DIVISION AND WHOLENESS:
THE SCOTTISH NOVEL 1896-1947

In two volumes

By

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ABSTRACT

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Scottish literature seemed to be stagnating. In the 1920s and '30s, a loose grouping of writers hoped to achieve a 'Scottish Literary Renaissance' - the name by which the period is known. They were interested in Scottish speech, customs, myths and traditions. By using this raw material in their work, they sought to emphasise a Scottish identity which, they felt, had almost disappeared. Novels often centre on the experience of a young, imaginative character who tries to combine artistic sensitivity with life in the community. This character is related to a recurrent figure in the Scottish novel generally. Usually he is morbid and unreliable but it is a mark of the optimism of the period that writers see in this figure not merely a potential artist but also a potential leader. The background is described through George Douglas Brown's The House with the Green Shutters (1901) and other works from the early years of the century. Thereafter the Scottish Literary Renaissance is charted through the work of four writers: Eric Linklater, Lewis Grassic Gibbon, Naomi Mitchison and Neil M Gunn. The use to which they put the figure of the young dreamer is noted throughout.

SUMMARY

In the introduction, I set out the background of the thesis by describing the views and aims of the writers who belonged to the Scottish Literary Renaissance and contrasting them with the writers of 'Kailyard' fiction. Then I outline the themes of the thesis: the nature of the figure of the dreaming youth which recurs with exceptional frequency in the novels discussed; and then the significance of these observations.

The first two chapters provide the context of Renaissance fiction and discuss novels whose themes prefigure those taken up by Renaissance writers. George Douglas Brown's The House with the Green Shutters is the central novel of this part of the argument. It sees Scottish society as being inimical to the creative imagination and in its depiction of young John Gourlay sees the flaws that an imaginative character will develop in such a society and the lack of fulfilment and eventual tragedy for which he is destined. Similar considerations arise from MacDougall Hay's Gillespie, Neil Munro's Gilian the Dreamer and J M Barrie's Sentimental Tommy. That Munro and Barrie should be considered along with Brown and Hay is unusual but I argue that the congruence of analysis which characterises all four authors suggests a new status for the latter pair. Chapter Two is a bridge between the foregoing novels and those of the Renaissance itself. Lorna Moon's work has affinities with Barrie; Ian MacPherson anticipates some of Grassic Gibbon's themes; Fionn MacColla is an extreme example of Renaissance views. Finally the chapter deals with the fiction of Eric Linklater, whose creative development illustrates the move to the Renaissance, and he is the first novelist studied to give mature expression to Renaissance themes.

Chapters three to five contain individual studies of central Renaissance figures: Lewis Grassic Gibbon, Naomi Mitchison and Neil Gunn. Lewis Grassic Gibbon's novel Sunset Song contains the Renaissance vision of Scotland as an harmonious society which can accommodate all its members but the trilogy, of which Sunset Song is the first volume, becomes progressively bleaker. The final disillusion of Grey Granite together with other aspects of Gibbon's work single him out as a writer perplexed by the classic dilemmas of the Scottish novel: dualism, fantasy and morbidity. Naomi Mitchison and Neil Gunn in The Bull Calves, Highland River and The Silver Darlings add a new dimension to the theme of the dreaming youth by seeing him not only as a potential artist but also as a potential leader and they argue that in rejecting imaginative people, Scotland loses out politically as well as culturally - The Silver Darlings by Gunn expressing Renaissance thinking at its most profound.

The discussion is summed up by the conclusion and a bibliography follows.

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF ABBREVIATED TITLES

(AHL)	*A Highland Life*
(ASCF)	*At the Sign of the Clenched Fist*
(ASQ)	*A Scots Quair*
(AYTN)	*Among You Taking Notes*
(BB)	*Butcher's Broom*
(CH)	*Cloud Howe*
(DS)	*Dark Star*
(EL)	*Eric Linklater: A Critical Biography*
(FM)	*Five Men and a Swan*
(FTH)	*Fanfare for a Tin Hat*
(G)	*Gillespie*
(GAG)	*Gunn and Gibbon*
(GD)	*Gilian the Dreamer*
(GG)	*Grey Granite*
(HGS)	*The House with the Green Shutters*
(HR)	*Highland River*
(LGG)	*Lewis Grassic Gibbon*
(LOA)	*Lobsters on the Agenda*
(LF)	*Land of our Fathers*
(MM)	*Magnus Merriman*
(MT)	*Morning Tide*
(SC)	*Sun Circle*
(SS)	*Sunset Song*
(ST)	*Sentimental Tommy*
(Sh.C)	*Shepherds' Calendar*
(Sp)	*Spartacus*
(TA)	*The Albannach*
(TAV)	'Tradition and Violence'
(TBC)	*The Bull Calves*
(TBH)	*The Big House*
(TCK)	*The Corn King and the Spring Queen*
(TL)	*Too Long in this Condition*
(TLG)	*The Lost Glen*

(TMN)	The Men of Ness
(TSD)	The Silver Darlings
(TTD)	The Thirteenth Disciple
(WMS)	White Maa's Saga
(YMWA)	You May Well Ask

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INTRODUCTION

Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
But to be young was very heaven!

These lines, which Wordsworth wrote in The Prelude to describe his joy on hearing of the storming of the Bastille, have become synonymous with great upsurges of enthusiastic hope which characterise human life from time to time. They appear at the beginning of a book, rather quaintly entitled Scotland in Quest of Her Youth, and refer to the enthusiasm certain sections of society felt about a new phenomenon in Scottish culture: the "Scottish Literary Renaissance".[1] The poet, Christopher Murray Grieve, (better known by his pen-name, Hugh MacDiarmid), and the French literary critic, Denis Saurat, felt that the new poems, novels and plays being written by largely unknown authors, were the beginnings of something so significant they deserved this grand title, which was given in all seriousness, though it sounded a little grandiose to some ears even then.[2] As a piece of nomenclature the phrase has stuck and when I use the term, and the shortened version "Renaissance", I shall use it to refer to the work of the group of writers and others who held particular views of Scottish culture outlined below. For Grieve, the phrase encapsulated the cultural renenwal he was trying to achieve, whereby Scottish culture was to shed the parochialism which had disfigured it and was to be judged by universal standards.

By some people, the "Scottish Literary Renaissance" has been taken to refer, almost exclusively, to the work of Scottish poets. In his book, Hugh MacDiarmid and the Scottish Renaissance, Duncan Glen gives novelists little credit for sharing MacDiarmid's vision, but this is far from accurate.3 Neil M Gunn and Lewis Grassic Gibbon were closely involved with MacDiarmid, Naomi Mitchison and Eric Linklater, to a lesser extent. It is the purpose of this thesis to show that the content of their works establish these novelists as central figures of the Scottish Literary Renaissance. Glen also

gives the impression that the Renaissance was interrupted in the early years of the 1930s when MacDiarmid left Scotland for a disasterous period in England and that MacDiarmid's views were not taken up again until the "second generation" of Renaissance poets arrived - poets such as Sidney Goodsir Smith and Sorley MacLean. However, I would argue that what happened in the 1930s was that from being predominantly expressed in poetry in the 1920s, in the 1930s the Renaissance was most powerfully expressed in prose fiction, particularly, though not exclusively, by the novelists named above. By the late 1930s, particularly by the outbreak of World War Two in 1939, the sense of purpose and hope which characterised the Renaissance had disappeared. However, two novels written in the 1940s are the refinement of Renaissance ideals and cannot be properly interpreted outwith that context. The novels are The Silver Darlings (1941) by Neil Gunn and The Bull Calves (1947) by Naomi Mitchison - thus the concluding date in the title of the thesis is fixed so late.

It would be inaccurate to leave the impression that the Renaissance took place only in literature. More properly, the Renaissance represents the literary aspect of a general renewal of interest in Scottish culture. In Francis George Scott and the Scottish Renaissance, Maurice Lindsay describes the developments which took place in music. Charles McKean, in a recent study, The Scottish Thirties, describes the Renaissance as it relates to architecture and most typically in Contemporary Scottish Studies by Hugh MacDiarmid and the collection of essays Scotland in Quest of her Youth edited by David Cleghorn Thomson, a stunning variety of subjects is covered, reflecting the comprehensive interests of the Renaissance, from sculpture to folksong, from church policy to transport.

The Renaissance movement was a radical response to what it perceived as the sluggish complacency through which the country had drifted into the carnage of the First World War. Many of the certainties which had characterised that period had disappeared. The old political dualism of Liberals and Tories ended with the rise of the Labour party and, in Scotland, the Renaissance coincided with a period of electoral popularity for Scottish Nationalism. Orthodox religious beliefs had lost their popular authority and the new subjects of psychology and anthropolgy provided stimulating alternatives. The glory of imperialism had been thoroughly tarnished in the trenches and was replaced by internationalism and its corollary, self-determination. Nations were to observe their obligations to each other but were free to develop their own national identities.

To be a Renaissance person, then, was to embrace a new, integrated set of views on culture and politics. Such beliefs as those outlined above recur frequently throughout the Renaissance. Many of its writers were involved in politics - both Naomi Mitchison and Eric Linklater stood for political office. The new intellectual approach to psychology and anthropology provided writers with a rich source of inspiration. Paradoxically, writers rooted in the twentieth century were fascinated by the wisdom of the pre-historic past, especially as it was expressed in myth. A similar tension existed between their veneration of tradition and their ideals of progress. For them tradition did not consist of external, visible ceremonies but in ancient ways of thinking which were also expressed in myth. These myths were interpreted - often through the theories of C G Jung - and applied to the modern world. Jingoism had been replaced by a thoughtful and joyous discovery of the literature of other cultures. For writers, however, the main impetus of the Renaissance was to impel them to catch a new vision of their own country. George Blake, publisher and writer, summed matters up thus:

> A "consciousness of Scottishness" came to us all after the War. We began to see - or believed we saw - that the Scottish spirit had been misrepresented in literature by kailyard pawkiness on the one hand, and whaup-and heather romance on the other. We took The House with the Green Shutters to represent us most adequately in fiction, and the poets turned violently away from Burns in the direction of Dunbar. New horizons seemed to open out before us.[4]

In this quotation Blake raises one central attitude which defined writers of the period: they all regarded themselves as being "Anti-Kailyard". To understand the meaning of this term and its implications for the Renaissance, it is necessary to go back to the last decade of the nineteenth century.

"Kailyard" was the derogatory epithet coined by either J H Millar or W E Henley in 1895 in an article in Henley's New Review which had lately noted several recent popular novels. Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush (1894) by Ian MacLaren (the pseudonym of J B Watson) and The Lilac Sunbonnet (1894) by S R Crockett were two of the most popular; the former selling over three quarters of a million copies. By using the term "kailyard", Henley and Millar were drawing a parallel between these novels and American pulp fiction. (One of the representative titles of the genre was Mrs Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch and it was from this title that the Scottish equivalent was coined.)[5] Henley and Millar objected to the sentimentality of these novels where Scottish life was portrayed as a rural idyll and talented "lads o' pairts" were supported by impossibly generous, kind-hearted families and communities. J M Barrie and Neil Munro were also thought of as belonging to the "Kailyard School", although they were generally regarded as being

more talented. Kailyard novels gave credence to popular misconceptions about Scots and Scottish society. During this hey-day of Empire, Scots, like other national groups, were often seen stereotypically: the dour Scot; the mean Scot; the kiltie. These stereotypes did admit Scottish distinctiveness but it was a quaint, eccentric, and most importantly, a politically irrelevant distinctiveness. Being Scottish may have been different and something to be proud of, the stereotypes imply, but being British was really what counted. In political terms, Scottish identity was no longer a threat or even a problem for an English government, but something completely compatible with the ethos of Empire. Kailyard fiction is the literature of a subjugated nation. What also annoyed Henley and Millar about Kailyard fiction was that it had received much indiscriminate praise. Henley was reviewing English, American and Irish writers of the calibre of Thomas Hardy, Henry James and W B Yeats but since the death of R L Stevenson in 1894, there seemed no-one remotely comparable in Scotland.

Thus, when in 1901 George Douglas Brown published The House with the Green Shutters, many critics felt that here at last was a writer who was well aware that rural communities were not the paradise Kailyard novels made them out to be. Brown's Glasgow University tutor summed up his relief thus: "I love the book for just this, it sticks the Kailyarders like pigs."[6] It is not surprising, therefore, that, as George Blake records, Renaissance writers looked back to this novel as their literary antecedent. Though the main issue between the Renaissance and the Kailyard was one of literary integrity, the deeper issue of their world views separated them at a profounder level. Because Renaissance writers saw tradition as alive and changing, they had no use for writers who tacitly mummified one historical view of tradition, namely that subscribed to by the society of late nineteenth century England, as if that was the only view which existed. Renaissance writers disagreed so violently with the Kailyarders because they

located Scottish identity in different places. For the Kailyarder Scottish identity was expressed in stereotypes, ceremonies and a romantic view of history. For the Renaissance writer, identity lay in ways of thinking and acting which had evolved within Scottish history. Further, the Renaissance writer would actually blame the Kailyarder for confusing the living tradition with the ways in which the tradition had sometimes been expressed. This concern with Scottish identity led to a particular phenomenon in the literature: often novels attempted to create a microcosm of society by describing the institutions which, it is often argued, embody a distinct Scottish identity - the church, the legal system and the education system.[7] It will be a major theme of this thesis to chart how writers analyse the nature of Scotland.

