to that externally perceived standard, borrowing the "feminine" perception of her watcher, smiling while confused, sweet when disturbed, supplicating instead of asserting herself. But assert her inchoate desire for personal liberty Joanna eventually goes on to do in the scene, with deleterious effect on the relationship. There can be no freedom for her while engaged to Bob, as indeed he recognises in his dejection, since he suffers no confusing double-vision. Thus the knowing narrator can only close the episode reporting the inevitable consequence: "So Joanna's carefully planned betrothal feast ended in flatness". (p. 69)

While the heroine continues to labour under the burden of her self-deferring values, illumination remains all too rare, requiring a level of irony between the convergence of narrative and character's viewpoints. When marrying the overpowering Rasponi, Joanna considers her new adventure:

That man in the grey suit was her husband. He was a stranger to her: at this moment he appeared a complete stranger. Yet she had

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left her mother, her home, all that was familiar, to come away with him. (p. 104)

Here again, the free indirect speech of "that man [...]" switches to become the perception of someone considering the position at a remove, and we cannot be sure if it is narrator or character. The voice of doubt, counting the cost of marriage, is at its most realistic and hopeful when containing the potential combination of the two. But in the succeeding paragraph that small layer of irony returns, the voices distinct again, beginning with Joanna, closing with narrative comment:

This then was life at last! But it seemed less real, more dreamlike than anything that had gone before. She was going to a strange land, was going among strangers, was going alone with that passionate stranger in the grey suit. The train of experience was alight. Greatly she feared it. But not for anything would she have escaped. (104)

The voice of doubt seems to continue, "but [...]" added to the "yet [...]" of the previous paragraph, the passage concluding with detached narrator speaking over her character's head. The train of experience is a vehicle carrying its passenger as opposed to being steered by her. Since Joanna chooses not to escape, and escape requires some pre-existing form of restraint, we must infer her journey may not be to freedom. Small irony expresses narrative detachment from, and judgement of, Joanna's continuously circumscribed consciousness.

Whenever Joanna sacrifices her desires for the ideals of patriarchy, most particularly when trying to offer her self up to men, this shifting distance is present. In the third and final doomed relationship the collapse entails her major lesson, leading to greater unity with her narrator. Again we have the merging voice:

He was too old - an ebbing, dying man. No power could alter that grievous, icy fact. She saw that now. And yet, and yet - she cried out that she loved him. (p. 351)

Again the voices are separate as Joanna errs, her sacrificial tendency couched in free indirect speech:

If he would but allow her to share in this death of his, she would surely go through with it. (p. 351)

On this occasion her summary takes the form not of free indirect speech, and not of a narrative voice containing delicate irony, but one unified with its heroine's:
There was in her no real anger against Louis. The waves of fury that overwhelmed her from time to time were all from the outside, and inessential. What really concerned her was that the menace of death which had been with her all these months was now fulfilled in her [...] (p.355)

So the inner voice of consciousness makes its alignment with the alternative external perception provided by the female narrator, to see Louis, Joanna, and all events more clearly than was hitherto possible.

The varying alignment of narrator and character forms the basic technique from which all else in the novel flows, a way of writing that embodies the experience of self and world in a way symptomatic of the authors' awareness of stifled potential. Female self-interest comes up against patriarchal values, with the narrator acting as positive female advocate, pointing out the imported ideology in Joanna's mind. In stylistic terms, the answer to John Carswell's question about how much of Catherine is Joanna, is that a fuller potential identity exists as the sum of Joanna and her narrator, recasting the fragments of the female.

In the face of the huge amount of material in *Open The Door!*, its conclusion is somewhat banal. The ultimate harmony of Joanna and Lawrence Urquhart implies that power relations between the sexes are not the primary problem, only a symptom of the main issue, namely that in civilisation people have shut out essential elements of their spirit: not the nature of relations in society, but the relation of society to nature. Yet the novel generates what at times appears to be an irreparable tension between the growth of the heroine as advocated by her narrator, and the knowledge encoded in inner symbol. This is an example of the deconstruction by the text of the essential self, selfhood wrought out of the fluid movement of encoded symbols in personal experience, yet reaching its apotheosis as a transcendent ego, intact, somehow outside of the polluting secular world. The level of narrative innovation and that of its symbolist devices do not convey the same implications, and this tension limits the thematic resolution of the novel.

*Open The Door!* represents a stylistic advance towards assertion, but thematically it holds back, serving its Lawrentian influenced ideas.

Supporting these ideas, but also paralleling the *via media* identified in *Crossriggs*, is another schematic arrangement of oppositions, only in Carswell's book they are more clearly non-religious in their significance to the heroine. The first is that between Joanna's parents, Juley and Sholto senior, whose influence Joanna must
come to terms with. He, with great gifts of self-expression, is a man with nothing to express:

He was a fine, gracious figure of a man. But at the centre of his being there was a falling away. (p. 16)

Juley on the other hand is all centre but lacking in expressiveness. Clumsy of body, muddle-headed, she resists trying to realise her centre, her self, sacrificing it to her conception of spirituality:

Juley had hesitated long and seriously, but in the end she had taken Sholto instead of her dream of holiness. (p. 15)

Self-fulfilment and self-sacrifice are irreconcilable opposites. Here again is the eternal feminine of Gilbert and Gubar, but unlike Matilda, Juley wills this so, and despite her best efforts cannot really kill off her centre. Though the spirituality she seeks in delivering her self up to Sholto is not a quality inherited by her daughters, the altar of patriarchy persists, thereafter representing a secular deity, and the daughters’ tendency is still sacrificial.

This opposition, centre and vacuum, sacrifice and self-expression, informs correspondences elsewhere in the book too. Potential radical choices are deferred by Joanna as she is enlightened via Lawrence, Carl and Aunt Perdy. The apparent liberation found in the rebellious cruelty Joanna visits on Lawrence accords with the spirit of bondlessness preached by Perdy, whose words encourage escape from service but offer no model for human intimacy. Perdy’s freedom is in a fanatical extreme requiring solitariness for its realisation. She is the opposite of Juley, another pole in the scheme of extremes. Joanna comes close to this extreme when unleashing her selfish spirit on the hapless Lawrence who, symbol of Joanna’s roots in nature, endures, like a flower without bloom, a sort of hardy perennial. Joanna’s scapegoating of him is encapsulated in the letter she would have written him to break their engagement had she been honest:

[… because I trust you more than anyone I know, also because I wanted to feel I had power over you, I have used you shamefully] (p. 237)

Misanthropic as her conduct is here, it is merely a temporary counter to the dynamic of self-sacrifice, in fact its diametrical opposite, someone else-sacrifice.

The novel enacts its version of polarities of mind, through which the heroine plots her via media, this time supported by her narrator’s discourse. Ultimately however, the sin of pride that Joanna learns to eschew, is the one sanctioned in society for the opposite sex, and the social and religious groupings are depicted
in close collusion with such values. The freedom the novel advocates requires for women, in alliance with the close association of narrator and heroine, greater contention with the sexist social values consistently identified in its polarised characterisation. Less ambiguous is the direction Carswell's second novel takes. Bearing in mind what we have seen in the three novels so far, from polarised aspects of identity to increasing irony, and the explicit alignment of narrator with heroine, a reading of The Camomile will demonstrate the way they lead towards what would later be called "feminism".

"The Camomile, The More It Is Trodden On The Faster It Grows"\textsuperscript{139}

Described by Moira Burgess as a lighter version of Open the Door!, and ostensibly more straightforward than its predecessor, Carswell's second novel carries the implications for a women-centred literary vision a step further.\textsuperscript{140} Structurally and thematically The Camomile expresses the assertion of a female consciousness in the face of oppressive influences in a world whose design, perceived by heroine, and implied in narrative, promotes men’s superiority over women. Gone are the subtleties of relationship between character and narrator, replaced with the epistolary/journal form, in which the theme is also simplified, more focused. The female perspective struggles against gender norms both socially enforced and psychologically internalised.

How is the narrator/character alignment refined? Firstly, the author, in providing Ellen with a journal format through which to tell her own story, gives her scope to reveal victories and vulnerabilities as she relates and speculates on her fortunes. This allows Ellen’s text the immediacy of a chat with the reader, plus her stated aim of sustained mental organisation to aid self-knowledge, as she writes. It is not a simpler relation of author to material though. Judgement as well as sympathy is required as we regard Ellen’s interpretations of the events she


describes, but also, secondly, in relation to the movement of each of the book's sections.

By ordering the story into sections, over the head of the heroine, the author provides level 1, structural irony, varying the narratee's distance from the character. In five sections, it reflects symphonic form, one of progressive growth and harmony. Each section states and restates its themes, via the issues Ellen confronts in the writing of her journal. Section titles imply their themes: for instance *Studies And Inventions* deals with the need for creativity to learn from, and be based in, real life rather than detachment. Movement between sections follows a pattern, from the outlining of the matter in *Praeludium*; the beginning of major conflict in *Glee For Female Voices*; development of these conflicts in *Studies And Inventions*, and the descent into negation of *Fantasia On An Old Theme*, before the final resolution of *Also, Vorwarts*. A layer of evaluative work carried out by Joanna's narrator is rendered redundant here. The reader, placed in the same position, is invited to form the necessary judgements implied in the structure. For example, the section *Fantasia On An Old Theme* introduces its old theme quickly. Ellen writes of her engagement:

> [...] marriage must surely be of itself a clarifying and liberating process [...] with such an incomparable intimacy in one's life what need can there be for the intimacy of a journal?,

to then ponder immediately "Duncan's inscrutable plans". (p.213) The old theme is apparent, same as it ever was, and Ellen's descent into self-abnegation disguised to herself as self-expression is rapid. Ultimately it is a disguise she cannot maintain. Far less can she fool the reader, who is armed with the allusion to a fantasia in the section title, implying extreme movement without rational control.

This complexity is reminiscent of Hogg's *Confessions*, as the editor commits the error of thinking himself the compiler of his own book rather than a character in Hogg's. Unlike the *Confessions* though, sympathy for Ellen remains even as we judge her in error. The reader occupies the outer portion of her perceptual potential, stepping back from her misjudgments and endorsing her independence. Because of the privileged access to Ellen's thoughts, we also assess her mind at one remove from the gender values she tries on before discarding. We participate in the growth of her consciousness. The fluid and benevolent irony in this marks a healthier attitude to "femininity", which we see as something increasingly variable. Social orthodoxy exerts powerful expectation on Ellen's developing identity, but is not internalised by her to the extent of being irresistible ideology.
It has no hegemony any more, and her future promises greater choice in sexual relationships thereafter (diagram 6). This marks the assertion of a female consciousness over the environment with which it is at odds, even as the limitations still effective on Ellen’s life are portrayed.

Diagram Six: The Camomile

Narrative slant, or commentary, is redundant in the novel’s journal form; level 2, structural irony, predominates. Within story, the heroine’s journal examines the tension between roles and self. The heroine remains a filter character, within story, addressing her friend, also a fictional character in story, rather than a narratee outside it. Level 1 irony judges story proceedings, completing the territory of the Female. This form allows the heroine to discourse upon her own history, to begin to form her own personal discourse, within story.

As schematised in diagram 6, there is no narrator acting as advocate for Ellen, but in writing her own journal, the character, who remains a filter on whose fallibility the structure of the novel is based, proceeds to form and reform her own consciousness, creating in effect her own discourse, within a story over which she still cannot exert control. In fact, the discourse of the heroine becomes the subject of the novel, and the subjective truth she discovers is the value on which the narrative rests. The diagram represents the assertion of self achieved by the heroine in the form of the novel, and it is this achievement that constitutes the bridge between the two age groups of authors. Greater thematic and formal convergence is achieved by the focus of the plot on single examples of the issues
faced by the heroine. Also, the unconvincing conclusion to *Open The Door!* is done away with in the later novel, Ellen’s resolution following irrevocably from its antecedents. Among these is the fact that her major form of communication in the narrative is through the journal itself, written for a female friend. Women’s society is central. Ellen’s contacts are primarily with other women, particularly in *Praeludium* and *Glee For Female Voices*. Despite embarking on the ill-starred engagement, she is at no point a woman dependent on men. She learns to make choices having recognised where accession to a socially conservative lifestyle will place her. The truth Ellen discovers for herself is the current price of sexual relations, and the remedy available, among her own sex, and in non-sexual contacts with men. Having set out this issue throughout the story, the only sensible solution is the one that occurs, Ellen’s renunciation of her man, at least temporarily, and of her place among his and her families.

In confronting this issue, Ellen’s choice appears at once easier and more radical than that faced by Joanna. Individuals in *The Camomile* must accept the given terms of social participation or leave, shape up or ship out. Or must they? The values Ellen rejects, bourgeois, Christian, patriarchal, do not, despite their profound effect on individuality, constitute a closed circuit of unified ideology. Ellen has her female friend, and has hope and scope to be a creative woman. She will go on to contribute to the widening of the fissures in predominant social ideology. Not only does she open the door to her own self-development, Ellen puts a wedge underneath it. This brings the thematic level of *The Camomile* into closer alignment with the more radical aspects of critique resonating in both Carswell’s novels. I have argued that the notion of a self which emerges from within the textual representation of women, or somehow exists outside of the social environment in which its story is located, is not a tenable conception of identity, and that in the earlier work the dualities found could be seen in this light as well as in their most salient division. In this chapter we have seen the utilisation of ideas current in the new age to explore the relation of female selves to social nexus. Carswell in particular simultaneously postulates identity as an essential form beneath social, ideologised constructs, via her sophisticated symbolism, and yet also as an interactive and variable entity, open to reshaping by social and inner influence. Later writers respond to the untenability of the scheme in different ways, utilising non-essentialist assumptions about identity which become axiomatic to thinkers in their new age. In the next chapter, I will discuss the relation of this new wisdom to the old ideologies, and how the authors respond to reforming values, in particular, regarding sexual ideology.
The ruling class seeks [...] to impose a morality consonant with its own interests [...] but it is always conscious of the expediency of the morality it imposes on inferiors, and attaches no absolute value to it (Willa Muir)\(^{141}\)

In charting the differences between defensive and assertive dualisms we saw the general social influence of new knowledge and increased rights for women across the period spanned by the authors’ work, with its effect on them as they display a sense of times changing. This helps to distinguish those in the earlier group from their successors. We should also expect to find attitudes to sexuality expressed in novels following a similar pattern across the period, that as hygiene improves and contraception eventually becomes more widely available in reality, new rights of fulfilment in sexual relations are required by women, in literature as in society. But in this fiction we don’t. Instead, among all of the women, when in a position to choose, their heroines frequently opt to reject sexual relations on the terms that they are available to them. The greater autonomy enjoyed by a heroine, the less is her acquiescence in sexual relations with men.

Why? Concentrating primarily again on the writers who span the war, the Findlater sisters and Carswell, this chapter is concerned with the parallel agenda among them as it affects their depiction of sexual relations. It shows that the non-sexually active female, in opting out of relations, far from being a failure as a woman, in fact reflects the authors’ awareness of their still paradoxical relation with their society, whose evolving overt values, like the morality Willa Muir

describes above, remain circumscripive despite appearing to incorporate a new sexual equality.

**REFORM OF THE ROMANTIC PARADIGM**

Beware of binary oppositions. Metaphysically conceived, they are of great significance in constructing values and identity, especially in asserting models of difference, but too often instead of challenging cultural ideology, are symptomatic of it. Until now the Romantic paradigm with its binary oppositions has been influential on authors’ ironic narratives which, through accident or intention, have partially undone the division between "true" and social identity. In this chapter the issue is the reconstitution of that paradigm not so much by authors as by society itself, the consequences leading to the new literature of the modernists and other experimentation after the First World War. Among authors and in society more broadly, comprehension of the way private identity is informed by external influence grew, from primal experiences and emotional patterns experienced in childhood, to the living and working environments we inhabit, and the social messages we call culture. The realm of "true" private experience, as opposed to "social", could no longer be upheld in the light of discoveries in science, especially by Darwin, in cultural history, by J.G. Frazer, and sociology and psychology, from Marx to Durkheim, as well as Freud and Jung, whose conclusions irredeemably preclude autonomy in personal identity. The ascendancy of physical science in the new century led only to Einstein’s crowning glory, the theory of relativity. But there’s a twist in the tail: while personal identity became understood as relativistic rather than absolute, the existing power relations underlying gender differentiation, threatened by changing employment opportunities and legal rights, were reinforced by the external forces of culture. New knowledge grew simultaneously with the expansion of consumer capitalism and communications, and the new age was characterised by their complicity in commodifying "femininity" to preserve the ideological status quo.

This chapter follows the pattern of alleged sexual liberation propagated in the years around the Edwardian period (a pattern repeated again in the consumerist reconstruction of economies after the Second World War). It will show how the

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languages of science and of human rights re-define sexuality without changing its underlying power relations. Allied to this, we will see markets creating rather than responding to demand. Political demands for liberation were transmuted into economic demand for more commodities, chief amongst which in the context of this discussion was the patriarchally preferred model of "femininity". Arising out of growing consumerism, the sexual rights of the new woman implied unity of the previous divisions between private and social selves, between progressive ideals and female needs. In other words the consumer society would obviate the need for the two, split positions of the Romantic paradigm, and of the need for ironic perspectives on society. Consumer society would replace them with a new, liberating, third position. The consumerist chalice is a poisoned one though, influential undoubtedly, but hardly emancipating. Whatever may be said of goods sold via consumer markets, there are always conditions attached. If something is conditional, then it isn’t had by right, and if our status must be paid for, then we aren’t free. The new model absorbs women within unreconstructed "femininity" rather than releasing them from it. While the agenda of writers shows development according to their age-groups, the commonest response to sexual relations represents the link by which each manifests, in inchoate form, a response to female status bearing similarities to feminism as that term was defined in the early years of this century. Their responses betoken awareness that, despite the weakening of other forms of men’s privilege, particularly economic stability, the ordering of sexuality as the expression of existing power relations prevailed and, being so fundamental an aspect of individuals’ experience, the subjugation women encountered in this sphere led to its renunciation by them.

The "progressive" reading of the Edwardian age says that reform programmes of many kinds were initiated, and that out of the reformist climate women’s advance followed after the war. It’s informative to consider this interpretation further. A critical view will indicate its limitations, and an alternative approach will reveal the parallel sexual agenda of women, and define the basis for the growth of feminism in their novels.

As a preface to this however, here is an excerpt from Havelock Ellis’s introduction to his 1933 edition of *Psychology Of Sex*, which was the first unabridged small collection of Ellis’s seven volumes of sexual psychology, its introduction confidently asserting the success of his ideas by this late stage of his lengthy career:
Sexual psychology, normal and abnormal, as well as sexual hygiene, nowadays attracts a general interest and attention which before the present century was undreamed of. The young man of today is sometimes remarkably well informed in relation to the literature of sex, and the young woman of today often approaches these subjects in an inquiring spirit and with an absence of prudery which would have seemed to her grandmother absolutely impious. Until recent years any scientific occupation with sex was usually held to indicate, if not a vicious taste, at all events an unwholesome tendency. At the present time it is among the upholders of personal and public morality that the workers in sexual psychology and the advocates of sexual hygiene find the warmest support.143

Sexual freedom for Ellis lies in the unbinding of the physical act from any mental reservations about it. Sex is de-mystified, its traditional wrappings an encumbrance whose removal allows individuals of either sex to get on with their natural, mutual fulfilment. Sex is natural, sex is good. It exists as some kind of essence outwith the harmful social attitudes ascribed to it, and is gradually being freed from these burdens. And the instrument of liberation? The scientific methodology of psychology, that clean, value-free apparatus of the enlightened world. How does Ellis make his case here? Science is justified by recourse to morality, the improvement of which would appear to be its goal. Hygiene, normality and the upholders of personal and public morality are allied, with opposition to their project characterised as "prudish".

But wait a minute: the science of sexual psychology distinguishes between normality and abnormality, so clearly not any old sexual activity can be good. Though no longer to be shrouded in the repressions of prudery, sex remains subject to prescriptive categorisation. It is de facto bound within normative evaluation, which makes it relativistic rather than absolute. These are curious values that classify sexuality in terms of normality and abnormality, while claiming to have done away with maladaptive morality. Sexual reform as epitomised by Ellis represents the triumph of progress over prudery. By reinterpreting this version of the history of the age, we can identify the normative tendency in the newly reconstituted Romantic paradigm, and the progress of sexual reform.

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THE "PROGRESS" OF WOMEN

Ian MacKellar writes of the Suffrage movement:

When war came, the Suffragettes patriotically stopped their agitation. All Suffragette prisoners were released; and, encouraged by people like Christabel Pankhurst, women flocked to sign on for war work. To this call women of all classes rallied and did many kinds of jobs in the munition factories and in the field. Gradually the contribution made by women to the war effort established their right to full citizenship [...] There remained, however, two great barriers of prejudice in 1914: the hostility of men and the reluctance and opposition of many women. It was the war that broke down the barriers.144

One of several variations on the progressive model of the issue, this conclusion implies that the impetus towards the attainment of women’s suffrage was maintained in the legal act-less Edwardian years, slowed but still moving, by the Liberal governments of Campbell-Bannerman and Asquith, catching the spirit of change to attempt the improvement of the lot of those traditionally disadvantaged within existing social organisation. The women’s movement is said to have reached its goal in the aftermath of the war, when conservative resistance was critically weakened. Crucially in this reading of events, the range of issues converge in the campaign for the vote, but depend, strangely, on other means to actually achieve anything. From the Property Acts of the 1860s, some of the legal power of the male sex had been whittled away, but control of men over women in society was evident in education, work and politics. If women could vote they could even change man-made laws. Legal rights, political activism, and openness in sexual matters become portrayed as aspects of the same progressive, gradualist movement. As one contemporary sympathiser observed:

To the early Suffragists and to their successors the Parliamentary franchise has thus been much more than a mere means of influencing Government. It has always appeared as a symbol of social worth [...] The disenfranchisement of women is thus intimately connected not only with their remaining political and

legal disabilities, but also with their inferior training, their narrower outlook upon life [...] and their purely sexual grievances of marital subjection and prostitution.\textsuperscript{145}

And yet the programme is held to have failed precisely because of its focus on suffrage. The feminists had failed to give sufficient weight to the necessarily broad social programme, including marriage reform, birth control and support for working mothers. The winning of the vote should have been the means rather than the central issue.\textsuperscript{146} Strategic naivety appears to take the blame here. And, so the story goes, after eventually securing women’s suffrage, the movement lost its way in the 1920s, sexual reform obviating its necessity, leaving the leadership to fragment and to pursue more abstruse goals, such as Christabel Pankhurst’s revivalist mission to announce the second coming of Christ. The progressive interpretation portrays Suffragism both as the focus of wider issues before the war, and a distraction from their resolution after it. Reformism in law, and as advocated in literature pertaining to other areas of life, was the real agent of women’s progress, part of the inching forward towards the new world of freedom for all, a point of view which simultaneously attributes the attainment of suffrage to social change, while blaming the ongoing limitations of women on the Suffrage movement.\textsuperscript{147} But the notion of irregular but inexorable global advance in women’s lives within a universal reformism, including sexuality, is a dubious one, and finds little sympathy in women’s writing.

The new climate regarding sexuality is expressed in sex’s visibility in the Edwardian novels of the Findlaters, and among the later writers. Carswell can describe the attractions felt by members of both sexes in a more physical way than her predecessors, and individuals of both sexes are allowed to consciously evaluate what there is for themselves in a relationship. The adolescent Joanna in Open The Door! is invited to join an equally flagrantly adolescent young man up on the moor at Duntarvie, with the offer to show her "what lads is for". Enjoying the attention and the boy’s compliment of her looks, the shy Joanna rejects the advance, but:


\textsuperscript{146}Benning, Keith, \textit{Edwardian Britain: Society In Transition} (Glasgow: Blackie, 1980), p.82.

[...] the thrill of the boy’s touch remained with the girl, and the shameless young pagan look he had given her took its place also in her dreams. (p.37)

And in adult relations, Joanna feels strong physical attraction to Mario:

And now with his wet, pushed-back hair, and his strong bare neck, he looked boyish, different from the Mario she had known before. He had irresistible grace. No-one had warned her of the beauty men conceal beneath their disfiguring clothes, their stiff collars. (p.107)

No earlier female character is so explicit in viewing a relationship as something whose satisfactions reside in the here-and-now, rather than in abstraction to a purely emotional, or spiritual plane. Yet none of the writers is especially bold in their sexual candour in relation to the possibilities in the new cultural climate. Thus, while greater social mobility and expectation in post-war novels reflect the changing times, and sex is no longer subject to its previous taboos, it is not the ease, the visibility of sexual portrayal that is of significance to the women during the period.

**AN ALTERNATIVE VIEW: THE CONSUMPTION OF "FEMININITY"**

Women did not necessarily endorse this progressive interpretation of their own experiences. Far from opening up a healthy third way for women, the linearity of this scheme continued to exclude much of their reality, operating analogously with the consumerism upon which sexual reformism relied for its circulation. The alternative reading of sexual reform is of a quite reactionary programme that, despite the often good intentions of its proponents, defined sexual behaviour in ways beneficial not to the female sex, but to the stability of the social order, including power distinctions between the sexes, and whose vehicle was the expanding market for journals targeted at women.

Sheila Jeffreys provides an alternative interpretation of this "story", characterising it as a watershed in the history of sexuality.148 The years around the Edwardian period, she writes, witnessed a massive campaign by women to transform male

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sexual behaviour and protect women from the effects of the exercise of a form of male sexuality damaging to their interests. Jeffreys notes the absence of mention of this campaign in the histories of the women’s movement in Britain, typified by the instances above, and goes on to argue that activities aimed specifically at male sexual behaviour were forgotten as female sexuality was re-defined, mostly by men. The effect of the sexual revolution was to cripple the feminist campaign to assert woman’s right to control her own body, and to exist, as writer and activist Wolstenholme Elmy put it, "free from all uninvited touch of man". (Jeffreys, p.5) The feminist strand of the parallel agenda in this respect is a result of the fact that the right to bodily integrity has not been included on the political platform of any male political rights struggle, and only those objectives which men have seen to be important for themselves have been given serious attention, politically or in the study of society:

Men are not subject to physical invasion by a powerful ruling class and can take possession of their own physical space for granted. Women’s right to escape from being the involuntary object of a man’s desires has not earned itself a place in the pantheon of human rights. Woman’s "frigidity" became an issue in the 1920s as attempts were made to construct a female sexuality which would complement that of men. The struggle of women to assert their right to say no gradually faded into insignificance, whilst male sex theorists debated astride the conquered territories of women’s bodies. (Jeffreys, p.5)

Sex reformists were in the vanguard of the new era, the principal medicalisers of sexual "normality", the latest version of "femininity" as a male design. Their work may be seen as a response to the increasing opportunities encountered by middle-class women to be not only apart from men at the end of the nineteenth century, but less dependent on them, at work or as a consequence of its economic rewards. Increased conspicuous consumption in the new century in part exploited women as a market, and sex reform was among the commodities into whose attainment their new level of surplus income could be diverted. Ellis and the other sex psychologists operated in the context of women’s journals as much as in bound volumes, which, as with Psychology Of Sex, only became available later. The values espoused by sexologists interacted with the standards common to this form of publication, reflecting and being influenced by them, and like the bulk of consumer production since, cleaved the form from the substance of their
goods. The emerging orthodoxies of "consumption-femininity" become apparent on sampling some publications aimed at the growing market of women.

For instance, the late-Victorian manifestation of *The People's Friend* contains much the same mix of ingredients as its late twentieth century form, the personal confined to the domestic, experience sentimentalised into moral platitude.\(^\text{149}\) Annie S. Swan and Adeline Serjeant are easily the most popular contributors, arraying their individual brands of emotive Christianity among the paper's short stories and in interviews and miscellaneous brief comments, while alongside advice about cookery and dress-making sit practical tips concerning the new gadgetry of consumer goods. Disinfectant techniques vie with a new improved cabbage-skinner, while fuel economising is detailed next to an apparatus for mouth-vacuuming! The emphasis is on woman as mother, domestic manager, and through these, upholder of the national fabric. Articles cover such topics as "What To Teach Our Daughters" and "An Excellent Thing In A Woman (A Soft Voice)", beside a medical section covering crying babies, fatness, cosmetics, and how to retain a clear skin. Here she is, little changed across a generation, the angelic "eternal feminine", maintained in the market place.

This remained the most popular type of magazine, but smaller circulation products found a market for their material. Later and more progressive journals addressed the new possibilities of the age, or at least the possibility of new possibilities, as we see the self-deferring aspect of "femininity" become subject to revision. In the periodical *Womanhood*, staple queries about cures for unpleasant breath and blackheads are joined by discussions of feminism in France, inebriety and suicide in relation to womanhood, and an ongoing debate on the subject "Should Clever Women Marry ?".\(^\text{150}\) This debate reflects a range of viewpoint, but the general thrust is the justification of the clever woman's marriage on the ground that self-development can be achieved as well as the fulfilment of domestic, marital responsibility. If the clever woman cannot do both of these then she should be


\(^{150}\) *Womanhood: An Illustrated Magazine Of Literature, Science, Art, Medicine, And The Progress Of Women*, Volume IV, June - November 1900, Editor Mrs. Ada S. Ballin (London: Odhams Ltd., 1900). All quoted items from this edition.
denied the right of marriage. Like the more recent joke, she may be an airline pilot and fly around the world, just as long as the tea is on the table when her husband gets home. The notion that she might prefer some alternative to marriage is singularly absent. Also missing is any conception of choice for women outwith the framework of this sort of "femininity". Progress for this conception of woman entails the supplementing of a positive orientation to social norms with a wider range of knowledge than would previously have been regarded as appropriate, but it remains subsumed within her subsidiary status, upholding the oppositions it claims to do away with. In *Women, Beauty And Health*, an advice column exemplifies this limitation, and its association of women’s subsidiarity with the issue of hygiene, so important a matter in the campaign to change men’s sexual behaviour:

Q. I am sixteen years of age, the daughter of a widow. My mother is very anxious for me to shine socially, and to marry well. She has insisted on me wearing corsets for two years past; she has placed me in a fashionable boarding school, where we are taught a little music, a little painting, some French and some Italian, and all the manners of the smart set. But they have never taught us anything about ourselves - our real, true selves, I mean. I don’t want to be a slim, simpering, lady of fashion, and be married off some day, whether I will or not […] I want to be strong, healthy and free. Tell me how to realise my ambition.

A. Keep your body clean and pure, internally and externally, in the first place; make its development and care the first object. Make every part as nearly perfect as possible in size, contour and strength. In addition to your studies, secure and read radical scientific works, some good physiology and general literature of a classical nature. In demeanour be yourself. Keep in mind always that health, and the capacity to enjoy life, are of more importance to you than anything else earth affords.¹⁵¹

Note the scientific emphasis in the answer, both of its practical advice, and its recommended reading. With specific aesthetic goals regarding the parts and contours of her body, the young enquirer is invited to study her body as an object

in need of improvement to its beauty and health, twin goals of the modern woman. The female form becomes one of the commodities whose new design is being sold back to the subscriber. Couched in this way, external beauty and internal health convey a greater teleology and, allied to the pragmatic, inconclusive tone of the answer, it is no coincidence that the advice addresses none of the enquirer's substantive complaint, namely the condition of social subsidiarity by which she feels oppressed. In such ways are women's possibilities absorbed into the socially acceptable programme of sexual reform. Perhaps the young woman secured and read the radical scientific work of Havelock Ellis himself.

As for Ellis, among his ideas for better understanding of sexuality were certain key assumptions.\(^{152}\) Firstly, he believed in the innate and immutable differences between men's and women's sexuality, from which his other prescriptions follow:

Woman's special sphere is the bearing and rearing of children, with the care of human life in the home. Man's primary sphere remains the exploration of life outside the home, in industry and inventions and the cultivation of the arts.\(^{153}\)

Ellis's normative standards included the prescription that sexual relations between men and women should therefore take the form of male dominance and female submission, and he went on to define an ideal of woman, with particular glorification of motherhood. The form of sexual pleasure Ellis considers it a woman's right as well as capacity to enjoy is the submissive surrender to her male pursuer, who should practice foreplay upon her until she is aroused, after which sexual intercourse must take place:

she is, on the physical side, inevitably the instrument in love; it must be his hand and his bow which evoke the music.\(^{154}\)

By his elevation of maternity to the highest station available to woman, Ellis further circumscribed the ideal of "woman". He considered the main task of

\(^{152}\)As identified by Jeffreys (pp.129-30), and also in Faderman, Lilian, *Surpassing The Love Of Men: Romantic Friendships And Love Between Women From The Renaissance To The Present* (London: Junction Books, 1981).


social hygiene to be the secure regeneration of the race, a race whose deficient condition was highlighted during the Boer War, and one in which women greatly exceeded men as a proportion of the population. Indeed, "The Woman Question" came to overtake interest in magazine correspondence from the related, and still controversial "Servant Question", a letter about which appears opposite an article on the new status to be accorded women in Womanhood. From "across the Atlantic", the writer calls upon the "valuable and erudite testimony" of Professor Bjerregaarde who writes:

"All facts point to the Feminine as the primary and fundamental basis of existence [...] Biological studies have also shown the masculine as secondary".

The article goes on to promote the ancillary functions performed by the stronger, "feminine" sex, implying men's inability to carry out these tasks because of genetic deficiency. (Womanhood, p.208) Change in the economic and abstract status of women is often accompanied by just such an idealisation of motherhood and women's demarcated roles as instinct, and in this respect Ellis's sexual psychology appears in essence little different from the "eternal feminine" of the previous, "prudish" century that his work was intended to supersede.155

Sexual reformism does not withstand close inspection. A paradigm of the age, it asserts rights while simultaneously restricting freedom in practice. Its basis is reactionary not progressive, normative within the pre-existing framework of patriarchal and bourgeois capitalist culture. Seen in this light, the medicalisation of sexuality fails to live up to its billing either. The distinction Ellis made in his introduction to Psychology Of Sex between sexual normality and abnormality demonstrates precisely the same pattern regarding intercourse and motherhood. By the end of the First World War, scientific terminology identified "frigidity" as a major obstacle to healthy sexual fulfilment. But "frigidity" was used to define any response by women other than orgasm via sexual intercourse. And only sexual intercourse within marriage, mind you. Presumably the practice of heterosexual intercourse outwith this sanctity qualified as abnormal too. Among the causes of frigidity suggested by sexologists was "homosexuality", which when described by the influential Wilhelm Stekel, sounds remarkably like simple non-compliance in a woman:

She wishes to dominate and is afraid to submit. Orgasm means to give in, to be the weaker one, to acknowledge the man as master.