When this study began I intended to include the novels of George Douglas Brown and his contemporaries as well as those of the Renaissance writers in order to see how the Renaissance view of earlier novels was borne out in actual fact. However, as the study progressed, I became aware of a character which recurred with some frequency throughout all the novels under consideration. In Renaissance novels, the figure is sensitive, imaginative and seeks to integrate Renaissance ideals with existing Scottish reality. Chris Guthrie from A Scots Quair (1932-34), Finn MacHamish from The Silver Darlings (1941), Magnus Merriman from the novel of the same name (1934) and Kirstie Haldane from The Bull Calves (1947) were the characters around whom my thoughts centred. In the pre-Renaissance novels, the figure appears in much darker shades. Despite his apparent differences and morbidity, young John Gourlay from Brown's novel is a literary ancestor of the Renaissance figure. Eoghan Strang in J MacDougall Hay's Gillespie (1914) shows strong similarities. As my interest in these forerunners grew, I thought it would be interesting to see if this figure had any relation in Kailyard fiction. When I selected Neil Munro and J M Barrie, what I discovered was not what Renaissance criticism had

led me to expect. Underneath the Kailyard veneer of their writing, both authors displayed a bleak view of Scottish society and wrote of a young boy, a dreamer, who was sensitive, imaginative, morbid and unreliable, who found no way of integrating himself with his surrounding society, although that was his aim. In addition, both authors shared the theme of a retreat to childhood. It has been noted that this theme often arises in Scottish literature and my observations indicate it is linked to this dreamer figure. Consequently this thesis will reappraise J M Barrie and Neil Munro, instead of seeing them, merely, as a background to the Renaissance.

Reflections on this character continued to absorb me, for though I could see that he recurred, I had not fully understood his significance. Then it occured to me that he had appeared in Scottish novels both before and after those I was intending to study. Because this aspect of the thesis is new, I wish to outline here some of the most famous manifestations of the figure. Edward Waverley is his first and seminal appearance. In the third and fourth chapters of Sir Walter Scott's Waverley (1814), the features of the figure are clearly delineated:

> His powers of apprehension were so uncommonly quick,. . . [His] instructor had to combat another propensity too often united with brilliancy of fancy and vivacity of talent,- that indolence, namely, of disposition, which can only be stirred by some strong motive of gratification, and which renounces study as soon as curiosity is gratified, the pleasure of conquering the first difficulties exhausted, and the novelty of pursuit at an end.[8]

Waverley learned what he wanted to and spent the rest of his time "Castlebuilding" - the title of the fourth chapter of the novel.

His imagination is exercised by his aunt's accounts of the exploits of his ancestors:

> From such legends our hero would steal away to indulge the fancies they excited. In the corner of the large and sombre library, with no other light than was afforded by the decaying brands on its ponderous and ample hearth, he would exercise for hours that internal sorcery, by which past or imaginary events are presented in action, as it were, to the eye of the muser.[9]

Later, Waverley's Romantic imagination leads him to throw in his lot with the Jacobites, taking Fergus Mac-Ivor at his own estimate and not able, or not willing to admit that Fergus is, to some extent, exploiting him. The division in Waverley between the claims of reason and imagination are symbolised by the struggle between the Hanoverians and the Jacobites. When the Hanoverians win, the claims of reason triumph and an ordered society is possible. However, the claims of the imagination, represented by the Jacobites, are not forgotten: Waverley commissions a portrait of himself and Fergus in Highland dress against a Romantic Highland landscape. In Scott's Scotland, excessive imagination has its dangers but once they have been dealt with, there is a residual and conformist indulgence of the imagination.

In James Hogg's The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner (1824), there is no balance between the claims of reason and imagination at all. The more Robert Wringhim seeks to guide himself by reason, the more Hogg shows him to be at the mercy of a treacherous and uncontrolled imagination. Wringhim flees across Scotland, pursued by demons. By subtle narrative technique, Hogg refuses to declare the demons real or imaginary. Archie Weir in R

L Stevenson's Weir of Hermiston (1896) demonstrates another characteristic of the figure: he is often opposed from within his own family. Archie has sensitivity and imagination - traits which occasion his father's withering sarcasm: "[Lord Hermiston had] a word of contempt for the whole crowd of poets, painters, fiddlers and their admirers, the bastard race of amateurs, which was continually on his lips. 'Signor Feedle-eerie!' he would say."[10] Not infrequently this sort of violence ends in tragedy.

As far as later appearances of the figure are concerned, John Stirling in Robin Jenkin's Happy for the Child (1953), Mat Craig in Archie Hind's The Dear Green Place (1966) and Conn Docherty in William McIlvanney'sDocherty (1975) manifest the same characteristics. As recently as 1981, in his novel Lanark, Alasdair Gray presents his version of the figure. Speaking of Duncan Thaw, he writes:

> Books 1 and 2 owe much to the novel The House with the Green Shutters in which heavy paternalism forces a weak-minded youth into dread of existence, hallucination, and crime.[11]

Characteristically then, the figure is imaginative, passionate to morbidity, liable to confuse imagination and reality, subject to mockery.

That this figure was closely related to the history of the Scottish novel was becoming apparent and questions about its significance form the third theme of the thesis. Why does the character persist? Why do authors uninfluenced by each other seem to "invent" this character independently? The answers to such questions concern the views of Scottish artists about their own culture. Generally, their views are pessimistic. Tacitly, or explicitly, they say that the Scottish environment is hostile to the literary identity: that "the creative Scot [is a] displaced person."[12] I hope to show that

the figure's problems reflect the difficulties authors encountered in a society which undervalued human imagination. Renaissance writers consistently complain about a lack of tradition, which is why MacDiarmid and Blake selfconsciously create a tradition of Scottish literature in which they wish to stand. Pre-Renaissance writers tacitly endorse this lack of tradition. One of their greatest problems is the lack of an intellectual framework through which to analyse society's hostility towards the imagination.

The problems authors have with Scotland can be seen in two recurrent features of Scottish literary history: literary exile and inconsistent literary achievement. Andrew Noble writes about James Boswell that "The genuine Scottish writer, then, went south not so much for foreign gold but to receive an imaginative succour no longer possible in Scotland's prissy cultural capital."[13] This statement can be paralleled in the lives of other Scottish writers - R L Stevenson and Lewis Grassic Gibbon being the two most dramatic examples. Even within Scotland division is common: Hogg was deeply divided between his love of his Borders community and his desire to be accepted by the Edinburgh literati. In the latter half of this century, writers have shelved the whole issue of a national identity finding it easier to be identified with a clearly defined locality. Thus George Mackay Brown is associated with Orkney, Alan Sharp with Greenock, William McIlvanney with the West of Scotland and James Kelman and Alasdair Grey with Glasgow. In this thesis biographical considerations are raised where they are relevant to the author's work.

Writers not only find Scotland difficult to live in, they also find it difficult to write about and the history of the Scottish novel is strewn with carcases of flawed, but intermittently brilliant, work. Perhaps the most obvious index of difficulty is the problems many novelists have in ending their novels. Extremely able

novelists like Hogg and Stevenson cope with problems by writing openended novels which allow for varying, and often opposed, interpretations of their work. Other novelists, like George Douglas Brown and J MacDougall Hay, could not resolve the problems of their novels. Yet their novels had to end and so great were the problems that the novels often ended in violence, horror and tragedy.

The thesis focusses on the period 1896-1947. Chapter One outlines the problems of the last decade of the nineteenth century and the first of the twentieth - a bleak period characterised by violence. Chapter Two deals with novelists who bridge the gap between the early years and the Renaissance itself. Like J M Barrie, Lorna Moon sets her work in Kailyard village, but her analysis is not crassly sentimental. Ian MacPherson anticipates Lewis Grassic Gibbon in theme. Fionn MacColla, the pseudonym of Tom MacDonald, represents the Renaissance in its most extreme manifestation. Finally the chapter describes the work of Eric Linklater, the first Renaissance writer to be discussed. Chapters Three to Five are studies of individual Renaissance authors - Lewis Grassic Gibbon, Naomi Mitchison and Neil Gunn. The chapters show how the outlook of the Renaissance enabled the authors to deal more positively with the problems of cultural poverty. However, though there are some notable cases of age-old problems being resolved, sometimes resolution is only achieved in a few novels from an author's output, sometimes resolution is flawed and sometimes even during the Renaissance, the problems of the Scottish novel are of such a magnitude, that resolution is not achieved at all. Indeed the later works of these authors which post-date the Renaissance show clear signs of disillusionment. The hoped-for paradise does not arrive and the cultural vacuity, so habitual in Scottish life, seems to be quickly returning.

FOOTNOTES TO THE INTRODUCTION

1. Scotland in Quest of Her Youth, edited by David Cleghorn Thomson (Edinburgh, 1932).
2. The Glasgow Herald, 31 December 1923 in their first leader described recent developments in Scottish literature as "a genuine Scottish literary renaissance". Denis Saurat used the phrase in an article entitled "Le Groupe de 'la Renaissance Ecossaise'" in Revue Anglo-Americaine, Premier Annee, No.4, April 1924.
3. Duncan Glen, Hugh MacDiarmid and the Scottish Renaissance (Edinburgh and London, 1964), pp.105-120.
4. George Blake, 'Letters' in Scotland in Quest of her Youth, op.cit. pp.158-171 (pp.158-159).
5. Janet Dunbar, J M Barrie: The Man behind the Image, (London, 1970) p.73.
6. Cuthbert Lennox, George Douglas Brown: A Biographical Memoir with Reminiscences by Andrew Melrose (London, 1903), p.149.
7. For a concise statement of this argument see James G Kellas's A Modern Scotland, revised edition (London, 1980), ch.3, pp.29-33.
8. Sir Walter Scott, Waverley (London, 1972), ch.3, p.46.
9. Sir Walter Scott, ibid. ch.4, p.53.
10. Robert Louis Stevenson, Weir of Hermiston, Everyman edition (London, 1925), ch.2, p.207.
11. Alasdair Gray, Lanark (Edinburgh, 1981), p.486.
12. This phrase is taken from the title of a review article by Andrew Noble called 'Creative Scot as Displaced Person' in The Glasgow Herald, 10 November 1984, p.11.
13. Andrew Noble, ibid.

CHAPTER ONE

GEORGE DOUGLAS BROWN, J MACDOUGALL HAY, NEIL MUNRO AND J M BARRIE

Most critics are agreed on the significance of The House with the Green Shutters for Scottish literary history.[1] It stands at the beginning of the twentieth century as a sign that serious Scottish fiction had not been overwhelmed by the forces of the Kailyard. There is a reasonable degree of agreement too, about the interpretation of the novel. We are presented with themes which occurred previously in the history of the Scottish novel: the divided family; the tyrannical father; the fanciful child; national identity presented through the microcosm of a provincial Scottish village. I wish to discuss some of these themes and use them as a guide to the interpretation of other novels, commonly thought to bear no similarity to The House with the Green Shutters.

Brown's study of the small, Scottish rural community has been praised for its accuracy and perception, though some critics, including Brown himself, have reservations about the extent to which Brown's disgust with the Kailyard affected his objectivity and, therefore, the artistic balance of the novel. Brown's study is notable for its comprehensive account of village society. He includes the laird, the lawyer, the doctor, the ministers (Church of Scotland and Free Church varieties),the councillors, the wealthy business men, the unsuccessful business men, the group of "bodies" drawn from councillors and tradesmen, the barmaid, the ostler and the farm labourer. He observes the effects of social and economic change. The "dirty man's shop", the "dru'cken man's shop" and the carrier's business are replaced by the new Emporium, headed by James Wilson, the man who is able to move with the times, realising that there is a profit to be made out of the railways. Wilson becomes Provost. A powerful citizen, he can initiate significant changes in local government - ensuring a fresh water supply in Barbie, for example, whereas earlier Provosts could not act in such a grand manner because of the power of individual citizens, like John Gourlay. Since Gourlay's power depended on trade which has since been taken over by Wilson, there is no longer any conflict.

Not only do all these pheneomena exist in the novel, but Brown is skilful in writing about the relationships which exist between man and his society and man and his neighbours.

Because the village is small, it is not difficult for one inhabitant to know a great deal about the others. One of the main pastimes of the town is to discuss individuals in the light of this shared knowledge. Often the discussion is malicious. Brown takes gossip very seriously, showing it not as a venial sin, but as a destructive force in any society whose life blood it is. The role of the "bodies" is well-known in relation to this fact. As Brown pointed out, not only do they comment on the theme, they also act to bring about the final tragedy. John Gourlay has aroused the jealousy of the "bodies" because of his wealth and his disdain for their company. For his own part, Gourlay fears them because of their insidious jibes and his own inability to parry their remarks. What this malevolence means for Gourlay is that when he gets into financial difficulties, he cannot share his problems with anyone and has to deceive people into thinking his business is carrying on as usual. Obviously, Gourlay has gone a long way to alienate other people and cause his own isolation, but the "bodies", nevertheless, contribute to his tragedy. Indirectly, they have created a society dominated by bullies. Gourlay's wealth has given him some degree of protection from them, and this fact galls them: they await his downfall with unconcealed glee. Directly, two of the "bodies" goad young John Gourlay into violence, and as a result make Gourlay angry with his son. They add heat to an already volatile situation so that when John meets his father after this provocation, the tragic outcome is inevitable.

This is the most dangerous failing of Barbie's society, but it has others. Brown does not describe much interest in Christianity, though Barbie has at least two churches. The Free Church minister

is interested in botany. Whether this hobby is meant to represent academic interests which Barbie cannot satisfy, or a genteel occupation incomprehensible to working people, it has the effect of making the minister remote. The Church of Scotland minister is an oaf. It took him ten years to get his degree and the only reason the fierce-tongued inhabitants of Barbie are not openly sarcastic towards him is due to the residual respect given to the position of minister in Scotland. Christianity seems to have no ethical, or spiritual content. It is associated with respectability.

One of the main results of the decline of Christianity, is to make people look elsewhere for sources of value. The transcendant world has been replaced by the material; money and power are big attractions. Businessmen are the new leaders of society and Barbie becomes progressively more corrupt as wheeling and dealing among businessmen becomes more profitable. In this context, it is worth noting the almost supernatural power of Gourlay. He is often described in the colours of black and red. He has extraordinary strength and he is, on occasion, compared with the Devil. On entering Barbie's square, the first building a stranger would see is not a church but Gourlay's house, the expression of his wealth. Is it fanciful to suggest that Barbie, in its wholesale pursuit of materialism, has become a village of the damned?

Scotland's great intellectual tradition, epitomised by the Enlightenment, is just as irrelevant to Barbie as Christianity. Anyone who had intellectual ability left Barbie to pursue a career elsewhere. Jock Allan was an able mathematician who went to Edinburgh and became a lawyer. Such intellectual men do not return to Barbie, therefore intelligent men who still live there stagnate for want of stimulus. One such is the strict school-master, Bleach-the-boys, whose occupation gives such poor intellectual returns, that it makes him brutal. He knows young John will come

to grief at University, but tells no one. This intelligent but frustrated man returns to his "stuffy little room" to rekindle his idealism, perhaps, by reading The Wealth of Nations. (HGS p.127) The ideas of the Enlightenment have no significance in Barbie.

In the novel, although the law is mentioned, it is even less prominent than the Kirk or education system. Gibson, who is cleverer than Gourlay, uses the law to trap Gourlay into a scheme which loses Gourlay more money than he can afford. Gourlay's lawyers cannot help him, they can only explain to him the nature of his circumstances. The law can be used by cunning people to entrap others quite legally; it does not appear to administer justice.

Barbie has no respect for the Kirk, the education system, or the law, though it pays them lipservice. The vacuum left by these institutions in the life of the community is filled by what Brown calls "individualism", a materialistic, selfish attitude to life. Gourlay, Gibson and Wilson are the lively and powerful characters who operate on these principles. At a public meeting where the coming of the railway to Barbie is being discussed, Wilson deliberately puts Gourlay in a false position, knowing Gourlay is not capable of arguing himself out of it. Wilson goes along to boost his own trade by bringing down Gourlay in public estimation. Wilson's material success is made even sweeter because it is achieved at Gourlay's expense. Gibson, who is more cunning even than Wilson, hatches a plan which furthers his own trade, appeals to Wilson's desire for civic recognition and humiliates Gourlay:

> [Gibson] cared as little for Wilson as for Gourlay; all he wanted was a contract for covering Wilson's holm with jerry-built houses. (HGS p.102)

Wilson is delighted precisely because he benefits and Gourlay suffers. Gourlay himself displayed identical attitudes before his downfall, as he forced his rival Simpson out of business. The savagery with which he defends his monopoly is checked by no external standards of behaviour. Gourlay "disconsidered the Church", although "he swelled with pride" when the minister congratulated his prize-winning son in the main street. (HGS p.165) The appearance of respectability is important, not its reality. Gourlay only takes pride in his son's education in so far as it bolsters his own position in Barbie, not because he sees any inherent good in education itself. Gourlay only congratulates John on winning the Raeburn prize because Wilson's son had not won anything. The other value Gourlay is condemned for ignoring is natural beauty. On a beauthiful morning, Gourlay is shown to be completely impervious to the beauty of the scene, thinking only on how he has outdone his rivals. Just as in Barbie, the vacuum left by the deterioration of the institutions is filled with gossip, so in Gourlay the vacuum is filled with anger and violence.

The depth and inclusiveness of Brown's analysis of Barbie gives it a resonance which is greater than the sum of its parts. The elements commonly cited to constitute a unique national identity for the Scots - the church, the education and legal systems - are all referred to within the novel and are no longer found to be meaningful for people in the throes of industrialisation. The values they stood for are dead and their place has been usurped by the new gospel of self-aggrandizement, worked out at the expense of one's neighbours. Men prey on each other. John Spiers has noted that although the new men seem, outwardly,to respect the old values, in reality they are peripheral to the new society, which is duplicitous and destructive.[2] Gourlay and his son are both destroyed by it. This is Brown's pessimistic estimate not only of rural society but of Scotland as a whole.

For James Wilson, young John Gourlay's rival, Scotland offers him all he wants. He grows up comfortably, with reasonable intelligence and his father's eye for commercial potential. He also absorbs completely the small-town ethos of Barbie, so that when he is studying at Edinburgh University, he writes home letters in the gossipy, malicious tone he learnt from his father. Young John Gourlay does not find Barbie such a congenial environment. From his boyhood John is at the mercy of two personal qualities, his weak will and his sensitive imagination, often using the latter to compensate for the former. As his teacher points out:

> "The fault of young Gourlay," quoth he, "is a sensory perceptiveness in gross excess of his intellectuality." (HGS p.126)

As a boy, John is seen trying to make up for his own powerlessness by threatening a servant with his father's authority. When the servant is sacked, John takes pleasure in the reflected power of Gourlay. However, his father is not always able or willing to realise his son's wishes. When life becomes unbearable, John retreats into his imagination, which thrives on vivid, morbid sense-impressions. He is only interested in reading a book in so far as it provides him with such impressions. His imagination does not bring history or personality alive for him, rather it enlivens a scene in a way that produces a strong emotion. When he imagines the scene from the Dick Turpin adventure, the emotions produced are those of fear and horror.

John is somewhat redeemed by the fact that the insights are genuinely imaginative, but what lets him down is the fact that they are trivialised by the pedestrian character of his mind. What ultimately destroys John is the fact that he cannot control the sort of impressions he creates and thus cannot be at ease with them:

> in Gourlay was a rawness of nerve, a sensitiveness to physical impression, which kept him fretting and stewing, and never allowed him to lapse on a sluggish indifference.
>
> Though he could not understand things, he could not escape them;. . . poor Gourlay was cursed with impressions which he couldn't intellectualize. (HGS p.133)

John has an impossible gift, one which only exacerbates his tragedy.

His own weak temperament adds to his difficulties. In order to cope with life's problems, he does something natural, but dangerous. He pretends he is someone else. Finally his role becomes an excuse for his failure. Roles are always attractive for John, who swaggers before his school friends, the villagers and later, University companions. These people know, however, that John is all talk, and they put up with him only as long as he is interesting or profitable. John's will is so weak he cannot sustain any role for long and he is so vain that he responds quickly to flattery or insult by dropping his role and revealing his true feelings of self-importance or inadequacy. By flattering John, Deacon Allardyce finds out all he wants to know to fuel local gossip. By flattering John, Armstrong, a student, forces John to admit that he is afraid of his pose being misunderstood for the weakness it does not quite succeed in covering up:

> Gourlay scowled. "Damn Armstrong!" he thought, "what did he yell like that for? Does he think I didn't see the point of the joke against myself?. . .This is what comes of being sensitive. . . Curse the big brute, he thinks I have given myself away. But I'll show him!" (HGS p.185)

Although John is self-conscious and develops roles to hide his inadequacies - his fear of his father, his fear of school, his fear of leaving home - from public view, he is not intelligent enough to see that his roles convince no one but himself.

When John discovers the helpfulness of drink in banishing his inadequacies and promoting his talents, his fate is sealed. Immediately after this discovery, John hears a lecture called, 'Philosophy and Imagination', in which the lecturer argues that the information the mind receives from the universe is diverse and overwhelming. "The mind," says Auld Tam, "is terrified by the demoniac force of nature and the swarming misery of man; by the vast totality of things, the cold remoteness of the starry heavens and the threat of the devouring seas." (HGS p.145) However, the lecturer concludes that the place of philosophy is in explaining such phenomena to the mind, assuring the mind of its own worth, helping it to produce something valuable in the face of a random, chaotic universe. John recognises that the lecturer is describing his problem, but in response to this argument, John commits his central act of self-deception. He does not think it is philosophy which reassures him but whisky:

> "By Jove," thought Gourlay, "that's what whiskey does for me!" (HGS p.146)

Instead of trying to achieve a natural balance, John is prepared to settle for the temporary and false stability engineered by drink. This bathetic response to intellectual argument is a sign of John's essentially low intelligence and anti-intellectual attitude - a trait which characterises a number of inhabitants of Barbie.

After this lecture, John enters the competition for the Raeburn prize for which he has to write "an essay in the picturesque" - an

ideal form for his imagination. As ususal his morbid fancy takes over and he sees a ship where one man has gone over board and another is ice-bound to the tiller. As with the Dick Turpin scene, he can visualise every thing in exact but morbid detail. The only thing which this work produces is uncontrolled and engulfing emotion. It gives no limits to the emotion, supplies no interpretation of it, pooduces the slenderest of information about its cause. When the mind is controlled by emotion only and not also by reason, or awareness of circumstances in the real world, its resulting actions may be fatal. John's lecturer warns him of this possibiblity when he awards John the Raeburn:

> "That almost morbid perception, with philosophy to back it, might create an opulent and vivid mind. Without philosophy, it would simply be a curse."
> (HGS p.151)

Returning to Barbie in triumph, John adopts his last role - that of the man who could succeed if he would but put his mind to it. He indulges before the inhabitants of Barbie in "splurging" - a habit of wild and heedless talking - which he uses to deceive himself about the pressing realities of life. He does not succeed in fooling anybody but himself. The amount of drink consumed during that summer makes John an alcoholic, and by the time he returns to Edinburgh, he cannot stop drinking, nor can he discipline himself to work. So his imagination (in winning him the prize) and his weak will (in his posing and drinking) again combine to his disadvantage. His downfall comes speedily.

No sooner is he back at University, than he is expelled for a trivial misdemeanour which he makes worse by his assumed arrogance. He must return to Barbie to face his father, whom he, rightly, dreads. Gourlay has no time for such whimsies as imagination and is furious that John has brought him into public disgrace. By

ripping away the roles John has hidden behind for so long and exposing his failures, Gourlay takes his relationship with his son to its logical conclusion and destroys his personality. John, with the ambiguous help which he receives from drink, makes his first and last act of self-assertion in the murder of his father. In this moment of violence he is energised and purposeful. The emotional chaos Barbie produces is seen in the murder where hatred is very close to love, involving the whole personality and determining the intensity of one's behaviour towards the other:

> The fiercest joy of his life was the dirl that went up his arm, as the steel thrilled to its own hard impact on the bone. (HGS p.227)

Of course John's self-assertiveness evaporates when the effect of the whisky wears off. He finds himself in the position Auld Tam had forecast for him as he descends into madness. In Edinburgh, he had already experienced the torture of his mind in extreme drunkenness when his "mind began to visualise of its own accord, independent of his will." (HGS p.187) This same phenomenon overtakes him after he has murdered his father and the pictures he sees are terrible and bound up with his own guilt. His emotions have mastered him completely and his will has deserted him:

> The vision he beheld against the darkness of his mind, projected itself, and glared at him. He was pursued by a spectre in his own brain, and for that reason there was no escape. (HGS p.236)

Suicide is his inevitable end, abetted by drink, escaping from his own imagination.

The main points which emerge from the discussion of the society of Barbie are clear and have are evident in extant literary criticism.

What is not so well-recognised is how the second half of the novel is related to the first and the extent to which these themes are common to other novels of the period. In moving from the familiar to the unfamiliar, it is helpful to think of The House with the Green Shutters as a paradigm; not that the themes appear identically elsewhere, but their general, persistence is significant.

That a close relationship exists between The House with the Green Shutters and Gillespie has long been realised, but the significance of the relationship remains a matter of debate.[3] Some critics have found that Gillespie relies too heavily on Brown and is not original. Lately Bob Tait and Isobel Murray and Alan Bold all suggest that this is not the case.[4] They see Gillespie as a variation on Brown's novel and as an important work in its own right. Some similarities and differences are immediately obvious. Firstly, both novels are set in small towns, both have as a main character a grasping, domineering man who tyrannises his enfeebled family, both books end in utter tragedy. Secondly, Brieston is similar to Barbie in its complement of social evils - gossip, deceit, malice, fear. Spiritual, moral and social values have been replaced by materialism. Hay sees this materialistic impulse as a denial of the values it replaces and ultimately as a denial of Providential, elemental justice. Hay's definition of social stagnation however, is linked to his pre-occupation with the role of Providence in a way that Brown's is not. Thirdly, both books contain the figure of the morbidly imaginative boy. Where John is weak-willed, however, Eoghan is impeded not by his own shortcomings but by horrific domestic circumstances. There are significant differences between the two books. As both Hart and Wittig point out, the most striking difference about Gillespie is that it includes a much more full discussion of the role of Providence than is found in The House with the Green Shutters.[5] A discussion of Fate and God does exist in Brown's novel, but it is not the

obsessive preoccupation it is here. Also Gillespie is not a straight transfer from Gourlay. Hay has actually merged Gourlay and Wilson into one character who has the necessary powerlust and business acumen to achieve his desire. Bearing these points in mind, by studying the nature of Brieston and the character of Eoghan Strang, we can see how Hay varies the pattern left to us in The House with the Green Shutters.

Hay returns verdicts of varying culpability on the institutions of Brieston. As usual the Church has its dual manifestations in the Free Church and the Church of Scotland. Gillespie is a deacon in the Free Church and sends Topsail Janet, his servant, to the Church of Scotland so that he can keep in with both congregations for the sake of his business. Both churches are condemned for being more concerned with the letter of Christianity than its spirit. The Free Church in Brieston is condemned because it has chosen Gillespie, completely antipathetic to Christian values to be a deacon and the Church of Scotland is condemned because Topsail Janet hears nothing there about the Jesus who had compassion on the weak and the outcast.

Mr. Kennedy, the school teacher, is one of the few characters who emerge well in the novel. Although he has had his own personal tragedy, he is not embittered and is able to understand Eoghan's problems. The Board of Governors wants to get rid of Kennedy because he does not suit their ideas of what a teacher should be - he sees no harm in children reading Penny Dreadfuls. The Board's choice is Mr. M C R Campion who is young and modern and has an Honours degree. The Board seeks to replace a wise teacher with a young man who is confused about where to find value in life. At University, Campion was disillusioned by the aridity of theology but excited by a well-taught course in sixteenth century English Literature. The University has failed to equip Campion with any

explanation of the plight of a place like Brieston. Instead it has contributed to his confusion. Literature tells him that justice and mercy should exist. His own knowledge of the life of Christ tells him the same. But his experience of theology, however, is that it is unrelated to human existence - especially in matters of practical import - and that its only use is as a means of earning a living. Because the control of hiring and firing teachers is in the hands of lay people, the quality of education fluctuates and the wise, if unpalatable, teaching of Kennedy is replaced by the uncertainties of Campion. Hay makes the obvious point that the institutions are only as good as their members and if their members are troubled or unscrupuluos, then their ability to lead will be impaired and subsequently the standard of life in the community will deteriorate.