This type is keeping back the orgasm because of pride. Another favoured explanation for "frigidity", according to Jeffreys, was "arrested development", either physical or psychological. In these conditions, while sexual capability is conceded, it is deemed inadequate, erogenous but erroneous. "Abnormality" is equated with any less than enthusiastic reception by women of heterosexual intercourse, with virtually all alternative means of sexual gratification denied, diminished or in some way marginalised.

Ellis, Edward Carpenter, Iwan Bloch and Wilhelm Stekel were among a large body of sex reformists who increasingly used the ideas propagated by Freud in order to construct their own social programmes. The complexity of Freud’s work has been routinely ignored by people who have leapt to the sort of conclusions we see in Ellis, not least Freud himself in his development of psychoanalytic practice out of his extensive writings on dreams. While investigating the imaginative mysteries of the unconscious, Freud sought to subsume them within a hierarchy headed by reason and conscious thought, the pattern throughout Western history. This is clear in his delineation of the stages of growth each individual must negotiate on the way to adult maturity. From the state of original infant "polymorphous perversity" common to both sexes, based on Freud’s recognition that the sexual apparatus of girls and boys is more similar than different, he projected a "psychic bisexuality", which he took to explain the emotional traits of passivity and assertiveness combined in varying ways in adults. The presence of two zones of sexuality in a girl, the clitoris and the vagina, made her psychic bisexuality, and therefore her potential variability, stronger than that of a boy. She must, Freud inferred, surmount this if she is to become a mature woman, in normal development.


157 This brief summary of Freudian development paraphrases the following books: Berne, Eric, Sex in Human Loving (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1970), Chapters 2-4; The Myth Of Motherhood, Chapter 7.
In each of these models, sexual response and conduct in women are transparently hierarchised according to how they accommodate current social priorities as these are defined by men. Women who do not have children become the "immature", "repressive", incomplete creatures of the sexologists' categorisations, lacking in what were considered by Freud to be the essential traits of female personality: passivity, masochism and narcissism. These qualities seemed to him not only constitutional but the norm for good female development. Factors leading to these behaviour patterns were of no consequence. The female was to be as men defined her, and the male as men preferred. Once again, description becomes prescription, or, as Elisabeth Badinter concludes, acquired habit is declared innate.(Badinter, p.296) Utilising this model of sexuality, the sexologists and reformers of the Edwardian sexual revolution applied a restrictive binding to the issue whilst claiming its liberation. That the new knowledge discovered by the likes of Freud irrevocably mediated the conception of the autonomous subject so beloved of Western societies has been a major influence on successive thought, but the desire to mould the sexes according to two complementary sets of binary oppositional values was retained in this movement, and persists to this day. As Samuel Hynes typifies, looking back on the Suffragist movement in the midst of another alleged sexual revolution, in 1968, Suffragism never made "sexual freedom" a goal:

the tone of its [the movement's] pronouncements was more likely to be puritanical and censorious on sexual matters than permissive:
"Votes for Women and Chastity for Men" was one of Mrs. Pankhurst's slogans. Beneath the sense of political injustice was a deeper feeling, the women's sense of the fundamental injustice of sexual relations.158

Relations are unjust, yes, but their rejection constitutes puritanism not freedom, an attitude perpetuated in women's magazines, like Cosmopolitan, which grew out of the second sexual "revolution" in the 1960s. Such magazines feature adaptation to changes in middle-class women's lifestyles over the last two decade or so, especially regarding careers, adding professional success, personal wealth and extravagant sexual practices to the staples of good home-making, dress and parenting. The point is to make "control" synonymous with "consumption", "do" a code-word for "buy". Following the pattern set by Womanhood in their accretion rather than selection of ambitions, they evade the inevitable

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irreconcilability of some life choices with domestic, heterosexual service and financial stability.

Thus, the terms of the debate around sexuality had changed dramatically by the 1920s. The combined impact of the orthodox sexologists and the "progressive" sex reformists was to transform the way in which sex could be spoken or thought about. There remained only two positions available regarding the matter, "progressive" or "prude", an updated binary opposition between private experience and social dictat.

How do the novelists respond to this choice? In illustrating the co-option of issues other than suffrage into the reformists' programme, we see that the radical alternatives which were present in the women's movement before the First World War, far from sustaining their momentum quietly towards the attainment of the vote, had their diversity forestalled by this new, socially reactionary climate. It is among the ideas of the pre-war radicals that we find resonances with, and clarification of, the issues addressed in the novels in this discussion. Particularly among them, the sense that sexuality is the product of social construction as well as constriction, and that the usual route into marriage is not the only fulfilling way to live, were commonly espoused. In their attitudes to these matters the authors retain the distinction between personal potential and prescribed "feminine" destiny, the basis from which conscious feminism could grow to during the century. As far at least as sexual morality goes, radical branches grow from "prudish" roots.

THE PRUDERY OF WOMEN

Out Of Touch...

The Findlaters would appear to have considered themselves inhabitants of the repressive, "prudish" older world opposed by the sexual reformists. They were in their late middle-age by the 1920s, and their literary output declined markedly, so much that between them they produced only a single novel after the war. Beneath The Visiting Moon shows no signs of engagement with the new conventions regarding the depiction of sexuality, didn't sell very well, and seems in its gentle and discreet rendition to confirm its authors' place among the values
of Victoria's passing glory. But if the "prudish" attribution which encompasses the likes of the sisters is the instrument of women's absorption into the social order, what is of relevance in their work is not whether heroines follow the lifestyle advocated by progressives, but, rather, how female experience in narratives is related to normative standards, whether they are consonant with them, or resistant to them.

There are certainly many instances in the sisters' novels of acquiescence in the values of the sentimental novel, deemed old-fashioned in the new age, but they contain also the seeds of its re-interpretation. The host of vigorous women and men outwith their sexual and reproductive potential indicates the difficulty of portraying individuals whose self-development in their sexual years is free from the influences surrounding sexuality. Only outwith its constraints do these older figures find positive expression. The group includes Jacob's Lady Harriet Fenton (The Sheep Stealers), lover of outdoor life, devoid of becoming looks; Lady Eliza Lamont, frustrated by her limited life, and Granny Stirk, raw, bold, defined entirely outside the constraints of bourgeois values (both in The Interloper). These characters complement the earlier group of oppressed and declining victims, reaching some measure of strength and independence at the cost of sexual activity or valuation. While they are in part sexless, none is passive, each asserting herself over circumstances in some way. But none is whole, or wholly fulfilled either. These novels represent women in the traditional double-bind, living without men in a world controlled by men. Protectors are absent, or unable to protect their wards, leaving women to cope, their stories acting as accounts of female society, in interaction with, subject to, but also in important ways, distinct from, the dominion of men. It is from this basis the sisters' Edwardian novels go on to decentre motherhood from their heroines' lives, reflecting their personal practice in relation to the possibilities of their context.

...And Unwanted Contact

The literary attitudes of the sisters, which they develop in their Edwardian work, in fact have similarities to those at the base of the radical ideas propounded by

159 Findlater, Jane and Mary, Beneath The Visiting Moon (London: Hurst & Blackett Ltd., 1923).

members of the women's movements, ideas antagonistic to the presumptive monopoly of marital intercourse. They share the basis without expressing the ideas of sexual separatism found in the writing of women like Christabel Pankhurst, an implication that is taken on in the novels of their successors.

Among the divergent interests represented by women's activists towards the end of the nineteenth century were those seeking to change the behaviour of men, not of women, and who fought the assumption that prostitution was necessary as a form of social "safety valve", a release of men's innate sexual drives. This emphasis on the conduct of men is at the heart of the difference between those characterised as feminists in the period, and those with other priorities. It is also the key to the parallel agenda of writers, whose work reveals scepticism about the categories of both progressive and prude.

In particular, it is the notion of the biological and innate nature of sexuality that feminists rejected. The male sex urge came to be seen as a social rather than biological phenomenon, in complete contradiction of the sexologists' findings. Sheila Jeffreys indicates how, while attempting to express such anxieties about sexuality, women had to use terms which they did not create themselves. There were various ways in which campaigners went about disseminating their ideas, and the language they used has often been held as symptomatic of their old-fashioned view of sex, contributing to their seeming prudishness and repression to historians. Moral, medical or scientific, such language nonetheless contains radical implications, as it refutes received orthodoxies, new and old. Christabel Pankhurst's writings are a good example. In *The Great Scourge*, a sustained assault on men's use of prostitution, Pankhurst dismisses the biological claim, and as a result, asserts the moral inferiority of the sex whose members choose this course of action:

According to man-made morality, a woman who is immoral is a "fallen" woman and is unfit for respectable society, while the immoral man is simply obeying the dictates of his human nature, and is not even to be regarded as immoral [...] One is forced to the conclusion, if one accepts men's account of themselves, that women's human nature is something very much cleaner, stronger
and higher than the human nature of men. But Suffragists, at any rate, hope this is not really true.\textsuperscript{161}

Pankhurst further adds:

There can be no mating between the spiritually developed women of this new day and men who in thought and conduct with regard to sex matters are their inferiors.(p.98)

In this argument, morality is combined with the principles of evolution, and portrayed as a plastic form. It does not represent the repressive practice the sexologists claimed to be removing from sexual relations. The same trend is identifiable in novels, sentimentality at times giving way to judgements of male sexual behaviour revealing the moral code which enforces power relations between the sexes. In examining a specimen of this type, the combination can be seen leading to feminist implications within a sentimental novel, including narrative endorsement of unmarried status.

**HEROINES WITHOUT HEROES**

*The Joyless Rose*

We saw the ill-fittedness of the heroine Susan Crawford for her prescribed place in society, in chapter three. In this instance we will focus on the tenets of Christabel Pankhurst’s feminism as the novel embodies them. Mary Findlater posits the growth of the heroine through her experience of the moral inferiority of male conduct, the power basis of sexual relations, and their ultimate repudiation by her heroine Susan. Governed by inequality, gender relations in novels are fraught with dangerous liaisons of this sort, and given the chance, many heroines reject their heroes.

The novel’s opening epigraph from Emerson points as ever to the tension between the ideal and reality:

In the actual - this painful kingdom of time and chance - are care, canker and sorrow: with thought, with the ideal, is immortal hilarity - the rose of joy - round it all the muses sing.(frontispiece)

But while this implies the elevation of ordinary life through its resonance with higher Neo-Platonic ideals, the text in effect does the reverse, deflating idealism by reference to the intractable nature of human relationships in mundane reality. The unequal burdens placed upon women whilst they traverse their mortal coil furnish the background of its telling, from Mrs. Crawford’s premature decline due to excessive childbearing, to the endurance of various widowhoods throughout. As with Pankhurst, the language of Christian morality features in scenes whose import is essentially secular, treating the misuse of women by men in intimate relationships. This ranges from delicate metaphor to factual description. Comforting her young sister Emmy after the child has had a nightmare in which Jesus and the Devil appeared before her, Susan offers the commonplace guidance:

Good and evil are always with us, darling; let us keep near the good.(p.54)

But, as the girl brightens, they talk about animals, and Emmy asks if a lark could fly as high as Heaven. "Not quite as far as Heaven", Susan replies, "she found that the door was shut".(p.54) "She", the lark, has to return to Earth, where her lot entails another lark and their four eggs. The lark cannot recount her adventure, Susan tells Emmy, because "she had to look after the eggs when she got home".(p.55) Here, Christian imagery gives way to restriction by gender attribution. Not for the female lark feats of transcendence; only the immanence of maternity.

Similarly moral language expresses differential expectations of conduct between the sexes, but there is no mistaking the moral inferiority attributed to men. A weeping, unkempt woman accompanied by her fearful child is described by Susan’s husband Dally Stair as "quite a Magdalen"(p.197), and she bewails her sins, to be advised by Susan that:

God, who is our Father, will give food to your soul, and be kind to you, just like that, if you ask Him and are not afraid.(p.199)

Typically however, the woman’s problem is not God the Father but the father of her child, an absentee, following their illicit affair.

"What was it all about ?", asked Dally.

"Oh" - Susan reddened - "It began with a gentleman at St. Andrews". She sighed.

"Poor girl !", said Dally.(p.199)

With which Dally launches into an outburst of ostensibly sentimental piety of the reformed rogue sort, revealing his character as shallow and self-serving:
"Have mercy upon me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord! [...] A gentleman at St. Andrews! I could tell you things, Susan, but perhaps it would be more judicious not to. It's delicious though to make a "clean shrift". I'd like to; I once said so to Maurice Hamilton. "You can enjoy luxury in prayer", he said; but you can't, for you get no reply".

Just then his eye was caught by the colour of the sunset [...] (pp.199-200)

And indeed the moral inferiority opted for by the male sex is made explicit in the marriage of Susan and Dally. He, it emerges, has married her only out of financial expediency. Admitting he has debts to pay, Dally is asked by Susan why he took on marriage:

"to help to pay 'em", said Dally, turning away. (p.174)

And worse than this, it transpires that their marriage is legally null because, living down to his name, the husband has dallied previously, and is already married to a former household servant of his mother's whom he had seduced. The melodrama lurking in this turn of events does not detract from the exploitation of two wives by Stair, or the cover-up which ensues to help him evade prosecution. For Dally Stair, sexual relations within and without marriage are vehicles of the unequal power he enjoys, his moral claims an ineffective artifice. Commitment is all on the part of the women, the confidence trick on his.

This crisis in the life of Susan intrudes just as an old potential suitor returns to the community. Archie Hamilton is a man of "strength and uprightness of character"(p.278), and all seems set fair for a sentimental resolution to her trials. But no, Archie marries Susan's conventionally orientated partner Juliet, while Susan ends the novel in a wise, if not entirely splendid, state of spinsterhood. Her friend Carrie wonders aloud if it were possible that

anything would make up for a husband and baby? (p.311)

Susan's response is silence, and the narrator concludes that she had joined those who,

having looked on the face of Love, have turned away to follow after knowledge or the arts instead [...] (p.312)

Perhaps we should not be surprised by this outcome, recalling Susan's envy of the elderly spinster, Miss Mitford, when originally announcing to the old woman her engagement:

Her [Miss Mitford's] lonely life! Heavens! What should any woman want more than she has got - a home, a quiet life of her
own where she can read Shakespeare and worship God in peace, and freedom? (p. 133)
The comma between "peace" and "freedom" is an interesting one, the second noun, occupying its own clause, suggesting freedom in its larger sense, distinct from the mere accommodation with the world that the heroine is about to embark upon. Still suggestive of the Romantic paradigm, this novel nonetheless repudiates sexual partnership within marriage as the solution to social oppression, and, having implicated the institution of marriage, asserts the validity of opting out: for these oppressed heroines, there is an alternative.

The dawning age of Edwardian progressive reform holds no allure for the authors. Remember Herman the musical virtuoso alongside whom the Scotsman reviewer condemned Miriam Sadler in *The Ladder To The Stars*: Miriam opted out of conventional morality into another form, not into the immorality the reviewer attributed to her in binary opposition. The new, progressive model of sexuality is reflected in the opportunities dramatised in these novels for heroines to indulge in sex free from traditional moral constraint. But it remains the reactionary one portrayed in *The Rose Of Joy*, with the visibility accorded sexual matters allowing a clearer view of the same dynamics.

So while the terms of debate around sexuality in the period changed, resulting in the prudes/progressives distinction, the new language and modified details innovated by Ellis and the other reformists contained in essence the same old ideas, fed to their consumers by the new, pervasive and homogenising effect on the perception of sexuality achievable through mass marketing. As the reformist climate creates the possibility of greater visibility of sexual matters in published literature, so the issue of women's self respect, while receiving more overt treatment, retains the same core of ideas as those seen in *The Rose Of Joy*. Returning to Carswell, we can add this perspective to our understanding of the narrative innovations she made between her two novels.

**The Strange Case Of D.H. Lawrence's Friend**

Catherine Carswell's association with D.H. Lawrence has obscured the details of her work. She has often been treated as an acolyte of the "radical" sexual visionary. Considered from this common starting-point, she exemplifies what might be called the strange case of D.H. Lawrence and Mrs. Carswell, a
presumed "progressive" in whose writing a feminist lurks. How does her "Lawrentian" writing give way to reveal a feminism which cultivates the seeds planted in the writing of the Findlaters?

Carswell carries on the core of ideas in her own way, the implications of which are hinted at in her writing on Lawrence. Their association is apparent in Carswell's first novel, and attested to in her later, retrospective writings, *Lying Awake* and especially *The Savage Pilgrimage*. But in both cases Carswell's thoughts led her towards a feminist perspective as defined in opposition to the progressives, and her divergence from the great literary sexual revolutionary supports the repudiation of "progress".

That she was broadly in agreement with her friend and sometime mentor regarding the narrowness of society is clear:

"I believe not that there may but must be a new way of life, and that Lawrence was on the track of it". (*The Savage Pilgrimage*, p.IX)

In her laudable defence of Lawrence's intentions Carswell provides the basis from which her own literature grew. Lawrence's view of parenthood, that there are "plenty children, and no hope. If women can bring forth hope, they are mothers indeed", typifies his rejection of old ideals as they are located in bourgeois society, to replace them with the continuing relegation of women into secondary, re-creative roles. (*The Savage Pilgrimage*, p.60) Carswell modifies this in her first novel, the protagonist asserting that if children are to be truly served, "one must utter clearly and fearlessly one's own word of truth in one's own lifetime". (*Open The Door!* , p.336)

It is characteristic of Lawrence to invoke the grand, abstract ideal, out of synchronisation with the smaller realities of individuals' lives. Carswell treats the issue, equally characteristically, with respect for its personal significance. In keeping with his spirit of progress, Lawrence never ceased to regard the coming together of man and woman as the essence of all creativity: "it needs a man and a woman to create anything", Carswell quotes from his letters, "there is nothing that can be created save of two, a two-fold spirit". (*The Savage Pilgrimage*, p.78)

But Lawrence's pupil did not follow his example to remove herself, lock stock and

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righteous indignation from her social milieu, to pronounce on it from above. As she concluded about their friendship, in her narrative of him:

From beginning to end I had for Lawrence [...] a special kind of love and admiration [...] but I felt also a need to save myself. (p.41)

Carswell’s version of those core ideas fall into three related forms of portrayal. The moral expediency of men is still depicted, with, secondly, the language in which morality is couched losing its previous Christian tone, and moral choices explicitly expressing social power between the sexes. And thirdly, the complexity of women’s choices in these issues is rendered by a more sophisticated interpretation of the social construction of identity, which is deployed to explain the "false consciousness" that leads women into the prescribed inequality of personal relationships.

The first of these is testimony to the failure of sexual reform and the Lawrentian vision to address, never mind alter, the exploitative moral conduct of men. As with the secondary characters in Violet Jacob’s novels, a positive life force for Carswell is usually the province of those outside of sexual relationships. Granny Stirk was Jacob’s richest such portrayal, in The Interloper, while key male figures in either of Carswell’s books occupy a similar position. Boris Fabian and the benevolent man whom Ellen nick-names Don John enact the positive male roles in The Camomile. Ellen turns to Don John for advice and comfort in her travails. What is his qualification for the job? Like Boris, he is an outsider, scarcely recognisable as a man in the normative terms of socio-economic status, recognisable success, or the attributes of "masculinity". The outcome of these two men is in contrast to that of the heroine herself, as each, in rejecting the values of their milieu, must go to the opposite extreme, total isolation. Don John suffers a sort of death-in-life in his principled, impoverished loneliness, while Boris, in committing suicide, chooses the more concrete mode of dying. For these men, patriarchy prescribes polarity. They must retain power, or be subject to it, without the room for compromise within conventions which is the norm for the female sex.

In addressing this issue, the language of morality becomes synonymous with that of power. Compared with Mary Findlater’s book, for Carswell relations between the sexes manifest a more sharply focused view of the power disparity underlying moral conduct. In Open The Door! Joanna’s relations with men, on either side
of the Lawrentian divide, embody values associated with the binary oppositions of patriarchal power. These take the form of symbolic interpretation of physical encounters, in effect dances dramatising power.

By marrying Rasponi, Joanna "will have life", he avers, disingenuously, proceeding to constrain her in every possible way. The "freedom" of passionate emotional expression becomes as easily the violence of the terrified infant. Mario's paranoia impels him to seal his world, including his wife, inside the confines of his estate. The dynamic of their relationship is encapsulated in their equivalent of a dance of power, their wrestling match, an unequal contest in which Mario is as coercive as necessary to retain control of Joanna, and in so doing, Joanna rejoiced that he had beaten her. For he had made her his anew, and she longed for him.(p.116)

Along with Mario's need for control, Joanna is fully compliant; this is her spirit of self-sacrifice, portrayed as a falsely imported aspect of her consciousness, and one whose retention precludes her freedom from such a relationship to her man. Once Mario has bitten the dust, a victim of his own steam, Joanna returns to Glasgow, to Lovatt's West End set, and to the wrong choice.

If a wrestling match typified relations between Joanna and Mario, the waltz she attempts with Louis Pender exemplifies love, Louis-style:

> Upstairs he asked her for the waltz which had just begun. She refused: he insisted. But it was a failure. And when he had gone half around the room with her, trying every few steps to make her reverse, he stopped and took her away. "You were right. You are no waltzer, my child", he said resignedly.(p.175)

Once again, the dance is about control, and despite Louis's benevolence, he it is who possesses that control. But this is not enough: Louis's ability to maintain that control is illusory, even in the agreed convention of the dance. Try as she might, Joanna cannot conform to his guidance, and ultimately will not dance to his tune. The positive qualities Louis displays towards Joanna are mediated by the deceit he practises in his marriage, and his goodness essentially arises out of weakness, not strength. Christian moral language is absent from these encounters, while the disparity between the expectations and responsibilities of either sex is implicit in them.

As this pattern progresses in the story, the representatives of the Lawrentian theme come forward. Potential radical choices by Joanna are deferred as she is
enlightened with regard to the true nature of Lawrence Urquhart. Lawrence’s instinctual grace is seen in dancing with Joanna, harmonious where the waltz with Louis faltered in disarray. In spite of her attempts to reject Lawrence, Joanna will be taught by him what he articulates in one of their many painful encounters:

Try to take from a man for a change. Then perhaps you will learn really to give. (p.343)

The power-relations so carefully elucidated elsewhere seem to be laid aside, Lawrence somehow free from patriarchal values, discovering too his full self. This resolution is at odds with the depths of inequality portrayed between the sexes, and it is in the novel’s successor that the implications of power as it derives from social organisation are foregrounded at the expense of the transcendent selves realised in its predecessor.

In *The Camomile*, the dance of power is replaced by the *Fantasia On An Old Theme*. In this chapter of Ellen’s journal is the deferral of control to the patriarch, in this case her newly secured fiance Duncan. Unlike the dancers in the previous novel, Duncan brings with him an alleged modernity, is ambitious, capable, and free from the trappings of melodrama which colour the villainous lover in *The Rose Of Joy*. Inevitably, he proves to be a fitting reincarnation of the old theme, an enforcer of simple binary attribution. Devoid of imagination, utterly conventional, he is another version of the oppressor ordering his empire. In him is embodied the might of sexual and socio-economic conservatism, with its prescription for woman. "Duncan wants me to write", records Ellen,

He merely does not want me to fall into "the usual feminine mistake of over-doing things". (p.219)

There is a world of presumption in this attitude. As Ellen’s feelings about their relationship develop, Duncan’s remain fixed, fluid possibilities suppressed in him, intended to be deferred in Ellen. The satisfactions he takes appear superficial ones, for instance in making his fiancee a gift, then adding: "Mrs B. will be green with envy, I’m thinking". (p.245) This is the arrogative gift, the brand of a man affirming narrow terms in which he has a vested interest. Duncan furnishes his life with the ambitions provided by his milieu, among which is a suitably compliant wife. The demarcation allows her a wee bit writing, since that is in keeping with her defined otherness to the business orientation of the proud husband-to-be, but dedication would transgress into his territory. Passivity and narcissism are ascribed to Ellen by Duncan as he first assumes her absolute support for his plans, and then, in the face of her resistance to them, blames her lack of rationality. The basis of the Findlaters’ judgement of sexual relations is
carried on, Christian moral language giving way to that of structural power. No moonlit regeneration will be found there, and so Ellen follows an alternative route to social participation, a selfhood neither isolated nor submerged, her own third option. Just as dualisms in the parallel agenda reflected the authors’ orientation to women’s values, so their depiction of sexual relations declines to follow a pattern prescribed by male historians.

The socially relative form of sexuality has been implicit in the foregoing discussion. Carswell’s treatment of this is her third feminist tenet, and contains significance for the analysis of later writers. She is the first to utilise this potential in character construction to re-model female consciousness to a more favourable design. Implications of this design are worth consideration in concluding the chapter.

**SOCIETY, SYMBOL AND SELF**

The unusual texture of Carswell’s novels postulate their heroines’ identities as a complex of factors, the consciousness of each the outcome of the interaction of influences both external and internal. Neither heroine’s mind is a fixed entity, and both display internal contradiction. This fluid conception of identity reflects a newly sophisticated means of portraying the tension between female self interest and traditional gender constraint which carries the parallel agenda beyond its dualistic beginning, to collapse the boundary between theoretical inner selves and outer reality. The refusal of the polarities implicit in dual models leads the parallel agenda from simple narrative detachment to the complex *via media* which acknowledges the reality of the partial social construction of identity, and allows the attack on the attempted monopoly of power by men in the new age. Carswell’s understanding of the implications of a fluid self is apparent in the development between her two novels, and foreshadows the work of her younger successors.

In *Open The Door!* Joanna travels to locate her "true" self, and in so doing comes to recognise similar qualities in Lawrence Urquhart, thus enabling the two of them to find fulfilment in each other. But in repeating patterns of movement, and deciphering metaphorical clues to understand her own mind, Joanna is tracing her personal experience back through her parents and society. In psychoanalytic fashion, minus the sexist presumptions which prevail in its practice, Joanna
investigates her emotional needs, guilts and repressions, via recurring motifs of flight, death, nature and water, based on facts or objects of significance from childhood.

Flight is both the mythic expression of spiritual freedom, but also of anchorless fleeing. The death of Joanna’s father brings sorrow and guilt, while nature, and water in particular, contribute to the child Joanna’s stirring desire for a more harmonious existence. The ambiguity of flight and the obscurity of death remain at the back of her mind as her experience grows. Besotted with cousin Gerald, the child Joanna perceives herself as a "fluttering bird in his cruel hands".(p.39) Shortly afterwards she equals his legendary feat of leaping spectacularly across the backyard, achieving momentary transcendence. But this leap to nowhere will be repeated in Joanna’s urge to escape her family. As with her father’s death, Joanna absorbs the lessons of childhood unaware, meaning converted into symbol and codified perception, and little understood. Most pertinently, this produces the following effect on Joanna, in response to a nightmare involving the return of her dead father:

On waking, which she did immediately afterwards, the child was first conscious of immense relief that no such return need in reality be feared. "For", she said to herself in that conscienceless moment, "we can do as we please now he is gone".(p.29)

The schism between conscienceless perception and received attitudes, or conscience, causes not a helpful balance but the suppression of the unacceptable attitude through guilt:

But with complete awakening all and more than all the repulsion of her dream turned upon herself.(p.29)

This guilt is the instrument which impels individuals to the repression of similar emotions, leading in Joanna’s case to their expression only in rebellious terms, in compensation for which she enacts the socially endorsed ideal of self-lessness. Freudian allusion of this sort implies not merely the social construction of individual identity, but its formation in ways derivative of the predominant values of its cultural context. Flight and death, transcendence and transience, their symbols derive from human knowledge of nature’s elemental flux. Splitting the qualities associated with each and apportioning them separately, transcendence to men, immanence to women, establishes normative values which distinguish gender along with sex. This value-system, as received and transmitted by the Bannerman family, provides the convention of Christian duty by which Juley lives unfulfilled, and Sholto senior is elevated beyond his capabilities.
While unravelling this pattern in her mind leads Joanna to harmony, the sense that under the beliefs received from the external social milieu lies a true, female self becomes finally untenable. Promotion of the transcendent, essential self requires the reification of other forms of identity into its polar opposite. Postulating Joanna and Lawrence as "true" selves, freed finally from the encumbrances of cultural messages about the nature and purpose of their lives, reduces everyone else in the novel to the caricature of merely "false" selfhood. Exploitative or otherwise disapproved behaviour in the story is the product not of guidance, taste, choice, desire or other personal satisfaction, but is reduced deterministically into an expression of false consciousness. Along with her fixed potentials, Joanna’s self comprises the social delineation of her gender, manifest as these internal symbols representing cultural archetypes and stereotypes of status, and morality. The unconscious in this portrayal can be viewed as a system of signs, not only of Jung’s psychosexual unit, but of culturally biased norms which interact with the instinctive, genetic, given aspects of the individual. Post-Freudian understanding of this sort affords women writers the opportunity to re-define their experience without simply asserting binary oppositional standards. The key is the interactive possibility rather than having to opt for one side of a two-way split between a social and a true self.

From novels of sentimental tendency to those allegedly endorsing the sexual view of Lawrence, the core of ideas running through the books examined in this chapter share the constructionist tenets of feminist women’s activism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and continue in the face of changing sexual language and standards of conduct to opt for the rejection of conventional marital arrangements. The writers succeeding this group continue to develop these ideas in a context of re-structuring models of society and individuality. For each of the youngest two authors, Muir and Shepherd, the individual must incorporate a balance between the interaction of social definition and private experience of self, since despite the potential harm of the external environment, self-attainment in total solitude is not viable. This is more or less the option Grassic Gibbon chooses for his great heroine, Chris Guthrie, who drifts ethereally out of the human realm, and narrative, via the isolation of her chosen hill-top.\footnote{Grassic Gibbon, Lewis, \textit{A Scots Quair} (London: Penguin Modern Classics, 1986. First Published 1932-4), p.496. Further page reference to Penguin edition.} The union of character and symbolism fails here, the logic of withdrawal pursued
beyond credibility on the level of character portrayal. When Rhys Walters is placed outside his community in Jacob's *The Sheep Stealers*, he is unable to sustain a sense of identity, and concludes the novel not in peace but in psychosis. Mad Moll in *The History Of Aythan Waring* likewise enacts the role of human isolate within social history (and narrative), condemned to remain detached, incomprehensible, uncomprehending.\textsuperscript{164} The pure, essential self is untenable, lacking a means of entry into the world of mutuality. All of the women in this study posit psychosis in this way, the terminus of the Nietzschean isolate. We will go on to consider the youngest authors’ achievements in connection with the resolution of the collapse of the Romantic paradigm, in the third part of the study, their third narrative option.

PART THREE: THE THIRD WAY

Chapter Six

THE DECLINE AND FALL OF THE ROMANTIC PARADIGM

Human beings become mere pegs on which to hang the theories, economic units, and man, the heir of all the ages, is in danger of being crushed under the weight of his own machines (Willa Muir)\(^{165}\)

New opportunities are seldom brought to fruition, as old patterns constrain the uses to which new knowledge is put. So it was with recognition of the social, external influence upon the formation of the individual. As the untenability of the self/society opposition became widely understood among influential strata, proponents of the newly sophisticated consumerism exploited its potential to attempt to absorb personal experience further within ideologically determined parameters. Dissenting writers meanwhile either maintained the opposition or utilised the new possibilities to promote a model of the self which eschewed the metaphysical divisions of binary opposition to assert their own models of non-autonomous identity. When offered two choices, formulate a third one: authors’ rejection of the artificial choice between polarities, in gender, between socially delineated “femininity” and socially unacceptable areas of female experience, and in the autonomous model of the human subject, between full control over selfhood or non-existence, to posit a healthy alternative, is what I have termed the third way.

This remains relevant in the present, another age of revision and reaction, in which the poisoned chalice of consumerism is held triumphantly aloft, acclaimed as the very well-spring of personal freedom by advocates of Western capitalism, in the face of the decline of East European state bureaucracies. But again, new ideas dress up old values, and the ideological hegemony of which consumerism forms the soft option requires a philosophical critique along with other forms of resistance. The culture defined as postmodern is to our age what modernism was to the first half of the century. Like that earlier movement, the postmodern contains a philosophical challenge to dominant modes of thought, and offers alternative models of human experience and identity. Also following its predecessor however, postmodernism seems set to enter the same closed avenue, in which the positive potential of reduced personal autonomy is deferred, and its scope to engage with the world from which it has arisen diminished. The parallel agenda I have been elucidating avoids the reductive impetus found in some of the better known, more influential examples of art and thought during this century. In examining postmodernism in the present, and comparing it with its predecessor, we can identify key, common limitations. Set against these, the significance of the parallel agenda becomes clearly apparent, and its relevance to the present clear.

A STRANGE KIND OF FREEDOM

Meet The New Age...

There are helpful and less helpful ways to regard human development. The ideology of the dominant classes in Western societies in the eighteenth century favoured the conception of the autonomous human subject, while among the same classes in the late twentieth century the nature of the postmodern selfhood is debated. If modernism allows us to question ways of representing reality, including history, postmodernism challenges our notions of reality itself, and especially the model of the transcendental ego. Postmodernism in one respect offers

the gradual recognition of the value of construing human identity in terms of relationship and dispersal, rather than as a unitary, self-directing isolated ego, which has fundamentally altered the course
of modern and contemporary women’s writing concerned to challenge gender stereotypes.\textsuperscript{166}

Constant dispersal, following from the conception of roles in social organisation, is helpful in undercutting the ideology which impairs women’s ability to direct their own lives. But crucially, postmodernism’s dominant aspect tends to go further, to carry the concept of dispersal logically on, theoretically reducing identity to the point of nullity, rendering it a mere surface on which to play with roles, register, design. This offers no alternative vision to the reality from which many artists appear to dissent. While allowing the challenge of profound assumptions about our reality, it also opens the way for the denial of any defensible value beyond the subjective position from which the individual expresses what becomes only his or her personal preference.