The same thing is ultimately true of the law. Legislation as it affects the citizens is sometimes mediated to them by Gillespie, whose mediation is always perverted. As Poor Law Clerk and Sub-Collector of Taxes, Gillespie makes money at the expense of the people the Law was designed to benefit. In opposition to Gillespie stands the Procurator Fiscal from Ardmarkie who is called in to investigate the death of Andy Rodgers. Paradoxically, although he is a just man and an officer of the law, there are some cases which the law cannot reach, and the Fiscal is impotent to judge the criminal, Gillespie:

> "I cannot, sir, bring you under the penalty of the law for what you failed to do, but I have no words to express my sense of your vicious conduct. . . In my opinion a man's death lies morally at your door.
> The law, unfortunately, cannot punish you. I leave you in the hands of God." (G p.195)

Whether justice is administered is a matter of chance and it depends, again, on the individuals involved.

The man who proves to the Fiscal that Gillespie was in some way to blame for Andy Rodgers' death, is the doctor - the character most consistently opposed to Gillespie. The doctor is concerned as much for the poor people in Brieston who cannot pay him as he is for the rich. He does not gossip at all and keeps severely away from backbiting and malicious curiosity. He is angered by poverty and disease and does not understand why mankind should suffer so much. Despite this mystification he does all he can to alleviate pain and suffering. His dedication is seen at its height as he tirelessly tends the sick and the dying during the plague. However, he is not able to change the habits of the community but can only treat its worst excesses.

The Parish Council is fairly ineffectual, not even able to provide relief during the period when the boats have no catches. Other matters which affact the town generally seem to be undertaken by a group of self-appointed guardians; these men appoint Gillespie to the Poor Law Clerkship. The town is small. It is easy enough for a few men to run it in their spare time. This casual sort of government suits Gillespie, for as long as he remains solvent, he remains respectable and is accountable to no one. Legislation is made a long way south and the people of Brieston know of it only through Gillespie, who has more authority in Brieston than the law itself.

What we saw happening in The House with the Green Shutters is happening again in Gillespie. The quality of life depends upon the quality of the institutions which in turn depends upon the qualities of individuals. The doctor tries to restrain Gillespie,

but because Gillespie is not accountable, no one can force him to change his behaviour. Community life is neither regulated nor enhanced by civic institutions which, in turn, are not accountable. Because they are not unified under a national government which decides national policy, each institution has to make its own policy which is dictated by vocational, not national, considerations. Institutions do not work as parts of a unit and national identity fragments among the very institutions which are meant to express it.

For Hay the materialistic drive which exploits the delays and inadequacies of remote povernment is exacerbated by the fact that it denies not only man's government, but God's. Broaching this subject puts criticism on uncertain grounds because it is not entirely clear from the novel whether Hay does not believe in God or if he does, what sort of God he believes in. Clearly, Hay is not a Calvinist. Hay's attitude to Christianity can be seen in his attitude to Topsail Janet, a poor but kind-hearted woman, who is moved by sentimental images of Christ. She likes to look at her copy of the famous picture of Jesus blessing the children and believes in Jesus in an orthodox way: that he was born, lived, died was resurrected and now lives in Heaven. As she gets no comfort from the Church, Hay implies that she gets no worthwhile practical benefit from her belief: it seems almost illusory. At one point she believes she has had a message from her dead husband, but she has been deceived from Gillespie who has tricked her:

> [Topsail's] eyes gravely searched the stars and she sighed. . . The sigh was . . . for the face lost for ever behind the cold glittering constellations. (G p.129)

However, this attitude is problematic because it has real difficulty in making sense of Gillespie, one of those luminously

evil characters who frequent Scottish fiction. On the one hand, because of his reverence for the example of Jesus, Hay deplores Gillespie's actions, yet on the other, if there is no God to give existential authority to Jesus's teachings, then the teaching can no longer be the ground for condemning Gillespie. For Hay the implications of Gillespie's evil are not primarily political but theological. In his estimate of Gillespie, Hay displays some confusion between a social or political interpretation of events and a theological one. Because he himself has theological doubts, he would rather couch his criticism in social terms, yet he is always drawn back to the theological perspective, which, paradoxically, he finds more satisfying.

From boyhood, Gillespie is motivated only by a desire for material gain. At first his mother and father are proud of his thrift, but eventually Mr Strang realises that Gillespie is not thrifty but inhumanly greedy. Gillespie's "bargain" with Lonend for Mr Galbraith's farm involves treachery, deceit, cruelty, neglect and fraud. Yet at the end of this incident, Hay records that Gillespie "had made a gigantic stride towards respectable citizenship." (G p.23) As long as Gillespie keeps a good distance from the crimes he commits, no one can harm him - "Souple Gillespie" is the nickname he earns. (G p.133) Gillespie does just enough to allay suspicions and insure friendly relations as on the day he stages the miracle of the fishes in reverse by buying up all the catches when the other fish merchants could not. The size of Gillespie's economic vision wins him respect and his provision of a secure market is seen as a god-send:

> "Goad be thankit, there's wan man that can buy fish, mercat or no mercat." (G p.145)

However, Gillespie's real colours emerge again when he buys up all the boats during the herring famine so that when the fishermen go

back to work, they are in never-ending debt to Gillespie who had shown the starving families of Brieston no compassion in hard times:

> "Ye'd think I was Goad Almighty to look aifter
> the sparrows". (G p221)

In these last two quotations we can see the shape Hay's judgement of Gillespie is beginning to take. Gillespie denies a power more potent than his own. At times it seems that Brieston depends on Gillespie as if he were God - a role which he seeks for its power but not its responsibilities. Hay uses some horrific incidents to show how completely unfeeling Gillespie is to any sort of moral value whatsoever - the tale of the headless corpse that moved being the most gruesome. After this incident, Andy Rodgers dies, Queebec's hair turns white overnight, while Gillespie can only make facetious remarks to the Procurator Fiscal. This theme reaches its climax when the Brieston mob burn the fishing fleet signed over to Gillespie during the famine. However, Gillespie is unmoved by this revenge which Hay treats as a judgement on him:

> [Gillespie] had encountered the grim judicial award
> gained by those who would usurp the function and
> authority of God. (G p.256)

Inanimate nature is for Hay an expression of elemental goodness and of the goodness of those men who co-operate with it. He writes using religious imagery in a way we now associate with George Mackay Brown:

> In the plum-like bloom of the winter dusk
> he ploughed the lea, urging his ministry of faith
> in a pentecost of peace. (G p.11)

Gillespie, however, like Gourlay in Brown's novel, is impervious to natural beauty and destroys those who are not. He infects Galbraith with "the modern cancer of unrest" and makes Mrs Galbraith a "machine of steel". (G p.11; p.162)

While Gillespie opposes Nature, Providence opposes Gillespie. His mother comes from the old, disappearing Highland culture which she takes seriously as it has supported the life of her forebears for generations. Out of that culture, which her Lowland husband tries to belittle, saying it was full of fighting and sorrow, comes the curse which Gillespie lives to deserve:

> "the hands of the son shall be in the blood of his parents." (G p.317)

This dim, ancestral voice is more powerful than the puny efforts Gillespie uses to oppose it. He finds that his secure position is of no value unless he can hand it on to his son, but his son does not want it. It is through Eoghan, whose birth was decided upon as "Fate was listening with bated breath", that a vast sea of retribution meets Gillespie. (G. 88)

In order to find a means of vanquishing Gillespie, Hay has substituted for God, Fate and for election, the ancestral curse. In turning to these primal ways of discussing man's destiny, Hay anticipates later writers who, if they see any outside power affecting man's destiny, see some impersonal force. Gibbon calls it Change. Gunn calls it by different names, sometimes Laughter, sometimes Wisdom, sometimes God. Mitchison talks of a sort of Magic. However, Hay is much more concerned with the tragic outworkings of Fate, rather than the ultimate justice it achieves. Hay's Fate is a ferocious phenomenon which can bring down Gillespie only because it raised him up in the first place. In bringing down

Gillespie, Fate requires the life of both Gillespie's sons and his father. In the last pages of the novel, Hay asserts that because of the innate goodness of man, humankind will progress and become a better race. Yet in the face of the violent events of the ending, when a vaguely just but clumsily undiscerning Fate wipes out Eoghan and old Mr Strang as well as Gillespie, a belief man's goodness seems vulnerable to the vagaries of such a Fate.

Justice is not meted out by God, Hay seems to imply, for if it were, how could it involve such unnecessary suffering? Although he sees in Christianity a pattern for behaviour, he does not see it has any dynamic ability to work in human circumstances. The promise implicit in Christianity, that God can indeed do this, is found by Eoghan to be a tortured illusion. Hay ends the novel with an image of a transitory ploughman ploughing the earth - "nothing was left but the earth." (G p.446) In this he also anticipates later writers who also assert the existence of the land as a source of value. Hay is left with the innate goodness of man, the existence of the land, and two contradictory implications, firstly that life must be worked out by these two protagonists alone, yet secondly, but inexplicably, evil exists and Good cannot overcome it. It seems subservient only to an amoral Fate.

The thought of a baby being born into such a confused and cruel society is frightening and fears for Eoghan's safety in Brieston are well-founded. That Eoghan is quite different from his father is seen by his reaction to the slaughter of one of his father's cows. Eoghan is concerned that the pitiful animal should not die. He sees its fear and its innocence. He wanted to ask the butcher to spare the cow but is afraid of what people will think of him. After the butcher has killed the cow, Eoghan, incensed, kicks him and runs away. He is pursued by the butcher's hammer which narrowly misses his head. Still angry, he picks up the offending

instrument and throws it into the sea. Most of the distinguishing marks of Eoghan's character emerge in this episode - his identification with suffering, the way his imagination makes suffering a reality to him, his fear of what others think of him, his desire to rectify the situation which is undercut by his father who makes him gather whelks until he has earned enough money to pay for a new hammer.

Eoghan's imagination is fired by Penny Dreadfuls, comics, fantasies, the songs and folk tales of his grandmother. Hay gives an account of Eoghan's dream of the death and burial of a soldier, which he has to organise. Like, Gilian, his imagination is fired by soldiers and the sea. (Tarbert and Inverary, the places the fictional towns are based on are close to each other and open to similar influences.) Like the other boys in this study, what Eoghan imagines is more real to him than the ordinary world, which is a sorry come-down from his imaginative flights. However, this pastime does not last for long:

> Those fond sea-fights gave place to strife in reality, and the boy emerged suddenly into the vicissitudes of a too early youth. (G p.266)

Unlike John Gourlay, Eoghan is able to differentiate fact and fancy, his burden is that reality is made worse by his imagination. John Gourlay, Gilian (the hero of Neil Munro's Gilian the Dreamer) and Tommy (the hero of J M Barrie's Sentimental Tommy) all use their imagination to falsify reality. Eoghan, perhaps the healthiest of all of them, trains his imagination on reality but that reality is so tormented, it destroys him. Eoghan is aware of how the declining society affects him.

Eoghan is able to love and sympathise with other people. He continually cares for his mother who has been systematically dehumanised through her marrigae to Gillespie. By the time Eoghan reaches adolescence, his mother is a confirmed alcoholic and sexually immoral. Eoghan closely identifies with her struggle and the great problem of his late teenage years is how to save his mother, physically and spiritually. His whole development is bound up with this problem. Yet Eoghan can also sympathise with his father:

> He saw his father stooping over a bag, counting oysters. . . Eoghan recalled the eczema on his father's hands. It would never heal with such raw work. The tears welled up in his eyes; he wanted to go in and help; but was too sensitive. (G p.268)

Again the sensitivity of the boy is seen, as it was in John Gourlay's case, as an aspect of his character which makes him unable to act. Eoghan wants to help but he is overcome not by his imagination presenting him with multiple option but because of utterly inimical circumstances: his mother's alcoholism and his father's greed.

Eoghan is not entirely without understanding friends as he grows up. Mr Kennedy, the schoolmaster, Mr Maurice, the minister from Ardmarkie and Barbara are able to get through to Eoghan. Mr Kennedy advises Eoghan to adopt a sort of Christian Stoicism with regard to his mother. He also advises Eoghan to go to church where he hears an entire sermon on Mr Kennedy's principles. Though Hay is sympathetic to Kennedy and the minister, Hay shows that these attitudes cannot save Eoghan from his Fate, they can only help him to face it in a particular way. The sermon has a profound effect on Eoghan. Never before has he felt so sure God existed as when

Maurice preaches the discreet and courteous compassion of Jesus on the repentant prostitute. The strength and assurance of the final triumph of good over evil which Eoghan receives from this sermon, is quickly dissipated by his father's insult to Maurice and his mother's complete inability to be involved in her own recovery. When Hay describes grace (God's active favour towards people), he consistently throws doubt on its reality by juxtaposing it with people and situations which are so full of suffering that, in Eoghan's eyes, they make a mockery of grace.

When he falls in love with Barbara, Eoghan's life again approaches normality and significantly, this transitory liberation allows Eoghan to write poetry:

> He wrote secret verses. . . He used the most stilted epithets. . .But he found a lively pleasure in being thus to himself a pedlar of dreams. (G p.346-7)

However, Barbara's love is not enough to extract him from or protect him in his present circumstances. Later he thinks that the time he spent with Barbara was a cowardly escape from the plight of his mother, whom he should not have neglected.