This tendency makes the culture of the postmodern dangerously complicit with the economic powers in Western societies, to whose emergence in "this new moment of late, consumer or multinational capitalism" postmodernism is agreed to be related.\textsuperscript{167} Lyotard tells us that eclecticism is the "degree zero" of our contemporary, postmodern culture, one whose central mode is pastiche, defined thus by Fredric Jameson:

Pastiche is, like parody, the imitation of a peculiar or unique, idiosyncratic style, the wearing of a linguistic mask, speech in a dead language. But it is a neutral practice of such mimicry, without any of parody’s ulterior motives, amputated of the satiric impulse, devoid of laughter and of any conviction that alongside the abnormal tongue you have momentarily borrowed, some healthy linguistic normality still exists.\textsuperscript{168}

Implicit in the reductive vision of the human subject is the degree zero Lyotard refers to, out of which we are left with nothing to express, nothing with which to express, and scarcely any point in expressing it, to adapt Samuel Beckett’s phrase. Action without ends, only means, a world of valueless eclecticism, and writing


which exists as a subjectless object. The likes of Beckett dramatise this notion in creative writing, as well as ushering in the predominant postmodern vision in Western culture during the second half of this century. What has happened is that aesthetic production today has become integrated into commodity production generally, Jameson argues, that

the frantic economic urgency of producing fresh waves of ever more novel-seeming goods (from clothing to airplanes), at ever greater rates of turnover, now assigns an increasingly essential structural function and position to aesthetic innovation and experimentation. (Jameson, pp. 4-5)

And human form and identity are fetishised into surfaces to be bought and sold. It is in opposition to the logical conclusion of this vision that I have sought to affirm an alternative, parallel writing which upholds intelligibility and human intercommunication.

What’s wrong with this pessimistic vision of life in the modern world? Belief in valuelessness is itself valueless. The alleged neutrality of value can be seen as a front for the continuance of the ideology of "progress". Even as Lyotard itemises his imagined eclecticism, the failings of his view are apparent:

One listens to reggae, watches a western, eats McDonald’s food for lunch and local cuisine for dinner, wears Paris perfume in Tokyo and wears "retro" clothes in Hong Kong; knowledge is a matter for T.V. games. It is easy to find a public for eclectic works.  

Now this statement patently is not culturally value-free. It is a description of the lifestyle of "one" sufficiently educated and affluent to partake of the latest in consumerism, and we have seen the relation of consumer markets to the interests of women. If we can afford the price, we may consume freedom, and if we don’t like the goods, we are free to do without. But the menu isn’t within our control. The more the range of dishes expands, strangely, like McDonald’s, the less substance there is in them.  

This represents, under the talk of neutrality, a case of meet the new boss, same as the old boss. Post-Second World War welfare capitalism represents the heart of the postmodern problem, its bureaucracies

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170 This response to Lyotard indebted to Paddy Lyons of the University of Glasgow.
absorbing the individual within structured modes of action, while the post-industrial economy simultaneously facilitates further privatisation of values, severing the personal from the communal, upholding the polarities of individual subject-status. Thus Terry Eagleton's damning dismissal of the logic which has carried modernist into postmodernist, and from reference to, and challenge of, the structures which inform real life:

Postmodernism represents "the cynical belated revenge wreaked by bourgeois culture upon its revolutionary antagonists [...]".\(^{171}\)

And reality, however we perceive it in theory, goes on, with the same power and ethical issues to be addressed, the same sets of mediated subjects, some imposing ideological constraint on others:

[...] this whole global, yet American, postmodern culture is the internal and superstructural expression of a whole new wave of American military and economic domination throughout the world: in this sense, as throughout class history, the underside of culture is blood, torture, death, and terror.(Jameson,p.5)

For all that, as is a premise of this study, ideology is never without inconsistency, and remains under contest.

For this to be the case, the dismantling of the human subject must have a limitation. As Eagleton points out in relation to structuralist theory, understanding intentions in language requires the interpretation of it as in some sense oriented, structured to achieve certain effects; and none of this can be grasped apart from the conditions in which language operates. It is to see language as a practice rather than as an object; and there are no practices without human subjects.\(^{172}\)

The process of dismantling the autonomous human subject arouses great controversy because of its proximity to a denial of social and interpersonal value. This indeed has been the basis of the wrath directed by many a critic at Virginia Woolf's experimentation, from leading feminist writers to the poet Tom Paulin in his television polemic about her. So much so that the defence mounted on Woolf's behalf by Toril Moi in \textit{Sexual/Textual Politics} is a refutation of a longstanding distaste for the seeming insularity of the complexities of Woolfian


narrative strategies. Interpretations made by the likes of Moi, and Patricia Waugh in *Metafiction*, of the deconstructive technique, dispel the reductivist attribution, but succeed a lengthy tradition of dissent, particularly among Anglo-American feminists writing in the 1970s such as Showalter. In damning Woolf's social elitism Paulin appears to ignore her literary efforts, bracketing philosophical anti-humanism alongside personal snobbery, and by implication endorsing the kind of humanism deemed, as we have seen, historically relative and culturally conservative. But a healthier philosophical alternative than liberal-humanism is needed, one that grows from the recognition of interdependency, interconnection. In the strategies adopted in the fiction of the parallel agenda, dispersal of identity retains orientation to an external reality. The writers maintain their standpoint within the world to which their fiction refers. And in this manner the fiction under discussion culminates in a modernism eschewing the two extremes, endorsing instead a third way of construing human selves in contiguity.

How does all this relate to the Romantic paradigm still operational as literary modernism and the Scottish renaissance began to flourish? All philosophical paradigms are concerned with the nature of the human subject, and the shift effected in the decline of the Romantic vision led to a similar preponderance of deterministic models.

...Same As The Old Age

From the death of God to the death of man [sic], key influential figures in the lengthy and complex process in which these new forms arose were, at one end, that high Romantic Friedrich Nietzsche, and at the other, in this century, Michel Foucault, with the line of development drawn by the latter leading us to our present postmodernity. Their viewpoints appear on the surface to be polar opposites, but in fact have much in common. In between, and antagonising their positions, are the related bodies of thought, in association with which I introduced the context of the developing parallel agenda. These are the work of Henri Bergson, significant to many of the modernist generation of writers; the idea of the collective unconscious espoused by Carl Jung; and the philosophy articulated by John Macmurray. It is their refusal of the paths represented by the work of Nietzsche and Foucault which offers the most positive response to the declining

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feasibility of the Romantic paradigm, staking out territory shared by the likes of Muir and Shepherd.

The duality found in nature by the likes of Hegel became the common basis for the irony at the heart of Romanticism. The new historicism, perceived by such diverse figures as Lukacs and Foucault as the key intellectual innovation in the later eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, opened the way for the relativistic world picture that grew in writing, against the grain of the allegedly conformist Victorian society. Imagination freed from the confines of its social circumscription, in literature, reaches high up beyond the social plane, and outwith rational and empiricist constitutions of time, history and experience. Cyclicality in literature, the Romantic’s mode of dissent, in binary opposition to the linear order of things, charts the private in contrast with the public, in a dualistic tension which disapproves the understood, the accepted, the norms of society. From Arnold and Bronte to Stevenson, we have seen variations of this model, the inner world divorced from, and resistant to, its external complement. But for the writer grappling with the contradictions of experience towards the end of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth, personal identity appears subject to ever more complex determinants, ever decreasing autonomy. For adherents of the Romantic paradigm, the self is inclined to be withdrawn into still more private space, or to relinquish any claim to individuality, never mind autonomy. Let us map out this scheme in some detail.

The well-known route chosen by Nietzsche exalts the human subject as the source of truth in the universe, and his proclamation of the death of God is the logical extension of the solipsism implicit in earlier Romanticism, as deplored but unresolved by Matthew Arnold, and evaded, in Nietzsche’s opinion, by George Eliot. Like George Eliot, the earlier writers we have examined in this study share the refutation of objectivity in knowledge, while retaining a Christian moral base. In the radical Nietzschean version of subjectivity, there is no access to facts independent of human points of view:

A living thing desires above all to vent its strength: life as such is will to power.174

There is a master morality and a slave morality, depending on an individual’s ability to exercise will. Those able to do so inevitably aspire after a secret citadel,

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"set free from the crowd, the many, the majority", where, as its exception, the superior individual may "forget the rule "man" [sic]". (p.57) Plainly asserted here is the value of existence outside of, and above, the social order:

One should not avoid one’s tests: not to cleave to another person, though he [sic] be the one you love most - every person is a prison, also a nook and a corner. (p.52)

Affirming this in his most radical and lyrical utterance on the matter, Nietzsche proclaims victory in solitude:

You solitaries of today, you who have seceded from society, you shall one day be a people: from you, who have chosen out yourselves, shall a chosen people spring - and from this chosen people, the Superman.175

Nietzsche might be accused of wanting to eat his cake and retain it, in acknowledging constructionism in identity, and claiming transcendence through simply ignoring the fact. The Nietzschean subject becomes in this manner withdrawn despite asserting dominion over humanity, reduced while proclaiming expansion. The transcendent subject-self beats a narrow path into the terminus of isolation, the destination of its advocate in life as in art. When Nietzsche said "God is Dead", people were influenced by it not because he said it, according to Carl Jung, but because it stated a widespread psychological fact.176 This fact can be seen as acquiescence in the demise of belief in common human interest. For exponents of the parallel agenda however, individual identity incorporates a balance between the interaction of social definition and private experience of self, since despite the potential harm of the social environment, self-attainment in total solitude is not viable. The essential self is untenable, lacking a means of entry into the world of mutuality. We have seen already, and will see again in the later novelists, psychosis posited as the erroneous closure of the Nietzschean isolate.

As ideological uncertainty accelerated into the new century from the insecure 1870s, so fissures in traditional Christian, bourgeois and patriarchal values became more apparent than ever before. A totalising model of history, what was later


characterised as "grand narrative", could not resist its decline, all-encompassing exemplification of life being deemed impossible in the post-First World War age. The single line of division, or duality, in experience, so pervasive throughout the nineteenth century, began to dissolve under the burden of ever-more apparent inconsistencies in its formulation, necessitating new narrative arrangements in novels addressing the realm of the personal. Literary narrative had to adapt, manifesting the relativism of claims to knowledge, and among the major writers of the 1920s the Romantic model on which so much literature had been founded as it developed in the age of industrialisation, underwent its most drastic review. After plunging civilisation into the cataclysm of the war, history had become the nightmare from which the artist was trying to awake. Recasting the forms of art, thought, and life, became the concern of the modernists. Borrowing growing knowledge of the unconscious, making it new entailed increasing emphasis on discontinuity, and orientation to inner and irrational life, but in so doing it upheld the opposition of individuality versus external environment, while simultaneously implying diminution of free will.

Freud’s confirmation of the unconscious enhanced the focus on the inner self as an alternative centre of interest to history, but it also predicated a gloomy determinism in thought as irrational impulses seem to overpower conscious will. By its allegorical journey, Joseph Conrad’s *Heart Of Darkness* exemplifies regression into mere savagery, the discovery of the darkness within, while, following in the new century, T.S. Eliot was similarly pessimistic in his early poetic grappling with the same problems. Indicating the formation via language of the shared thoughts and ebbing ideals of Western civilisation in "The Waste Land", the poet simultaneously resists the implications of that knowledge by enclosing himself in the garb of an alien culture, itself in the throes of decline. Fragmented syntax and social register express the split between imagination and history:

A crowd flowed over London bridge, so many

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177 As outlined in retrospect by, amongst others, Jean-Francois Lyotard, in seeking to define the "post-" phase of this cultural shift, in *The Postmodern Condition: A Report On Knowledge.*

I had not thought death had undone so many.\footnote{179} Detached from the crowd, the speaker abstracts the self of inner existence away from the death-in-life of London, into the safe haven of his imaginative space. Conceding history, Eliot plots his escape from the urban desert into his safe haven, clothed in the high and ancient cultures of a noble past, noble, but alive only in the memory, dead to the touch of the modern world. On the Scottish scene, Hugh MacDiarmid identified with an ideal of Scottish community while asserting his connection with the universe, but simultaneously stood his speaker in ironic apartness from the bulk of its human inhabitants, reifying them into mass imbecility above which he would roam, in poems about Scotland’s cities, or in "A Drunk Man":

\begin{verbatim}
I’ll ha’e nae hauf-way hoose, but aye be whaur
Extremes meet - it’s the only way I ken
To dodge the curst conceit o’ bein’ richt
That damned the vast majority o’ men.\footnote{180}
\end{verbatim}

Confirming rather than challenging the alienation of the artist, no more mileage is to be made using such a vehicle of identity. Selves, so constituted, would appear to be getting smaller by the generation. The alternative route leads further, if also problematically, in the direction identified by what came to be called structuralist thought.

As the unity, or autonomy, of the subject-self became irrevocably mediated, French deconstructive philosophy came to the fore in the world of twentieth century art. Arriving at the post-structuralist proclamation of the death of man [sic], Michel Foucault points to the absence of free-will, autonomy, or even much choice at all in the make-up of the "individual". Foucault’s anti-humanist detachment remarks the absorption of the once-transcendent subject into the complex of meaning-systems from whence it arose. His point is most elaborately made in \textit{The Order Of Things: An Archaeology Of The Human Sciences}.\footnote{181}

The epistemological field which the human sciences traversed was not laid down in advance,


\footnote{180}MacDiarmid, Hugh, \textit{"A Drunk Man Looks At The Thistle"} (Edinburgh: The 200 Burns Club, 1926), p.6.

for man did not exist (any more than life, or language, or labour); and the human sciences did not appear when, as a result of some pressing rationalism, some unresolved scientific problem, some practical concern, it was decided to include man [...] among the objects of science - among which it has perhaps not been proved even yet that it is absolutely possible to class him; they appeared when man constituted himself in Western culture as both that which must be conceived of and that which is to be known. (pp.344-5)

Metaphysically constituted in accordance with the values of a particular epoch, Foucault confirms the historicity of the human subject:

[...] the new norms imposed by industrial society on individuals were certainly necessary before psychology, slowly, in the course of the nineteenth century, could constitute itself as a science; and the threats that, since the French Revolution, have weighed so heavily on the social balances, and even on the equilibrium established by the bourgeoisie, were no doubt necessary before a reflection of the sociological type could appear. (p.345)

This poses an epistemological threat to humankind. In one respect human life is revealed in all its determinations, but in another it retains its dependence on transcendent claims. In order to sever truth from error, science from ideology, knowledge needs a critical standard of some external bearing. Though humankind no longer reigns at the centre of being, Foucault concludes, the human sciences are dangerous intermediaries in the space of knowledge: "this very posture dooms them to an essential instability". (p.348) It is no wonder that "such an ambiguous figure of knowledge is threatened by the prospect of dissolution", the death of man [sic].

Foucault joins in the dismantling of the humanist conception of the subject, advocating in its place each individual's self-invention, but out of this logical development has arisen literature of the Absurd, and other nihilistic arts, celebrating the unintelligibility of the universe and humankind's place in it, the arbitrariness and self-reflexiveness, the essential purposelessness, of human knowledge and action. Logical rigour of this sort overwhelms the positive implications of the anti-humanist stance.

Not for nothing did Foucault approve the stance taken by Nietzsche. There is a logical extreme to their seeming opposites of isolation and dissolution which unites them, namely their own intrinsic fiction that the subject can be severed from its

social, interpersonal reality. These are the two sides of the same coin, dependent on each other in binary opposition. As with the Romantic ironist, separating the selfhood that constructs the work of art from the objects portrayed within it, in the pose that defends against being swallowed up by engagement with the world, each of these writers is simultaneously shut out of the universe and sealed within his own selfhood. Literature of the urban environment in post-Second World War Scotland has often tackled the problem, but rarely found a way around it. Self may face the universe without trepidation, but self accommodating others suffers the impoverishing schism of the post-industrial diagnosis. Reporting social relations between the sexes in the realist novel leaves little room for interactive potential.183

Even while they dissent from the conditions of their reality, women resist this bypassing of human otherness. No subject, no struggle: the philosophical dissolution of their subjectivity will not provide a better reality, it will only detach writing from its potential readers, who must perforce remain sufficiently constituted to comprehend the words written on the page, as a practice, and not as a sealed system imprisoning both transmitter and receiver. Personal identity as conceived by the Enlightenment humanist may be irredeemably compromised, but interpersonal communication, and therefore connectedness, remains the crux of the literature of Willa Muir and Nan Shepherd, in common with their older countrywomen, binding together the seemingly polarised condition in twentieth century thought.

THE THIRD WAY: NON-ESSENTIAL SELVES IN A DIS-UNIFIED WORLD

Early in the century Henri Bergson attempted his creative interpretation of individuality mediated and autonomy denied. His antidote to the Nietzschean isolate is analogous with proposals generated in Scottish thought during the 1920s, intended to solve the post-war crisis of confidence.184 Resisting utilitarianism and the ascendancy of scientific methodology which marked English trends,

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academics debated the nature and status of the human subject that they were trying to educate, and in this climate grew the philosophy of personalism.

**Bergsonian Freedom**

The Bergsonian philosophy of time and free will with which the Findlaters were acquainted is used to more positive effect by Muir. Bergson is referred to by name in *Imagined Corners*, and his ideals inform the thoughts put into the heads of her main characters. In *Time And Free Will* Bergson undertook to demonstrate that the recognition of the non-spatial, personal experience of time provides a basis for vindicating human freedom, and disposes of the determinism looming ever more irresistible in other areas of thought. Bergson’s distinction between time in scientific theory and time as directly experienced is crucial to his case. We find it extraordinarily difficult to think of duration in its original purity, he writes:

external objects, it seems, *endure* as we do, and time, regarded from this [external] point of view, has every appearance of a homogeneous medium. Not only do the moments of this duration seem to be external to one another, like bodies in space, but the movement perceived by our senses is the, so to speak, palpable sign of a homogeneous and measurable duration.\(^{185}\)

Thus do we measure consciousness by the criteria of an erroneously spatialised time:

> Granted that inner duration, perceived by consciousness, is nothing else but the melting of states of consciousness into one another, and the gradual growth of ego, it will be said, notwithstanding, that the time which the astronomer introduces into his formulae, the time which our clocks divide into equal portions, this time, at least, is something different: it must be a measurable and therefore homogeneous magnitude - it is nothing of the sort, however, and a close examination will dispel this last illusion. When I follow with my eyes on the dial of a clock the movement of the hand which corresponds to the oscillation of the pendulum, I do not

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measure duration, as seems to be thought; I merely count simultaneities, which is very different. Outside of me, in space, there is never more than a single position of the hand and the pendulum, for nothing is left of past positions. Within myself a process of organisation or interpretation of conscious states is going on, which constitutes true duration. (pp. 107-8)

This is Bergson's real duration, *Duree Reelle*:

Below homogeneous duration, which is the extensive symbol of true duration, a close psychological analysis distinguishes a duration whose heterogeneous movements permeate one another; below the numerical multiplicity of conscious states, a qualitative multiplicity; below the self with well-defined states, a self in which *succeeding each other means melting into one another* and forming an organic whole. (p. 128)

Deliberating about choice is not like being at a point on a line and oscillating between various courses confronting us, since these are temporal, not spatial acts. It is the spatialisation of experience that allows its restriction within mechanistic modes of thought. The "associationist" reduces the self to a mere aggregate of conscious states. If these various states are viewed as no more than is expressed in their name, sensations, feelings, ideas, etc., then they may be set side by side forever without getting anything but a phantom self, the shadow of the ego projecting itself into space. (p. 165) If on the other hand these psychic states are taken with the "particular colouring" they assume in the case of a definite person, and which comes to them "by reflection from all the others", then there is no need to associate a number of conscious states in order to build the person:

the whole personality is in a single one of them [conscious states], provided that we know how to choose it. And the outward manifestation of this inner state will be just what is called a free act, since the self alone will have been the author of it, and since it will express the whole of the self. (pp. 156-7)

Neither Bergson in his philosophy nor Muir in her fiction were ingenuous enough to ignore the difficulties faced when comparing this theoretical framework with the awkward reality faced daily by living people. In the absence of spontaneity, Bergson concluded, actions become stereotyped, mechanical: thus understood, free acts are exceptional. (p. 167) Time so characterised is a flux in which individual experience may be fully realised, or may be circumscribed by repression or oppression applied from impersonal social organisation. Willa Muir follows Bergson in seeing both the potential in such a flux, and the powers whose patterns
prevail over it. Systems of thought such as Calvinist individualism or prescribed gender relations privilege the spatially abstracted imaginative forms of order. Both of these posit a spatially extended scheme of purpose in human affairs: the teleology in Christianity resembles that of patriarchy in entailing the deferral by individuals, particularly women, of imaginative choice in order to retain them within the bounds of their socially ascribed position. As we have seen, duty and the stereotypical forms of sexual attractiveness of "femininity" form two aspects of the teleology of what Muir called the slave psychology of the oppressed sex. Bergson's philosophical framework seeks to reaffirm humanity collectively, where Nietzsche's resistance to stereotyped moral values was the denial of all connections. But Bergson also endorses individuality, despite his communal flux. Modernists like Virginia Woolf sought a new vision through precisely this dissolution of humanist notions of autonomy and separateness, with Foucault celebrating its logical conclusion a generation later. Perhaps it's no surprise that Freudian influenced models of the human psyche engage the interest of these thinkers. The collective unconscious espoused by Carl Jung was the preferred model of Willa Muir. In her study of folk-lore and children's songs, Living With Ballads, Muir seeks the archetypal, elemental basis in various forms in the oral tradition. In the light of this discussion, her allegorical short story "Clock-A-Doodle-Doo", a strange tale of the goings-on of anthropomorphised chronometers, is illuminated and illuminating. In it the tension between Bergsonian and Nietzschean freedoms is dramatised, and the third way of the author implied.

**Spatial Time Or Fluid Time: "Clock-A-Doodle-Doo"**

Excited and glad to receive attention from their daily cleaning woman, the clocks' whirring and chiming increases to express these feelings. They perceive a social order among their milieu, though their positioning in their room is quite arbitrary; they have a value-system in which the sun is regarded as a "Super-Clock", the "Author of their Being", and the moon its pendulum, expressions therefore of

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their own structure and function. The clocks fear the dark, for without vision they are confronted with uncertainty.

The voice of dissent raised by the "Clever Clock" is that of rational rejection of belief without evidence of cause, and Clever Clock dismisses the sun and any other power in his concerted attempt to unshackle himself from this order. In so doing he ignores aesthetics and emotion, valorising rational capability, setting about atomising his inner workings, glorying in his apartness, discarding numbers, choosing to chime at will. The outcome is his inevitable breakdown, and consequent removal by the cleaning woman in the morning.

This wee tale dramatises rationality harnessed to relentless self-will, the repudiation of universal connectedness, and the failure to comprehend the relation of thought and sensation to deeper emotional life, including the clocks' reaction to the much-desired attentions of the cleaning woman. Clever Clock is neither true nor free. He replaces spatialised time not with creative growth in *Duree Reelle*, but with solipsistic self-regard. Glad to become unintelligible, the Clever Clock moves only into the untenable closure of isolation, a *duree* false.

Marking out spatial time, the other clocks, by their emotional attributes and universalising religious world picture, exist in a context of potential meaning and growth, at the centre of which, if only they recognised her beyond her ancillary function in their lives, is the cleaning woman. The fullest potential for growth that embodies temporal, imaginative choice is impaired by the advocacy of an abstract rationality leading only inwards, and apart, from the universal context: Bergsonian freedom is incompatible with the imperious self as subject. Because of the limitations of the clocks' world, they recognise only the service rendered to them by the woman: she remains object to them. Muir's third way lies in constructing the connection between the subject, which does not dissolve, and the universal flux. In this respect she is updating the avoidance of the polarities found in female experience by her predecessors in their novels. And as the nameless woman is the unseen key to freedom perceived by the clocks, so the nature and place of woman, as interconnecting element in the universal flux, *and* as subject, becomes Muir's theme. As her essays elaborate, it is a paradox whose resolution allows neither valueless acquiescence nor spurious claims of personal transcendence.
Personalism

John Macmurray both influenced and was influenced by the context of thought in Scottish academic life from the 1920s up until the 1960s. Arnold Kemp recalls attending as an undergraduate at Edinburgh University a lecture given by the professor in which the subjective nature of truth would be demonstrated by a dramatic event played out in front of the class, a chase or a fight, after which students had to write an account of the action:

Professor Macmurray took great pleasure in pointing out that not one version tallied with any of the others.188

Macmurray partook of Scottish traditions in resistance to the English analytic tradition growing in philosophy, which he regarded as a capitulation to the methodology of science and which, however useful, was only one form of knowledge. Macmurray’s personalism accords with the refusal of the theoretical extremes of modernism represented by the third narrative way, and locates this alternative in a broad context of ideas concerning the historical predicament in which civilisation found itself in the aftermath of the First World War. That the line of connection between Nietzsche, certain modernists and Foucault is the predominant one in cultural development, reflects the power of its dogma and evidences the failure, for most, of its various liberating claims, looked at from this far from liberated present. In emphasising the importance of religious traditions for the maintenance of ways of living which attempt to do justice to our nature as persons, Macmurray is eloquently at variance with the facile secularism of most contemporary thought.189 But he is not at variance with the trend of philosophy to which Shepherd was exposed during her undergraduate career.

Moral Philosophy at Aberdeen University in the period of Nan Shepherd’s education, 1912 - 16, was taught by one Professor James Black Baillie, and featured a course entitled "Psychology Of The Moral Life", whose set text, Bosanquet’s The Psychology Of The Moral Self, exemplifies just this grappling with the secular and deterministic impetus associated with new knowledge. In it, Bosanquet regards the emerging social sciences within an ethical frame, stressing action over sealed intellect, and in a crude form addresses mind-body models of

188Kemp, Arnold, "An Editor’s Tale", Edit, Issue 2, Summer 1992, p.34.

189Turnbull, Ronald, and Beveridge, Craig, "Recent Scottish Thought", The History Of Scottish Literature, Volume Four, pp. 61-74, p.70.
the human subject, rejecting them in favour of a non-unified model of personal identity:

The abstract "I" or supposed pure ego will not help us, for identity must be a content, something that we take to be essential; a pure form can have neither identity nor change [...] Bosanquet resists the scientific essentialism of formal psychology, going on to assert that practically, our result is that the question cannot be answered in general; there is no essential individual, and no essence apart from a teleological point of view. (p. 56)

So saying, Baillie underlines the basis of the parallel agenda, whose anti-teleological implications in female identity receive their most refined treatment in the third way.

Baillie himself follows this line in his *Studies In Human Nature*, a tome whose old-fashioned diction and resistance to the modern is more sophisticated than it first appears. He shows strong echoes of Bergson, who is specifically footnoted, in elucidating conscious experience as more than cognition, more creative than a machine. If we eliminate the individual mind from the thinking function, thinking must work like a self-acting machine, Baillie writes, and if the thinking be a self-complete mechanism, it may well have a correspondingly independent self-complete object upon which it may be directed. When thinking is thus mechanised, he continues,

concepts assume an almost spatialised precision of outline, and arrange themselves one beside the other in a sort of intellectual mosaic called a scheme of thought. The thinking agent is turned into a quasi-external spectator of his own processes [...] (p. 215)

In this respect, cognition is subsumed within a holistic realm of personal action out of which identity, the self, arises. Following in this tradition, seeking to affirm spiritual value while taking on board the new knowledge, Macmurray wrote of religion that, firstly, no human society, from the most primitive to the most completely civilised, has ever existed without a religion of some kind:

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This can only signify that the source of religion must lie in some characteristic of human experience which is common and universal. Secondly, though it is easy to find analogues of all other aspects of cultural activity - artistic, technological or social - there is no analogue of religion in even the highest forms of animal life. This must mean that the universal, common root of religion in human experience is definitely personal. Religion is bound up with that in our experience which makes us persons and not mere organisms. Thirdly, religion has been, as a matter of historical fact, the matrix from which all the various aspects of culture and civilisation have crystallised [...] Fourthly, religion is, in intention, inclusive of all members of the society to which it refers, and depends on their active co-operation to constitute it.192

Like Jung, Macmurray’s use of the term "religious" gives it a modern vintage. Traditional Christianity is not the concern of his writing, nor is the ritual of church-going, and indeed he cares but little for institutions. Under the influence of scientific assumptions, in Jung’s words, not only the psyche but the individual man and indeed, all individual events whatsoever suffer a levelling down and a process of blurring that distorts the picture of reality into a conceptual average. The effect of this, he maintains, is to thrust aside the individual in favour of anonymous units that pile up into mass formations.193 When we accept that Jung and Macmurray refer not to the particular practice of religions, but the intention with which each is constituted, we can see the two sharing opposition to the growth of the abstract systems referred to by Willa Muir in the epigraph to this chapter.

Macmurray was followed by John Macquarrie, who acknowledges the former while affirming the principles of personalism in his characteristic alignment of existentialism with human inter-relations. Macquarrie approves of Macmurray’s attempt to move the starting-point of philosophy,


from the abstract thinking subject to a more concrete base in the
total, multidimensional experience of involvement in a world of
affairs. Adoption of the "I-act" rather than the "I-think" as the starting-place would
circumvent many of the problems that have proved to be most intractable in
philosophy, avows Macquarrie:

Especially, it avoids the initial dualism of mind and matter, body
and soul, self and world; and this dualism has been at the root of
the antinomies of modern philosophy.(p.126)

Here, deftly made, is the connection linking the fluid Bergsonian model of
consciousness with personalism, whose dualities pull away from polarities towards
their positive alternative way. Existence, in Macquarrie's words, is impossible
apart from a world, indeed,

existence is "being-in-the-world". But the human environment is
not just a world, if this is understood [...] as a world of things.
There is also the personal environment. The existent lives in
constant interaction with other existents, or, to put the matter in
another way, existence is "being-with-others" or "being-with-one-
other".(p.102)

And, concluding his point emphatically, the author says:

"With-others" is not added on to a pre-existent and self-sufficient
being; rather, both this being [the self], and the others, find
themselves in a whole wherein they are already related.(p.104)

In Macmurray's own words, "personal reality expresses itself in spontaneous
objectivity". What does he mean by objectivity? Not the Nietzschean dream
of power, but, in contrast,

what I have repeatedly expressed by saying that it is in our nature
to apprehend and enjoy a world which is independent of us. And
when we are completely ourselves we live by that knowledge and
appreciation of what is not ourselves, and so in communion with
other beings. That is what I term our objectivity, and it is the
essence of our human nature.(p.182)

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Page references to this edition.

195Macmurray, John, *Freedom In The Modern World* (London: Faber And
Faber Ltd., 1968. First Published 1932), p.182. All page references to Faber
edition.
And in his later work, Macmurray is equally forceful in this emphasis: Consider now the self in relation to the world. When I act I modify the world. Action is causally effective, even if it fails of the particular effect that is intended. This implies that the self is part of the world in which it acts, and in dynamic relation with the rest of the world. On the other hand, as subject the self stands "over against" the world, which is its object. The self as subject then is not part of the world it knows, but withdrawn from it, and so, in conception, outside it, or other than its object. But to be part of the world is to exist, while to be excluded from the world is to be non-existent. It follows that the self exists as agent but not as subject.196

Here again is the rejection of Nietzsche and affinity with Bergson and the view elaborated by Muir, the attempt to open existence out into the world. Anti-humanist in its antagonism towards the autonomous subject, the personalist self is contiguous, inextricably founded in action, and specifically in inter-action. This strand of dualism's development in the Scottish cultural context foreshadows the creative psychotherapeutic model of self formulated by R.D. Laing in the 1950s and 1960s. Laing, as the most influential practitioner of the anti-psychiatry movement, is often perceived as distinct from his Scottish beginnings, but he follows in the line which undermines fixed binary opposition and the Romantic paradigm, to whose development the authors contribute.

Laing's contribution to the understanding of mental health is acknowledged as one of the major achievements in mental health in this century, so the connection is worth consideration. His life-affirming model of self is premised on the rejection of binary, metaphysical oppositions between not only sanity and madness, but between moral definitions and gender distinction. Distinguishing mental insecurity from stability as Franz Kafka experienced it, Laing says that it by no means follows that the individual genuinely based on his [sic] body is an otherwise unified and whole person, though it does mean that this individual has a starting-point integral in this respect at least.197 Sanity is not unified self-identity, but the

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most effective combination of non-unifiable elements within an individual, and between that individual and his or her society:

"[...] we cannot give an undistorted account of a "person" without giving an account of his [sic] relation with others. Even an account of one person cannot afford to forget that each person is always acting upon others and acted upon by others [...] No one acts or experiences in a vacuum". 198

Laing was at the cutting edge of modern thought in the 1960s, and yet the connection of his radical ideas with an apparently dated ethic in a peripheral culture is quite apparent on comparison. Existence may be tenable alone, but identity requires others. Belonging to a community and yet also finding space for the self, this "getting leave to live", is the central theme in all of Nan Shepherd’s fiction. 199 Illustrating the tension between the isolationism of the autonomous model and the reality of life, we can introduce Shepherd via her short story "Descent From The Cross".

Isolated Voices And "Descent From The Cross" 200

This is the story of a couple who marry against the wishes of the young woman’s family, to discover that neither of the pair is equal to their ideals. Physically and psychologically damaged by torture during wartime imprisonment and too frail to do ordinary physical labour, the young man, Tommy Martin, attempts to write a great book, only to realise he doesn’t have anything to say about life. Writing war stories for the sake of fame, or failing that, to make a living, proves equally elusive, and his life ends in illness and failure. Tommy’s wife Elizabeth learns to adapt her belief in her husband in the process, coming to realise her idealisation of his experience. By the time of Tommy’s death each of them, along with

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199As phrased in Watson, Roderick, "...To Get Leave To Live", Patterns Of Identity, Freedom And Defeat In The Fiction Of Nan Shepherd, Studies In Scottish Fiction: The Twentieth Century, Drescher, Horst, and Schwend, Joachim, Editors (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1990), pp.207-218, p.207

200Shepherd, Nan, "Descent From The Cross", The Scots Magazine, whose undated excerpt is located in M.S. Accession 7951, National Library Of Scotland. Page references to the magazine excerpt.
Elizabeth's mother on whom the pair in turn come to depend, recognises in some way the interdependency of dreams and needs enacted in their small world, and the primacy of real life over the fiction with which he has sought its transcendence.