It seems that what is happening in the novel is that Eoghan is being presented as a sacrifice whose death will set in motion a train of events leading to a final catharsis. Eoghan, because of his sensitive imagination, experiences the horrors of Brieston as no one else can. He is "cursed with an unbalanced imagination." (G p.354) This relentless imagination binds Eoghan in horrific dreams where the reality of his world is transfigured into the evil it actually contains. This characteristic connects Eoghan with John Gourlay of whom Brown wrote, "The strange and sinister detail of the world, that had always been a horror to his mind, became more

horrible, beneath the stimulus of futile thought." (HGS p.145) For Eoghan, the death of his brother Iain (through his father's meanness) and the alcoholism and probable adulteries of his mother (caused by his father's neglect) bind him ineluctably to the consequences of his father's evil. This fundamental battle in Eoghan's life is the only one which matters and any other ambitions are ultimately irrelevant, no matter how much Eoghan may be interested in them. This background explains Eoghan's failure to sit his examinations at Glasgow University. Eoghan tries to tell himself that his mother will reform her behaviour to avoid disgracing her son at University. But this will never happen. His mother has long passed the stage where appearances are important to her. When Eoghan is in Glasgow, he forces himself to believe that if he can do the next examination paper he will never give Brieston another thought. Both John Gourlay and Eoghan could, in theory, walk away from their home circumstances but tragically, their imaginations bind them to their parents and their parents' actions. However, Eoghan's will deserts him and he can see no value in taking "College laurels back to the mire of Brieston". (G p.373) Eoghan knows he has been defeated by the circumstances of his life:

> She, [his mother] sordid and derelict, was become the arbiter of his fate and he the puppet. (G p.373)

Eoghan is on the verge of a nervous breakdown. He cannot see clearly and blames the University for not being relevant to his needs. Hay records that "this specious idea. . . was his apology to his conscience for his retreat." (G p.376) The lecturer who looks at Eoghan's paper after he has gone notes the "incoherence of talent" and feels he should have detained him. (G pp.374-5) Thus again, Eoghan is linked with John Gourlay whose problem, as expressed by the schoolmaster is exactly the same. But Eoghan has had to take his chance along with the rest and receives no special treatment from the institution to which he desires to gain entry. The experience has scarred Eoghan, who dreams about it:

> The dream deepened, the face of the phantom became sharply outlined; he was struggling in a death-grip with the superintendent of the examination on the spire of the University. (G p.389)

After his return from Glasgow, Eoghan hurtles on to tragedy. The omnipresent gossip of Brieston reminds Eoghan of his mother's public reputation. Eoghan, whose grasp of reality is so intense it has almost become madness, hears in his head the curse on the house of Strang, and decides the only way out of his tortured circumstances is to kill his mother. After a tortured exchange, Eoghan punches his mother and, like John Gourlay, feels a "dirl go up his arm". (G p.395) His blows are not fatal and afterwards Eoghan is struck by remorse. For a time it seems Eoghan has decided to accept his mother and to protect her as best he can, but the unrelieved suffering is taking a tremendous toll of his mind, and in his last dream, in images of cold, reminiscent of Gourlay's "Artic Night" essay, Eoghan fears for his sanity:

> He began to babble of gibbets which he saw, and chains of lightening frozen by a supernatural cold, and a multitude of priests droning of hell. (G p.408)

Finally that night in a fit of madness, his mother slashes Eoghan's throat. In the description of Eoghan's death there are two references to the crucifixion of Jesus, implying that some kind of atonement is taking place. Eoghan, driven to distraction with his mother's madness and feeling guilty because he thinks he may be responsible for it, cries out, "Oh, Jesus Christ, lead her sorrow and her woe into my breast." (G p.424) After his mother has killed Eoghan, she accidentally kills herself. This is the end of Gillespie's hope; he has no posterity; all that is left for him is the hatred of Lonend and the vengeance of Mrs Galbraith. Soon afterwards, Gillespie himself dies.

Both Brown and Hay are agreed that the little villages, so pretty and picturesque in the Kailyard novels, are stagnant and dead places. The extent of their stagnation is that they are implacably opposed to people like John and Eoghan. There is no room for their talent in their societies.

Neil Munro, (1864-1930), was a professional writer with a varied output. From 1918-1927, he was the editor of the Glasgow Evening News and besides journalism, he wrote novels, short sketches and some poetry. His novels include The New Road, written in a Stevensonian vein and Gilian the Dreamer, a partially autobiographical novel.[6] He won enduring popularity, however, with the humorous Para Handy tales collected in the volume The Vital Spark. Munro is not a well known figure of this period and is usually thought of as a second-rate romancer. However, there is more to him than this perfunctory estimate suggests. Munro knew both Geroge Douglas Brown and J MacDougall Hay. Indeed, Gillespie was dedicated to Neil Munro.[7] He met Andrew Lang and corresponded with Joseph Conrad whose work he held in great esteem. He was a literary figure of the period and no mean critic. The collection of journalism, The Looker-On, contains a well-judged criticism of Fiona MacLeod's work which makes it clear that Munro knew what Celtic Twilight writing was like, and where its faults lay. Despite Munro's literary ability, he is largely neglected and his talent thought to be negligible. This estimate is due in part to Hugh MacDiarmid's criticism of him in Contemporary Scottish Studies, where MacDiarmid argued that by not devoting himself to literature full-time, Munro himself admits his lack of real talent.[8] Other critics have sometimes speculated on why he did not write an urban or an industrial novel, finding in his non-coverage of this subject a lack which a greater talent would have identified as a source of artistic concern. This double criticism of Munro - first that he is merely a purveyor of romantic fiction and second that he is not a great enough talent to identify real Scottish

problems - can be qualified by a study of society and the potential artist in Gilian the Dreamer. Such a study will also clarify Munro's contribution to the themes which commonly concerned the Scottish novel of the period.

The society introduced to us in Gilian the Dreamer is similar to Barbie in many respects. It is a small town, based on Inverary, situated in the Highlands, but containing a few Lowlanders and Englishmen. One of the unusual features of the town is that it is the home of a number of retired soldiers, whose Highland regiments played a large part in the Peninsular and Napoleonic Wars. These men, have come home to grow old and die in the rosy glow of memories of old campaigns. There is not much to do except stand around the street and talk, attend funerals, or go in for a drink now and then. The half-pay officers may be joined by the sheriff, the innkeeper or the schoolmaster. The rest of the inhabitants are made up of "merchants and mechanics and fishermen" and are despised by the old soldiers as civilians. (GD p.116) People make their own entertainment and supper-parties are popular. Highland songs are sung but although these songs are enjoyed, people are not keen to encourage others to maintain this tradition. Of the hero, Gilian, who could carry on this tradition, his guardian says to the schoolmaster:

> I would be vexed to have my plans for him spoiled and a possible good soldier turned into a swindling writer. (GD p.117)

In the past poets who wrote songs which reflected contemporary Highland society were revered but no honour now attaches to a writer. Somehow the quality of society has deteriorated. Munro does not go into great detail as to why this should have happened. He mentions economic and social changes which have taken people from the country to the town and have resulted in a debasement of

the culture: supper-parties were to make up for the "lost peat-side parliaments or supper nights that for their fore-folk made tolerable the quiet glens". (GD p.101) He mentions three other features which point to the root of this deterioration: the depopulation of the glens by the army; that the jobs available to Gilian are either soldiering or shepherding; that when Nan and Gilian "elope", they shelter in a derelict summer house - one of many ruins which would have been inhabited in previous years. Without stating it in so many words, Munro is dealing with the body-blow dealt to Highland culture by the Clearances and yet the word is not mentioned in the whole of the novel. However tacitly, Munro is criticising the Clearances for reasons which were overtly expressed by twentieth century novelists - by Neil Gunn in Butcher's Broom, by Fionn MacColla in And the Cock Crew and by Iain Crichton Smith in Consider the Lilies. Whatever reasons Munro may have had for not making this theme more explicit, so fundamental were the changes brought about in the Highlands by the Clearances, that he cannot build a picture of Highland society without reference to them.

Parts of this older culture can be seen in the home of Jean and Aliset Clerk, to whom Gilian takes the news of his grandmother's death. Jean realises what has happened before Gilian tells her because she had a premonition of it the previous night:

> "I dreamt last night I saw a white horse galloping over Tombreck to Ladyfield and the rider of him had his face in his plaid." (GD p.17)

This sort of dream was a distinguishing feature of Highland culture. However, the old world of the second sight has gone and the reality is that the sisters live, not on a croft, but in a room, in a web of closes, in a town by the sea. Physically and spiritually, they are displaced people.

Jean cannot afford to bring Gilian up, but she ensures he will have a good home by persuading the paymaster to adopt him. His new family show a less appealing trait of Highland culture - touchiness which leads to feuding. At his grandmother's funeral, Gilian's prospective guardian, Campbell, and a man called Turner insult each other and inflame an old quarrel. Campbell ends the occasion swearing he will train Gilian to hate Turner's very name. They cannot fight or raid each other's cattle, but Turner "revenges" himself on the Campbells by not inviting them to his next super-party. Perhaps the most ferocious aspect of the old society was its absorption with fighting as Munro is suggesting here. Parliament finally overcame this tendency by making the Highlanders fight for Britain instead of against it. The schoolmaster sees this clearly when asked why he does not drink with the old soldiers:

> "I find more of the natural human in the back room of Kate's there where the merchants discourse upon their bales and accompts than I would among your half-pay gentry who would have the country knee-deep in blood every day in the calendar if they had their way of it." (GD p.117)

The Paymaster says that without this fighting the country will rot. He sees fighting as a means of ensuring the survival of the fittest, which thereby ensures the fitness of the country. This is surely ironic as the soldiers who laze about the town are fat, drunken and choleric. The Paymaster's ideas fail to account for the fact that it was precisely because the fittest were fighting elsewhere, that the country rotted. Both Neil Gunn and Iain Crichton Smith clearly show how the lack of a generation of young men, who had left home to fight in foreign wars, to subjugate cultures inimical to British rule, because of their absence were made unwitting contributors to the subjugation of their own. Munro later makes this explicit, as he criticises the role of the army in the decline of the Highlands:

> Gilian looked and saw Young Islay, a smart ensign home on leave from the country corps that even yet was taking so many fine young fellows from that community. (GD p.234)

The following quotation which is taken from the description of the troops entering the town on their way elsewhere is enigmatic but important:

> And now they were the foreign invader, dumb because they did not know the native language, pitying this doomed community but moving in to strike it at the vitals. (GD p.141)

Is Gilian here imagining what it would be like if the army were marching in to destroy a foreign community? Is he seeing them as if it were his community which was to be invaded? It is almost as if Munro is suggesting that although there are valuable things in the community, for some reason it has become doomed and therefore the army is doing an unpleasant but necessary job in destroying the place altogether. If this is true then it implies that Munro's feelings about Highland culture are split right down the middle. On the one hand he sees in the community something to be treasured, while on the other, he knows that the life has gone out of the community and it is not worth saving. This split attitude is close to that shown in the early novels of Neil Gunn, who in The Grey Coast and The Lost Glen, shows the same blend of regret and pessimism which characterises Munro here.

Munro is aware of the old world's good and bad points. He remembers the songs, poems and dreams with affection but he also know that there was a dark impulse in Highland society and the passing of violent quarrels and feuds causes him no sorrow. He knows too that the vitality and range of possible action which

characterised the old society now serves to emphasise the deterioration which is apparent in contemporary society. This deterioration can be seen in the lives of Islay - the man of action - and Gilian - the dreamer - the boy who is linked with such a"feminine" quality as imagination. Islay fights Gilian because he finds him reading, provokes him by calling him a girl and pours scorn on his writing. Islay beats Gilian but the loser sees Islay as an "old hunter of the wood. . . a figure of achievement altogether admirable." (GD p.126) Although the values attached to the man of action in the old culture still remain, those attached to the bard have vanished. Gillesbeg Aotram, from whom Gilian learns the old Gaelic folk-tales, is shunned as a tramp. Gilian sees Islay as an admirable masculine figure but he is taught to feel ashamed of his frienship with Gillesbeg. His society supplies him with no admirable role model for the gifts he has and all the roles he assumes in trying to find one are inadequate.

The way in which contemporary Highland society has trivialised its ancient customs or condemned them outright is part of its complex attitude to its older self. The new society is antipathetic to culture and breeds petty deception in the way that all these small towns do. Besides this, however, quite a few inhabitants have a tendency to dream. The Paymaster's brothers, General Dugald and Cornal Colin are old and only happy when recounting their fighting days. Their day is regulated by routine and simple actions which pass the time but do not fill it. When the news reaches Dugald that the country corps is to be billeted in the town overnight, he seems to lose years and returns to that lively youth, whose memory haunts him. But his romantic reverie is betrayed by his advancing decrepitude. Munro's knowledge that men cannot cheat time relates to the novel's wider theme that a society cannot cheat history. There is no going back in either case.

Miss Mary, sister to these men, seems to be healthily rooted in reality. But her dream has arisen because of disappointment in love. When she finds she is to look after Gilian, the reality of having a child to care for is too great for her. Huge stores of love are poured on a small boy to an extent which impedes his development. Miss Mary can live with dreams more easily than reality. When Gilian arrives she wants him to remain a child for ever. Gilian's problem here bears a close resemblance to that of Tommy Sandys in J M Barrie's Sentimental Tommy who finds himself constantly wishing he were a child again. The same pattern appears fitfully in Gillespie where Eoghan wakes up after a nightmare to hear children singing, "Again the unappeasable yearning to mingle with them, to be a boy again!" (G p.410) As Gilian grows up, Miss Mary will not hear a word against him. The schoolmaster cannot tell her about Gilian's truancy because he knows he would "shatter her illusion." (GD p.229) After years of keeping house for her undemonstrative brothers, Gilian wakes in Miss Mary the need to be loved and, closely associated with this, her buried but undestroyed attachment to the old world:

> "I once had my own fancies, but I think they must have been sweat out of me in my constancy to my brothers' oven-grate and roasting-jack. It must be the old, darling, foolish Highlands in us, my dear, the old people and the old stupid stories they are telling for generations round the fire, and it must be the hills about us, and the constant complaint of the sea-" (GD p.67)

The schoolmaster is also involved in playing games with the real world. He does not wear his spectacles in class, preferring to see his pupils in a "vague mist", rather than having to admit to needing them. (GD p.116) The persistence of dream and illusion among these people points to a dissatisfaction with society as it

is. The General wants to return to his youth. Miss Mary refuses to acknowledge the worrying side of Gilian's character and the schoolmaster prefers to see a blurred image, not a clear one. Munro describes this aspect of the town as "A stopped and stagnant world, full of old men and old plaints. . . " (GD p.34)

More than any other dreams in this town, those of General Turner shed light on why this stagnation should have taken place:

> [Nan was] uplifted marvellously with his ambitious dreams of State preferment. For General Turner was but passing time in Maam till by favour promised [sic] a foreign office was found for him elsewhere. (GD p.264)

We come finally to the crux of the matter. The reason people dream themselves into other worlds, or delude themselves about the one they are in, is that their nation provides them with no frame of reference in which to exist. The only man who links this area of the Highlands to Parliament is the Duke and though he appears in church sometimes, he does not seem to know or be involved with the local community. He speaks to no one; when at home, he merely "threw a glance among his clan and tenantry." (GD p.254)

In 1707, the centre of Scottish political power shifted south from Edinburgh to London. It took longer for the effects of this change to be felt in the Highlands. Although the stringently repressive laws which followed the Jacobite Rebellions did smother Highland culture, a much more drastic blow was dealt when the chiefs themselves left the Highlands for London and began to exploit their own people in order to support their new aristocratic life-style, close to the centre of political power, orientated to serve English affairs primarily. Because political power is so distant, there is

no specifically Highland authority binding this society together. The actions of the inhabitants are no longer meaningful in the sense that they are unrelated to any scheme of things larger than the family or the parish. This is why General Turner can only pass time in Maam - socially significant activity takes place elsewhere. Those who live in this society have to dream or invent meaning for their drab lives. Very little action is possible inside a society where people's energies are reduced to gossiping about each other. Action occurs only by permission of H M Government and even that might be fatal as General Turner is not sent to a prestigious post but to Siere Leone - the White Man's Grave. Turner has a choice - he can be killed by boredom at home or disease abroad.