Seeming to play on the oddly parodic portrayal of the power of love over art in Barrie's *Tommy And Grizel*, Shepherd's Tommy finds abstraction proves the only defence against the harsh realities facing him in the real world. From the prisoner of war camp, where psychological withdrawal is the only form of defence against reality, Tommy proceeds to sustain the error of assuming not only that what goes on in his head is the primary source of his knowledge of that external reality, but that of itself it constitutes a revelation of an objective truth, which he must share with the world for the world's greater good. This is a serious mistake, since it upholds Tommy's severance from the world of action and inter-relations. Tommy's inability to construct his own grand narrative in writing reflects not only lack of craft but also, as he realises, his lack of knowledge of life as lived between people. With no transcendent truth to call his own, and devoid of emotional engagement with his neighbours and colleagues, Tommy's life becomes a permanent flinching from the oppressive and threatening practicality of those around him, and particularly the mother-in-law whose arrival highlights these deficiencies to him. He feels crushed between the two women, mother and daughter. Dying slowly as a consequence of imprisonment, the failing relationship with Elizabeth is likewise presented. "Something had gone dead between them", we're told.(p.357) Elizabeth notes that her husband is "already detached from life or he could not be so happy", indicating the torture that he experiences in this hard world of action in relationships.(p.357)

Elizabeth is not deluded about the nature of her interest in the marriage, enacting the opposite of her husband's stance, seeking vicarious fulfilment by absorption into his attempted transcendence. Hers is the manifestation of immanence to his transcendence, a relation we have encountered before, and as with the likes of Carswell it is portrayed as a better bet than isolation, but nonetheless scarcely tenable. Left with her grief and an unmapped future, "Oh God", Elizabeth agonises, "How am I to bear it?". (p.367) By living her own life, would appear to be the answer, in relational action with, rather than transcendence of, the human community, down from her sacrificial cross.

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The telling of the story is a curious one, containing non-linearity in ways we have come to expect, but harnessing it to the story-telling issue in the subject-matter in a way which foreshadows the writing of Muriel Spark, another Scot whose Scottishness of vision appears misunderstood by critics seeking only the local in their national culture. "By nineteen twenty-eight, when this story begins [...]", she is twenty-six years old, and planning to marry her stuck-up lad, and after a further seven years, the narrator says, Tommy was dead, having believed falsely that he would be famous. Compare this manner of telling with a scene from Spark's *The Prime Of Miss Jean Brodie*, another story located in a past time, in which the same shift of attention occurs from what happens to how it does, in an aside which breaks into the chronology of the story:

[...] Miss Brodie said:

"I renounced Teddy Lloyd. But I decided to enter into a love affair, it was the only cure. My love for Teddy was an obsession, he was the love of my prime. But in the autumn of nineteen thirty-one I entered an affair with Gordon Lowther, he was a bachelor and it was more becoming. That is the truth and there is no more to say. Are you listening, Sandy?"

"Yes, I'm listening."

"You look as if you were thinking of something else, my dear. Well, as I say, that is the whole story."

Sandy was thinking of something else. She was thinking that it was not the whole story

[...]

"I wonder, was it Rose who betrayed me?"

The whine in her voice - "betrayed me, betrayed me" - bored and afflicted Sandy. It was seven years, thought Sandy, since I betrayed this tiresome woman. What does she mean by "betray"?

She was looking at the hills as if to see there the first and unbetrayable Miss Brodie, indifferent to criticism as a crag".\[^{202}\]

Here, as in Shepherd's story, the emphasis is shifted from the "what happens next" interest in the outcome of Miss Brodie’s careers in school and in love, since their conclusions are made known, to how they came about.\[^{203}\] The revelation


\[^{203}\]Thanks due again to Paddy Lyons for this reading of Spark’s novel.
of crucial material at this stage occurs before the main story has reached the point of betrayal, and so by the time the betrayal takes place the reader knows all there is to know of Miss Brodie’s history. The means of story become the focus of attention, its outcome disposed of early. This is their being-in-the-world, with all its ideological and interpersonal perils. Life is assembled out of various discourses in society and between individuals, but cannot be circumvented.

And so with "Descent From The Cross", means lacking the ability to arrive at ends in story, the young couple failing to sustain themselves by their untenable personal discourse. The story dramatises the failure of a sealed, private discourse to construct meaningful story, and the inability of individuals to overcome the demands of received, social meaning. Action speaks louder than words in this tale, the practical outlook of the mother-in-law apprehending more of life’s oddness than those of the self-enclosing central characters. The relativistic external world is not merely threatening though. The tension between the story of the novelist and the inner desires of her characters is the tension between isolation and belonging. Spark in her later version of the problem of the construction of inner life is not explicit in her objection to the selves so constructed. We are left to work it out from the ultimate withdrawal by Sandy from social activity, from social narrative. Sandy opts for private discourse without a social story in which to locate it, since in story challenging variables are likely to arise. Tommy Martin attempts the same. But for Tommy’s author, the variable nature of story is the source of the solution to this tension. Narrative story, in which filter characters’ personal discourse has scope to interact with the otherness of the alternative discourses enacted by a range of characters, is the forum in which meaningful value may be reached. In other words, story is the sum of whatever personal discourses take place within its parameters.

This is a stylistic paraphrase of the insistence by both Shepherd and Muir that all art is fundamentally religious. With its roots in the Romantic paradigm, but extending into the new age’s awareness of mediated identity, each claims the universal validity of life, with the imagination as the instrument of revelation. Shepherd expresses the adaptation of this to her version of subjectivism and the community in her assertion that
real art recognises lasting values and relates whatever aspect of life it is concerned with to these values.204 Seeing the futility of emphasis laid by some modernists on individuals, she affirms that the greatest art arises where there is a community of belief in the people from whom it springs.

Shepherd, Muir, Macmurray and John Macquarrie are consigned to the margins of the prevailing views of human society, their work characterised as old-fashioned and out-moded, lacking application to the modern world. But they are part of a democratic, inclusive strand of Scottish thought which has been submerged by the dominant readings of philosophy and history, whose connection with recognised literary and social achievements we have seen, and which in being revived now provides a critique of the consequences of cultural history since the thirties.

Hugely successful when first published in 1932, Macmurray's *Freedom In The Modern World* went through five large printings in three years. Republication in the 1960s was justified on the ground that "the problems he [Macmurray] examines, and his close reasoning toward a solution, are not less relevant today".205 In the face of the hegemony of the industrial complex over contemporary society, this remains the case in the 1990s. These voices of the third way remain relevant as a refusal of the opting-out tendency in postmodernism in preference for communication, community, and communion between people. We will see the development of their respective narrative strategies to accommodate their assertion of positive human relations and the rights of women. In the following chapters we will consider, respectively, Willa Muir in relation to her acknowledged Jungian, and especially Bergsonian influences, and Nan Shepherd regarded alongside the work of Macmurray.

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205Quoting review note on cover of Faber edition of *Persons In Relation*.
Chapter Seven

WILLA MUIR:
SELVES WITHIN THE WORLD

This is myself (who but ill-resembles me).
He befriended so many
Disguises to wander in on as many roads
As cross on a ball of wool (W.S. Graham)²⁰⁶

The use of irony by Muir and Shepherd leads to a philosophically sophisticated resolution of the paradox of their position, between the endorsement of the local community and the rejection of the circumscription it imposes upon its individual members, particularly women. In Imagined Corners we will see Muir’s understanding of culture, and of the relation of ideological power to social organisation and personal identity, to an extent only partially formulated by her predecessors.

Muir’s private life reflected the themes she dealt with in her fiction and, seen through her own eyes, its pattern indicates the personal principles on which a lifetime’s creative writing was based, and its resolution of issues addressed by her contemporaries on the literary scene, in Scotland, England, and across continental Europe. Like all of Muir’s writings, there is something of a personal manifesto in this. From life and travel across Europe in the twenties and thirties, she cultivated a vision of identity as a multi-layered and often downright contradictory construct shaped by external, pre-existing forces, and not reducible to any single essence. It is the contradictions in experience rather than notional unity that engage her interest, in essays and fiction. This places her in the mainstream of European artistic affairs, distinct from and parallel to literature which seeks to reassert a specious historical or personal unity.

BEARING IN THE POST-WAR WORLD

The title of Willa Muir’s memoir of life with Edwin gives an insight into her divergence from the vision of chaos enacted in so much avant-garde art. Belonging validates the author’s sense of personal identity, attained through the attachments by which life is constituted. Muir had strong connections not only among writers of the Scottish renaissance, but with major figures at the heart of the modernist movement, being a friend of the Woolfs, published by their Hogarth Press in London, acquainted with T.S. Eliot, and translator of Kafka into English for the first time. She also translated the Austrian novelist and essayist Hermann Broch. But she dissented from the conclusions many appeared to be reaching about their volatile civilisation. In Belonging Muir says this about Broch:

Broch, who admired Joyce’s experiments with form and language (especially Finnegans Wake), had experimented with the form of his own narrative [...], breaking it up into disconnected pieces, set down side by side, much as Eliot in his poetry had set side by side disparate elements of experience; perhaps Eliot, too, had fragmented his observations as an image of disintegration [...] We refused to be bludgeoned by Broch’s logic [...] we did not agree that the unconscious should be despised as Broch despised "the irrational".(p.152)

This intimation of a collective unconscious informs Muir’s vision of the degenerating geo-political world around her, and implies the metaphysicality of the constructs our specific environment moulds us to fit. Change in these may be perceived as fragmentation, but the logic by which isolation follows from it is only one response. Despising this logic, the author upholds the dignity due to human life as a shared and shareable experience. Willa privately thought little of the self-enclosed Eliot, as her unpublished rhyme written to amuse Edwin reveals:

You may think Percy Bysshe
A cold, abstract fish
But I think Shelley hot
Compared with Eliot207

The Muirs undertook a path which led Willa to recognise the complexities of belonging to one culture or nation. She looked on national traditions from a different perspective to Eliot, or indeed C.M. Grieve. Travelling beyond the

island of her birth and then the island of her youth, the author encountered a world in which continuity of tradition in many spheres, including national governments, territorial boundaries, and the development of literature, could be perceived to be not only in a state of flux, but part of a permanently incoherent reality.

The couple lived in Czechoslovakia, Germany, Italy and Austria, and later in the U.S.A., and observed the disjunctions between history, territory, language, power, and between peoples. *Belonging* recounts the conference of P.E.N., the organisation of Poets, Essayists and Novelists, during which factions representing ethnic groups, political parties, and national governments plotted and counterplotted to assert their particular interpretation of culture over others' (pp. 151-6). Muir learned quickly some of the ways in which national and regional values become intertwined with, and exploited for, the furtherance of political goals. Recognising Nazi ideology being propagated at the P.E.N. conference, Willa understood the influence of these beliefs at the personal level. Strong as her patriotism was, it was never located in a univocal rendition of national tradition.

Between the arid extremes represented by the dissolution and the isolation of the subject, arising with newer clarity than ever before in the logic of some modernist art, Muir, and Shepherd, sought a form to resolve the polarity. Thus their resonance with the opening epigraph of this chapter, written by another Scot embroiled in the changing world, W.S. Graham's image of the ball of wool representing divergent paths inextricably bound, undertaking the same journey; or encapsulated in the closing remarks of Muir's memoir:

That was the end of our story. It was not the end of the Fable, which never stops, so it was not the end of Edwin's poetry or of my belief in True Love [...] It has happened before; it will happen again [...] (p. 316)

In identifying the choices made by her in resistance to the reductive logic of some modernisms, Muir's response will be exemplified and discussed, beginning with her published cultural essays, *Mrs. Grundy In Scotland* and, most importantly for the entire discussion of women's status and the parallel agenda, *Women: An Enquiry* expounds the intellectual basis of her novels. Following from this, the novels themselves enact both sides of the author's philosophy. *Mrs. Ritchie*, the later of the two, is bleakly consistent in its depiction of the "unfreedom" of a repressive and judgemental consciousness, an extreme example of the self-isolating
potential in Calvinist rationalism. It develops its theme with relentless logic while inviting the reader's rejection of that development. Imagined Corners, which will occupy the main focus of attention in this chapter, tells of the consequences of the return to her native town by a woman long resident abroad. It is Muir's highest achievement, combining in its texture her inclusive vision and a feminist social critique.

**WOMEN, CULTURE, AND IDEOLOGY**

Muir's essays give body to abstract social values, observing their effect on the individual. They represent the formal basis on which her challenging implications rest. They also state overtly the themes located among the earlier exponents of the parallel agenda. It is remarkable the extent to which the tenor of her essays crystallise the themes we have elucidated, and to which the later cultural critics I have drawn upon share similar perspectives, from the metalanguage of social constructionism to artificially engendered divisions within experience, and the dangers of rejecting in theory the rights of the individual in the real world.

In *Women: An Enquiry*, Muir attempts to define differences between the sexes. Her conclusions are not entirely convincing today, but share much with later feminist thinkers such as Cixous and Kristeva, and the details of her analysis boldly antagonise the patriarchal norms of her time. Covering a range of social issues, from the symbolic meanings of the female in ancient cultures to the abstract function of the contemporary economic machine, the essay has provided fitting epigraphs for each of the previous chapters, and formulates terms applicable to the writing of each of the authors in the parallel agenda. It also postulates respect for the individual hand in hand with comprehension of the complex formation of individuality.

Muir distinguishes, a wee bit dubiously, between the quality of abstract thinking, which she attributes more strongly to men, and women's greater fusion of conscious with unconscious experience. Of the pre-eminence of conscious cognition, the author writes:

> Conscious life implies rational thinking. In thinking about things we arrange them in patterns, we give them form and system. But we do not give them content; conscious life modifies or seizes upon things which it does not originate. Growth is a process which is
already well advanced before it enters consciousness at all. Our patterns of thought, therefore, can never be final: they must from time to time be broken and reformed to admit new factors pushed into consciousness.(p.14)

No schism between the conscious and unconscious is conceded here and, in reaching her conclusion about the nature of mental activity, Muir in effect affirms the thematic intent of all of her work:

The unconscious is concerned with growth rather than form; it is essentially emotional, spontaneous and irrational. As far as we know it is concrete in its thinking and not abstract; it creates living agents and not systems of thought. Thus, while conscious processes supply form and permanence in our world, unconscious processes supply growing vitality and change. The creations of unconscious life are wrought in mortal substances, those of conscious life in enduring patterns which are one step removed from life.(p.15)

And so for each person, consciousness is the "shaper of form", one aspect of life, and its work leads to a permanence beyond the vicissitudes of living. But its vitality depends upon its communion with the unconscious.(p.14)

In this arrangement, the flow of material between conscious and the unknown of unconscious experience are established as the common denominator in all human life. Men and women are both subject to these processes, alike susceptible to the compromises they enforce on the integrity of individuality. Constructionism as defined here underpins even the more sentimental novels of the earlier writers. Further than this, the author focuses on the inequalities engendered in women’s lives because of patriarchal ideology inherent in social conventions. Social arrangements, she maintains, are the obstacle to potential mutuality between the sexes. Muir emphatically minimises the extent to which the characteristics she identifies of each sex are innate, discussing gender differences consequent of the relative status enjoyed by women and men in society. As with the collective unconscious, each individual’s repressions are influenced by the cultural requirements of gender differentiation. Jung’s anima and animus, the unconscious realms of men and women respectively, contain the repressed "femininity" and "masculinity" of members of each sex.208 An inherited collective image of the

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female exists in a man’s unconscious, but it is only as a general phenomenon, to which some women will conform, but many women will not. (Fordham, p.53)

Most of these internalised distinctions are attributable, in Muir’s view, to the disparity of power between these groups:

The subordinate sex […] is excluded from complete development [but] in fact, men and women share jointly in what is called human nature, and are alike capable of courage, fear, cruelty, tenderness, intelligence and stupidity - when exhilarated by power they display the more dominating qualities, and in the subordinate positions they manifest a "slave psychology". (Women, pp.7-8)

The author’s list of generalisations she claims men hold about womankind is equally insightful, as in her observation that, apparently, the average man sees woman

alternately as an inferior being and as an angel. One must conclude that he is looking at her through a distorting medium. (p.9)

Bringing into play the perception on which the chapters on dualism have focused, the author recognises the partiality of this perception and attributes it fairly and squarely to the power relation it serves.

No alternative exists untainted outside of social relations, but remaining within needn’t imply acquiescence. This does not represent pastoral or primitivism; it is not the organic society "reclaimed" by Eliot. For Muir, the community remains a non-unified, discontinuous complex in which lives inevitably and of necessity proceed. Along with this feminist essay, Muir adds to her picture of society the bourgeois and religious narrowness embodied in the figure of Mrs. Grundy, the popular character from Punch magazine, in whom the tension between the demands of Calvinism and the aspirations of bourgeois materialism compete to deter the realisation of the third way. Written for the same series as her husband’s Scott And Scotland, Mrs. Grundy In Scotland examines the Scottish middle-class context as influenced by the practice of Christianity, especially Presbyterianism. Again she cannot avoid recognising values associated with this as non-universal, linked to social ideology.


For instance, in offering a general overview of the Mrs. Grundy phenomenon in England, she notes the alterations undergone by Mrs. Grundy’s embodiment in the pages of *Punch* as the social structure evolved to accommodate the expansion of the bourgeoisie and metropolitan culture. By the 1870s, Mrs Grundy had moved from a place among the peasantry to one in the middle-classes. The "upper-class" came into being and the "lower-class" in the form of Mrs. Grundy voiced its envy in disapproval. Moral judgement was the vehicle for a less advantaged group to express its insecurity as their social organisation changed:

With the growing power of mere money in England, and with the establishment of a middle class, a vast new field of inferiority complexes begins to sprout; [..](p.16)

Power dictated the forms of social relations, and differences between the English system and its Scottish counterpart are viewed as a result of the divergent social and economic forces in each country. Poorer material conditions led to a more interdependent social structure in Scotland, but also to the tension between the duty of the Calvinistic individual to God, and duty to the community, reflected in the underpinning tradition that all men [sic] were equal before God:

If he had any inferiority complexes - and who has not? - he refused, on principle, to admit them: He was inferior only to his Maker.(pp.22-3)

The social conscience which might have produced a MacGrundy, she continues, not being allowed to cohere on any plane lower than Heaven, whisked her up to Heaven, where she led a specious, because unacknowledged, existence, "concealed behind the veil of that Bride of Christ, the Scottish Kirk".(p.24) No-one in this scheme of relations is inferior to another, which is not the same as enjoying equality. Again Muir indicts the socio-economic foundation of the competitive morality emanating from the Kirk, and with it the gross contradiction between individual and community ideals in the notion of duty as transmitted to women. Concluding the essay by contemplating the mass unemployment of the Great Depression, Muir laments the way the stereotype of Mrs. Grundy discourages intelligence and genuine growth: she is "a feminine symbol which has no real femininity"(p.187), and Willa warns that the socio-economic order of the new age threatens to maintain its constraint of humanity despite promises of change.

"Femininity" is the ongoing product of social construction, attuned to the requirements of patriarchal ideology, which is hegemonic, claiming minds as well as bodies through social institutions and influence over personal aspiration. But the author also regards this control as potentially resistible, since she depicts
change and division in continual movement, and among the disarray of the thirties sees a ray of hope for the future if people can reject the overarching ideologies instilled alongside their sense of belonging.

In *Women* Muir also scrutinises the values that the dominant forces in society foster in its members to retain them within its bounds:

> Certain moral and religious sanctions always rise to reinforce law on these points [...] The disabilities imposed upon women by conventional society cut deeper still. (p. 18)

They cut as deeply as personality development:

> The sexually good woman must be not only good but ignorant: whole tracts of human experience are withheld from her knowledge. (p. 18)

And the partial vision of men's distorting medium is identified as an ideological, not transcendent construct:

> The morality honoured by men is thus a morality designed to preserve the systems which men create. (p. 30)

An important matter, Muir argues that systems of morality operate codes of reward and punishment for conformity or dissent, each valid only for itself, and not necessarily either religious or universal. Individuality in this context is only that which arises in some way out of the codes of its system, possessing no autonomy of its own. Reflecting the internalisation of social mores, personal identity is moulded to an invented design, constrained by corners imagined. The modern era exemplifies the ascendancy of systems in society, to the detriment of its members:

> The financial machine in our own day is an excellent example of masculine activity pushed to extremes: it has been successfully detached from human values so that it exists for the production of money and not for goods and services to humanity. (pp. 26-7)

And, Muir continues, it is a curious paradox that men, generally more convinced of their own individuality, "should inevitably create systems to which the individual is subordinated". (p. 27) By this analysis of sexual relations she arrives at her feminist response to the ways men obstruct the ability of individuals to construct, to become, a community, a view with parallels to the emergence of postmodernism out of the calamity visited upon civilisation by yet another World War, in which the industrial-financial complex reached new levels of dominance in the organisation of societies. Among the characteristics of that progress is the consumerism which absorbs much resistance to societal norms. For Muir and
Shepherd the human community (as opposed to society or the merely local) is the highest form of human expression, affirmed in repudiation of the depersonalising trends of the economic machine, their positive voice of modernism.

Complex, selective, variable over time and place, and informed by power relations, Willa Muir opens her sense of national identity to the wider flow of humanity; she resists the continuous line of development drawn by others, inhabiting the space around it. In her novel *Mrs. Ritchie*, the error of perceiving life as a single line of development is portrayed in stark terms, demonstrating the consequences for the protagonist of adhering to the contrary, twin ideals of Christian duty and personal pride. The consistent action of the narrator in drawing attention to this error, and the variety of human perspectives with which that single line lacks contact, introduce her stylistic characteristics.

**MRS. RITCHIE’S UNFREEDOM**

The moral manifesto outlined in the author’s cultural essays provide the means of reading the simplistic moral frame inhabited by the mind of Muir’s Mrs. Ritchie. Narrative judgement of her character operates through specific distancing devices which constitute one plank of Muir’s third option. The omniscient narrator commentates on events, ironic distance maintained by level 1 discourse also. In this respect it is technically less adventurous than its predecessor *Imagined Corners*.

In the character of Mrs. Ritchie we see the harmful inhumanity inflicted by the patriarchal, Presbyterian order, embodied in each individual’s code for living. The rational basis of Calvinism leads the novel’s movement along its grim path. Its narrator invites the reader to make a choice in interpreting the depicted circumstances, and also presents the eponymous protagonist as both criminal and victim in her interaction with her code: Mrs. Ritchie’s culture is one of unfreedom, and she moves through it with relentless logic. She exemplifies in quite demonic pursuit of her own salvation a remarkable urge to power, turning all opposition, including most of her fellow townspeople, into objects, abstract obstacles to be swept aside on her ascent to Heaven.

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Told in the manner of the Scottish bildungsroman that features a sensitive soul in insensitive circumstances, the story describes the child's defensive mental strategies, and the convergence of these with religion in her adult rigidity. The child, Annie Rattray, begins life neither evil nor angelic, scared by the outside world, but with no awareness of the Original Sin which comes to pre-occupy her later life. The book could be subtitled "Whatever Happened To Baby Anne?"

What happened to Anne is indicated in a narrative which signals in its structure the source and effect of the child's inimical values. Within discourse, imagery and narrative commentary on psychology contribute to this procedure. Most pointedly on level 1 of the narrative, detailed epigraph is utilised to ironise the fallibility of Annie. Consequently, despite her centrality to the novel, within story Annie's status as a mere filter character is emphatic. The book's division into four sections mimics the catechism with its question and answers preceding each one. These are ordered, closed, arbitrary. Book I, titled The Child, begins with this epigraph:

The Child: God of my Fathers, an abyss has opened between me and myself.
The Answer: I clove that abyss
The Child: How shall I bridge it?
The Answer: Throw a tightrope across it. If you fall, you fall. (p.7)

This provides a traditional image of Original Sin in the division at the heart of the flawed soul of an undifferentiated child, the carefully ordered, narrow route to God its only means of redemption. It also implies, read from the child's view, the wider sense of the universe beyond her own wee existence. But looking at the response of the God-figure there is only the narrow Christian teleology of arbitrary and punitive conditions laid down for salvation. The response also embodies the intrinsic contradiction of this tenet, since it is the God-figure who has created the abyss and who maintains it. Further still, in casting narrative doubt on this scheme of sin and salvation, the child's question is addressed to the God of her Fathers, not of all humanity, suggesting a God at least influenced by this proprietorial group. The response comes not from an identifiably "real", universal God, being identified only as "The Answer". The words of The Answer are Muir's equivalent of woman's animus, an assembly of fathers or dignitaries who lay down some incontestable "rational", ex cathedra judgements which, on closer
examination turn out to be largely traditional habits.\textsuperscript{211} Offering fixed penalties and indefinite rewards, this unattributable source speaks in a voice redolent of traditional power relations, and appears to be the expression of fathers of the child a bit closer to home. And of course, such verbal contracts are not worth the paper they are written on.

In Book II, \textit{The Girl}, the narrator’s epigraph indicates the same problem when the child sees a potentially helping hand:

\begin{quote}
The Girl: A hand has been stretched out to me
The Answer: Take it
The Girl: But if I lose my balance?
The Answer: Shake yourself free.(p.73)
\end{quote}

There is no support in such a gesture. By Book III, \textit{The Woman}, the message implied by the narrator is becoming apparent to the reader, while in the story Annie Rattray calculates her way into marriage.

\begin{quote}
The Woman: I must be the best tightrope walker in the world.
Look, I am more than half-way across, although the rope shakes.
The Answer: I am shaking the rope. If you fall, you fall.(p.147)
\end{quote}

Repetition of the arbitrary condition,"if you fall, you fall", from the opening epigraph, enlightens the universal woman:

\begin{quote}
The Woman: It is my Enemy who shakes the rope.(p.147)
\end{quote}

But by this time Annie, in story, now the less individually named Mrs. Ritchie, continues on her route. The human source of the Answer is indicated in the final question and answer sequence, the Woman reaching the other side of the abyss to ask: "God of my Fathers, where are you?":

\begin{quote}
The Answer: Thou Fool, I am in the abyss.(p.239)
\end{quote}

Implicit in the final word of the Woman is the inhuman proposition offered by this scheme of Christian teleology:

\begin{quote}
The Woman: I heard no answer. There is no-one here but myself.(p.239)
\end{quote}

Completion of this journey leads only into isolation from, not participation in, the greater universe. The system of virtue arises from the human plane, and stigmatises life there. The spatial progression of this image is the narrative analogue of the rationality imposed by Calvinism on the seeming chaos of evil in mortal life. Salvation in Calvinism is attained by the movement from the chaos of lower life to the higher order of the conscious form. Progress here by the

\textsuperscript{211}Jung, C.G., \textit{Two Essays On Analytical Psychology}, pp.205-6
human soul is spatialised as a journey across an abyss. As with the earlier writers, disruption of the order of this progress occurs via the intentional failure of the novel to carry its characters anywhere morally new; and again, the failure of linearity is aided by the use of commentating imagery representing the uncivilised and unconscious elements in citizens and society.

Drunk and in mental disarray, Annie’s father Jim Rattray feels at one with the noises emanating from the local school playground, and is

as unconscious of his broken shoes and sack cloth apron as if he had been naked in some primeval forest. (p.9)

The "charging herd" of the children disturbs Jim, and his status as the town drunk leads Annie to fantasise a picture of her father and sister on an icebound waste, "cowering with nothing on them but a scanty animal skin apiece". (p.12) Mentally calling her father a "black", Annie’s depressed and angry mood is also described as black, a "black and bulky oppression". (p.12) Her strong emotional experience and the fantasy of savagery combine in the colour black, and indeed the black oppression heightens as mental fantasy releases the child’s rage. The savage is within, in the chaos of the playground, the disordered cognition of Jim, and in the fury his daughter feels at being humiliated by her father’s insobriety. In her attempts to cope with this situation, the narrator informs us, Annie’s defence was not unlike the defence of some great champion, "challenging men and Gods to break him". (p.12) In that primal world of the school playground the girl cannot thrive, and dreads the games by which the children create their social organisation, a point the author makes about childhood games in both Imagined Corners and the later study Living With Ballads. 212 The real meaning of hide and seek, Annie’s narrator observes of the playground life so troublesome to the girl, lies in the hiding, in the secret withdrawal [...] the "seekers" have their office imposed upon them by failure, and it is an unpopular office. The separate dream can persist until the sense of isolation becomes acute and one child after another sees itself in fantasy detached from its family [...] (Mrs. Ritchie, p.18)

The child fantasises control while suffering isolation in reality, imposing conscious images over the emotional trauma associated with her inability to flourish in the social setting. Her fantasy also projects emotionally uncontrolled parts of her experience onto external objects, detaching herself from them, and thereby inventing a form of control over them.

The obvious limitations of the self-protective order Annie invents in story are ironised in narrative discourse. Imagery is pointed in its reference to the tension between linear history and other elements of "the past" in human existence. The "black" uncivilised areas of experience, of which the girl is afraid, translate into the black of evil associated with traditional Judeo-Christian imagery. The narrator has located the character's mode of engagement with the world in her emotional vulnerability, portraying both the religious and the mental modes as inadequate, defensive interpretations of life's vastness. Annie's system of mental operation is analogous to the rational order of the Calvinism she later follows. Her problematic internal combination of rational progress with savage instinct is conveyed perfectly in an image of a spear moving through space:

The tight little spear of Annie's life aimed its point steadily towards the day on which school began again [...] (p.24), and the self-imposed restriction of experience gets underway, with repression and judgementalism its major weapons. Such is the imagery and commentary of the narrator, ironically placing her character's perception against a realm of imaginative vision outwith the girl's ability to grasp, even while she is seeing the same mental images as the reader. The process is maintained as the narrator goes on to compare Annie's narrow view with larger possibilities, when for instance she goes off to live with three elderly, unmarried gentlewomen, and discovers to her discomfort that her own morality is more restrictive than theirs:

Although she [Annie] revered the drawing-room she began to discover that there were things in it, relics of past generations, apparently, of which she did not approve [...] (p.88)

The use of the word "apparently" provides the ironic comparison, indicating by free indirect speech the newness of the historical fact to Annie, and her detachment from its potentially enlivening value.

So much for the narrow course of the character's life. The error of her choices is also linked with the sexist frame in which her moral system is moulded. Success in the schoolroom entails the attainment of approval by the severe, hirsute and harsh voiced schoolmaster. Having applied her capacity for rational thought sufficiently well to reign with ease at the top of the class, Annie is duly rewarded. And her trophy? A cookery book, accompanied by parental scorn at the very notion of her following the dominie into teaching. Annie's almost Nietzschean force of will is equalled only by the consistent denial of self-development required of her by the social system, in which implication the ideological foundation alluded to in the narrative epigraphs comes home to roost in the girl's life, in the
story itself. Thus follows the embittering of the mind of the adult Annie. The will to power in Annie’s identity is the product of the harmful, rational individualism which proffers its own imagined corners to be internalised, simultaneously precluding the fulfilment of personal goals. Annie lurches onwards, to reach the end of the Nietzschean road, in isolation from the human community.

Pessimism and logic seem suited to one another in this novel, which contains many devices seen in fiction by the Findlaters. The narrative slant seems to concede the everyday defeat of universal aspirations, the social territory of story remaining the province of patriarchal order, narrative discourse the female refuge. Complexity of technique and subtlety of vision reach their highest in *Imagined Corners*. Portraying women in pursuit of a fuller lifestyle in their unfree society, the author reaches out of Presbyterian patriarchy towards *duree reelle* and personal freedom.

*IMAGINED CORNERS*

Celebrating the weakening of the terms of Romantic irony’s oppositions, this novel takes the two-sided paradigms of duty and joy, isolation and dissolution, and linearity and cyclicality, to forge from them its third option. As the boundary between "self" and "roles" becomes indefensible, discourse and story are concerned not with discovering natural essences, but instead with the choices available to female characters about how to live: how to imagine corners of their own.

We find level 1 irony still in place, and continuing use of ironic speech acts on level 2 discourse. The interaction of these and explicit free indirect speech in the story creates a parodic sense of the narrator’s omniscient activities, reflecting the relativism of its balancing act. Proceeding in this manner, the novel charts shifts of correspondence throughout its story. Structured in three books, level 1 irony compares proceedings with a glass containing a suspension of mixed, floating elements, to which new items are added; as the title of Book 2 states, the glass is shaken, and the resulting precipitation observed in Book 3, "Precipitation".

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Calderwick in 1912 is a fluid fictional world, whose relations are susceptible to alteration. This alteration comes about as Elise Mutze, the former Lizzie Shand, returns from continental Europe at the invitation of her brother John, husband of aspiring sophisticate Mabel, and whose half-brother Hector has just married, bringing another Elizabeth into the Shand family. The relationship of the two Elizabeths, the younger newly-wed, the elder newly widowed, is the central dynamic of the novel, around which the Shand marriages and wider issues are brought into sharp relief.

Narrative commentary, level 2 irony, is immediate and intrusive, providing the scale of measurement by which the author intends her characters to be judged. The abstraction of her opening geometrical language, "the obliquity of the earth with reference to the sun" does not so much satirise the practical realities of mundane life, but instead enjoins the uncertainty underlying such lives:

Indeed, the arguable uncertainty of the sun's gradual approach and withdrawal in these regions may have first sharpened the discrimination of the natives to that acuteness for which they are renowned [...] (p.1)

Nonetheless, the narrator goes on to place the town of Calderwick in long shot, comparing its quotidian business with the nature taking place around and among its inhabitants:

All this late summer peace and fragrance belonged to the municipality. The burgh of Calderwick owned its golf and its bathing, its sand and its gorse. The larks nested in municipal grass, the crows waddled on municipal turf. But few of the citizens of Calderwick followed their example. The season for summer visitors was over, although summer still lingered, and the burgh of Calderwick was busy about its jute mills, its grain mills, its shipping, schools, shops, offices and dwelling-houses. The larks, the crows and the gulls, after all, were not ratepayers. It is doubtful whether they even knew that they were domiciled in Scotland. (pp.1-2)

Business relations and civic organisation determine the human plane. Nature "belongs" to the town, its value located in its attractiveness for tourism. The voice of the narrator lists the business activities of the townspeople that so dominate their idle natural world, with the conversion from the civic perspective to the universal one held by the narrator, as revealed by her use of the ironic comparison of the municipal dynamic with the minds of birds which "after all,
were not ratepayers". The irony of the remark is in the absurdity of the unstated proposition that birds be judged according to the human respectability of the work ethic. While adopting the register of civic dignity, the narrative voice compounds the absurdity by her use of the human concept and the pomposity of the term "domiciled" to describe the birds' domestic arrangements. The birds' woeful ignorance of national identity neatly side-swipes the constricting elements of literary nationalism too, the category inadequate to contain the swoops and heights of their flight. Borrowing the discourse of municipal life, the narrator places it in an inappropriate context, and so by parody, ironises it in her own slant. We will return to the question of parody and narrative control after examining the implications of the way in which characters are constructed in relation to this relativistic perspective in the text.

*Narrow Cages: Selves, Roles, And Scripts*

One key technical feature of this narrative lies in the way fictional reality is constructed via roles. The territory previously attributable to roles, having lost its monopoly on females in story, is now portrayed in two distinct modes, which may be distinguished as "roles 1" and "roles 2". Roles by now cannot encompass women’s existences, and indeed roles 1 and 2 are mutually exclusive, though their oppressive relation to the Female is the same, since they are designed according to conventional pursuits. The former includes those self-deferring ethics and actions associated with Christianity, and with Victorian angels. In the latter group are the values of the new woman formulated in consumerist expansion, claimed to be sexually liberated, and permitted greater sexual self-interest than hitherto, aided by the market for women’s magazines and romance fiction. However, they do not comprise sealed systems, merely loose, internalised values. Unable to efface alternatives in story, they constitute oppressive, but not monopolistic aspects of the Female in social action.

The particular activities of the narrative voice provide a new version of the tension between role and individual. Narrative slant in fact explicitly portrays these qualities as received and refutable values, optional roles whose codes can be and are intelligible in conscious life. I now propose to analyse them under the rubric of "script", to which I alluded earlier, since, more pointedly than previously, it is as an actor performing a script that characters inhabit their social "story".
Scripts are forms of social action which structure time with the object of avoiding boredom and at the same time getting the greatest possible satisfaction out of each situation, in Eric Berne's definition.\textsuperscript{214} Problems occur when the motivation of the individual is ulterior to the social needs manifest visibly in relationships.\textsuperscript{215} Received and restrictive, scripts reflect broadly the gender disparities discussed by Muir in Women, denying individual potential, but in ways divergent between the sexes. The social situation in which a person lives constitutes the team on which he or she plays and is, therefore, of the utmost importance in determining who he is or how he acts. Man's [sic] so-called instinctual needs are actually shaped [...] by the social game prevalent in his milieu.\textsuperscript{216} This too has its analogue in Muriel Spark's Jean Brodie, who exemplifies the construction of self via roles, received and chosen.

As a filter character in Spark's novel, Jean Brodie constructs her own story in her own discourse, at odds with what the author chooses to reveal about her. Facts are less significant than the story or stories characters adopt, so causality as such is also questionable. Brodie demonstrates no inner life, only her discourse of stories about herself. Despite its emphasis on means, on performance, Spark's novel does not purport that individuals do not have the ability to affect each other. Like Muir and Shepherd, Spark appears to oppose the limitation this imposes on people as persons, even as these postmodern antecedents in her writing contribute to critical acknowledgement of her as a major post-Second World War writer. But as I argued earlier, this is not necessarily the celebration of valueless eclecticism. While Miss Brodie re-writes her story, changing facts as expedient, her young pupils are not mere spectators. They too construct identities, Sandy and Jenny writing stories about their glamorous mentor, imagining themselves as policewomen or lovers in the borrowed registers of prescribed ideals, as in the letter they concoct from Miss Brodie to Gordon Lowther, the singing-master:


Sandy was fascinated by this method of making patterns with facts, and was divided between her admiration for the technique and the pressing need to prove Miss Brodie guilty of misconduct. "What about those incriminating documents?" said Sergeant Anne Grey in her jolly friendly manner. She really was very thrilling. Sandy and Jenny completed the love correspondence between Miss Brodie and the singing master at half-term [...]. The last letter in the series, completed at mid-term, went as follows:

My Own Delightful Gordon,

Your letter has moved me deeply as you may imagine. But alas, I must ever decline to be Mrs. Lowther. My reasons are two-fold. I am dedicated to my Girls as is Madame Pavlova, and there is another in my life whose mutual love reaches out to me beyond the bounds of Time and Space. He is Teddy Lloyd! Intimacy has never taken place with him. He is married to another [...] (pp.72-3)

Competing scripts jostle to write the girls' consciousnesses, the contrariness of sexual fascination and moral rectitude side by side with romance cliche and the tone of Miss Brodie's own speech. Along with the script internalisation seen in Muir's novel these three characters are in relationship with each other, and their identities change according to the prevailing personal story-lines. That Sandy should withdraw to a convent and Miss Brodie shrivel into an embattled old age betoken not only the failure of personal discourse to transcend the real world of relations in which it occurs, but the extent to which personal story is received discourse, which does not necessarily serve the interest of its speaker. In this literary connection is opposition to the postmodern posture of valueless eclecticism.

The relevance of this to the discussion of *Imagined Corners* lies in the ulterior quality of many of the scripts enacted by Muir's characters. Among the novel's subsidiary plot involving the Murray family, the Reverend William Murray feels sympathy for the confines of his parishioner old Annie Watson's existence:

it was touching to see a human soul journeying from one infinity to another in such a narrow cage. (p.20)

Regarded by characters in the story variously from "narrow cages", to philosophical categories, "in those days when one believed in categories"(p.256), it is the performance of a game-playing form of script which the narrator's slant condemns.
With a life script that restricts him to inhabiting the narrowest cage of all, the Reverend’s Murray’s brother Ned represents Muir’s version of the isolate, a type whose realistic accuracy of portrayal culminates in the fiction of Muir and Shepherd. Ned lives by the desperate psychological measures of introjection and projection, his incompleteness of a sort analogous with infant experience, unable to distinguish mentally where the outside world ceases and the personal realm begins, and seeing only danger in either. Many psychologists from the 1930s onwards term behaviour such as Ned’s "deviant", the product of "social labelling", and see in it a teleology instrumental in defining and upholding the personal norms necessary for the form of social organisation in relation to which it is defined. Labels such as "ignorant" or "ill-mannered" are stock responses; someone who frequently violates social norms tends to be categorised in some such way, but there remains a group of assorted deviations that are regarded as inexplicable. These tend to be put down to witchcraft or spirit possession or mental illness, or just to eccentricity, depending on the society concerned. A view of this sort typifies the relative value of received internal script. Social organisation is itself a narrow cage, and the scripts of other Calderwick inhabitants reflect their own received restrictions. The portrayal of Ned’s psychosis displays in immediately recognisable social signs the status of his individuality: lacking the basics of ontological security, he is profoundly handicapped in his engagement with the social environment. However, the inability of the town’s membership to accommodate Ned’s oddness implicates its parameters also. We see analogies between the maladaptive behaviour of the three Murrays, for example by discourse comment on the illusions determining each of their scripts. Social convention, or circumscription, is seen in this respect to be another kind of script, locating in the individual’s consciousness a pre-defined teleology. The more socially conventional the character the more readily accepted is an identifiable personal story-line. And these story-lines are the source and practice of the incompleteness which precludes the attainment of a creative self.

William Murray’s recognition of the metaphorical journey between infinities represents one form of human effort to place a comprehensible pattern over the incomprehensible void of infinity. Occurring in major formal activities like religious observance, the attempt is also seen in his sister Sarah’s darning, which


is shown in parallel to the pacing upstairs of Ned in pre-occupied agitation. (p.27)

But the error of the Reverend is to attribute absolute and transcendent knowledge to his preferred form, or pattern. Capable only of a simplistic belief in the essential goodness of the world, William enacts a correspondence of inadequacy to Ned’s vision of a hate-filled world. His frustrating and ultimately failed life as a minister is just such another script, as the commentary informs us:

It did not even enter his mind that there were people in the world who might regard his firmament as a mere illusion of beauty woven of light and air. The Reverend William Murray did not doubt the universal validity of his personal experiences. (p.21)

In confirmation of this, the Reverend is shown in abject confusion when analysing the contradictory impulses in his own personality, and between these and his religious faith. William’s mental perception spatialises the experience of failure, as he stares, in a fury of anger and shame, at the inadequately illuminated night street:

He stood on the edge of the pavement and stared at the wall, a high, well-built wall enclosing a garden. Its regularly cut stones were so smoothly fitted together that there was neither handhold nor foothold all the way up to the top, although the stones were greenish with age. (p.57)

In William’s imagined corner there is no means of communication with the garden beyond; his universe is a system of closure and enclosure. Like Matthew Arnold, his personal vision of the universal flow can carry him nowhere. The pattern of William’s faith is emotional, part of his psychological configuration, as the metaphorical image reflects. The man of the cloth enacts principles sincerely held, deeply cherished, but dismally ineffectual in his daily experience, and he can find no means of integration.

A script of a different sort, more widespread and with more obvious gains, is the one performed by Hector Shand, that of the swashbuckling hero of romance adventure. Roguish romancer, rough diamond, aye ready for action, newly-hitched but unreformed, Hector’s internalised values are those endorsed for dashing young men in all western societies. He has that “wee spark of the devil in his eye; just what a man should have” (p.45), in the words of young Mary Ann, domestic servant to the Hector and Elizabeth; Mary Ann’s free indirect speech reveals the corresponding value received by women. What the narrator identifies as the fundamental inadequacy of Hector’s script is its gratuitous exploitation of others. Emotional behaviour is deployed as a means of avoidance rather than
engagement with other people’s feelings: apology to his wife over one of his many transgressions is successful for Hector because it means "she wasn’t going to cut up rough after all". (p.62) The narrative slant goes on to generalise beyond the character of Hector about the sexism associated with this internalised assumption:

Hector, like all the other men of his acquaintance, accepted unthinkingly the suggestion that women were the guardians of decorum - good women, that is to say, women who could not be referred to as "skirts". Good women existed to keep in check man’s sensual passions [...] At any rate, Lizzie Shand used to tell her friends that in Scotland man’s chief end was to glorify God and woman’s was to see that he did it. (p.77)

The influence, broadly and in particular application to his choices, of patriarchal ideology, is transparent in Hector’s script. At the level of personal sexuality the swashing of his buckles requires the misperception which cleaves the opposite sex into angels or monsters, the vested interest detailed in Women. The narrator alludes to the biological interpretation of human nature as the justification held by her character and other men, while in this portrayal she implicates by commentary and in free indirect discourse the dynamics of Hector’s actions, not as a biological process, but as psychological game-playing.

Polarised correspondences abound between characters, and the response of Mary Ann hints at the interlocking "feminine" perception to Hector’s form of "masculinity". Mabel, his sister-in-law, represents this aspect of the "feminine" in full, while Sarah Murray likewise exemplifies the self-deferring female of Christian principle in relation to her brother William. But the areas of our narrative scheme occupied by roles 1 and roles 2 make the more illuminating comparison in relation to the parallel agenda.

Sarah Murray, we are informed immediately on introduction, defines herself in the limited terms of servant of God and Man. If she had been asked what kind of woman she was, the narrator remarks, "she would have replied, with some surprise, that she was a Minister’s sister". (p.3) The close circumscription of this self-definition becomes clear in the story. Its ill-fittedness is implicit in the succeeding sentence:

Throughout the week she was mistress of his [the minister’s] house, and on Sundays, sitting in the Manse pew, she was haunted by a sense of being mistress of the House of God as well. (p.3)
Not blessed, not rewarded, but haunted. In this ironic speech act, such a dutiful role appears, as it does throughout the story, to inhabit Sarah's life like an unbidden ghost. As with the Findlaters' Matilda, Sarah believes the admission price to Heaven is the deferral of earthly fulfilment, or even pleasure. She is caught in the Calvinist's double-bind: on the one hand, reward now, pain later, or pain now, reward later; but on the other hand also guilt now, the immediate internal penalty for any minor personal ambition, desire or simple appetite, the "selfish" elements of the individual. In this script self equals selfish, and everything Sarah does is burdened by anxiety about its moral correctness. But, and here's the rub, since in Muir's novel script cannot monopolise consciousness, Sarah is simultaneously unable to avoid contemplation of worldly, selfish satisfactions, and therefore enacts a life of maladaptive hand-wringing, suffering the slings and arrows, imagined and real, of outrageous fortune. She invents self-destructive corners within her mind, seen in her interactions with her brothers where she attempts to fulfil the roles of maid, mother, confessor and ultimately decision-maker.

Sarah's nurturing tendency is patently misrepresented in the script with which she is saddled, while William's fecklessness places him closer to the maladaptation of Ned when his dependency is viewed in relation to the "good woman", their sister. Locked in her Manse milieu, Sarah remains bound within conservative values, values representative of the older world of the Victorians. Mabel Shand, on the other hand, belongs firmly in the modern, Edwardian era, enacting the script of "femininity" in transition. Hers is the performance of reformed, liberated woman, as free as a heroine in magazine romance.

We can understand the difference between Sarah and Mabel in a diagram of the two sets of social roles in the narrative, which - unable to monopolise the characters' minds in their portrayal - occupy major areas of their construction in the text. Diagram 7 shows the demarcation of roles 1 and 2 (see over). Sarah's service orientation is the product of roles 1, though also extending into the area of self, as located in story. Other than the materials now available in couture, which, haute or otherwise, she cannot afford, Sarah is repelled by most aspects of the modern woman, which transgress her model of morality, and so, disapproving of each other, the two characters enact a tension within the territory of the Female. The story material out of which Mabel is constructed can be located principally in the area of roles 2, but extends into roles 1, even if she largely ignores the values associated with it. She nonetheless incorporates the
morality of the local community within herself, and in story. Mabel also inhabits the space of self, though as ever, the repudiation of a creative self by her is ridiculed in the narrator's slant.

Diagram Seven: Imagined Corners.

The socially ascribed terms of "femininity" are now demarcated into two sets of roles:

**Roles 1**: traditional Christian and domestic duty, the "eternal feminine", as expected of women in previous delineation of "roles".

**Roles 2**: the modern consumerist model of "femininity", orientated to sexual display and personal gratification through purchasing power.

Sarah Murray exemplifies Roles 1, in disapproval of Roles 2 woman, embodied in Mabel Shand.

The sources of Mabel's roles 2 script are explicitly identified, over and over in story, to be judged in discourse. Evaluating her life in the terms of a romance heroine, Mabel exercises covert designs on a glamorous lifestyle as prescribed in magazines, and not so covert designs on her brother-in-law and male counterpart, Hector. Appearance, manner, and private desires all conform to the shape and detail of this pattern. Pondering her marital circumstances, Mabel compares them with the standards of romance fiction:

She gazed idly at an illustration to the story she was reading. The hero and heroine were standing clasped in each others' arms, a typical magazine embrace, with the woman swaying backwards, and the man masterfully overtopping her. She had a hand on each of his shoulders, pushing him away; when the inevitable kiss came
she would enjoy it with a good conscience because of this show of resistance. Mabel’s eyes lingered on the picture. It came into her mind that the hero’s shoulders were like Hector’s, and although startled, even shocked, she felt for an infinitesimal space of time that it would be thrilling to stem her hands against Hector’s broad shoulders and push him away with all her strength. (pp.38-9)

Straight narrative recounts the action and thoughts of the character, her mind encompassing the moral territory of roles 1 in her indignation at her own thoughts, but enjoying more the image as it relates to roles 2, and we see the evaluative element which shifts from one to the other.

What’s wrong with idle sexual fantasy? Nothing in itself, but here we have the obverse of Mabel’s self-deferral. Attempting to emulate the “delicious frou-frou of femininity”, another magazine line, Mabel fantasises enjoying sex under the guise of its disapproval. (p.84) The greater motive force in Mabel’s mind is alluded to in the ironic value contained in the narrator’s use of the phrase “startled, even shocked”: the balance of the two scripts lies with roles 2, entailing only marginal concession of moral feeling implied in “shocked”, along with the greater one of mere surprise. The “femininity” Mabel lives by is the passive/ assertive duality of male misperception, dressed in images of the modern, glamorous as it reflects new markets, alluring as it promises fresh excitement, but implicitly conveying the same power relation as its predecessor, a relation still alive and active. Mabel must therefore be overpowered by the hero, her resistance and capitulation the conventions that enable her to evade ownership of her sexuality. In romance stories, the heroine can satisfy her own needs by serving those of her man. Thus the symmetry of the posture adopted by the figures in Mabel’s image. In reality this is not so simple, scripts overlapping between theoretical mutual exclusivity. In Mabel’s internal story therefore, the artificial “femininity” requires infinite calculation for success. She manifests the ambition of a tyrant, and the caution of a sniper.

Free indirect speech reveals this calculation. When recounting what Mabel thought in the above quotation the narrator simply observes from the outside: "she felt that [...]"; on other occasions Mabel’s error of judgement is exposed via shifts from narrative voice to her own. Interpreting Hector’s flirtatious baiting of her, she can see only in self-referential terms:

He was an unscrupulous brute, of course; but she had the whip-hand of him, no doubt of that. John would turn him out of the
mill at a word from her. His boldness in the circumstances was not unpleasing. (p. 85)

Undoubtedly, with the narrator effacing herself to allow this revelation, the reader is furnished with sufficient value in the immediate moment, and elsewhere in the novel, to reach the intended conclusion about the character. Not only does Elise comment on Mabel’s scheme of magazine values, but in this extract the possibility of Hector being sacked by his half-brother John for the sake of Mabel’s flirtation, can be evaluated side by side, and adjudged an excessively high stake in what is portrayed as her game. Also in this scene, narrative voice operates ironically, positing a counter irony over the irony contained in Mabel’s scale of satisfaction at her potential power over Hector, "not unpleasing". This satisfaction in the speaker’s mind, the slightest pleasure from the fullest power, is ironised by the narrative context, in which such trivial malice is belittled, and so free indirect speech as it issues from Mabel becomes the instrument of her ridicule. Self-reference and power terms accord with internalised script. Game-playing secures maximum pay-off while precluding genuine intimacy. Mabel’s portrayal is the most accurate of this sort of female character, its subtle construction of identity out of scripted, linguistic modes of thought doing away with the formal difficulties encountered in the real and false selves of Isolines and Emmies.

So much for the fallibilities of these subsidiary filter characters. Script, as I have emphasised, is incomplete. The two leading characters reconstruct themselves in their ongoing dialectic in story, narrative discourse elucidating the error or appropriateness of given actions. But whereas in previous examples such assertion entailed the alignment of discourse and story in order to encompass the fragments of the Female, we see in the two Elizabeths the extent to which the Female can be located in story, and the way narrative control becomes parodied through its relation to the two characters.

**Breaking Down The Walls: Discourse Within Story**

The dialectic of the two Elizabeths leads them away from Calderwick towards an unspecified destination and an undefined freedom. Being of an unclosed nature, their characterisation constructs an alternative to the self-will of the rational subject. Closure here is distinct from completeness, the authorial goal. From Elizabeth Shand’s fluid potential arises the prospect of attaining freedom within *duree reelle*. Elizabeth the elder, Elise, provides the reconstructive lesson, in the
re-opening of corners in her own mind. This assertive process locates self in story, as our scheme demonstrates (Diagram 8), and the two characters share considerable overlap among roles 1 and 2, and in particular, their largest territory, self. In this shared space they do not encounter conflict, as with Mabel and Sarah, but rather share mutual growth. The realm of Female is completed by the contribution of narrative slant.

Diagram Eight: Correspondence of heroines: the two Elizabeths.

E1: Designating the area encompassing the identity of Elise Mutze, the former Lizzie Shand.
E2: The area comprising the identity of Elizabeth Shand, newly married into the name. Reflecting the reduced rigidity of social ascription, each character's identity encompasses some of roles 1 and roles 2, and narrative discourse, but they also learn from and about each other in their common mental territory. Age difference leads to Elise's lesser participation in roles 2, territory significant to the choices faced by Elizabeth.

Rejecting script as the basis of personal identity becomes the dynamic underlying the relationship of the two Elizabeths. The scheme created by Carswell in which the distinction between "inner" and "outer" selves was made, with harm consequent of the inimical outer portion, is superseded by that of Imagined Corners, in which respect the Romantic paradigm has been stretched far beyond mere duality.

The outer self which led Carswell's Joanna to act the role of wife/servant was treated with detached, judgemental irony by her narrator. Joanna had to respond
to instinctual, emotional messages which contained the "truth" of her identity, but
Elizabeth Shand must apply her capacity for thought, to discriminate between
choices which are referable both to codes in her own mind, and to actions in the
outside world. It is no longer the difference between essential and artificial
identity which distinguishes the distance of narrative slant from heroine, but the
adoption of particular scripts, in their unsuitability or potential to provide creative
identity. Consciousness is neither false nor free, but its application in association
with emotion is crucial to freedom from ideological impediments.

Narrative distance again varies with the heroine's conduct. For instance,
Elizabeth Shand, in her period of doubt, enacts a poor compromise of scripts.
The name of this adopted mode is the Noble Wife, as the narrator remarks.
Struggling to come to terms with her realisation that Hector intends to leave her,
Elizabeth attempts to become that which she perceives he requires in a woman:
"I am your wife", she said. "Am I not? I am your wife, Hector.
I'll be a good wife. What do you want me to do?" (p.134)

While Elizabeth tells herself that she is discovering her truest identity, an
irreducible self, narrative detachment occurs:
We must not pity Elizabeth as she makes her way upstairs to the
inner office of John Shand and Sons; she is transfigured by
happiness.(p.127)
The "we" detaches narratee and narrator from character, making this a message
transmitted in slant, outside of story.

In this scene, Elizabeth has imagined the wrong corners, and her divergence from
the narrative line on the matter is subject to the narrator's disapproving shift to
impersonal pronoun. The virtual incompatibility of roles 1 and 2, as well as
either of them with Elizabeth's other attributes of character, is attested in story by
the resulting confusion of both Elizabeth and Hector, and their uncertainty how
to respond while she inhabits a previously unadopted, conventional mode. As the
couple enact their scripts in full knowledge of their dishonesty, Hector's gratitude
to his wife is said to be

a sincere tribute to the impersonation of the Noble Wife. A lump
rose in Elizabeth's throat, but she returned his gaze unwaveringly.
There was one curious consequence of this interchange. Both
Hector and Elizabeth felt embarrassed when they kissed each
other.(p.135)
In this instance, the cap doesn’t fit, and the script cannot be acted in comfort. It is clear from the attitude of the narrator that this is the inimical script, the female impersonating the "feminine". We have the ironic speech act of a narrator addressing her narratee outwith the ken of the characters, referring to both the standard of conduct enacted by them in the game called the Noble Wife, and its divergence from the spoken claims in their exchange. Since the narrative slant informs us what is wrong with the behaviour of the couple, we know there is nothing surprising about their embarrassment, and so the irony is located in the word "curious": it is the narrator’s feigned ignorance of the ulterior nature of the script she has just elucidated. Narrative irony is couched in the game of adopted register, the pretence of neutral value where her own partiality clearly exists, two hierarchised perspectives disguised as a single, totalising one.

This parody of objective omniscience represents the disavowal of grand narrative, of unifiable interests between inhabitants of the depicted world. It is complemented in Muir’s third way by her treatment of the distance between characters and narrator, usually maintained by free indirect speech, as we have seen with regard to Mabel. For instance, when giving rein to Elizabeth’s thoughts on married life, the narrative manifests the terms of Bergsonian thought, and while so doing the relation of narrator to heroine takes on a new aspect. Elizabeth sees time in a linear progression, Bergson’s erroneous unfreedom. Herein lies the alien aspect of her consciousness. She is also caught responding to internal voices, unaware she has the choice to ignore them:

Those years of the future stretched endlessly before her; with that queer lucidity which is seldom found in daytime thinking she could see them as a perspective of fields, each one separated by a fence from its neighbour. Over you go, said a voice, and over she went, then into the next and the next and the next. But this was no longer time or space, it was eternity; there was no end, no goal; perhaps a higher fence marked the boundary between life and death, but in the fields beyond it she was still Elizabeth Shand. (pp.64-5)

Spatial and linear to Elizabeth, time is also open and unmarked within the image in her head. The narratee is given access to the fluid imagination of the character, and can see the choices she faces: fences or open field, script or freedom.

Now in this moment we can see the limitation of conscious perception, in accordance with Bergson. We are shown the thoughts inside the character’s head,
but the area of free indirect speech contains significant uncertainty. The first sentence in this extract is in direct report, "she could see [...]", the narrator in omniscient mode. But is it Elizabeth's voice or her narrator's which says "but this was no longer time or space"? In this instance no distinction can be made, the territory of eternity is shared, both afloat in the flux of time. The narrator inhabits the same space as her character, part of her repudiation of God-like authorial control. Claims of control have no absolute authority in this fiction, but the preference for one featuring shared values and equality of freedoms between the sexes is upheld in the fruitful tension between narrative slant and characters' imagined corners. The narrative paradox is heightened further when we consider how the characterisation of Elise fits. In Elise, the elder Elizabeth, the story-teller parodies her own power, re-making her own self within her narrator's story. She comes to represent a level of meta-discourse within the novel.

**Imagined Corners** is loaded with imagery, often shared by narrator and characters, of the vast non-order of life, in fields, gardens, or oceans, on walls and from trains. Reminiscent of the motifs used by Carswell, these images are redolent of the collective unconscious, from which each individual sets out, but along lines pre-determined by various factors, including script. Minimising the extent of this determinism is part of the Bergsonian reach towards a shareable freedom. Back in Calderwick, Elise re-evaluates her life: ""Permanents" and "transients" they had called them in Brussels, "in those days when one believed in categories [...]". (p.256) Elise is a filter character, a fictional element, but it is through her own commentary on her own story that the novel makes much of its progress. The analogy of narrative and history is most explicitly drawn in her character, the selective reconstruction a self-conscious editing process in Elise's fictional mind. This relation between the levels of narrative discourse and character's discourse can be represented in Diagram 9 (see over).

Diagram 9 shows the character of Elise, and in it the delineation of her own commentary on her history. She is able to tell herself her own version of the events of her life, to demur from the broader standards of the community, portrayed in the novel's story and discourse, to reconstruct her story, within her own discourse, within story. Her space in the narrative is that of history constructed by the historyless, developed in a dialectic with the external values enacted around her.
Diagram Nine: Imagining Corners.

I.C.: Imagined Corners 1. The construction by Elise (E1) of her own version of her life story. She does this via her own discourse, which occupies narrative space in the novel. The circle labelled I.C.1 therefore contains her own personal model of story (s), within her discourse (d). Elise remains a filter character, addressing no implied narratee or reader, and so requires no slant. I.C. is the sum of the heroine’s discourse and story, within her consciousness, which still encompasses the territory of roles 1 and roles 2. This scope for the thinking woman to detail her own history is paralleled by the rein it is given in the narrative by Elise’s narrator, N. Narrative therefore embodies the interacting levels of personal and social discourse, out of which characters' lives are made, and remade, within the original hull of D and S, discourse and story.

There is no need to indicate a narrative slant outside of story for Elise, because she remains a filter character, addressing no narratee, living her story, operational within the story of her own implied author, whose narrator comments upon her progress. The narrator’s slant is consistently in accord with the I.C. of the character, but there are occasions when they deviate, otherwise Elise would necessarily remain static.

This scheme manifests the self-consciousness of which metafiction is made, but it is consciousness of the tensions in reality which lead to innovation in form, rather than the artificiality of narrative convention which is being overthrown. The fictional growth of the character leads her into the sphere of teleologies, the social basis of the scripts performed around her in the town. The levels of control enacted in the discourses of Elise and Elizabeth (eventually), combined with their
displacement of the omniscient narrative voice, make an extended parody of the teleology inherent in narrative form.

Teleology is the key concept in Cairns Craig's comparison of narrative with history (The Body In The Kit Bag); teleology is synonymous with the pre-determining nature of roles and of script as I have applied it in this chapter. Elise enacts the metafictional tension between self-will and determinism, as she moves through the community, beginning the story in contemplation of her imminent return to the town from which she withdrew under a different name, and closing the story in transit again, accompanied by greater self-knowledge as well as another Elizabeth. The journey is neither cyclical nor linear, but an oscillation between those two points, movement and return, transcendence and immanence, in steady accretion of the layers of self by which a true life history is formed.

In one scene, the narrator has her character recall the events of a comically respectable afternoon tea party, which in turn sparks off speculation by Elise on the nature of things. In particular, she elucidates the case for rejecting the prescribed teleologies of roles 1:

- The physical capacity for motherhood was a common measure, perhaps the lowest common measure, of all present. But like the urge for power it was an attribute, not an explanation of individual life. (p.232)

To thus deem an attribute the explanation of a thing is to restrictively define its purpose, to prescribe its teleology, and teleology needs a context in which to confer meaning. Here certainly, narrative slant and Elise's I.C. are in alignment, with Elise proceeding to think with comic irony about teleology:

- From the racial standpoint, of course, it could be argued that the individual existed to continue the race, that Mrs. Mackenzie lived to produce her son; and from the standpoint of Mrs. Mackenzie's son that was doubtless an all-sufficient reason. Any individual must feel that in producing him his parents had amply justified their existence. Teleology was plausible when one looked backwards. (p.232)

The women's urge to power declines into a socially ascribed fact of their lives. If teleology only really works backwards, then of course it is the explanation of something in the present that it serves. And explanation in this context implies justification, the thrust of conjectural history. Once again, self-deferral and the urge to power are revealed as two sides of the same coin in women's lives, that
of social rather than universal currency. Childrearing is not rejected in this view, but is relegated from its elevated position in the life of the Female. This is where the modernist in Muir places art above instinct, human creativity over re-creation. In debate with Elizabeth, Elise tells her that civilised mankind [sic] might develop in the most unexpected direction if it were encouraged to trust its intelligence to outwit Nature whenever it could. (p.246)

Outwit? Elise goes on to affirm the creative potential of thought as the means to full awakening of personality. The arts and sciences were created in a void, she avers, and it is through these that we express our humanity, in all its imperfect variety. By imposition on human faculties freedom is circumscribed, and through their potentiation might it be attained. Arising from conscious and unconscious forces, each individual must combine these areas of existence into action, to realise their human potential in Duree reelle. This is where women are usually urged to choose one or other, as when MacDiarmid bends the "feminine" principle to suit his drunk man's vision, or the fictional Chris Guthrie may choose to have education or community. Nature becomes synonymous with "femininity", and the "masculine" principle makes off with the action. As this scene reflects, the allocation of re-creativity without creativity to the townswomen concentrates their energy in the vicarious triumphalism of parental pride. To outwit nature is to undo the absolutists of literary nationalism or gender essentialism, to challenge the polarities rarely overcome among Muir's male contemporaries in the renaissance, or the exponents of modernism.

Two voices make out the details of this case, Elise and narrator, the latter often addressing comments to the narratee, the former talking to another character, Elizabeth, and to herself. In the above debate it is in dialogue, and therefore in story, that the point is made. Elise then talks to herself and to Elizabeth, in her own discourse, within the ongoing commentary and story constructed by the implied author. The narrator comments both on the story she is telling and on Elise's discourse (containing Elise's version of her story), which become a form of history, since they are enacted within a wider frame of reference, namely the novel. All story is history, but then all history is story, and must depend on the values of its teller. More than one teller is present in Imagined Corners, each approaching the question of women's status from a slightly different perspective, each prey to, and two of them undoing, their own received teleologies. Personal discourse is the link between inner and external values, the space in which their dialectic is carried out, dissolving the Romantic dividing line between them. It
performs the same task in the narrative, displacing the single narrative stance. The reader in these instances is privy to a multi-levelled narrative in which the author's principle of the third way is dramatised. While maintaining the distinction between story and discourse, neither narrator nor her main female characters can tell the whole truth, each of the them is dependent on the others, and in the act of reading the reader apprehends the interdependency as well as the interaction of the various levels. In so doing, the reader discovers the layers of narrative texture, whose multi-vocal and varying vision represents the paradox of respect for the attenuated subject-self, or Graham's ball of wool. With its theoretical basis and politicisation of personal conduct, the rich style of *Imagined Corners* renders the potential of the thinking woman. Willa Muir's contemporary, Nan Shepherd, cultivated novelistic craft of similar lucidity, and expresses individual female consciousness with less of philosophy and more still of narrative sophistication, and it is to her third way that we proceed in the next chapter.
Chapter Eight

NAN SHEPHERD:
WORLDS WITHIN THE SELF

Aweel, I’m couped. But wha’ could tell
The road wad rin sae sair?
I couldna gang yon pace mysel’
An’ I winna try nae mair (Violet Jacob)²¹⁹

The youngest and finest exemplar of the parallel agenda and of the third way in narrative, Nan Shepherd appears to have little in common with Willa Muir in terms of her lifestyle or the priorities dramatised in her writing. Comparison of the two evinces interesting similarities of vision however, as well as crucial differences, out of which Shepherd’s literary achievement arises. This can be theorised alongside contemporary philosophy in the Scottish academic milieu in which Shepherd participated during a long teaching career.

For instance, the last and least known of Nan Shepherd’s three novels, A Pass In The Grampians, features the return to a small community in the North-East of Scotland by a woman who has previously left in high rebellious dudgeon, the better to be free of its fetters. The returning traveller has had a change of name in the interim, and brings her new sense of identity to bear on former neighbours and friends in the town. Her presence sets off a chain of events which affect a younger woman deeply. Growth is enacted between these two main female characters, and compared with the values of the community, by characters and narrator, and new possibilities emerge from the mutual interest of the women.

But unlike Elise, whose story in *Imagined Corners* this resembles, Dorabel Cassidy does not go on to occupy the central focus of the novel, and her denunciation of local mores does not attract her narrator's greatest attention. The dynamic of the novel is not the personal discourse enacted by this female character within story, nor dualistic partnerships acting in resistance to the wider group interest, but is instead the shifting and mysterious bonds on which relations within the community are founded, how individuals accomplish self, group and higher identification. This process is brought into focus by Dorabel's intrusion, and within it narrative judgement of fallible characters takes place. Fallibility is not portrayed as individual error, but as the shifting possibilities of what, in a nineteenth century novel form, might be called "truth". The book's complex reality is replete with alternative interpretations of unclear facts. For Shepherd as for Muir, the novel expresses history as story, but Shepherd dramatises her story not as two filter characters in collusion with their narrator, but rather as the discourse of its several parts. She converts narrative into a parody not only of her narrator's omniscience, but of the quest for any objective form of value, outside of the intersecting, and often contradictory activities of the community.