The author's attitude to contemporary society in the novel and to the older society behind it, is ambivalent and, lacking in confidence. Munro looks back nostalgically to the old society and some of his characters romanticise it too. General Turner wears an "antiquated queue that made him always look the chevalier." (GD p.264) By wearing his hair in this fashion, General Turner is associating himself with a Romantic version of the past, with a particular version of the Jacobite Rebellion and Bonnie Prince Charlie. In those days, his thoughts run, soldiering was glorious and honourable. But Munro realises that the past was not quite like that. It was a hard life on the land made worse by clan fighting and in many respects the schoolmaster is right to prefer the new and peaceful society. If the General's perception of the past is romanticised, so too is his perception of the present. General Turner tries to placate his daughter's desire to return to the bustle of Edinburgh in these words:

> "Bide at home, my dear," said he softly, "bide at home and rest. I thought you would have been glad to be back from towns among our own kindly

> people in the land your very heart-blood sprang from." (GD p.265)

These words sound conspicuously hollow coming from a man who is himself only passing time in the Highlands until a new posting comes up and who carries on mindless quarrels with his neighbours. A peaceful society which is the home of his forebears should be a satisfying place in which to live, but neither the General, nor Munro, nor the other characters in the book find it so. Why should such ambivalence exist? Munro's answer to this question is itself ambivalent. He does not seem very sure of his interpretation of historical events which resulted in the old society changing into the new one. The interpretation which was made explicit by later twentieth century authors, can only be picked up by hints and shadows in the novel. Munro's Highland River does not take a wrong turning, it simply goes underground. He knows that the Clearances and the role of the Highland Regiments were significant features in the change. He implies that the peace which exists is not a good peace because it has been achieved by defeat, desolation and displacement. The life and colour of the old world has gone. Trivialisations and falsifications have been set up. The people who are walking about are shadows with their minds full of dreams. Munro points out that the remnants of the old world which exist in the this doomed community create a vast, searing regret for the world that has gone; a regret he links with the separation of the lambs and ewes in August; a regret which he expresses in one Gaelic word which simultaneously evokes and mourns for the old world:

> that far-extending lamentation of the flocks was part of some universal coronach for things eternally doomed. (GD p.232)

The bones of a thorough criticism of the government - or misgovernment - of the Highlands exist in this novel. The bones are never clothed with flesh and the criticism remains undeveloped and uncertain. It is as though his head tells Munro that it is no use trying to bring back the past but it also provokes him into considering who it might be that is responsible for the damage. In a shadowy way, he points out the Government, the clan chiefs and the army but he does not go much further and these issues remain at one remove from the novel itself. His heart tells Munro that something tragic has taken place, that something beautiful has been destroyed. But the necessary fusion and follow-through does not take place.

Into the society described above is placed the familiar figure of the boy who is acutely sensitive to nature and stories, but who is weak and not able to make a good and healthy relationship between his imagination and the real world.

Gilian's powers of imagination are quickly established in the novel. Gilian's emotional and creative ability to identify with an external situation of which he can have little intellectual knowledge, is seen in his first meeting with the Paymaster's brothers. He surprises them with his ability to read from a picture the emotions of a wounded soldier. The child's insight disturbs the Cornal who thinks Gilian is "not canny" and is unsuited for soldiering, having "only the makings of a dominie". (GD p.83) This failure to interpret Gilian's gift correctly becomes more acute as the novel progresses.

Miss Mary's understanding of Gilian's gift is at the same time a blessing and a curse. Gilian understands her feelings completely when she shows him the rusty sword of her brother James who died in

battle. He knows the mixture of horror, sorrow and guilt that she would feel on drawing the sword. Miss Mary's response is set to mirror the Cornal's but she changes it in a way that helps Gilian:

> "You are uncanny - no, no, you are not uncanny, you are only ready-witted. . ."
> Gilian was amazed that at last someone understood him. No one ever did at Ladyfield; his dreams, his fancies, his spectacles of the inner eye were things that he had grown ashamed of. (GD p.64-5)

However, this sympathy is not all to the good as was explained above. Gilian's imagination is finely-tuned and the real world can easily become different for him if it triggers his transforming imagination. What his imagination creates is more intensely present to Gilian than the world where he feels out of things. Other people recognise that there is something different about Gilian. His schoolfriends are amazed at the reality he can inject into their games. For the most part though, other people do not know how Gilian should use his gift, if indeed they consider it a gift at all. Islay considers it a handicap. One other initial passage supplies a clue as to the nature of Gilian's gift. Telling Miss Mary "how at sudden outer influences his whole being fired", he speaks of one particular incident:

> from so trivial a thing as a cast-off horseshoe on the highway he was compelled to picture the rider, and set him upon the saddle and go riding with him to the King of Erin's court that is in the story of the third son of Easadh Ruadh in the winter tale. (GD p.65-6)

Thus Gilian is linked with the old story-telling traditions of the Gaelic people. As in his treatment of the Clearances, Munro is not explicit about the role of traditional stories in Gilian's artistic

development. He never says what Gunn says about Kenn, that much of his society, especially school, cut him off from seeking them out. We have become used to this interpretation of the facts from the novels of Gunn and it seems an interpretation very similar to this existed somewhere on the edges of Munro's mind but he was never able to trace it out exactly. Other facts are important to him too - like Gilian's dependence on external nature - and they prevent him from coming to a fully matured explanation of the different phenomena with which he is concerned. It is interesting though, that at key passages, Gilian's imagination is fired directly by Gaelic songs or stories.

Lack of a recognised tradition is not Gilian's only problem. Just like John Gourlay, Gilian has a weak, indecisive character and he covers up for his weakness by acting. He is concerned about how his actions will look to other people and so he tries to manipulate them into seeing him as he wants them to see him. Taking the news of his grandmother's death to the town, Gilian spends most of the journey planning his entrance for maximum effect. However, when he reaches town, circumstances overtake him and his grand entrance is spoilt by his inability to cope with the unexpected.

Although Gilian is good at imagining all sorts of varied events, he cannot bring them to pass. He responds to circumstances, rarely initiating them. He finds it difficult to respond spontaneously to reality and instead assumes various roles. This happens most conspicuously when the county corps is billeted in the town overnight.

Gilian becomes enchanted with the role of soldier. After listening to the campaign tales of the Paymaster's brothers, Gilian dreams

vividly about being a soldier. When the troops arrive, Gilian is fascinated by them and marches behind them as they move out:

> Gilian was walking in step to the corps, his shoulders back, his head erect, a hazel switch shouldered like a musket. But it was the face of him that most compelled attention for it revealed a multitude of emotions. His fancy ran far ahead of the tramping force thudding the dust on the highway. He was now the Army's child indeed. . . (GD p.143-4)

The Cornal mistakes Gilian's dream of the army for a sincere expression of boyish ambition but as Munro points out, when something new comes to take up Gilian's attention, his "dream of the army fled." (GD p.148) It is Nan Turner who dispels this dream and she is very aware of Gilian's inadequacies:

> "I think when you can pretend so much to yourself you cannot so well do the things you pretend. You can be soldiering in your mind so like the real thing that you may never go soldiering at all." (GD p.152)

Gilian's inability to marry dream and reality make up the substance of the book.

"Acting", or make-believe, plays an important part in Gilian's career and in Sentimental Tommy's, the eponymous hero of Barrie's novel. Gilian's active imagination makes day-dreaming a thoroughly enjoyable activity. However, as his dreams constantly change, there is no possibility of living out his dreams, thus there is no possibility of consistent action stemming from dream. Some boys who "dream of being a soldier" use the dream to motivate them to take actions which will make the dream a reality. However, for Gilian, making dreams come true is not simply impossible but also

irrelevant. He is not interested in dreaming because it brings reality closer, he is only interested in dreaming for its own sake. His inconsistent actions reflect his multitudinous dreams. As a dream is dreamt then abandoned for something else, the actions which the dreams inspired are also abandoned. At this stage in the novel, the significance of Gilian's dreaming is unclear and it is not until the last pages of the novel that a tentative interpretation of the significance of Gilian's dreaming is suggested.

So far in the novel, dreaming has had positive and negative aspects: positive, when it appears as a natural occurrence in the old culture (Jean's dream) and negative, when it occurs as a social tranquiliser (the old soldier's dreams). Likewise Gilian's dreams have positive and negative aspects, and as with his society, the negative features predominate.

Apart from Miss Mary, Brooks the schoolmaster, is one of the few people who does see something valuable in Gilian's imagination. Brooks, who is himself dissatisfied with the society he finds himself in, recognises that Gilian is different from the other boys. He knows that failure to nurture the quality which makes Gilian different will spoil it irrevocably:

> With him it's a spoon made or a horn spoiled. . .but my experience has been with more common metal, and I'm feared, I'm feared, we may be botching him."
> (GD p.227)

Gilian is drawn to Nature, to books and to Gaelic songs and stories. In school he feels the call of the outer world acutely:

> When hail or rain rattled on the branches, when snow in great flakes settled down or droves of cattle for distant markets went bellowing through the street, it was with difficulty the boy kept himself to his seat and did not rise and run out where his fancy so peremptorily called. (GD p.119)

Gilian is a member of a small borrowing library and reads anything the lady who runs the library will allow him: Mysteries of Udolpho, Thaddeus of Warsaw, Moll Flanders, Roderick Random, Belinda and Robinson Crusoe. The parts he likes best are the parts he makes up himself after the written adventure has come to an end. He wants to read the poetry of Walter Scott after having been impressed with it at school, but the librarian thinks he is too young for poetry. It is interesting that Scott is introduced here only to be dismissed. The popular conception of Scott as a Romantic poet and novelist overshadowed another substantial emphasis in his work: his understanding of Scotland. It is not possible to tell whether Gilian could have understood more of Waverley or Rob Roy than the dashing adventures through the Highlands, and seen how both novels have already foreseen the kind of society in which he finds himself, where the hero is severely restricted. However, Scott, one of the few potential models Gilian could have used, is denied him. (Munro shows quite clearly that both Scots and Gaelic models are denied Gilian.) Even if he had known Scott, it is more than possible that he would have responded like Sentimental Tommy.

The final influence on Gilian's imagination is his relationship with Gaelic culture. He already knows some of its tales and is indeed thinking of them when he meets Black Duncan, the sailor, who is presented to Gilian in almost magical terms. Black Duncan tells Gilian of his adventures in what are imaginary worlds. Besides Black Duncan, Gilian meets Nan who sings to him the old songs thus bringing to him "new and potent joy." (GD p.98) Gilian recognises

that just as he becomes whatever role he adopts, so Nan "is The Rover" when she sings. (GD p.100) Clearly there is an identity between Gilian and Nan; it remains to be seen how close it is. Apart from Nature and books, Gilian's friendship with Nan and Black Duncan represents another world which stimulates Gilian's creativity and presents him with the hope of his calling which is almost universally denied in his ordinary world.

However, the negative aspect of Gilian's dreaming soon becomes apparent. This aspect is related to the subject already touched on - the tension between activity and passivity, which provoked the fight between Gilian and Islay. Gilian's imagination grows in inverse proportion to his will to act.

Hints that this process is taking place in Gilian occur when he takes Nan on a walk through the Duke's gardens. During their conversation Nan sets up this tension between the man who acts and the man who thinks. Nan prefers men who act but Gilian knows that though she says she does not like "the kind of boy" he is, she did recognise in him a kinkdred spirit when she sang for him on board the "Jean". (GD p.151) However, Nan is annoyed with Gilian when the heron's nest that he promised to show her turns out to exist only in his imagination. There is a nest, but Gilian never climbed up to verify whether or not it belonged to a heron! He did not check the nest because he did not want to be disappointed should it have been the nest of a less splendid bird. Gilian is using his imagination to insulate himself from reality. Instead of enhancing reality, it is falsifying it. Indeed it is sentimentalising reality because it takes its co-ordinates from the world as he would like it to be, not the world as it is. And Nan is not impressed by this for she asked him if he climbed the tree "looking him through with eyes that then and always wrenched the prosaic truth from him." (GD p.154)

The most startling example of Gilian's indecisiveness occurs one afternoon when he is on board the "Jean" with Black Duncan and Nan. Gilian begins the afternoon by feeling ashamed of his dreaming in the presence of Nan's active nature:

> A fury at the futility of existence seized him. He would give anything to be away from this life of ease and dream, away where things were ever happening, where big deed were possible, where the admiration and desire were justified. (GD p.187)

But Black Duncan seeing his perturbation, says he will tell another story. He asks if Gilian is frightened by things that are not there. Gilian says he is and Black Duncan assures him that this is a sign of his affinity with the old world. Duncan relates his tale of an encounter with the supernatural and at the end, Duncan makes it clear that he was destined for that encounter. He thereby implies that the power of the old world may still be felt. This possibility so arouses Gilian that he jumps off the ship onto the shore. As he comes to, he realises that a gathering storm will sink the "Jean" in a short time. A bridge has been dislodged and is careering downstream, set to collide with the "Jean" at the mouth of the river. Gilian sees all this through an unreasonable detachment. He runs down to the boat to warn Black Duncan who responds by loosing the boat from her mooring and allows her to be driven by the wind. Unfortunately, the ship is headed straight for a rock and will founder if she hits it. The seamen cry to Gilian and point but he cannot understand their meaning. As he follows the boat's progress and realises its danger, he anticipates in his imagination what will happen when the ship founders. Indulgently, he wishes he could be a hero and save the ship. Just then he sees Islay push out in a small boat and make for the distressed ship. The seamen had been trying to tell Gilian of the boat's existence, but he was so wrapped up in dreams, it never occurred to him that the possibility of action was real:

> Then the whole folly of his conduct, the meaning of the seamen's cries, the obvious and simple thing he should have done came to Gilian - he discovered himself the dreamer again. A deep contempt for himself came over him. . . (GD p.203-4)

Gilian's contempt only lasts as long as it takes him to get home. He relates the adventure to the General and the Cornal. They think his use of "the boy" as he narrates the story is a modest way of referring to himself, and this is confirmed to them when, halfway through the story, Gilian switches to first person singular narration. Gilian can relate what happened to Islay and how he felt better than Islay could himself, but Gilian cannot be Islay. Gilian had the same opportunity to help as Islay did but his imagination dominated reality and let him down again.The old General finds the excitement too much for him, in addition to the disappointing knowledge that Gilian has been proved the dreamer again. He takes to his bed and dies shortly afterwards.