**THE LIFE AND TIMES OF A LOCAL WRITER**

Unlike Willa Muir, there is no obvious clue to the relativistic world view of Nan Shepherd in her lifestyle, which, far from leading her out into the open spaces vacated by a civilisation in terminal decline, confirmed to her the validity of her beloved North-East of a wee, peripheral European nation. The parochialism routinely attributed to the region returns us to the issue with which this thesis started, the partiality of perception in any point of view, and the power of legitimacy maintained by dominant over peripheral cultures, producing the perception of parochialism in the "regional" as opposed to the metropolitan. In fact, the discussion of Shepherd will take us full circle in other respects, establishing her connection with the earlier writers in the definition of their parallel agenda, for whom the tension between belonging to a community and resisting it is the motive force of narrative.

Shepherd joins Muir in resisting the potentially reductive vision of belonging, but where the latter travelled far to find multiplicity of possibility, Shepherd perceived it all around her, at every level of life. Her fiction is full of the strangeness of experience and the intangible connections by which individuals change, grow, and
decline. At times her narratives appear visionary, the local portrayed as no less universal than any locale. But overcoming the tag of regionalism is not easy, as illustrated by tributes to the writer’s achievements close to end of her life. On the eve of publication of The Living Mountain in 1977, a poetic evocation of the Cairngorms, Louise Donald wrote in appreciation of the author’s life and career. Ms. Donald appears subject to the terms of provincialism in treating the by then eighty-four year old woman as no more than a wonderful contributor to local colour, listing her publications and employment, from university student to college teacher, and from her three novels to the "slim volume of poems" called In The Cairngorms. Shepherd edited the Aberdeen University Review for many years, we are told, after retiring in 1956 from a long career teaching at the Aberdeen College of Education, or the Aberdeen Training Centre as it was at that time, a point noted in all articles about her life, conceding the local orientation of interest. In this vein, we are told that Shepherd edited the Review until 1963, received an honourary doctorate the following year from her Alma Mater, the region’s university in Aberdeen, and then, though illness dictated the retirement, she herself nursed, "until her death last year at the age of ninety-two", the family retainer Mary. This snippet of information sits easily with Ms. Donald’s evaluation of the author’s first novel, The Quarry Wood, in which she says: "the reader is carried along by the limpid prose with its delightful local twang". And indeed, it is the subject matter of the new book rather than the author’s attitude to it that especially arouses the reviewer’s appreciation. The Cairngorms in such a case would appear to form the boundary between, rather than a bridge connecting, the region and the rest of the country. We see in this the local presented only for a local readership, reaching no further than the hills, insistently confining itself to self-recognition in writing by a local character. The local twang is enough, and the extraordinary acclaim The Quarry Wood received on initial publication is bracketed in like manner, mere confirmation of "our" culture.

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Among the culture of the local, Shepherd attended Aberdeen University which, as with Muir at St. Andrews, gave her access to an educational tradition in Scotland still distinct from that south of the border. Shepherd was exposed to current Scottish thinkers, including her Professor of Moral Philosophy James Black Baillie, and the Professor of English Literature Herbert Grierson. In the intellectual atmosphere created by such people the new secularism was considered reductive and defeatist, and among their striving for a healthy alternative, John Macmurray cultivated his personalism at the same time as Shepherd wrote her novels. No less than Muir with her continental European influences, Shepherd and Macmurray formulated their visions in a favourable climate, not a vacuum. Like a well-kept secret, this cultural context, running through the twentieth century, remains invisible to eyes which look for either the local or the international in culture, but in bringing the two together is the likeliest intellectual candidate to help re-orientate Scots to face the demands of late twentieth century social organisation.

A newspaper feature one year earlier quotes from one of Shepherd’s poems, "Achiltibuie": "Here on this edge of Europe I stand on the edge of being/ Floating on light isle after isle takes wing”, and concludes that each of her poems has its own secret, and Miss Shepherd admits with an enigmatic smile that this is so. Very few people understand them, she says, which makes me feel better. There is an elusive quality to Miss Shepherd. You know that behind the surface charm there are depths that aren’t even hinted at.223

How, on the edge of Europe, the isle takes wing, and in what way its flight relates to the parallel agenda, can be arrived at by textual and thematic analysis of each of the novels.

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DEEPENING MYSTERIES: A PASS IN THE GRAMPIANS\textsuperscript{224}

The more one learns of this intricate interplay of soil, altitude, weather, and the living tissue of plant and insect [...] the more the mystery deepens. Knowledge does not dispel mystery (Nan Shepherd)\textsuperscript{225}

Why go elsewhere when the place you inhabit is so mysterious? Shepherd ostensibly describes the mountains in this epigraph, but in so doing displaces particular lumps of rock and soil as subject matter, to discourse upon the mystery of which life’s story is made. So with her least-known work of fiction, at whose close the youthful heroine Jenny stands on the verge of adulthood,

still as a puss, but ready to pounce, and dreaming dreams of her own strangeness with the invincible expectancy of youth.(p.245)

In reading the novel, whose form moves away from the innovation of its predecessor, \textit{The Weatherhouse}, we can detail the shared thematic concerns of the author and the philosopher.

The return of Bella Cassie, or Dorabel Cassidy as she now styles herself, reconstructed and nationally famous, functions in her own mind to rub the noses of her erstwhile associates in the success bequeathed by metropolitan culture for her singing ability. It is not the return of a woman actively re-examining the past from which she once sought escape; nor is it the contemplative quest enacted by Muir’s Elise. In fact, no single character in this novel can monopolise narrative space the way Elise was allowed to by her author, and none has an inner life which commands attention and receives confirmation \textit{in its own right}, without reference to how action affects it. Echoed in the title of John Macmurray’s third book, \textit{Persons In Relation}, Shepherd’s third and final novel is not the story of any one individual so much as the story of persons whose selves have attained that status by their connection with otherness.


\textsuperscript{225}The author writing about the Cairngorms in \textit{The Living Mountain}, p.51.
Elementalism And Fluidity

Shepherd’s Dorabel hurtles into the village of her upbringing intent on bringing it to heel by the power of her rising star in metropolitan culture. But the lesson she has been encouraged to ignore in London is that the transcendent star of the Nietzschean subject is a mere illusion, which should be replaced by confrontation with the everyday reality of shared human nature. Importantly for the reading of A Pass In The Grampians, and the reverse of Muir, Shepherd’s traveller journeys with the intention of severing connections, while the community flows in interaction. The community’s is a fluid life-pattern, Bella’s a linear one.

The persons in relation are a disparate bunch, whose private spheres are only partly glimpsed from any single standpoint in the story and are susceptible to evolution with experience. Individual consciousness is described as a fluid and changing succession of states. In Chapter IV, we are told of an incident, "on a day in March, a year before", in which the young heroine Jenny and her grandfather Andrew Kilgour were burning heather on the moor.(p.41) When the fire blows out of control the pair set about extinguishing it:

- each forgot the other was there. Fire, earth, space, the wind - in labour with these elemental things they became as it were dissolved in their own elements. Memory was gone, and consciousness of selfhood, and all intricate coils of living.(p.42)

As the fire is quelled, local small-holder Durno arrives to grumble "Ay, that’s what comes of owning a bit grun’ you see".(p.47) So far, so Romantic, social organisation seemingly transgressing nature, but the chapter proceeds to depict Kilgour’s consciousness in a quite different relationship to the natural world. Local farmer whose several brothers have gone off to further themselves as educated lads o’ pairts, Andrew is their equal in wisdom and dignity. His trustworthiness is legend, his judgement precipitative in the development of the plot, and he receives this noble colouring throughout; he is the earth personified. Thinking about his childhood, Andrew discourses for eight pages on his growth, from infancy to old man (pp.51-58), before the narrator returns character and reader to the present: "Kilgour’s dreaming mind came back to itself".(p.58)

Except that "itself" is not existent in the present of story-time, it is still a year in the past:

That was a day whose memory came so savagely upon Kilgour’s consciousness as he stood, more than a year later [...] (p.60)
The mixing of time periods within the continuing third person past tense rendition provides Andrew with his own discourse within story, and the story with a non-linear continuance which is not cyclical, in Romantic style, but rather a succession of states of mind, of memory and thought, together constructing the variable layers of the present as experienced by the character, and transmitted in story. Andrew’s selfhood dissolves, re-forms, is consolidated by memory of the past and by contemplation of the present and future, and confirmed in interaction with the otherness of the land and his neighbours and family. Connected with the soil he may be, but Kilgour’s identity is a tantalisingly variable entity. Elemental as the earth, but fluid as a stream, his portrayal reconstitutes the Romantic paradigm in its open form, allowing the fluidity of community to displace the dulling, restraining forms of both society and a closed individuality.

Combining features elemental and sublime, Bella makes her entry, portrayed as both natural Romantic and transcendent subject. By the former quality she holds the village in thrall, and as the latter is she judged by the narrator. Chapter IV concludes with Andrew conceding the future to the ascending Bella, at Jenny’s enquiry "who will come next?". The modern world appears to be upon the village. As in Imagined Corners, amongst this social nexus there is a thread running between the returning woman and her new, younger friend Jenny. But the promise of freedom offered by Bella requires the severance of the manifold bonds of Jenny’s social existence, and the stricture of the offer is ultimately rejected by the girl.

Bella’s fame is the result of both her talent and her phenomenal urge to power. Large, aggressive and voracious, her predatorial instincts gradually come to receive greatest comment in narrative slant. On the occasion of the all-night dance, during which Bella loups maniacally to fiddle music played out in the fields, her energy frenzied, her compulsion almost demonic, the narrator observes that

Dorabel’s frolic expressed no more than a thoughtless delight in being. She couldn’t stop dancing. (p.155)

Seemingly endorsed, this activity ultimately gives way to the triumphalist desire to persist dancing in order to enrage onlookers and wear down opposition to her will. Unequivocally disparaging of Bella is the description of her meeting with the young painter Barney, while on a camping expedition:

Dorabel had not been there a day before she scooped up boy and tent together in her greedy palm. She squeezed paint out of tubes
as though it were an essence of life that she must not miss. In much the same spirit she had crammed oilcake down her throat in childhood. Her inordinate appetite for food had been indeed an inordinate appetite for experience, that she, and equally those around her, were too ignorant to direct into its proper channels. (p.100)

Sympathy of judgement for her gusto mingles with the ironic note of words like "greedy" and "crammed". By this gradual emphasis on the assertion of subject-self, Bella's closed nature is revealed. The great irony dramatised in the story is Bella's discovery of her particular roots in the community. The motive for her return, complete with intrusively garish house, is the desire to belong, but to belong only on the terms of her transcendent-subject status. Bella seeks power and social prestige, claiming possession of, rather than participation in, community life. The revelation that she is not the blood daughter of the landowning Andrew, but rather of the smelly, socially marginal Durno, provides the sting in the tail of her arrogant enterprise. In adhering to competitive and divisive standards of conduct Bella is confirmed as being no more than conventionally metropolitan in outlook. Unable to control the past, she will not accept its mysterious connections when revealed, and so can only return to the city once more in high dudgeon. Bella's path, along which she invites Jenny, is more like with that of Muir's Mrs. Ritchie than with Elise. Transcendent in intention, isolationist in effect, the urge to power endorsed by the broader society entails the rejection of community. Bella opts for the same course as Annie Rattray, as that character transformed herself into Mrs. Ritchie for the purpose of satisfying an ambitiousness tempered by the unfree teleology of duty, progressively narrowing the scope of her existence. Bella’s assured ascent to stardom entails the inevitable consequences of linear progression, reducing her connectedness with the otherness of place and persons. And in the same way that Mrs. Ritchie's teleology was predetermined to confine her within a patriarchal "feminine" role, what I called "roles 1", so Bella follows Mabel Shand to occupy "roles 2", as a glamorous radio broadcast performer in the new leisure expansion of the twentieth century. She opts out of community and into the new niche allotted to "femininity".

Mary Kilgour, Jenny’s aunt, exemplifies a limited form of opposition to Bella. Mary is merely the other side of the same "progressive" coin, reactionary in resisting change, and still failing to reach the human objectivity defined by Macmurray. Attacking the house designed by Bella’s husband Gib, Mary regards him as a kind of barbarian:
The modern barbarian. No sense of the past nor regard for the future. No responsibility towards either - slaps the shoddy house down, destroying the continuity of a tradition, spoiling the heritage for those that come after.(p.III)

True enough a description of Bella and Gib, as far as it goes, but then Mary commits the converse sin by resisting change with the reactionary fervour of one who invokes the past as an emotional experience owned and controlled by herself:

And Mary let her eyes rest on the house - inimical eyes, that harboured the enormous and implacable resentment of those who have grown into possession of what they value and cannot understand why anyone should take it from them.(p.III)

In the desire to control the past, the past in effect controls Mary. This applies to Durno as well, his long-standing grudge against Andrew Kilgour arising from the mistaken belief that Andrew has knowledge of a past misdeed. Mary and Durno live not just in thrall to the past, but more especially, to their own subjective understanding of it, since in each case the key events never took place at all. Their errors enact their own teleology, engulfing the individual with circumscripive guilt, envy and resentment. Personal history, like conjectural history, may be plain wrong too, but is no less influential on reality in the present. Each is a powerful discourse, the construction and interpretation of story. It takes Andrew Kilgour to preach the lesson of freedom to others: "The past is past", he tells Durno’s sister Alison when she debates whether to reveal to Bella her real father:

We’ve no say there [in the past] and the best we can do is say nought. But we have a say in what’s to be, and we’ll e’en take it.

Will you or I do the saying ?(p.195)

Existing in his succession of states, involving memory and mood, Andrew knows not to be bound by what has gone before. Bonds are not chains in his selfhood, unlike those of Mary or Bella. Devoid of teleological interference, growth of this sort is endorsed in narrative, a goal Jenny has the potential to fulfil.

The Heroine: Self As Agent

Observing adult behaviour, in the background of the events which enliven the village, Jenny assimilates and evaluates, imagining for herself the best ways to advance into the future of impending adulthood. In her portrayal she eschews the teleological model of connection, growing to a conception of life whose
parameters surround the greatest number of persons, respecting them for themselves. "Action is not teleological" writes Macmurray, but intentional:

It is described and understood by reference to the purpose of an agent. (*The Self As Agent*, p.150)

The narrator expressly takes Jenny's side when her action is intentional, in resistance to the purposes prescribed for her, as when she shows signs of adult perplexity about the affairs of the village:

Jenny made a face. The pure virginal quality of her features vanished rudely. She looked lovelier than ever. (p.118)

While the novel foregoes the innovation of its predecessor, the character of Jenny is in fact its embodiment of the third way.

This is particularly manifest in the scene where she is first placed between and in conflict with the polarised demands of Bella and her grandfather, their values looming over her, the future suddenly upon her:

She stood there, lids drooping. By flashes she eyed Dorabel. The glance was lit by supplication and a lovely far inwardness, as of a dream that was its own pure light. She trembled there between two loves - the mountain grandeur of her grandfather's, and Dorabel's encroaching, tumultuous, cruel, endlessly altering ocean-love, musical till now as summer seas. If she is frail, she will be crushed beneath them, deformed for life through this her first battering by the elements. She is sweet, she is ardent, is she also strong? Darkly she understands that if she yields her will to either of them now, even to her grandfather to whom she owes obedience, she is lost. Her own nature teases her, unreal and tantalising as a gossamer, more fateful then the stars. Issue it must have towards what it loves, or return upon itself in confusion. So she stands there. Like a flame, like a jet of water, she is blown by contrary winds from her true shape, yet momentarily resumes it and is herself. (p.206)

Between the ocean and the mountains, threatened with dissolution or isolation by the pressures exerted on her, Jenny will resolve the polarity in her own way, retaining the shape of her own selfhood, which is neither closed to outside reality nor controlled by it. The process described here by which she must issue towards what she loves, or undergo return upon herself in confusion, is closely analogous with the pattern of emotional engagement learned by developing individuals characterised by Macmurray.
Describing the infant-mother situation, Macmurray focuses on the pattern of the infant's expression of need, anticipation of the mother meeting it, and then the mother actually doing so. But this learning to wait and to expect has an even more fundamental bearing on the development of motivation in relations, as he goes on to elaborate:

The child's recognition of a need for the mother to do something for him [sic] is negatively motivated [...] Learning to wait for the right time involves, therefore, the subordination of this negative motive to a positive attitude of confidence that the expected response will come in due time. This trust in the other does not dispose of the discomfort or the need. The negative motive remains operative; but the sting is taken out of it by its integration in a complex attitude that is, as a whole, positively determined. (*Persons In Relation*, p.89)

If and when this rhythm of return is upset by the mother's refusal to cater for its needs, as must occur in healthy development, then in the child's perception, he [sic] calls to the Other, but the Other is deaf to his entreaty. He is thrown back upon himself. His world has collapsed into irrationality [...] (p.89)

The lyrical language and rhetorical gesture of Shepherd's prose in portraying this emotional dilemma conveys the same impetus, its rich reflexiveness reaching inward and then out in a pattern of return. Rhetorical, present tense questions act as the hinge around which the emotional language evoking the girl's consciousness moves. The inner realm is alluded to by self-reflexive diction evoking her glance, whose "far inwardness" is likened to "dream" and to a "pure light", while the flowing series of dependent clauses unites the inner and outward emotions, her own teasing, unreal nature "tantalising as a gossamer", but also "more fateful than the stars". Sweeping from the minuscule to the massive, the ephemeral to the infinite, the passage evokes and unites the polarities of which the girl's self is formed, and re-formed. The rhythm of return is what she anticipates in her engagement with otherness, and what she craves in this moment of crisis. But she is ready to cope with the dilemma, and in so doing will consolidate her sense of self. The third way presents the possibility for the character of expansion outwards without internal weakness. Jenny's expansion into the world will entail further contact with Dorabel, as well as with Durno, and with people and things beyond the village. She learns what she needs to value in her place in the Grampians, but will move beyond it in due course, connecting the particulars of existence in a universal appreciation.
In confirmation of the philosophical reach to otherness embodied in the novel, Jenny’s final avowal expresses the conception of persons in relation, in typically rich language:

Dorabel and Barney are persons, she likes them, they are not codes, the life that tumbles so fiercely through her limbs has felt kinship with their life and must find its own terms of acceptance or repudiation [...] These thoughts, simple and innocent as they are, thrill her like the closing on her flesh of a mountain pool, make her gasp with the elation of far and dangerous adventure. She sees the Pass, that is the symbol of her going. (p. 236)

And she will surely return again, completing the rhythm of emotional engagement in the interplay of soil, altitude and weather out of which life’s impulses grows.

In turning to the earlier novels we can develop the discussion to encompass the formal innovation by which the author achieved her finest writing, the most significant part not only of this chapter but of the entire thesis. In them the creative tension between selves and other expressed by the rich lyricism of their successor is manifest in a different sort of narrative whose controlling voice comes to undermine its own control, to parody objectivity in a way that, going a step beyond Muir, turns all story into discourse. The Quarry Wood, more so than A Pass, features the developing consciousness of a single character, while The Weatherhouse dissolves this convention too.

**A DIFFERENT KIND OF WORLD: THE QUARRY WOOD**

This changing of focus in the eye, moving the eye itself when looking at things that do not move, deepens one’s sense of outer reality [...] By so simple a matter, too, as altering the position of one’s head, a different kind of world may be made to appear (Nan Shepherd)

Celebrating the strangeness of emotion and perception which unites persons, A Pass utilises primarily poetic diction to express complex experience. For this

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227The Living Mountain, p. 12.
reason only, it is less satisfactory than either of the earlier works. *The Quarry Wood* is best encapsulated by Roderick Watson in his introductory essay to the Canongate edition:

[...]

Nan Shepherd’s writing has all the grace of Chekhov, not least in its delight at how revealing the casual juxtapositions of everyday speech and action can be made to be. (pp. viii-ix)

There are many aspects to the novel’s richness. Focused through Martha Ironside in her life around Crannochie, the changing position of her eye reflects the dense layers of the universe she inhabits, materially and in her inner space. In this the book contains the freshness and energy of portrayal which characterise Grassic Gibbon’s *Sunset Song*. Shepherd’s novel however is finer in its evocation of emotional life, and its narrative enacts not the decline of the bonds of community, resulting in the isolation and ultimate dissolution of Gibbon’s heroine Chris Guthrie, but the complex activities out of which community arises, and from which flows the adult formation of Martha. In the terms of our narrative scheme, story becomes an assemblage of discourses, including that of the narrator, dynamic in their interdependence. After considering secondary characters, we will discuss the way narrative renders the thematic inter-relatedness of different levels of experience and, following this, focus on the portrayal of Martha.

*Female Roles And The Urge To Power*

Among the secondary characters who share the social nexus of Martha’s universe, Aunt Josephine sails blithely through her life, a woman whose inclusive regard for the world of people and things and command of her own being make her a memorable fictional creation. She enriches life by her touch, and respects what she cannot change, the embodiment of the spontaneous objectivity lionised by Macmurray. But there is also the fact of her long, drawn out death from cancer. This occupies most of Josephine’s story, and would appear to undermine the positive reading of her role: she is incomplete, impaired, suffers and is beaten, another post-sexual symptom of the restriction of self and womanhood in society. But to read the character in this way is to uphold the opposition between individual and society, to seek the transcendent subject-self in a text which denies it. Josephine is indeed incomplete, but incomplete in a world without fixity, closure, autonomy. The terrible force of life is inextricably bound up with its mortality. Life is a slow decline into the earth from whence we arose, but we can find validation by our common connection with it, or fear in a handful of dust.
Wholly dependent in undignified illness, Josephine retains her zestful orientation to the otherness of persons and soil, confronting the slender boundary between life and death and glorying in the former.

Martha learns this lesson from Josephine, an antidote to the form of incompleteness embodied by her mother, Emmeline, betokened by Emmeline’s continuous need to adopt children. Emmeline’s is the failure of self-development, an excess of the re-creative impulse at the expense of a creative role in life. Josephine’s inter-relatedness also implicates the circumscribed domestic orientation of her sisters, Leebie, and the imperious Jean, to whom Leebie owed her "superb belief in labour as an end in itself", a view described by the narrator as "subtly deranged". (p. 9) Such commentary on the part of the narrator supplies the anti-teleological viewpoint, and in these women resides the traditional roles through domesticity. The other part, the teleology of Calvinism, thunders in the tyranny of Jeannie Mortimer over her frail, elderly mother Mary-Annie, who can only say of her daughter that Jeannie is "ower gweed for the likes o' me". (p. 7) Another Mrs. Ritchie, Jeannie’s psalm-singing early morning prayer is condemned by Martha, to whom it resembles "the crude material for some grinning modern caricature of death". (p. 201)

Madge, Martha’s younger adopted sister, enacts a poorer, rural version of Mabel Shand or Bella, the roles of consumer age woman. Working in a shop, frittering away her money on perfume, combs and clothes, Madge aims no higher than the attainment of a respectable lad, and like many a modest ambition, is faced with major impediments to that. She is also a devotee of cheap romance fiction, fascinated by the goings-on in the "jewelled-and-ermined pages of the Pansy Novelette" (p. 26), but in her quest for romance becomes pregnant and leaves the family, her outcome unknown. Madge is prey to means whose ends are false, another failure of teleology. In these portrayals the third way remains the only way to live, but its success is impaired by the motivation and conduct of men. Pursuing selfish goals, both Luke Cromar and Roy Rory Foubister, in their different modes of living, when offered more, choose the line of transcendent control.

Roy is a traditional sexual conqueror; he seeks to complete his imperial existence by claiming a wife appropriate to his land-owning status in South Africa. For Roy woman is man’s property, and Martha proves ultimately sullied goods,
meriting no investment. Exemplifying his urge to power, he projects only object-
otherness onto his chosen bride:

Finding her [Martha] inexperienced on the levels where he could test her, he failed to realize that there were other modes of experience. It did not occur to him that she had any sort of past. (p.148)

The narrator goes on to define the particular poles Roy presents Martha with:

She knew that he was wooing her and she knew that she would not be won: between these two sharp certainties the whole world lay in a confusion that her deadened intellect made no attempt to clarify. (p.149)

Of course the confusion at this stage is consequent of Martha’s intense passion for Luke Cromar, whose pseudo-enlightenment resolves into the same process of oppression by the attribution of otherness. Failing to recognise Martha as a person in her own right, Luke instead projects onto her a fantasy of his own inner life, perceiving her as a spiritual essence in keeping with his passing curiosity about spiritual affairs. Luke’s power over Martha becomes in her mind a form of rape:

Was it any mitigation for him to say, I did not want the flower, since the flower was taken? He had no right to her essence if he did not want herself. (p.160)

Luke’s tendency to wax lyrical about his own poetic efforts earns narrative scorn, and in his epic about the Archangel Gabriel, male arrogance is represented in microcosm. Growing tired of heaven, Gabriel visits a man, and takes him up to heaven: "tremendous experience for the man, of course, but that’s not really what matters", Luke opines: "what matters is what Gabriel discovered by taking the man up". (p.87) Far from identifying with a mere mortal, Luke aligns himself with the heavenly deity, using art to envision transcendence. He wrote his poetry easily, the narrator remarks:

Like going to heaven, it [poetry] was fun; and without the travail of his soul he was satisfied. (p.88)

Merely another instance of arrant dilettantism, Luke’s failed epic poem, like his inadvertent misuse of Martha, manifests the spiritual shallowness commonly diagnosed of men in women’s parallel agenda.

These characters repeat the configuration of types common to the authors we have discussed, with the sharpened focus on power relations which typifies the younger writers. The implication here is irresistibly feminist, a certain proportion of the
male sex portrayed in oppressive conduct, acting by inclination not instinct, while women are allocated subsidiarity within traditional social organisation and the new consumption orientated opportunities. Locating them within her personalist vision is no mean feat, but Shepherd's narrative goes on to do just that.

**Subjectivity In Story: Reflecting And Telling**

In the exchange between Martha and Roy above, Roy's intended property is not fooled. Martha understands his policy, realising that:

> Taking life, like Aunt Josephine, with zest, he [Roy] could not take it, as she did, for itself; but always for what he might take from it.(p.149)

As yet Martha sees Roy only in the abstract, as her narrator mentions in a typical intrusion, designed to highlight unseen bonds:

> She had not yet quite learned that the importance of things lies not in themselves, but in their relations.(p.149)

Such an intrusion is used sparingly in the novel, and serves to reinforce the interpersonal basis of values. Daily life is more often constructed by a method akin to showing than telling. But while conferring on the novel its noted strength of realism, the narrative also continuously places it in the larger context through fine metaphorical allusion, a double-sided technique realised with seeming ease in Shepherd's writing. In the craft of her prose we can see the thematic shift of story towards discourse: the subjective responses of characters, in all their extension or restriction, shapes the value of factual material. For example, in a scene describing young Martha's first encounter with the Northern Lights, her father, the laconic Geordie, struggles to meet her wonder with a rhyme learned in childhood about the boundaries of Scotland, his linguistic limitation leading to the interpenetration of factual knowledge and universal mystery. Gazing upon the night illumination,

> The vast north was sheeted in light; low down and black, twisted firs, gnarled, shrunken, edged the enormous heaven. The Merry Dancers were out.

> A shudder ran over Martha. Something inside her grew and grew till she felt as enormous as the sky. She gulped the night air; and at the same time made a convulsive little movement against her father. She was not afraid: but she felt so out of size and knowledge that she wanted to touch something ordinary.(p.18)
Expansive as MacDiarmid’s drunk man, extending to the heavens, Martha also seeks validation of the ordinary. The connection is reiterated when, attempting to recall the bit screed he knew as a laddie, Geordie can only get as far as:

"On the sooth o’ Scotland there’s England, on the north the Arory-Bory-Burnett’s lassie, the reid-heided ane - Alice; on the east - fat’s east o’?"

"The sea", said Martha, turning eastward, where a span of sea, too dull a glint under the Dancer’s light to catch an ignorant eye, notched their eastern view.

"Weel, aye, but it wisna the sea. It was something there was a hantle mair o’ than that".(p.19)

Eventually, as Geordie’s struggle with memory is resolved, Martha repeats the rhyme to herself:

Scotland is bounded on the south by England, on the east by the rising sun, on the north by the Arory-Bory-Alice, and on the west by Eternity.(p.20)

Comprehension and limitation, conceptualisation of infinity and factual information, the wonder of the lit sky and the wee lassie with the reid-heid, together suffuse the young girl’s experience, embodying the religious impulse attributed to art by her author.

Mundane dialogue is intimately bound up in the book’s theme, itself constructing part of the universe affirmed in Shepherd’s vision. The evaluative narrative voice is therefore more liable to effacement, an occasional intruder supplementing the epiphanic revelations which signal the flow between inner life and otherness. As Franz Stanzel affirms in questioning the distinction between telling and showing, between objective narration and subjective revelation, many modern authors show a preference for narratives in which

the agent of transmission has most of the attribution of a teller-character, but occasionally acts as though he [sic] were a reflector-character.228

Discourse by characters and by narrator comes to perform both tasks in Shepherd’s novel. This weakens the distinction of story and discourse, as becomes apparent in Martha’s development.

As Martha’s story becomes the sum of the influential discourses in her life, so narrative commentary reflects rather than judges her subjective position. When the wee lassie performs her dance for Aunt Josephine, it appears little more than a solemn series of ungainly hops. An intelligent observer might have been hard put to it to discover the rhythm to which she moved. A loving observer would have understood that even the worlds in their treading of the sky may sometimes move ungracefully. A young undisciplined star or so, with too much spirit for all its mastery of form [...] Aunt Josephine was a loving observer. She had never heard of cosmic measures, but she knew quite well that the force that urged the child to dance was the same that moved the sun in heaven and all the stars.(p.9)

Again the balance between intuitive and factual knowledge is struck. And here is the child, viewed between herself, her aunt and her narrator, moving in cosmic conjunction, energy without form, a chaos in tackety boots. "Lovely, ma dear, just lovely", Josephine tells her, intuiting beyond the mere act.

Where Willa Muir provided her heroine Elise with the means to construct her own discourse within story, Shepherd in this instance constructs character out of the three discourses of narrator, Josephine on one level of insight, and Martha on another. And as the perceptions of the characters occupy much of the story space, and are liable to alter, so the sum of discourses, in story and in narrative slant, begins to displace "objective" sources of truth in the novel, as Diagram 10 represents (see over). Martha contains her own I.C., her own story and discourse within story, but she is also constructed by the interaction with others, in this instance the major early influence of Aunt Josephine, whose example, injunctions and energy kindle life into Martha the child, inspire the adolescent, and engender mutuality in their adult relationship. Closed individuality is mediated by such interdependency. Individuals, by their daily contact, shade into one another’s personal discourse, and not always for the good. This is especially pertinent to Martha’s confused emotions towards Luke. From "dreaming passionately of knowing all there was to know in the universe"(p.4), Martha will end the story in the realisation that "life was stranger than they [she and Luke] had supposed".(p.210)
Diagram Ten: The Quarry Wood.

J: Area representing Aunt Josephine.
M: Area representing Martha.
IC.2: Imagined Corners 2.

Characters construct their own discourse/story, represented here as previously in the IC. circle of diagram 9. Additionally, Martha in this diagram constructs her selfhood by the interaction of her personal discourse/story with that of Aunt Josephine. From these interactions personal identities arise, confirming the shared basis of individual identity. In keeping with this, the space of narrative is shared by the subjectivities it depicts.

But the depiction of her changing mental states while sacrificing her self for love of Luke are the novel's most impressive realisation of a world changing with the varying perspective of her eye. The grandeur of Martha's exalted state is portrayed by means of lengthy passages in which the lyricism seen in *A Pass* is more judiciously applied. The prose radiates with Martha's sense of joy. Though featuring prolonged shifts to free indirect speech, the mixture of third and first person forms does not generally separate character from a detached external standard by which the reader is permitted to judge her. Instead, the report of joy carries across the third and first person vehicles, the former endorsing the latter, creating an irresistible momentum which colours large tracts of the story itself, as when Martha first fully realises that she is in love:

Reason told her that there should be black depths of horror in the knowledge, but all she could feel was the wild glad exultancy, the sureness of a dweller in the hills who has come home. One loves - the books had taught her, though she had given the theme but little
attention - as one must, perhaps against one's will and inclination: but she, sucked under without awareness, had loved the greatest man she knew. Judgement approved. She counted herself among the blest. Besides, this secret and impossible love had a wild sweetness, flavoured and heady, luscious upon the palate, a draught for the gods. It was eternal, set beyond the shadow of alteration in an ideal sphere, one of the concentric spheres of Paradise. It would satisfy her eternally. There was nothing possessive in her love; or rather she possessed already all that she desired in him - those far shining, terribly intimate moments of spiritual communion.

She thought that she would love Luke forever with hidden and delectable love. (p.102)

Rich metaphor marks the emotional heightening of Martha’s free indirect speech, again showing rather than telling her inner tone. But also, though the narrative features demarcating markers between character and narrator, "She thought that she would love [...]", it is far less certain where the two are distinguished.

Anne Banfield writes about the convergence of character selves and narrator selves, what she calls the "dual voice" theory. This corresponds to the newly sophisticated model of narrator and heroine relationships in the third way, the basis of the resolution of story into discourse. In Banfield’s words, this dual voice theory of represented thought consists of sentences exhibiting
an intertwining of objective statement and subjective statement, of narratorial account, and free indirect speech.229

The narrator becomes an aspect of the character, or at least so confuses the distinction that in a given piece of text both occupy it. Banfield illustrates the point with a quotation from Henry James:

She had conceived her first passion, and the object of it was her Governess. It hadn’t been put to her, and she couldn’t, at any rate, didn’t, put it to herself, that she liked Miss Overmore better than she liked Papa, but it would have sustained her under such an imputation to feel herself able to reply that Papa too liked Miss

Overmore exactly as much. He had particularly told her so. Besides, she could easily see it.\textsuperscript{230}

The point of view is clearly Maisie’s, Banfield notes, but the language is elaborately Jamesian:

with the single exception of the word “papa”, not a single phrase corresponds to the child’s idiom.\textsuperscript{(Banfield,pp.62-3)}

Crucially however, the sentence cannot contain a self distinct from the character.\textsuperscript{(p.63)} So with this passage: who speaks the following words?

There was nothing possessive in her [Martha’s] love; or rather she possessed already all that she desired in him in those far-shining, terribly intimate moments of spiritual consciousness.

Rich emotional diction mixes with qualifying, evaluating language which seems to originate from a perspective outside of Martha’s immediate emotions. Free indirect speech cannot be said to fully account for the content of the sentence, yet there is no self separate from the intense experience of the character. This follows on from the conclusion reached by Stanzel, and corresponds stylistically and thematically to the operation being carried out by Shepherd in \textit{The Quarry Wood}.

Narrative in effect becomes a space shared by narrator and heroine, who in turn is contiguous with Josephine. Its imagery of loss and renewal, and of the ascent to paradise, affirms the model of the religious impulse flowing out of the fundamental emotional rhythm of estrangement and return. With the narrative occupying the heroine’s consciousness, her mind revealed rather than reported, this aspect of Shepherd’s prose surpasses the inner portrayal of Chris in Grassic Gibbon’s \textit{Sunset Song}. Compare the subjective intensity above with this extract from Grassic Gibbon, at the funeral of Chris’s father:

Somebody chaved at her hand then, it was the grave-digger, he was gentle and strangely kind, and she looked down and couldn’t see, for now she was crying, she hadn’t thought she would ever cry for her father, but she hadn’t known, she hadn’t known this thing that was happening to him! She found herself praying then, blind with tears in the rain, lowering the cord with the hand of the grave-digger over hers, the coffin dirling below the spears of rain.

\textit{Father, father, I didn’t know! Oh father, I didn’t KNOW!}\textsuperscript{231}


\textsuperscript{231}Grassic Gibbon, Lewis, \textit{A Scots Quair}, p.95.
A moving passage in a great novel undoubtedly, yet one in which emotion is evoked via external perception. Chris’s grief is revealed to the reader by the reporting of her thoughts consecutively, rising to the emotional pitch of her free indirect speech in the final sentence. Chris’s mind, her thoughts and emotions, tend to proceed in sequence, rather than as one, her language never so deeply suffused with emotional colouring and intensity. The narrative perspective remains external and logical, the world of pain distinct from the world of the narrator. In the formal contiguity of Shepherd’s narrator and heroine during her periods of emotional intensity, and between story and discourse, the narrative is the world inhabited by Martha.

Martha’s subjectivity is at odds with what we have already learned of Luke’s character and seen of his conduct, so we have two competing and contradictory perspectives. It is by the narrator’s attitude to Luke, rather than to Martha, that we judge Martha’s emotional status when in love, but, occupying lengthy periods of narrative, her subjective views lend an uncertainty to the progress of the story; what happens does not depend on matters of simple and objective fact. Story extends to encompass the discourses by which characters operate, existing as evolving states of mind in varying combinations, creating different kinds of world out of the same incidents, in the most ordinary of circumstances.

But the narrator in The Quarry Wood does not entirely relinquish her elevated stance over proceedings. The implication of error is found discreetly in the movement of Martha’s private metaphors from those of fluidity to the image of fixity, and most importantly for the structure of the book, the narrator’s refutation of Martha’s belief in her emotional state is conveyed by occasional return to formal distinction and critical comment at the end of such a passage, as when in this case her free indirect speech concludes:

it was a consummation, the final fusion of their spirits in a crystal
that would keep forever its own exquisite shape, timelessly itself,
to be followed by the narrator’s "but some crystals founder in some fires". (p.102)

Critically, as far as the morality and craft of the book go, the incident of the kiss in the wood is treated to the kind of factual clarity I have argued is otherwise mediated, partially or fully, by the discourses of narrative. Specifically distinguishing between what Martha feels and what takes place, the scene shares emotional heightening with narrative comment:

Her whole being cried, "Take me, take me". But she stood so still, so poised, that it did not occur to him that she was offering
herself. After a while he stooped and kissed her on the lips. There was no passion in the kiss. It was grave, a reluctance, diffident and abashed, as of a worshipper who trembles lest his offering pollute the shrine. But the flame that burned within herself was fierce enough to transfigure the kiss. It seemed to blaze upon her lips and run like fire through all her body [...] Martha did not perceive that she had not had her desire.

Subjective experience of both participants is revealed here, but objective fact holds sway. The author in this moment resembles her Edwardian predecessors, studiously avoiding exposing her heroine to the charge of immorality which would still be applicable to sexual acts out of wedlock. Martha may own sexual passion, but it’s still too much to allow her to indulge it in illicit liaisons. The distinction marks the limit of *The Quarry Wood* in transmuting story into discourse. Inner and external worlds are detached from one another and the fact is made known to the reader, before the plot goes on to deal with the communal wisdom which sees things differently. The relation of Martha to the child she is accused of bearing reflects her growth into communal meaning; a meaning validated by the storytelling role she adopts and transmits to the infant, Robin. Their shared story is the discourse of interdependency, but with the potential of the female to determine in part the values of their social story.

Open and fluid, the community of persons, for all its possibilities, is still circumscribed by the values of society, still subject to the influence of inimical doctrines. The community imposes ideologically informed, socially constructed discourses onto its members, despite and at times because of their protestations, and human imperfectibility continues to be manipulated into the polarisation of women into angels or whores. Martha’s paradoxical power, to pass on the open, elemental value of her culture, while remaining confined within patriarchal mores, is the novel’s feminist undercurrent, with the heroine both unable, and importantly, disinclined to withdraw from the world of action. *The Quarry Wood*, then, constructs social story out of personal and communal discourses, with one eye firmly on the dangers inherent in exposure to dominant ideologies. This theme is explored further in Shepherd’s greatest novel, *The Weatherhouse*, where communal discourse effaces individual ambitions.
TRUTH, RECONCILIATION, AND THE SOCIETY OF WOMEN:
THE WEATHERHOUSE

Islands are united by the bottom of the sea
(Nan Shepherd)

In this novel discourse determines belief, truth will not be fixed. Women without men enact practicality above abstraction, reconciliation rather than isolation. The survivors of war must adapt, extend or continue to destroy the parameters of the human community. Roderick Watson again provides the introductory essay for the Canongate edition of the novel, commenting rightly that it is by far her most complex and subtle achievement, that there are no villains or heroes,

and what we are left with is a vision of mortal existence and human reconciliation which is transcendent, liberating, and even frightening at times. (p.vii)

As he says, the plot may be minimal, but its human implications are vast. The challenge of an interactive model of identity is greatest in its story of delusion, deceit and the fallacy of objective value. Transcendence is attained either collectively or not at all, liberation found in spontaneous objectivity, a goal requiring radical adjustment of the concept of truth and of selfhood. The central issues raised in the tale of Garry Forbes and his quest to clear his friend's reputation are the status of truth; the optimum terms for human relationships; and the nature of individuality in the human community.

The Truth, The Whole Truth, And The Abstract Truth

Abstract truths, the lesson encapsulated in personalism, cannot constitute whole truth, rather their preference for cognition over action reflects a degree of withdrawal from the real plane of human relations. Whole truth must not be confused with absolute truth, which does not exist, and whole truth is only and exclusively attained through the intersection of whole persons. Garry Forbes

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233 Shepherd, Nan, In The Cairngorms, frontispiece.

234 Watson, Roderick, ""...To Get Leave To Live"", p.214.
commits the error of abstraction, and in his failure to reach out into action, dramatises the polarity that precludes a relational via media.

Truth for Garry is a single, clear-cut entity, objectively verifiable, a matter of fact. On his return from the war, a damaged, forlorn man, he imagines schemes to save civilisation, like Tommy Martin in Descent From The Cross, and bases them on the same premise, namely that his own personal experience is a sufficient instrument for universal comprehension. Unlike Tommy, Garry’s ideas express his prevailing interest in mechanical technology, the building blocks of civilisation. To many he is one of those “confounded Scotch engineers”. (p.1) Failing to grasp that he is merely projecting his emotional status onto the external environment, Garry perceives civilisation in terms of abstraction: it will be a “very different Britain before we’re done with it”, he opines to his fiancee Lindsay, predicting the replenishment of the spirit by the reconstruction of social infrastructure. (p.84) Emotional life is likewise abstracted into spatial order. In his encounter with the deranged Louie Morgan, Garry is enraged by the big lie of her engagement to his old friend David Grey, killed in the war: “the claim was a lie, and must be exposed as such”. (p.66) The simple certainty of fact appears to be Garry’s life-belt as he drifts in post-traumatic confusion, but he proceeds to impose on experience the polar extremes of isolation or dissolution. In his dealings with Louie Garry merely inverts his war-zone experience, in which he underwent the same dissolution as Louie suffers chronically. Couched in graphic clarity, he is overcome in the trench by illness and the squalor of death, attempting but failing to save a wounded comrade:

the body canted over, a shapeless rigid mass, and he [Garry] saw
the glaring eyes, the open mouth out of which slime was oozing
[...] Rain fell, sullen single drops, that burrowed into the surface
of the slime and sent oily purplish bubbles floating among the ends
of branch that were not submerged. (p.54)

In his delirium and distress, Garry confuses himself with the dead man, inverting his general sense of the violation of life into specific self-reference:

Come out, you there. Myself. That’s me. That’s me. I thrust
him in - I am rescuing myself. (p.54)

The middle way is precluded, life and primal experience projected onto the entire world, the self alone or everyone, an island or an ocean. Indeed Garry, in relenting from his anger at being treated charitably while in hospital, allows himself to be pitied, believing himself to "meet other people half-way", when in fact prolonging his delusion. (p.55) Maintaining the artificial distinction on which
charity is founded, provider/recipient in clear demarcation, he merely opts for the other side of the same coin. Louie’s mental confusion is equally the dissolution of self masquerading as the transcendent one, performing her fantasies of success and social status in plays at her home or in the woods. In keeping with this scheme, Garry reveals that it is the space between the extremes that terrifies him.

Putting words to his emotions, he thinks:

   It wasn’t the war that was big, it was being alive in a world where wars happened - that was to say, in a world where there were other people, divinely different from oneself; whole Kingdoms of Heaven, clamouring to be taken by violence and loved in spite of themselves. No nurse could know that. (p. 55)

Garry’s wonder at discovering his self in the universe stops short on meeting the human otherness of his nurse. Returning to Knapperley, to his aunt’s house, Garry proceeds to impose his notion of order as best he can, dominating others in compensation for his smallness. Not only is his truth not everyone’s truth, it is not really his either, and in progressing beyond it, he learns the variability of belief by which the community functions. This lesson is encapsulated in the village-speak by which Garry is identified in the story’s opening paragraphs:

   You would need Garry Forbes to you. It is a local way of telling your man he is a liar. And when they deride you, scoffing at your lack of common sense, Hine up on the head of the house like Garry Forbes and his twa fools, is the accepted phrase. (p. 1)

Odd, folksy phrases, parochial if you like, but expressing ridicule of Garry’s isolationist bent, and paradoxically, the community’s multi-faceted wisdom: you would be put straight by the man who knows no truth, and it is a fool who climbs up and beyond, to nowhere. Wry, inclusive comments on the extremes to which the essentialist self may distort relations in the pursuit of its own truth, and yet simultaneously approving the life-affirming spirit of Garry’s acts. They enact the shared space of narrative and character discourses, this time merging the collective view of the community with the voice of the narrator. Becoming a local legend in the village speak, the price for Garry of his conduct is the indignity of losing his grand self-image. But it is not the ostracism he seeks to inflict on the hapless Louie, left more damaged than ever, after he has done with her, more unable than ever to participate in the symbolic order.

Claiming betrothal to David Grey when David can’t confirm or deny it seems scarcely at issue in the minds of those involved. The meaning behind the fact, how to interpret it, is the truth each is concerned with. Louie has indeed taken
the engagement ring without permission from the Grey family home, after David’s death. The disparity between Louie’s version and this physical action marks the lack of balance between inner and external realities for her, the same alternation between dissolution and subject-self as exhibited by Garry. Her assertion that nevertheless she and David had an understanding betokens the odd bonds between individuals but, explaining her side of the story to Garry, she asserts:

You think you knew David - you didn’t know my David. You think I wasn’t good enough for him. Perhaps I was too good for him. There was a side to him you didn’t know. I developed it. I created him. My own part of him. You can’t take it from me. You didn’t know how much we were to each other in those last months before he died. (p.100)

This represents Louie’s projection of her own inner life onto David, not mutuality. She mistakes the part of him that is created by her discourse for the whole of him. In response to Garry’s admission that this is "a morality more involved" than he is used to, Louie draws a false distinction between morality and truth, postulating the latter as an absolute:

Morality is always involved. Only truth is clear and one. But we never see it. That’s why we must live by morality. (p.101)

Despite recognising the relativism of human values, Louie severs her connection with them by her preference for morality, an abstract system overlaying the possibility for real relations (its expedient variability in human relations identified by Willa Muir). Condemned to retain such a vision inside her head, Louie cannot extend it into spontaneous objectivity. Hers, like all the psychotic portrayals we have seen in the parallel agenda, is the lapse into untenability implied in postmodernism, the polarised privatisation of experience. In the same mode as Louie, Ellen Falconer inhabits a world of dreams, of inner visions, the inability to make inner symbol dynamic, to make contact with reality. Dreamers and builders, the two eccentric women, and Garry and his twa fools, alike evade interaction, the former journeying inward to nowhere, the latter climbing ever higher and adrift from the only realm of meaning, found among the mundane reality below.

The community does tolerate their strange antics, however. Louie, like Garry, is included in its parameters. "There’s Louie Morgan, now", affirms Mrs. Hunter, "queer you must allow she is, but bad she couldna be". (p.34) Persons in relation reject such privatisation, preferring the communal. In the climactic village concert party, Ellen, convinced she is finally participating in reality, humiliates Louie,
thereby confirming the maladaption of the two women to social action. John Grey leaps to forestall Louie's predicament, and Garry demonstrates his acquired appreciation of the relativistic vision, acting in Louie's defence. While for Lindsay, growth leads to this vision too. Articulating her imaginative fears in the by now familiar sentiment "life's so terribly strange, isn't it?" (p.132), Lindsay ends the novel in balance with herself and the world. Discovering that her memory of Louie having a pet dog in her youth is illusory, she ponders the tricks of memory:

The dog, bounding among the pines, had in her memory the compelling insistence of imaginative art. He was a symbol of swiftness, the divine joy of motion. But Lindsay preferred reality to symbol. (p.199)

Illustrating the queer way of truth, the narrative draws inner symbol out into contact with otherness, the refusal of the extreme of private subjectivity. The reconciliation with diversity is the lesson offered to Garry by the fluid community he inhabits, its depiction leading to the fullest supplanting of story by discourse.

**Reconciliation: Story Becomes Discourse**

With a structure alluding to Greek drama, sections labelled from "Prologue", to "Epilogue", and "The Drama" with its final chapter headed "Whom The Gods Destroy", level 1 narrative slant alludes to the timeless context of civilisation in which classicism places human character. Unlike Brown's *The House With The Green Shutters*, there is no bitter reversal in the irony of this allusion. It simply enforces the non-linear interconnection of persons. Imagery of light and earth dramatise action within its elemental scale, as when Lindsay rushes out of the house, to find:

The night astonished her, so huge it was. She had the sense of escaping from the lit room into light itself. Light was everywhere: it gleamed from the whole surface of the earth, the moon poured it to the farthest quarters of heaven, round a third of the horizon the sea shimmered [...] Her identity vanished. She was lost in light and space. (p.29)

In like manner Garry will contemplate the layers of history:

now the darkness, to his accustomed eyes, was no longer a covering, but a quality of what he looked upon. Waste land and the fields, in common with the arch of sky, and now a grandeur
unsuspected in the day. Light showed them as they were at a moment of time, but the dark revealed their timeless attributes, reducing the particular to accident and hinting at a sublimer truth than the eye could distinguish. (p.57)

Thus does he comprehend that no fixed perimeter can be drawn around human experience, encompassing some while excluding others, in imagery akin to that used by Woolf in *To The Lighthouse*.

The tragedy of Ellen Falconer’s brief marriage, the narrator informs us, "lay in the clash between her story and the truth". (p.9) The multi-faceted, queer truth celebrated by the novel is the sum of its participants’ stories, or in narrative terms, discourses. This truth is portrayed through the novel’s stylistic accommodation of the tensions that inhabit human relations, the sharing of story space by the personal discourses of various reflector-characters, whose combination with the narrator’s own contribution parodies omniscience in its construction of village life. The linear progression of story is assembled by the personal histories of the range of characters, whose intersecting moments convey along with universal resonances and the baggage of past, present and ongoing consciousnesses. In this the narrative technique finds echoes in another female modernist, Katherine Mansfield, whose short stories manifest the subjective nature of action in reality. In the extended short story "At The Bay" Mansfield moves among a large cast whose inner thoughts monopolise most of narrative, with no great continuity in plot terms. Cutting back and forward in time, Linda Burnell contemplates her marriage to the unpopular Stanley, recalling first seeing him while sitting with her father on the verandah of their house:

But just then a very broad young man with bright ginger hair walked slowly past their house, and slowly, solemnly even, uncovered. Linda’s father pulled her ear teasingly, in the way he had.

"Linny’s beau", he whispered.

"Oh, papa, fancy being married to Stanley Burnell !".

Well, she was married to him. And what was more she loved him. Not the Stanley whom everyone saw, not the everyday one; but a timid, sensitive, innocent Stanley who knelt down every night to say his prayers, and who longed to be good [...] But the trouble was - here Linda felt almost inclined to laugh, though Heaven
knows it was no laughing matter - she saw her Stanley so seldom.²³⁵

Step forward the real Stanley Burnell. Who is the real man within Stanley, the innocent husband or the unpopular trouble-maker? There is no essence of Stanley, no fixed terms for common evaluation of him, and no guarantee for Linda that her Stanley will be manifest in the man who is her husband at a given time. Narrative effaces not only the plot, but the narrator's voice, replacing it with the disparate perspectives of the characters who inhabit the bay. Recognition of this absence, this lack of an absolute, abstract source of value, is Garry's first stage of reconciliation with his fellow humanity at Knapperley:

Garry felt for a moment as though he had ceased to live at the point in time where all his experience had hitherto been amassed. (p. 57)

His sense of identity is decentred. And as characters are introduced we find the facts of their interaction surrounded by and effaced for periods by their personal histories. Or at least as perceived by each other. Gossiping about Francie and his wife who brought her black-eyed bairns to their wedding, Kate tells an indignant Lindsay that they were engaged for over twenty years:

"I don't particularly want to hear about it, Katie."
"But why", said Kate, "it's an entertaining tale."
And she began to relate it.

Francie was son to old Jeames Ferguson, who had helped to make the Weatherhouse; and Francie's taking of a wife had been a seven days' speak in Fetter-Rothnie. He had been betrothed for two and twenty years. All the countryside knew of the betrothal, but that it should end in marriage was a surprise for which the gossips were not prepared. A joke, too. A better joke, as it turned out, than they had anticipated.

The two and twenty years waiting were due to Francie's brother Weelum. Weelum in boyhood had discovered an astounding aptitude for craftsmanship [...] (pp. 21-2)

And so on for four pages in which we learn the intricate dynamics out of which the present moment in the story has grown. The present in the story exists merely at the edge of the participants' personal experience, their point of material contact perceived like the tip of an iceberg projecting out of the ocean, the latest historical

element in a nexus of private and shared memories flowing into each other among
the waves, which inform the moment, expressing their selfhood as each has
evolved up to the present (Diagram 11).

Diagram Eleven: The Weatherhouse.

I.C.3: Imagined Corners 3. A range of characters in the village
construct the novel's story (S) through the interaction of their
discourses, as in I.C.2. A communal discourse arises,
without abolishing personal I.C.,
but the interaction of these
discourses constitutes the bulk of
the narrative. Thus the encircling
territory of I.C.3. No character
predominates as a conventional
protagonist, and this sharing of
space, material and metaphysical,
is Garry Forbes's new vision of
human relations.

Narrative embodies the colliding, merging, and reforming of discourses, as the
sum of subjectivities, those of characters and narrator, inner and social, which
together assemble their many-sided, garrulous consen sus.

This is not a utopia, of course, but involves conflict and struggle. Individuals
impose on one another their personal discourses, and a group discourse emerges
out of them, to the dismay of those who disagree with the communal verdict. It
is a verdict open to demur, in the everyday scheme of village life, history
rendered permanently fluid, always susceptible to a new slant. Mediated from its
absolute status, truth is not the ascendant urge to power, but the widest possible
agreement between individual discourses, inner experiences and external events,
a kind of rambling, casual consensus.
A range of characters, major and minor, between them construct a communal story out of their intersecting discourses, in which individuals are constructed from multiple viewpoints, and simultaneously uphold or resist the labels they are given. The ongoing product of these interacting I.C.s constitutes a new level of discourse, represented as I.C.2, the communal corners, imagined and re-imagined. Narrative comprises much of this interaction, its story becoming the group discourse, enacting its fluid approximation of "truth", as opposed to abstract morality; not the solidity of fact, but the cumulative process of collective storytelling. "Granny’s very amusing when she begins with old tales", Kate concludes to Lindsay, having brought her up to date, about which Lindsay retorts: "I don’t like old tales. Nor this new one either". (p.24) But subjectivity shapes the past, the past shapes the present, and this new tale is the latest stage in the fluid process by which persons in relation define themselves. Such is the wisdom awaiting discovery by Lindsay. Like Martha before her and Jenny after, she will go on to immerse herself in local news and chit-chat by the end of the novel, a sign of her growth to wisdom. Reconciliation between individuals is their accession to the communal way; the communal story is the truth, located not in single facts. Reflector-characters, and a reflector-narrator, refute the tradition of Objectivity. Narrative is the forum in which discourses construct the story of Fetter-Rothnie, uniting individual islands in the flowing sea of past and private existence:

Life pulsed in the clods of earth that the ploughshares were breaking, in the shares, the men. Substance, no matter what its form, was rare and fine.

The moment of perception passed. He [Garry] had learned all that in college. But only now it had become real. Every substance had its own secret nature, exquisite, mysterious, Twice already this country sweeping out before him had ceased to be the agglomeration of woods, fields, roads, farms; mysterious as a star at dusk, with the same ease and thoroughness, had become visible as an entity: once when he had seen it taking form from the dark, solid, crass, mere bulk; once irradiated by the light until its substance all but vanished. Now, in the cold April dawn, he saw it neither crass nor rare, but both in one. (pp.175-6)

The third way is epitomised in this moment, symbolist language and the devices of narrative form together expressing its communal ideal in the merging of elements from their previously polarised relations in Garry’s mind.
As story is relinquished to the personal and collective discourses of its cast the result is, as we saw above, story-telling by characters which seems to occupy the same space as their narrator. Since this entails much disagreement, and variation of personal view among those constructing story, story is not reliable; nor is its fallibility treated ironically by a correcting narrator. Thus, the sum of discourses enacts a parody of narrative control, refusing the options of fact or falsehood, locating itself in the interstices, where the mysteries of inner experience converge in a form that undermines the Romantic oppositions between inner and external worlds, and personal and group values, found in the likes of Eliot, and Lawrence. This places Carswell to some extent, Muir and especially Shepherd, in the modernist mould of Woolf and Mansfield. They share the use of symbolism to validate communal life rather than repudiate it, in a positive use of the empty centre identified in history and identity, which for many boded only "the horror". Being allowed terms for social participation is the essence of Shepherd’s third way, her ideal means of living. What does this imply about the feminism so specific in the writing of Willa Muir?

**Personal Space And The Society Of Women**

While it would be inappropriate to describe the world of *The Weatherhouse* as female, since this would be to impose just the kind of binary opposition on it we have assiduously rejected, it is no coincidence that the novel draws its theme out of a community in which the male population which would usually have charge of social affairs is absent. Lost in war or still fighting it, their traditional social forms are suspended, individuals’ allegiance to abstract values reduced. Against the stark backdrop of the war, the women of the Craigmyle family, at home in the weatherhouse, suggestive of exposure to the full range of life, share the living space of a house designed to a woman’s preference. A month after her husband’s death, Lang Leeb had moved into Andra Findlater’s place:

> But Leeb knew what she was doing. She took the cottages and joined them. Andra’s problem was, after all, easy enough to solve. She had money: a useful adjunct to brains. She knocked out the partition of Andra’s original home and made of it a long living-room with a glass door to the garden; and between the two cottages, with the girls’ old bedroom for corridor, she built a quaint irregular hexagon, with an upper storey that contained one plain bedroom and one that was all corners and windows [...] (p.5)
With the repetition of "she" in the subject position followed by an active verb, the sentence firmly asserts the centrality of women; the reconstruction of the cottages itself unites two separate entities in a shared, enlarged space. Of her dearly departed husband, Leeb is dismissive: "He was a moral man - I can say no more". (p. 6) When used by Louie, the term "moral" confirmed her disconnection from life. Applied to distinguish between the deceased and his wife's current dynamism, it implies his abstraction from, and therefore irrelevance to, the community life now further enhanced by Leeb in her home.

As the family takes up residence in the new house, its members enact a microcosm of the village around them, an extended rather than nuclear family, sharing their lives in argument rather than possessing them in withdrawal. If the arrangements in the weatherhouse represent the third way, then to share betokens the relinquishing of the autonomous self, but to relinquish all possession is to dissolve the self. Instead, between the women in residence each retains private space, a room of one's own. The goings-on of the household reflect just this tension between belonging and isolation, with the dreamy detachment of Ellen echoed in her routine withdrawal to her remote bedroom.

In this world of women, the magnificent presence of Barbara (Bawbie) Paterson commands attention. This novel's equivalent of the elemental characters seen previously, Bawbie strides through the landscape, lifts Lindsay over dykes, and is thoroughly at home in the natural world. Overcoming her fear of Bawbie, Lindsay is exhilarated:

> The sea was, after all, not so very wide; and earth, primitive, shapeless, intractable (as exemplified in Miss Barbara), was every where about one, and could be ignored. Roots, if one thought of it, must grow somewhere - in the customary earth. (p. 161)

Complementing the stylistic realisation of the third way, this elementalism among characters in each of the novels unites self, nature and other, the dramatic embodiment of persons in relation. While for Lindsay John Grey represents the benignant earth, Bawbie is its "coarser, crueller aspect". (p. 71) Neither "masculine" nor "feminine", "She's herself". (p. 133) Implicit in this is that the realisation of spontaneous objectivity in proper personhood is precluded by the social delineation of gender distinctions.

It is significant that the most explicit allusion to the war in the novel should issue from Bawbie's lips, an allusion asserting the themes of this discussion and the
failure of the patriarchal way. Likening Garry's struggle up on the roof to a war, Bawbie says:

"There's wounds [...] and growths and mutilations, bits rugged off and bits clapped on to the body of man that is made in the image of his Maker. Them and their war up there" - she nodded upwards to where her nephew was at work - "they mutilate their thousands, they chop off heads and hands and fingers, they could take Johnny's cranny from him, but could they make another Johnny? What's the use of war, tell me that. You're making tinklers right enough, I'll grant you. They'll be all upon the roads, them that wants their legs and them that wants their wits and them that wants a finger and a toe, like Johnny. But ach! For all your shooting and your hacking, Johnny's beyond you. Your war won't make him. (p. 162)

Broken or incomplete, them that wants their legs are the people who would be retained within community, and are scattered to the winds by war. This image of fragmentation of body and community is the state of civilisation brought about by the war, in response to which Shepherd arrays her vision. Replying to "this novel point of view upon the war", Lindsay opines that "wounding people isn't all that the war does", to be cut decisively off:

Fient a thing does the war do that I can see but provide you tramps to tramp the roads. Wounds and mutilations - that's what a war's for and that's what it fabricates. (p. 162)

Competing discourses these may be, but there is no doubting the one which carries weight in the narrative. Affirming the sanctity of life and the ascendancy of the real over the abstract, an alternative to the prevailing social organisation is lodged in Shepherd's finest novel. In the third way, the polarity characteristic of patriarchal society is resisted in the society of women, imagery of light and dark weaves its new shade. Feminist, pluralist, sympathiser with human frailty, with its dependencies and its potential to do harm, the author states with force the pattern that has destroyed so much of civilisation, and the pattern she believes should replace it. Artist as opposed to politician, philosopher rather than leader, Shepherd, like many a democratic thinker, created her work a long way from sources of secular, material power in her society. That she, along with the rest of her generation of women, enjoyed slight and qualified progress towards basic equality in accordance with civilised principles, must be taken into account when assessing from a distance the careers of each of the writers studied. The real world enjoined by the authors remained, and remains, one in which women are
subject to inimical forces which circumscribe personal potential and withhold legal and cultural equality. That the problems portrayed by Shepherd in the 1930s were somehow different but the same as those faced by authors writing while Victoria was still on the throne, betokens the dubious nature of progress when that progress is conferred by the oppressor rather than taken by the oppressed. Conclusions about this in relation to the present may benefit from comparison of the pattern of the eldest author’s career with that of the youngest.

CODA: DISPARATE ELEMENTS

Jacob, Shepherd, Belonging And Withdrawal

Having expounded this argument with regard to Shepherd’s novel, it is instructive to apply it to the writing of Violet Jacob, in whose career the withdrawal from prose into lyric poetry occurred alongside ageing and personal loss, and in which the parallel agenda moves full circle to review the linear chronology by which we have arrived at the present position. Similar features can be identified even in Jacob’s conventional writing at the turn of the century, and it is how these are prioritised that determines the sort of novel which results. For the writer, this may lead to the preference for simplifying material within more usual forms, as Jacob did, or to the seeming acceptance of outdatedness in the face of the new era, as with the Findlaters. Or it may result in the self-aware writing of the later women. Each of these authors deals with diversity and relatedness in human experience, the paradox which is the bedrock of their parallel agenda.

Shepherd’s poetry has received little recognition, and few would argue that it merits much. However, it shares with the better recalled lyrics of Mrs. Jacob an often lonely, wistful voice, bewailing emotional pain in an unkind universe. In the case of Jacob, prose preceded poetry as her preferred mode of writing, while Shepherd ceased to write seriously at all after her early success. "It just didn’t come to me any more", she said in 1976.236 The fruitful tension between disparate elements held by Jacob’s narratives gives way to her single voice, and as we reach the final stage of discussion, we can look again at the extent to which this feature of her narratives, and subsequent preference for short lyrics, occurring

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in the first decade of the century, are mirrored in parodic sophistication of the third way.

The process of shedding complicated functions in narrative carried Jacob from overloaded short stories to simpler ones, and from these to poetry. In each of the forms she wrote in, Jacob utilised progressively more economic techniques to go with a complex vision. But it is in the best of her novels that tension between narrative and lyrical conventions, and between myth and realism, are exploited, and that the characteristics of the third way in narrative are already, if tentatively, being worked into place.

We can see that simple issues within each genre give way to more complicated ones: Jacob’s fairy stories for children precede the less obvious moral world depicted in *Stories Told By The Miller*, intended for an older age group. In her short stories there is a marked development from the laborious and merely social comedies predominant in *The Fortune Hunters, And Other Stories*. Their conventional, interminable plots and over-populated casts give way to finer craft in *Tales Of My Own Country*, where short story potential is better realised in economy of effort. Narrative voice is further refined without being effaced in the later collection, *The Lum Hat, And Other Stories*, epiphanies taking place via structural metaphor, as in "The Fifty-Eight Wild Swans", where old Jimmie Strachan comprehends the purpose of his life when submitting to the desire to be among a flock of wild swans. In the title story, the narrative retains a fixed position in telling of the repressed consciousness of the central character, allowing the necessary insight to her mind while maintaining ironic commentary on her actions. In these stories the focus is on one individual, an inner life in conflict with outer reality, and who as a consequence suffers anxiety and sorrow. This is also the keynote of Jacob’s poetry, when it came to replace short stories as her major focus in the years after the First World War.

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239 Jacob, Violet, *The Lum Hat, And Other Stories: Last Tales Of Violet Jacob*, Edited By Ronald Garden (Aberdeen University Press, 1982).
In that body of poetry there is experimentation with rhymescheme and metre, and variation between narrative and lyric, often featuring adopted personae. In the best of this, in *Songs Of Angus*, she cultivated lyricism particularly evocative of emotional loss, often with discreet reference to the war.\(^{240}\) Her static, lonely voice is pre-eminent in this poetry, while at the same time narrative efforts are deployed in the ponderous family history, *The Lairds Of Dun*.\(^{241}\) Despite this separation, the voice of isolation constitutes one of the elements of the earlier novels too, and in these the less specialised development of lyric, myth, description and history, are bound together by a narrative which, as we have seen, fulfils the expectations of the sentimental novel, but also contains the seeds of parodic control. Jacob’s divided selves in narrative have their analogue in the division of her writing into lyric and official history, inner imagination and external reality sealed one from the other. It is precisely in the cultivation of the possibilities of combination of these elements that the parallel agenda arrives at its third way, but for each of its exponents in this study experience encourages their withdrawal into the single view and the curtailment of positive engagement with otherness.

So with Shepherd, her lyric poetry expressing the violation of excessive self-exposure, as in "Pardon":

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I did not dream you would forgive me thus
Oh God! that wrestling through the bitter night
Both holding fast, yet maimed, exhausted quite
And after, no beatitude for us
But hatred, shame, contempt, disgust, despair
Estrangement and unsanctified remorse
And black self-knowledge, eating like a curse
(In The Cairngorms, p.61)
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After the effort to reach otherness fails, as this poem expresses of a love lost, there is little room left for reconciliation. The tension of narrative which holds together diversity is a difficult act to sustain, and in the real conditions of women’s lives during the first half of this century there is no reason to expect other than that real circumscription might dictate the outcome of literary development. There followed no reconciliation of difference in the freedoms won


by two world wars. The careers of each of the authors reflected their social inequality in terms of publication or critical response, and in relation to domestic arrangements. The world remains hostage to ideology, and hostile to female emancipation still, as even the best known of contemporary writers, like Alison Kennedy or Janice Galloway, can readily attest.