Thus book one ends on this pessimistic note. Gilian has talent but because he places more importance on dreams than reality, he actually endangers life. In the second book, these aspects of his character are developed to their conclusion but Munro steers the book away from tragedy, which this last episode perhaps suggests, and the book ends on a note of unfulfilled promise. The plot now centres around his romantic relationship with Nan and his rivalry with Islay for her affections. Gilian's inability to control his imagination is first seen in book two when he hears that Nan has returned from Edinburgh and is expected at church on Sunday. Gilian works himself into a state of rapture in the church, imagining he hears her voice coming from a pew behind him where the Turners usually sit. After the service, he realises that the pleasure he experienced was due entirely to his own imagination, as Nan had not been in church at all.

Islay, however, is there. He has joined the army and is on leave. He visits Nan at Maam House and declares his love for her. Gilian who has been eavesdropping, hears this and thinks how fine it would be to be Islay in love with Nan! Gilian is only slightly depressed by Islay's success and soon thinks himself an eligible lover for Nan. The plot falls out (rather oddly) that General Turner arranges a marriage for his daughter without informing Nan. Not knowing her father has picked Islay for her, Nan decides to elope with Gilian, who is entranced by the idea and not the reality. He finds himself hoping Nan will take cold feet. Nan finds that Gilian is not sufficiently alive to the romantic possibilities of the situation for her liking. :

> "I was- I was- kissing you a score of times in fancy and all the time you were willing in the actual fact. (GD p.334)

On their wanderings they find the old, broken-down summer sheiling and Gilian is perfectly happy. Immediately he conjures up the people who dwelt there and the atmosphere of domesticity that surrounded them. Gilian thinks the land melancholy because it has lost its people but in his imagination he is able to people the glens and to bring the old customs and culture to life again. (GD p.336) In Gilian's final debacle, we catch glimpses of how his imagination could have grown strong but as it had no guidance, dreams are punctured by reality, which finally breaks in on Gilian when Islay finds Nan and is accepted by her, after suitable protestations.

Even though Nan marries Islay, Gilian's irresponsibe imagination confirms him in the the belief that Nan loves him, not Islay. Even Miss Mary cannot make Gilian see what has happened. Out of the experience has come one positive result. Gilian has written a poem. It is one of the few things that Gilian has done on his own

initiative and his guardians wish to put a stop to it immediately. Gilian has written about "love and idleness among the moor and heather." (GD p.398) Although the love was wholly illusory, just as was his heroism on the day the boat sank, the utterly paradoxical thing is that to the readers of the poem, the emotions and actions are real in every aspect. Munro steps into the story at this point:

> It was the first of those heart-wrung fancies that went to the making of the volume that lies before me as I write - the familiar lament for the lost "Maid of the Moor" that shepherds are still singing on his native hills. (GD p.398)

There is no development or explanation of this startling conclusion to Gilian's story, like so many other aspects of the novel, no interpretation is made by the author. In fact none of the authors referred to in this chapter explicitly articulate the problem of the lack of a sustaining culture. Yet it does explain implicitly the prominence given to Gilian's dreaming. His dreaming is the result of his imagination which seems to have no relation to the ordinary world. Yet finally, Munro seems to imply that everyone in the book has been making wrong evaluations about Gilian's imagination. Instead of seeing it as something to be ignored or something that should be disciplined to the common uses of imagination, characters should have seen it as a gift which marked Gilian out as a creative artist. Such was the cultural decline of Gilian's society, however, that there was no one left who could recognise his talent. Even the narrator himself is diffident about making this connexion; the conclusion stated here is an indirect implication of Munro's work. However, it is a conclusion which seeks to harmonise a series of partially articulated and unresolved issues which lie below the ostensible plot. Even so, it is difficult to know exactly what Munro means by it.

Does Munro mean that though Gilian would never be able to stand in relation to the ordinary world as most people do, this different standpoint allows him to produce art? Is he suggesting that Gilian is able to find a role in society by writing songs from the experience of the people which the people recognise and sing? Or because they are "fancies", is Munro implying that they are worthless, mere "whaup in the heather" romances, the Highland Kailyard? Munro's final attitude to Gilian is difficult to gauge. The last image of Gilian with Miss Mary directs us back to Gilian as a small boy:

> She looked at her dreamer and stifled a sigh. Then she saw her brothers in the doorway, silent, and her hand went down and met his and fondled it for his assurance as on the day he first stood, the frightened stranger, on that floor, and she had sheltered his shyness in the folds of her bombazine gown. (GD p.400)

It's almost as if Munro is saying that the boy has not grown up and is still in need of adult protection. And yet there is the book of poetry. Is it perhaps that the only model that Gilian can find for his imagination is that of the wonderstruck, instinctive child, before society began to impose patterns on his behaviour? Certainly the return to childhood is a prominent theme in many Scottish novels. Munro gives one reason why this preoccupation should be so intense, perhaps. The unclouded vision of the child must become the touchstone of artistic integrity to all those potential artists, who grew up without meeting a literary tradition which might have helped them develop. Instead they were told that literature was a worthless pursuit. When they found nothing in external reality to correspond to the inner experience, they have to return to the sure intimation of their gift - the untramelled imagination of the child.

Is Gilian a "dolt or a deep one?" (GD p.234) Like most other issues in the novel, Munro leaves the question open but the strength of the novel lies in the fact that he raises the questions at all. This book is like a negative of Highland River. It has the same preoccupations and hints at many of the same conclusions but Munro is not able to progress from negative to positive. MacDiarmid's analysis of the matter is still very helpful:

> Neil Munro is the lost leader of Scottish Nationalism. . . He is a promise that has not been kept and while it is not permissible, and perhaps not possible, to describe here just how and why it came to be broken, I may speak of such a thing as a disabling fear of life, a soul-destroying tyranny of respectability,. . .
> So I think unworthy hesitations - whatever their nature, economic, moral, psychological - have made Neil Munro "unequal to himself".[9]

Too much blame should not be left at Munro's feet, however. When he was writing, critical appreciation of Scottish literature itself was low. If Munro, the artist, could but dimly see what was going on, it was little wonder that friends did not understand either and encouraged his talents in the wrong direction. As Anne Smith has pointed out in a reappraisal of Munro, Norman Bruce confirmed this view in an earlier Scotsman article by quoting from Munro's diary and commenting:

> [The entry was] an anathema against those (unspecified) who had encouraged him to pursue the vein he had adopted in his fiction. One can only suppose that he had in mind those friends, critics and possibly publishers who had seized on his writing "in the Highland manner" and by their acclamation led him into an artistic cul-de-sac.[10]

Given this misconception of Munro's work, it is not surprising that Munro was not sure how to develop. Ultimately his talent, fine though it was, was not sufficient to re-define Scotland positively, and write with absolute authority on its culture and the relation between history and recent literature. Such an instinctively accurate, if unsure critique of Scotland's spiritual decline in the nineteenth century, makes Hugh MacDiarmid's achievement twenty years later all the more remarkable. Surely, however, Munro's work is an anticipation of that Renaissance.

By now I hope to have shown that Munro in a rather obscure way did recognise particular Scottish problems in his handling of the decline of Highland culture after the Clearances in Gilian the Dreamer. It is true that he does not deal with the effects of industry on Scotland, but as a subject pulled out of thin air it has no more relevance to him than a discussion of English problems would have had. However distantly, Munro does deal with his own set of Scottish problems. The second criticism of Munro that he took refuge in romantic illusion is discounted in Gilian the Dreamer. Munro shows the debilitating effects of false realities on society and on Gilian. He is quite well aware that romantic self-indulgence has dangers which are to be recognised and condemned.

In arguing against this double criticism I hope to have shown that these criticisms are not illuminating entrances to Munro's work, which so surpasses their expectations. Gilian the Dreamer has as an instinctive knowledge of the decline of Scottish society and its baleful effects on the potential artist as have The House with the Green Shutters and Gillespie. Most criticism of Munro admits he has "skill" or "craft" but the extent of his ability has never been widely understood. While Brown and Hay have to end their novels in tragedy, Munro is not willing to take that way out. In his novel

Gilian becomes a poet but of what ability we do not know. Munro is confronted on all sides with problems which he refuese to simplify, but at last he finds it impossible to reconcile the romantic and the realistic for any length of time. For Munro there are no questions, only instinctive, perhaps subconscious, interrogative shadows.

J M Barrie, whose name is so often disparagingly linked with the Kailyard, provides an outstanding example of the themes which we have been discussing. In Sentimental Tommy Barrie maintains intellectual control over his novel and his sentiment is less obtrusive than in other parts of his work.[11] It is futile to deny that there were grave inadequacies in Barrie's imagination. However, when Barrie does refrain from sentimentality, he does give a full and shrewd account of provincial Scottish society and the gifted but reckless child who grows up there.

The village society Barrie presents in Sentimental Tommy is riddled with deception and self-deception. Barrie's attitude to Thrums is ambivalent. In the main he describes the malice and misery of the inhabitants, who are not unlike those of Barbie. Critics who speak of Brown's work being thrown out of balance by the unrelenting evil will find a similar emphasis in this novel, disguised a little by the black humour and sentimentality. There are times, however, when Barrie describes another side of the village: he admires the grit of the people who work there in extremely hard conditions:

> Grand, patient, long-suffering fellows these men were, up at five, summer and winter, foddering their horses, maybe, hours before there would be

> food for themselves, miserably paid, housed like cattle, and when the rheumatism seized them, liable to be flung aside like a broken graip. As hard was the life of the women: coarse food, chaff beds, damp clothes their portion; their sweethearts in the service of masters who were reluctant to fee a married man. (ST p.190)

The description of the hard life of the farm labourer has more in common with the writing of Communist novelist James Barke in The Land of the Leal than it has with the Kailyard, to say nothing of the way in which the rhythms of the passage so strikingly anticipate the prose of Lewis Grassic Gibbon. A passage such as this shows that life in late nineteenth century Kirriemuir is not so far removed from life in early twentieth century Arbuthnott, as it is sometimes made to seem by the distance between Kailyard and Renaissance. Although Barrie sympathises with these inhabitants, at other times, for other faults, he is brutally unforgiving. He notes that the gossip of Thrums "is still preserved in that Bible for week-days of which all little places have their unwritten copy, one of the wisest of books, but nearly every text in it has cost a life." (ST p.125-6) Thus Barrie condemns self-righteousness in his apt Bible metaphor, which shows the authority of gossip and his final statement shows the callousness of those concerned as they diminish human suffering until it merely becomes received wisdom.

Although curiosity, secrecy and the domination of gossip have their comical side, it is the more unpleasant consequences of their prevalence which Barrie studies in Thrums. Aaron Latta, Tommy and Elspeth's guardian, their mother's first lover, who submitted to Tommy's father in the contest for Jean Myles, has ruined his life by imposing on his actions the interpretation which he thinks would have been put on them by the people of Thrums. Because he

submitted to Tommy's father without a fight but with rather despicable alacrity, he judges himself by Thrums standards to have betrayed his manhood. Aaron accepts this as inevitable. Afterwards he lives a life of loneliness, regret and bitter self-accusation, emotions which bring him constant pain, as he surrounds himself with the furnishings which were to have been his and Jean's when they married. Aaron lives a life of continual penance. If we think he is self-indulgent, perhaps he is; perhaps it is his way of coping with an action he regrets. Perhaps he has managed to retain some dignity by forestalling Thrums' opinion and gossip by imposing the judgement on himself before they have the chance. It is worth noting that in thinking that there is no forgiveness for him in Thrums, Aaron is almost certainly right. He discusses the matter with Auchterlonie, a reasonably sympathetic man:

> "Did I ever say you was a shamed man, Aaron?"
> "Am I not?" the warper asked quietly; and
> Auchterlonie hung his head. (ST p.120)

The community is so small, the rules by which it governs itself are so well-known, no one needs to tell Aaron what people are saying about him. He knows and he makes its reality come true in his own life.