**Prejudice Or Plurality**

For all that, the place of these authors in Scottish literature should be celebrated, especially that of Shepherd and Muir, as the literary realisation of a female-centred modernist vision of human organisation partaking of international concerns and techniques in association with Scottish philosophical ideas in response to the spirit of the post-war age. What does the model of the third way tell us about contemporary life?

Premised on the mediated model of individuality, it counsels against reliance on absolute or simple models of identity, individually or collectively, and implicates their concomitant enforcement via binary oppositions, which resolve under scrutiny into the metaphysics of ideology. However useful binary oppositional metaphysics may be, Scotland as a Western European nation suffering no direct, manifest oppression cannot afford casual recourse to its simplicities, which neither assert a tenable identity nor include the range of its population. Urging the construction of values out of action, not mere abstraction, the model of the third way warns against the denial of complexity and difference, of divergent interests and mutual needs. Its lessons are applicable to other literature and cultural discourses, revealing their structural and theoretical premises. It of course challenges progressive models of history. As we saw with the writing in this study, issues in the past often appear to have been "ahead of their time". Because the progressive reading of history posits a past less civilised than the present, implying evolution towards freedom, the fact that often the same issues were debated in the past as in the present leads to this confused category. This is true for the women's movement, many of whose victories seem frail, dependent on material advance and the preference of government, and requiring repetition in each new generation. The goals of the movement in the late twentieth century, for example protection under the law for women from the conduct of their spouses, are disappointingly similar to many of those sought by the Suffragists and portrayed in women's fiction then as now.
In literature we can assess the tradition of urban realism as it has continued in recent years, valorised as ever, committing the same simple oppositions as we saw before. Describing working-class life in the west of Scotland, Gordon Williams and Archie Hind in the 1960s enact two sides of the same model, revealing the unjust circumscription of potential, but depicting their protagonists as either nobly heroic in spirit despite social reality, as with Hind’s hero Mat (*The Dear Green Place*), or diminished and embittered by it, like Williams’s Dunky Logan (*From Scenes Like These*). The individual is vindicated or vilified, placed on a pedestal or cast into the pit, but individuality persists in being autonomous or dissolved. Polarity prevails, contiguity of persons is absent. William MacIivanney is Hind’s successor in these terms, his highly successful *The Big Man* upholding working-class individualism by means of a Romantic inversion verging on pastoral, as the present of the Thatcher years is blamed for the wrongs of post-industrial society and the consumer nexus, with personal dignity its antidote.

Kennedy and Galloway in contrast address experience as a necessary intersection of imagination and action, as part of a complex reality in which metaphysical gender ascription is a poor fit, admitting of no easy resolution. Galloway’s *The Trick Is To Keep Breathing* demands of the reader simultaneous presence and distance in comprehending a common experience in personal as well as factual terms. The narrative does not allow a simple stance in relation to story events, defying the reader to stand aloof from characters’ experiences. *Night Geometry And The Garscadden Trains* is a collection of Kennedy’s stories, each with its sub-theme of confusion in the inescapable common sphere of human relations. In each case the author undermines the boundary between reader and character, discourse and story. The positive development in fiction, in which these women belong, features Alasdair Gray and James Kelman, whose narratives

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incorporate a range of interior and shared experiences, all with the implicit invitation to the reader to participate in constructing a version of reality from partial perceptions and subjective responses. Their lack of a sense of social cohesion should not obscure the implicit interdependency of their characters, out of which positive human values have the potential to grow. Liz Lochhead, for a long time the token successful woman writer in Scotland, has done likewise for years in her monologues, whose parodic impulse defies traditional gender presumptions, for example *Bagpipe Muzak.* Merely the most successful of the current, and very diverse generation of writers, these are literary voices of modernity, of engagement, and of value in a new age Scotland.

The claim that Scottish culture contains something more egalitarian than others is often bandied around, but, lacking substance to back it up, populist assertions about this quality run the risk of being co-opted into a different programme as a means of manipulation, or of collapsing into Gifford’s "parody of the native". Witness on one hand, the popular press when advocating civic labourism as the natural avenue of Scottish communal expression; or in formal politics, observe the party which claims to represent "working-class" interests via labourism hoisting its masts declaring commitment to social justice while setting sail in the opposite direction, accommodating financial interests in the City of London, and in operation of what is now the largest, most centralised State bureaucracy in Europe, in Strathclyde Region. On the other hand we see recourse in television representation of Scottish life to the machismo of bar-room bonhomie, popular representations of working-class culture remaining replete with the spirit of *No Mean City*, a tendency in which writers like Williams and MacIvanney have at times been dangerously complicit. As serious debate strives to overcome the cliches sustained in mass culture, the popular press and T.V. continue to manifest cynical populism in exploiting the polarisation of intellectual/elitist versus popular/democratic values, reflecting their commitment to the far from value-free impulse of commodity production. Unable to muster the ammunition of mass circulation media, higher educational institutions will mount no resistance to this attribution until they democratise themselves in disavowal of the various forms of social exclusivity with which they are charged. The denial of the wider

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247 c.f. William MacIvanney’s recent contribution to Ajay Close’s articles on the myth of the hard man in *Scotland On Sunday*, and Gordon Williams’s Scottish policeman "Minty" in the 1970s Independent Television series *Hazel.*
population’s access to serious culture, at all levels of education, leaves the likes of Taggart or Rab C. Nesbitt to enact variations of a type that urges Scots to identify with low-class "ordinariness" in opposition to high-class pretension, failing to question the model that posits high against low, "proper" versus marginal culture.

Scots too often regard their manners, language and dress in like manner, the badges simultaneously of difference and inferiority. For example, a stylised highland dress was adopted by George IV after highland pacification was complete. Having been outlawed as long as it represented resistance to imposed rule, highland dress was now a symbol of unified interest between the highland soldier and his ruler, and so it has remained through Victorian "Balmorality", and several wars on behalf of the empire. Signalling in reality the ruling-class’s co-option of a beaten culture, highland dress was and remains a symbol of difference which upholds the terms of Scottish absorption within its dominant culture: the kilt is a skirt in more ways than mere fact. From caricature kilts to gestural class identification, Scots’ symbols of difference conceal divergent interests within, perhaps especially of leaders with their eyes on prizes elsewhere, and instead of accepting division as innate, we continue to shelter behind such specious symbols of national unity, defined in opposition to England. As an antidote in the present age, we need look no further than the vision expressed by Alasdair Gray of a national identity broad and loose enough to include the true diversity of peoples within its borders:

I believe every adult in a land should have equal say in how it is ruled so therefore belongs to it, however recently he or she arrived.\textsuperscript{248}

Avoiding the claims of totality, or unity, while asserting true plurality, is one thread connecting the parallel agenda with Gray.

More broadly, as the 1990s unfold, a new epoch is beginning in history. Forces which seek to uphold the triumph of capital are themselves riven with contradictions as national bureaucracies and corporate control constantly renegotiate their respective domains. The major economic powers of Japan, and to a lesser extent Germany, by supporting the cultural and political might of the U.S.A., heighten the paradox in the latter’s ideologies of individualism, at the

same time as a new binary opposition is sought to consolidate the uneasily aligning power bloc. Will the expanding European Community alter ideological rhetoric to democratise populations? Following its responses to the wars in the Arabian Gulf and Eastern Europe, and with its ever centralising bureaucracy and the recent side-stepping of the Danish referendum on monetary Union, breath should not be held in anticipation. With the Arab world prime candidate to replace Communism as the "official" enemy of the West, political dissent operates its own model of a via media intended to reveal the ideology behind the move.

In Scotland, rumblings of change this year proved more distant than many thought. But change will come, confronting us with the questions I raised in the opening sentences of this study. In the post-General election clamour surrounding the postponement of the new democratic world's delivery, we are subject to two separate but conflated binary principles on which we are expected to struggle for a new form of government. On one hand, England is Scotland's problem: we need new constitutional arrangements to get away from England, and all will be well among the Scottish nation; but on the other, the failure of the present system lies in its allowing the minority British bourgeois to dictate to its proletarian majority, the class politics whose place in Scottish mythology we discussed in part one. Retain the British state but give its power to the proletariat. "Us" and "them", reified in two forms: take your pick. Suspicions should be raised by the polarities lodged in the rhetoric. Labouring under their excessive simplifications leads to the glib conviction that the reality of life within Scotland is somehow simple, consistent, unified, all the traits that the third way challenges. Genuine self-scrutiny is evaded by reference to an enemy outside. In the stasis beneath such rhetoric, the old order is unchallenged, and the new world can't be born.

Self-criticism, not a specious unity in the face of illusory enemies, is what Scottish life needs for social and cultural progress to be made. The third way marks one potentially liberating voice in Scottish cultural identity as we approach the next millennium. Advocating equality of opportunity and rights for the female sex, the third way I have elaborated in this study is part of a larger context of pluralism, a parallel agenda which endorses the ascendancy of the person over the private individual, selfhood over subject-status, complexity over simplicity, openness over closure. The third way is the revelation of what has always been true, that history is concerned to deny, and that its exponents have implicitly grasped from their own experience, namely that human values can claim no transcendental source beyond human terms, and that they must then be judged by how much of the
human community they set out to include within their parameters, how they attempt communion with rather than denial of otherness. The third way promotes the aggrandisement of none and the marginalisation of none, in the fruitful tension of disparate elements.

Scottish society awaits political and institutional democracy, but the intellectual and philosophical basis is in place in such writing, submerged beneath dominant readings of history, literature and culture. Should Scottish thinkers, in educational institutes and beyond, attain the right to advance a Scottish model of Scottish cultural traditions, the egalitarianism and diversity espoused in the writings of Muir and Shepherd as novelists, Macmurray, Macquarrie and Laing in the area of philosophy, connected with the likes of Kennedy, Kelman, Kesson, Spark and Gray in the present, provide a start to the rediscovery of a serious Scottish democratic spirit. Will those with the power to choose, conform to models of exclusivity, or opt to accommodate the implicit plurality of this tradition. Will ivory towers give way to a weatherhouse; can we open the door?
APPENDIX 1: PLOT SUMMARIES

Summaries of the story-lines of the main novels studied in each chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

Violet Jacob, *Flemington* (1911)

Set during the 1745 rising, the hero Archie Flemington is a spy on behalf of the House of Hanover, embarking on a mission to uncover a Jacobite plot in Montrose, involving David Logie, the Lord Balnillo, and his brother James, a professional soldier. Insinuating his way into their household, Archie hides behind his profession as a portrait painter to cultivate a relationship with the brothers, passing on information gained to his mother, Lady Christian Flemington, via the local character, the crippled tramp Skirling Wattie.

Having received a wound on his arm from James while following him too closely one night, Archie finds himself drawn emotionally towards the man, and their growing friendship is confirmed by James's personal disclosures, and declaration of loyalty. Archie attempts to abort the mission following this, to his mother's fury. She gives him an ultimatum to continue or be disavowed by her: thrown into emotional turmoil, Archie can reach no resolution of his torn loyalties, between people and within his ideals.

In the midst of the successful Jacobite invasion at Montrose, James Logie realises Archie’s part in the counter-plan, and the two fight; Logie wins and goes on to follow the invading forces, while Archie is imprisoned; he escapes, to join up with Wattie, who, suspecting Archie may be a double agent, will intimate as such to his masters, after the Jacobite star declines. Archie finds himself having to trail the by now fugitive Logie across Scotland, and secretly helps his friend to avoid capture. Logie and his followers ambush the Government soldiers in Archie’s absence due to a feigned injury, and Archie in turn is pursued. He gives himself up to his former ally, Captain Callander, who recognises the nobility of his actions, but is nonetheless executed. Callander keeps his word to pass on a letter from Archie to Logie: the story ends with Logie receiving the letter, in exile in Holland, and reflecting on its explanation of Archie’s torture at the hands of the source of his original loyalties.
Mary Findlater, *Tents Of A Night* (1914)

The Hepburn family set off on a holiday to continental Europe, with high expectation concerning the likelihood of the heroine, Anne Hepburn, to meet and fall in love with the romantic foreigner she had met in the recent past. But Anne finds problems on the journey with her sense of her place in history: as the family travel through ancient cultures of France, the story consists largely of Anne’ pondering of her feelings of spiritual inertia, in ongoing debate with her Uncle Peter, for whom particular place seems redolent of all time. Buildings and streets seem small in the midst of so many unfinished stories, Anne thinks. But she cannot discover the essential meaning which would bind her to this history. Encountering a stone age skeleton at the same time as meeting her potential suitor, Captain Voinavich, Anne discovers he is engaged to someone else; the skeleton appears to her to be secure from life. He attributes their lot to fate, which he engages in with passion, compared with Anne’s withdrawal. Feeling detached from present reality now as well as history, she comes to realise that life must simply be participated in, in order for interconnection to be affirmed. But she closes the story still without direction, gazing upon new graves, and with word of war approaching.


The daughters of the eccentric widow Marjoribanks, Henrietta, the elder, and Lucie, are confined in accordance with their mother’s rigid regime, to social isolation on their estate in the eighteenth century, with daily contact restricted to one manservant, John Silence, and the Reverend Doctor Cornelius Hallijohn, who becomes employed as their teacher.

In response to protests about their situation the girls are compelled by their mother to enact a regular mock social gathering, using furniture to represent people, and with strict decorum observed. One day their lives change when they are visited by a young man, Dan Charteris, and romantic involvement appears to blossom between Dan and Lucie. Life can never be the same now, but Dan fails to maintain contact with Lucie after returning to London once again. Lucie feels she must go there to find him, and does so with the help of Hallijohn; being confronted by the enormity of her abnormal condition, she experiences the maximum of culture shock, and is finally spurned by her erstwhile suitor.
Returning bitterly to Balgowrie, Lucie becomes consumptive, and commences a protracted decline. Following her death, Henrietta and Dr. Hallijohn become engaged to marry, but Henrietta shows signs of illness too, and, compelled by the widow into fulfilling her social act despite grave illness, she also dies. The novel ends with Hallijohn in old age, having made his own peace with the world, but anticipating greater peace in death.

Violet Jacob, *The Sheep Stealers* (1902)

Early in the nineteenth century, in the Wye Valley, Rhys Walters is at the centre of a campaign to foil the newly imposed tollgate. The young idealist Harry Fenton lines up on the side of law and order. Rhys rejects his pregnant lover, the servant girl Mary Vaughan. As the dissenting party raids the tollgate, its custodian, Mary’s father, is killed, and Rhys is accused of the act. He flees the community, to hide in the surrounding hills. Falling from his horse and sustaining severe injury, Rhys is given shelter by James Bumpett, a local sheep stealer, in exchange for assistance in his criminal activities, carried out with his bondsman George Williams. Harry meanwhile sets about wooing Isoline Ridgeway, a calculating young woman with romantic dreams and material ambitions, but she is attracted to the strange man she meets walking in the hills, none other than Rhys. George encounters the by now destitute Mary, whose new baby has died, and decides to leave his position with Bumpett to be with her.

In this intricate social nexus Isoline accepts Harry Fenton’s proposal of marriage, invoking the wrath of both sets of guardians because of their financial incompatibility. A financial bequest eventually solves Harry’s problem, while George and Mary overcome theirs, leaving Rhys in isolation in the hills, one of which he appears to deliberately walk off to his ultimate release from life.

Mary Findlater, *The Rose Of Joy* (1903)

The story of Susan Crawford, a talented artist with an affinity with nature who, seemingly condemned to follow the miserable lifestyle of her mother, moves unhappily among social routine often in the company of her cousin Juliet, with whom she is becomes good friends, though also becoming aware of her social ineptitude and shabbiness of dress. After being sent to live with her Aunt, Susan
is proposed to by Dally Stair, a young man seemingly bored by his own life and feeling sorry for himself.

Susan feels confused, imprisoned, envious of her elderly friend Miss Mitford; she confides in her friend Archie Hamilton, who is dismissive of Stair, but she marries Stair nonetheless. After realising that he is an opportunist, and that he has married her partly to help clear personal debts, Susan gives birth to and loses their first baby; Stair is revealed to have a previous marriage, to a laundry maid, and his marriage to Susan is annulled. At home and with a sense of beginning her life again, Susan is visited by Archie Hamilton: will this prove to be the ideal marriage? No, Archie marries Juliet, and Susan remains a single woman, sadder, wiser, thankful for her independence.

(This novel studied in chapter five also).

CHAPTER FOUR

Jane and Mary Findlater, Crossriggs (1908)

Nineteenth century life in the town of Crossriggs, one hour’s journey from Edinburgh, is home to the Hopes, the elderly father, "Old Hopeful", and his two daughters, Matilda, a widow with children, about to return from Canada, and Alexandra, single, the more lively, able and questioning of life's conventions, the heroine of the novel.

The Hopes live in genteel poverty, the scholarly, unworldly Old Hopeful unable to earn an income, Matilda’s brood adding to the burden. Alex is secretly in love with Robert Maitland, whose own marriage is a failure, but they will never put their feelings into practice. It remains for Alex to manage the household, and to find employment, which she does by reading books and newspapers to Admiral Cassilis, whose nephew Van lives in unharmonious dissatisfaction with social expectations and his blind uncle. Regular contact with Van leads to his desiring a sexual relationship with Alex, which she rejects with some regret. Alex attempts to make money from public reading, but ill-health afflicts her as her domestic burden increases. Enter Dolly Orranmore, whose aggressive sexuality sweeps Van into marriage; he sees Alex one more time after this, looking aged and lifeless. He is drowned in what may be an accident, but which is also
suggestive of suicide, and shortly afterwards Dolly loses their first baby. Alex goes to live as a nanny with relations in Liverpool, Matilda remarries, and ultimately Alex and Old Hopeful are left a bequest which allows Alex and Old Hopeful consolation if not joy, at the last.

Jane Helen Findlater, *The Ladder To The Stars* (1906)

In the village of Hindcup Miriam Sadler seeks "truth and knowledge". All of her family and the local Wesleyan minister beseech Miriam to reject wisdom and serve God and community. Miriam’s only friend in Hindcup is the elderly, wealthy and eccentric Miss Foxe, who introduces her to Alan Gore, editor of a leading journal. Beginning to experiment with writing, Miriam is invited to London, to the class-suspicious disapproval of her family. Mother’s illness interrupts her progress, and she returns to the village, where Cousin Emmie attempts to teach her how to be a proper woman, and mother plans to marry the minister. Miriam’s irreligious writing is discovered by mother, as is her first major publication in London, a spiteful satire on the community. Thus, back to London where the musician Herman comes upon her, his amoral lifestyle too selfish for her, confirmed on their trip to the countryside, in which she rejects his advances. He dies mysteriously later. The trip becomes a source of scandal for her family all the same, and Miriam once more returns to a "slow martyrdom". Following the death of her mother, Miriam meets Gore again, recommences writing, and the resulting book’s success is capped by love and comfort with Gore.

Catherine Carswell, *Open The Door!* (1920)

Joanna Bannerman’s family in Edwardian Glasgow is shattered by the death of their father, which marks the beginning of Joanna’s adolescent development. Learning music in Dresden, she returns to Glasgow a young adult. Cue Bob Ranken, a local Minister’s son, engagement to whom provides Joanna’s first lesson about patriarchal power, as he sets out his plans for their future. The engagement is shortlived. The consequent depression is ended by enrolment at University, where Joanna is co-opted into the arty set of Mrs. Lovatt, where she meets Mario Rasponi, the inventor. Marriage follows, and Joanna goes to live in Italy with him, only to feel imprisoned. Mario’s bizarrely domineering behaviour
culminates in death at the hands of one of his machines, releasing Joanna, who returns to Glasgow via her eccentric Aunt Perdy’s Italian hilltop retreat.

Joanna’s new friends are Phemie Pringle, the highly talented singer whose social class precludes entry to the Lovatt coterie, and Carl Nilsson, a dissenter from Lovatt. Joanna is introduced to the artist Louis Pender, and to Lawrence Urquhart; this pair remain significant counters in Joanna’s life thereafter. The latter is an irritant to her, seeming to challenge her social attitudes, while the former becomes her new lover in a relationship that flaunts social convention, before lurching unsatisfactorily to a close, Joanna still feeling she is giving more than receiving from her man. Lawrence comes to increasing importance during this process, even while Joanna lives in London. The death of Joanna’s mother focuses many issues in her mind, including the religious and social servitude women enact for men. After protracted searching for answers to her unhappiness, Joanna realises that the resolution is to be found with the ever-waiting Lawrence.

(Relevant to chapter five also).

Catherine Carswell, *The Camomile: An Invention* (1922)

Ellen Carstairs returns from studying music in Frankfurt to the home of her Aunt Harry in Glasgow, from where she compiles her journal to be read by her friend Ruby. This entails finding gainful employment without giving up on her love of music, and resisting the religious and conservative tastes of her Aunt, in the course of which Ellen frequents the Mitchell library where she forms a friendship with the elderly "Don John", whose integrity has marginalised him from society. Don John helps Ellen to write, an issue bound up in her relationship with her dead mother, whose own writing was done to the neglect of her children.

Engagement looms, to the family friend Duncan, but Duncan’s expectations are too much for Ellen, and she breaks it; in this period Don John dies, and Ellen flees from the conventional heart of her family to take refuge with Ruby, and commit herself to writing.

(See chapter five also).
CHAPTER SEVEN

Willa Muir, *Mrs. Ritchie* (1933)

In small-town 1880s, Jim Rattray, the local drunk, has two daughters, the sociable, non-academic Mary, and the serious, intelligent Annie.

Success at school for Annie confirms her difference from her peers, but since her family cannot afford to send her to college, and she must remain at home to fulfil domestic duties. She accommodates to life in the town by recourse to Christian principles, imagining herself one of the "elect". After leaving school, Annie helps Julia Carnegie to conduct the Sunday School and her missionary work. Envying the disrespectful Betty, servant to the three Misses Carnegie, Annie perceives her as evil; when one of the sisters, Miss Susan, dies, leaving money to Bet, Annie takes this as evidence of the sister’s evil too. When Bet leaves to get married, Annie is envious of her popularity, and will bear animosity thereafter.

In due course Annie gets married to Johnny Ritchie, and despite bearing him a child, John, and a daughter, Sarah Anne, Annie destroys their relationship through coldness and judgementalism. She becomes to the local children "the face at the window", and her husband dies ill and lonely. Since Johnny made no will, the property passes to John. Life becomes a battle for control, during which John dies, possibly by suicide, and Sarah flees her mad mother.

Willa Muir, *Imagined Corners* (1931)

Calderwick in 1912 features an inter-related cast of characters: John Shand and his young, fashion-conscious wife Mabel, and the newly-weds, John’s younger half-brother Hector and Elizabeth, and alongside the Shands the Murrays, William, the local minister, his sister Sarah, and their chronically psychotic brother Ned. Elise Mutze, the former Elizabeth Shand, is invited back home by her brother John, after having left to develop herself on continental Europe twenty years before, including through marriage to a foreign and therefore exotic academic, from whom she has recently been bereaved.
Hector sets about married life as he conducted his single one, chasing women and drinking, and depending on his new wife to excuse him. Mabel, bored by her husband's dependability, seeks the thrill of flirtation with Hector. Elizabeth tries to comprehend all this by projecting herself into the assumed role of "noble wife", including accepting Hector's wish to separate for a year. Elise, with recent widowhood to come to terms with, forms a close alliance with Elizabeth. As Elizabeth's marriage collapses, so does the domestic stability of the Murrays, Ned forced into hospital and William falling to his death. Having comprehended the social and personal expectations surrounding them in Calderwick, Elise and Elizabeth leave together to imagine alternative corners in which to live.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Nan Shepherd, *A Pass In The Grampians* (1933)

Dorabel Cassidy, formerly Bella Cassie, comes back to her small village after achieving fame as a singer in London, intent on establishing her place among the Kilgour family, whose senior figure, Andrew, she believes to be her father. Andrew's real daughter, Mary Kilgour, is also home on a visit, and feels an old enmity for Bella renewed. This takes the form of competing for the affections of the adolescent Jenny, the novel's pivotal character.

Bella bullies and boasts her way through the village, picking up a young artist on a painting trip, and dancing all night after a tension-filled dinner party. She leaves again on discovering that her true father is not Andrew, but the smelly, disreputable Durno. Bella's invitation to Jenny to travel with her to London precipitates the final crisis among the family. But Jenny maintains a friendship with Durno, as well as with Mary and her Grandfather, and ultimately resists all attempts to force her to relinquish her own, growing scheme of values, which encompasses all of them, and she ends the novel with the intention of travelling to London too.
Nan Shepherd, *The Quarry Wood* (1928)

Martha Ironside is a grubby wee girl of nine when she is taken from her schooling, to stay with her Aunt Josephine, from whom she learns much about life. By the time Martha returns to her parents, the quiet, honest Geordie and the domineering Emmeline, she finds a new, fostered sister, Dussie, who will remain a friend in adulthood.

Martha goes on to benefit from formal education, struggling on a bursary at Aberdeen University, where she is close to Dussie and her husband Luke Cromar, a medical graduate. The star of the Arts faculty, Miss Warrender, arouses confused emotions of fear, respect and jealousy in Martha. She learns about emotional facts of life, falling in love with the self-absorbed Luke, initially scarcely aware of the fact, then intensely consumed by it.

At the same time as Martha’s younger sister Madge becomes pregnant, Martha exchanges a kiss with Luke in the Quarry wood. This is seen by the malicious Stoddart, with consequences when Roy Foubister comes to woo Martha. The son of an old lover of Aunt Josephine, Roy proves an unwanted partner for Martha, who has had to spend much time nursing the terminally ill Josephine. Martha resents Luke as well as Roy now, and finds herself held in gossip to be the mother of Madge’s now-abandoned child. After Josephine finally succumbs to her illness, Martha is visited by Dussie and Luke, he showing signs of maturity, and each with the realisation of, and acquiescence in, life’s strangeness.

Nan Shepherd, *The Weatherhouse* (1930)

Garry Forbes returns from the First World War to recover from shell-shock to a community dominated by the remaining women, centred on the weatherhouse, the strange structure consisting of several cottages put together. In this the Falconer women live. The older generation of Lang Leeb, Paradise, Theresa, and Ellen the dreamer, are joined by Lindsay Falconer, who will go on to marry Garry. The drama revolves around Garry’s reaction to the news that Louie Morgan, another strangely dreamy, mad individual, claims to have been engaged to marry his best friend David Grey, killed in the war.
Garry determines to prove this a lie, and proceeds to upset most of the neighbourhood, who generally tolerate Louie without too much questioning. In his rough treatment of Louie, Garry learns that the engagement ring worn by Louie was stolen by her after David’s death; he also discovers that David’s father knows this and accepts it. By the time Garry comes to the same wisdom about the queer, relativistic way of truth, his actions, including his inept scheme to rebuild his aunt’s fire-damaged roof at Knapperley, have made him a by-word for foolishness. But among the shifting dynamics of the community, he does come to some resolution, dissolving his desire for certainty in all things, and winning back the compassionate and confused Lindsay.

Ellen, thinking she has found her chance to act positively in real life, joins in Garry’s scheme, not realising that he is no longer in pursuit of it, denouncing Louie in the village concert, causing havoc only ameliorated by the actions of John Grey, and especially Garry himself. Thus does he seal his reputation for perversity in public. For Ellen and Louie, there is no way back: each declines into confused and lonely madness. For Lindsay and Garry, the future brings happiness and the understanding of the uncertainty of life.
Chapter Two: Women's Fiction and the Romantic Paradigm.
Introducing diagrammatic scheme to assist evaluation of narrator/story strategies.

Diagram One: Seymour Chatman.
Initial diagram representing the form of irony perpetrated upon a first person narrator, whose unreliability is signalled by the indirect message of the implied author. The dotted line signifies the message transmitted from the implied author to the implied reader, outwith the ken of the narrator.

Diagram Two: Story and Discourse.
Additions to Chatman’s scheme for reliable narration and fallible characters, or other story elements

Filters: characters’ attitudes and actions, located within story. Susceptible to ironic or other evaluative comment in narrative discourse.

Level 1 discourse, or irony: structural effects, e.g. chapter headings or epigraphs. Located in discourse, outside of story. Though often significant to the implied reader, this level of discourse is not within the territory of the narrating voice, and so does not require encodement in the diagram to represent its development.
Chapter Three: Dualism of Self-Defence.
The putative division of true female "selves" and social "roles" postulated in narrative.

Diagram Three: **Self/Roles**.

F: this box encompasses female identity as constructed by whole novel, as opposed to the limited versions permissible in society, and which are enacted in story. Female requires both discourse and story for its completion, which is not attainable within a single character in these narratives.

**self**: Putatively "true" female identity as provisionally postulated in models influenced by the romantic paradigm; implicitly suppressed beneath socially permissible roles. Constructed outside of story, in narrative discourse.

**roles**: actions and attitudes of female characters within story. Comparable with socially endorsed "femininity".

--- : distinguishing line between selves and roles as constructed in story and discourse. Because it is never truly complete in narratives, the distinction is represented by a broken line.

Diagram Four: **The Fragmented Female**.

H: the heroine. Privileged by her narrator in discourse, whose commentary elucidates her "true" self, and its relation to the social roles carried out by the heroine in story. Heroine therefore exists as the sum of her parts spread between both story and discourse. She is characteristically unable to assert her self in story.

C: the secondary female character with whom the heroine enacts a corresponding relationship. The Female consists of the various female characters, including the heroine, arrayed among story and discourse.
Chapter Four: Dualism of Self-Assertion.

"Self" can be located within the territory of story now, representing the expanding potential for women to pursue their own self-development in society. The story is about the problems which follow from this fact. Variations of free indirect speech and the narrator's voice on level 2 discourse form the basic technique of elucidation.

Diagram Five: **Open The Door!**

Story encompasses part of the "true" self, which is no longer submerged beneath story and reliant purely on discourse. The narrator's slant aligns with the heroine, and this discourse activity remains necessary for the portrayal of the fullest experience of the Female, indicating the relationship between inner and social, conscious and unconscious experience of self. The distinction between slant and story is always maintained, the heroine remaining within story, subject to the influences of her society. Thus, her identity, and that of the Female, is the outcome of influences in three areas, slant, roles and self within story.

Diagram Six: **The Camomile**

Narrative slant, or commentary, is redundant in the novel's journal form; level 2, structural irony, predominates. Within story, the heroine's journal examines the tension between roles and self. The heroine remains a filter character, within story, addressing her friend, also a fictional character in story, rather than a narratee outside it. Level 1 irony judges story proceedings, completing the territory of the Female. This form allows the heroine to discourse upon her own history, to begin to form her own personal discourse, within story.
Chapter Seven: Selves Within The World.

Fluid identities in an oppressive society seeking the best via media by means of personal and inter-personal discourse. Narrative slant comes, in part, to parody third person omniscience by sharing space with characters' developing discourses.

Diagram Seven: Imagined Corners.

The socially ascribed terms of "femininity" are now demarcated into two sets of roles:

**Roles 1:** traditional Christian and domestic duty, the "eternal feminine", as expected of women in previous delineation of "roles".

**Roles 2:** the modern consumerist model of "femininity", orientated to sexual display and personal gratification through purchasing power.

Sarah Murray exemplifies Roles 1, in disapproval of Roles 2, woman, embodied in Mabel Shand.

Diagram Eight: Correspondence of heroines: the two Elizabests.

**E1:** Designating the area encompassing the identity of Elise Mutze, the former Lizzie Shand.

**E2:** The area comprising the identity of Elizabeth Shand, newly married into the name.

Reflecting the reduced rigidity of social ascription, each character's identity encompasses some of roles 1 and roles 2, and narrative discourse, but they also learn from and about each other in their common mental territory. Age difference leads to Elise's lesser participation in roles 2, territory significant to the choices faced by Elizabeth.
Diagram Nine: Imagining Corners.

I.C.: Imagined Corners 1. The construction by Elise (E1) of her own version of her life story. She does this via her own discourse, which occupies narrative space in the novel. The circle labelled I.C.1 therefore contains her own personal model of story (s), within her discourse (d). Elise remains a filter character, addressing no implied narratee or reader, and so requires no slant. I.C. is the sum of the heroine's discourse and story, within her consciousness, which still encompasses the territory of roles 1 and roles 2. This scope for the thinking woman to detail her own history is paralleled by the rein it is given in the narrative by Elise's narrator, N. Narrative therefore embodies the interacting levels of personal and social discourse, out of which characters' lives are made, and remade, within the original hull of D and S, discourse and story.

Chapter Eight: Worlds Within The Self.
Story comes to be effaced by, and then constituted of, the interactions of characters' discourses, individual and collective, relative and negotiable. Narrative in this respect becomes a parody of its omniscient stance, and of its claim as objective story/history. Its formal conventions give way to the subjective and interpersonal values which constitute the community.

Diagram Ten: The Quarry Wood.

J: Area representing Aunt Josephine.
M: Area representing Martha.
I.C.2: Imagined Corners 2.
Characters construct their own discourse/story, represented here as previously in the I.C. circle of diagram 9. Additionally, Martha in this diagram constructs her selfhood by the interaction of her personal discourse/story with that of Aunt Josephine. From these interactions personal identities arise, confirming the shared basis of individual identity. In keeping with this, the space of narrative is shared by the subjectivities it depicts.
Diagram Eleven: The Weatherhouse.

I.C.3: Imagined Comers 3. A range of characters in the village construct the novel's story (S) through the interaction of their discourses, as in I.C.2. A communal discourse arises, without abolishing personal I.C., but the interaction of these discourses constitutes the bulk of the narrative. Thus the encircling territory of I.C.3. No character predominates as a conventional protagonist, and this sharing of space, material and metaphysical, is Garry Forbes's new vision of human relations.

Narrative embodies the colliding, merging, and reforming of discourses, as the sum of subjectivities, those of characters and narrator, inner and social, which together assemble their many-sided, garrulous concensus.
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This section includes texts either referred to directly in the thesis, or uppermost in my reading and therefore in the formation of its principles, and encompasses fiction, as well as non-fiction (among which I have incorporated poetry), with separate sections to distinguish these categories.

**FICTION**


NON-FICTION

(INCLUDING POETRY)


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