The second life which Thrums destroys is that of The Painted Lady - the nickname given to Grizel's mother. She is an Englishwoman, an outsider, one who will never be fully admitted to the community just because she is too different. Even her use of make up (paint) is a distinguishing feature, which prompts her derogatory nickname. Because Barrie tells much of this woman's life through her child, it is not easy to be precise about the exact nature of her circumstances. Grizel tells the doctor that "bad men used to come to see her at night." (ST p.332) What is clear is that after an unhappy love-affair which led to the illegitimate birth of Grizel,

her mother took her to Scotland to search fruitlessly for her father. They settled in Thrums and increasingly events caught up with Grizel's mother who suffered a mental breakdown, took to drink and either began a series of affairs or became a prostitute. This woman's situation is reminscent of Morag Strang's in Gillespie. Barrie's chosen method of narration, through the consciousness of a child, should not distract us from the corruption being described. When The Painted Lady dies and the full extent of Grizel's circumstances is made known to the reader, it also comes to light that the people of Thrums had been aware of the situation and had done nothing about it, other than to make it the subject of riveting gossip. Grizel has always been injured by this sort of talk. Here is what Barrie says about the doctor, by no means a malicious character:

> like many he had heard of men visiting the Painted Lady by stealth, and he had only wondered, with other gossips, who they were. (ST p.333)

The doctor may be held guilty for what he did not do but as the men who used Grizel's mother were present at her funeral, and therefore people known in the district, and yet not identified as guilty ones, hypocrisy is shown to be one of the characteristics of Thrums.

We have seen how in the case of Aaron Latta, the customs of Thrums, proving too difficult for one man to keep, became the means of his continued suffering as he bound himself to the unstated consequences of his actions. What is unique about Aaron's case is that he admitted breaching the code. For the rest of the inhabitants of Thrums, deception makes it possible to conform outwardly to social rules but inwardly to bend, break or avoid them. Only by deception can people exist in Thrums. Even the

minister's wife deceives her husband by buying her son storybooks of which his father would not approve:

> (Mr and Mrs Dishart were very fond of each other, but there were certain little matters that she thought it unnecessary to trouble him about.) (ST p.213)

Miss Ailie deceives her sister's lover - Mr McLean - by continuing to write to him under her sister's name even though her sister has died, simply because she cannot bear to tell the truth in case the source of her pleasure, his letters, might dry up. Tommy's mother provides the most fantstic example of deception. When she was poor and ill in London her main delight was to write spiteful letters of deception to Thrums telling the people there how rich and satisfied she was.

What these three venial examples have in common is that real pleasure is derived from a false situation. One of the reasons Mr Dishart loves his wife is because he thinks she is not the sort of woman who gives story books to children. This is false. She is precisely that sort of woman. Miss Ailie receives pleasure from reading the letters of Ivie MacLean. But they are not written for her but for her sister. Jean Sandys derives pleasure from telling people she is wealthy. She is not. She is miserably poor. These people are not living in the real world which is too hard for them; they are distorting it and then living in the distortion. In Thrums people distort too much and their relation with the real world becomes tenuous as they deal with it at one or two removes. In Thrums neighbour deceives neighbour, wife deceives husband, friend deceives friend. As Neil Munro observed people using dreams to make reality bearable, Barrie observes them being forced into mutual deception to create a socially acceptable reality.

If it was Brown who brought this disease to public attention, it was Barrie who had already probed its symptoms until he succeeded in producing a perceptive and comprehensive diagnosis of an unhealthy society in which a spontaneous, natural, instinctive response to life had become impossible. The child, Grizel, who is perplexed by the gossip which surrounds her illegitimacy and suggests that because of it, she is incapable of being good, can find no one who will explain this to her. As with Aaron, although no one tells her what Thrums' opinion of her is, everyone, by their silence endorses it. Grizel, desparate to know what is really going on, cries out, "Oh, why is everyone afraid to tell me the truth!" (ST p.343). This small community has become ingrown in the worst possible way. It has a code of strict moral and social standards. Any deviation from this code beomes the subject of gossip. Corrosive curiosity spurs people to get to the bottom of any action which is not routine for their neighbour, to see if it might be a subject for gossip. What people fear most is that they should become so discussed and consequently they deceive their neighbours, their families and themselves to prevent this from happening. And so a society is established where appearance and reality have parted company to such an extent that all sorts of duplicity, neglect and madness exist in the vacuum. As far as malice goes, Thrums is a mirror-image of Barbie but because Barrie plays down the nastiness of it all by his use of children and comedy, the underlying similarity has not always been recognised.

Given his own predilections, Tommy Sandys could not have grown up in a more unhelpful society. From earliest childhood, Tommy comforts himself by pretending. Tommy's normal childhood delight in playing games with reality is the curse which has Thrums in its stranglehold. Thus the dilemma is set up. Will Tommy learn to distinguish between games and reality and emerge into full and mature adulthood? Or will he enjoy his games so much that they become his only reliable way of coping with reality? Will he live

in the real world or will he cope with life at one remove? Tommy has been given two talents which bear on this choice - imagination and self-consciousness. His imagination only makes his ability to distinguish between illusion and reality more difficult because his imagination makes illusion more attractive than reality. His imagination is balanced by his self-consciousness which he possesses to an alarming degree. It is the possession of this quality which is a master-stroke for Barrie, because it enables us to see Tommy's dilemma from his own point of view and therefore accentuates the dilemma. Unlike most of the inhabitants of Thrums, who are blind to their self-deception and their deception of others, Tommy is always aware of his deception of others and knows he should stop it but there is nothing in him that wills him to stop it. His facility for adjusting reality to suit himself makes his life pleasant, for it makes him feel in control of it. Why should he sacrifice this for reality?

There are two checks on his rampant imagination; one is his relationship with his sister and the other is his friendship with Grizel. Tommy cares very much that his sister should approve of him, but she is a pious soul and as Tommy often displeases her, he has to "interpret" his behaviour and deceive his sister into accepting his interpretation as the truth. When Tommy promises both Elspeth and Grizel a present from the Fair and only has enough money to buy one present, he gets out of the difficulty by giving the present to Grizel's mother, thus pleasing both girls. Grizel hugs him and Elspeth gets annoyed. Her annoyance makes her ask suspiciously if Tommy always meant to give the present to the Painted Lady. Tommy is grieved by this unworthy interpretation of his action and sheds a few tears. Elspeth believes he is crying because he is good, but she still wants to make sure of her primacy in Tommy's affections, so she asks him if he liked Grizel's hug. Tommy's reply shows the way he can outflank Elspeth's control of him, but it also reflects his increasing inability to react

spontaneously as his increasing self-consciousness makes him seem to himself an actor in every situation:

> "But you didna like it?" Elspeth asked, in terror.
> "No, of course I didna like it, but-"
> "But what, Tommy?"
> But I liked her to like it," he admitted, and by-and-by he began to laugh hysterically. "I'm no sure what I'm laughing at," he said, "but I think it's at mysel'." He may have laughed at himself before, but this Muckley* is memorable as the occasion on which he first caught himself doing it. The joke grew with the years, until he sometimes laughed in his most emotional moments, suddenly seeing himself in his true light. But it had become a bitter laugh by that time. (ST p.193-4)

* According to the Concise Scots Dictionary, a Muckley or Mucklie is a fair held on Mucklie Friday. It is a late nineteenth century term, used in Kincardineshire, Angus and Fife.

Grizel, Tommy's contemprorary and friend in Thrums, is upright, sincere and acute. She knows when Tommy is being sincere and when he is not and will have nothing to do with him if he is being insincere although this is difficult for her as she likes Tommy. Grizel is the moral centre of the book and the reaction of other characters to her is a measure of their goodness and maturity. Tommy too is measured by his attitude to Grizel:

> He, indeed, had as little in common with Grizel, for most conspicuous of his traits was the faculty of stepping into other people's shoes

> and remaining there until he became someone else; his individuality consisted in having none, while she could only be herself and was without tolerance for those who were different; (ST p.174)

What Grizel detests most is the temporary sympathy she elicits from Tommy. He is interested in her and so imagines what it would be like to be her and this enables him to enter sympathetically into her condition. What annoys Grizel, however, is that he does not do this for her sake but for the pleasure he receives from extending his imagination in this way. He is a parasite on Grizel's experience. When Tommy wonders whether he should present the fairing to Elspeth or Grizel and spends the time enjoying the projected reactions of both, Grizel brings him down to earth by pointing out that he must do two unpleasant things: he must decide and he must disappoint one of the girls:

> "Are you to give it to Elspeth?" she asked, with the horrid directness that is so trying to an intellect like Tommy's. (ST p.192)

Elspeth and Grizel are the only checks on Tommy's imagination, and neither is successful. Elspeth is easily countered by Tommy because all she really wants is protection and if Tommy gives her that she is happy. Her own selfishness fails to check Tommy. With Grizel, it is her selflessness which fails to check Tommy, basically because it is irrelevant to Tommy's selfish ambition. Grizel knows where Tommy's faults lie. She knows him to be incapable of spontaneous, sincere response. Therefore she knows that he is constitutionally incapable of returning her love and all her love can do is enter his world and play according to his rules. This is the closest she can come to him in affording him a source of pleasure, even if it is spurious.

These checks fail to accomodate Tommy to reality and no one else has any power over him. Fiction on the other hand has immense power over Tommy. Significantly, when he encounters Waverley, his first Scott novel, his imagination expands and feasts on the idea of the Romantic Jacobite for weeks. He organises his friends to act out scenes from the novel. That Barrie should chooses this Scott-hero for Tommy to imitate is fascinating and helps establish Tommy as Edward Waverley's literary descendant. Can it be coincidence that the scene Barrie has Tommy re-enact is the famous scene where Waverley hears Flora MacIvor singing in her Highland landscape, the scene which firmly establishes Waverley's romantic - and to the extent that it is romatic - unreliable imagination? The irony implicit in the passage throws doubt on Waverley's response to a romantic set-piece and in Tommy's version, it becomes full-blown parody. Corp, Tommy's friend, is not used to the elevated vocabulary:

> "Weep not my royal scone - "
> ("Scion.") [whispers Tommy helpfully]
> (ST p.235)

Barrie consistently emphasises the fact that the children are playing through their comic whispers to each other about what to do next. But for Tommy the game is more real than life itself.

He is exactly like Edward Waverley in interpreting externals in the light of his own imagination, albeit at a much less exalted level. Though in different degrees Barrie and Scott show the silliness of doing this (in one case it is a children's game and in the other it is a calculated move on the part of Ian Vohr to enlist and exploit Waverley's sympathies), they both depict heroes who show no ability to discriminate between imagination and reality. Waverley is taught later in the novel to make such discriminations. Tommy never wants to discriminate. Perhaps the last word on Waverley

should go to Gavinia, a friend of Tommy's, who has read the novel and been disappointed that Waverley has not succeeded in Flora's affections:

> "Because he was just a sumph," answered Gavinia, scornfully. "If he had been like Fergus, or the chiel in Ivanhoe, he wouldna have ta'en a 'No.'" (ST p.216)

Gavinia's opinion of Waverley and Fergus points to the general distinction which modern critics of Scott make when discussing his heroes. It seems likely that Barrie has also understood this distinction and its implications for Tommy's character. In the parody scene, Barrie is doing something quite complicated. He is making a critical point about the character of Waverley as he picks up that scene's ironic portrayal of Waverley and he is expanding that into parody. Into this parody he places his own sentimental hero who, in much more foolish circumstances, exhibits an exaggerated version of Waverley's behaviour. So Barrie draws a parallel between Waverley and Tommy, which deliberately draws attention to their undoubted literary relationship. According to Barrie the mighty are indeed fallen, when an idealistic and romantic young soldier is succeeded by a boy for whom idealism and romance are merely postures to be taken up and laid down at will. Barrie is unmistakably cynical about the worth of his hero; again, a perhaps subconsconscious comment is being made on Scottish cultural values.

Although Barrie is well aware of the extent of Tommy's imagination, he also points out that there is a way in which it interacts with the real world. Most of the time, Tommy does not want anything to do with reality but he is uncannily aware of how people live and think and when it suits him he uses that knowledge for his own ends. Because of his knowledge of Thrums, he earns precious

pennies to spend at the Muckley. Towards the end of Sentimental Tommy, Barrie introduces a new factor into Tommy's story. So far he has given a very detailed and perceptive account of the boy's personality, and the evidence of a sophisticated, if unreliable, imagination does not make it surprising when Barrie drops hints that Tommy will be a writer. The episode in which this becomes apparent also emphasises Tommy's chameleon-like individuality. As some of the inhabitants of Thrums were illiterate, if they wanted to send a letter, they had to ask the school-teacher to do this for them. Writing and composition were left up to him. Tommy usurps this position and begins to write letters which seem to have been written by the senders themselves; they do not feel as stiff as the teacher's letters. They are also much more successful in accomplishing their ends than were the schoolmaster's. When Cathro, the schoolmaster, asks Tommy how he manages this, Tommy says, "I think I thought I was Betsy at the time." (ST p.390) It is Tommy's judgement about what should or should not go into a letter that marks him out as a writer:

> "I was near putting in another beautiful bit about weeping-willows."
> "Well, why didn't you?". . .
> "It was because, though it was a beautiful thing in itself, I felt a servant lassie wouldna have thought o't. I was sweer," he admitted, with a sigh; then firmly, "but I cut it out."
> (ST p.391)

Tommy now weighs up words in the same way he weighs up potential actions, yet he has no true feeling for those to whom he is writing. Again Tommy obtains pleasure through the working of his imagination. He is full of vanity. Cathro seizes on this aspect of Tommy's character and brands him there and then as "Sentimental Tommy". Cathro is accusing him of writing purely to produce a sympathetic response in his readers, and although to achieve this

his use of language is meticulously judged, Cathro insinuates that in terms of literary worth, his achievement is not profound, and is gained at the expense of emotion which he cannot feel, but which he can only imitate in fiction.

Tommy is not a reliable enough worker to gain university entrance qualifications, but he is entered for the Blackadder Prize which Cathro feels sure he will win, as the boy entered against him is competent but unimaginative. The Blackadder Prize would provide Tommy with a high and respected position in Thrums (just as winning the Raeburn elevated John Gourlay in Barbie society). Characteristically, however, Tommy's imagination exhibits its inability to function to order. He searches for the word which eludes him and will not accept any approximation. As he is searching he is unaware that he has run out of exam time. Cathro is furious about this, but Mr Ogilvy, a minister whose eccentricity is a disguise for far-sightedness, finds in Tommy's behaviour the promise of genius. It is interesting that as Tommy is being criticised, one of the epithets thrown at him is "sumph" - the same one used of Waverley when he had failed to make his dreams come true. (ST p.410)

At this stage, Barrie ends Sentimental Tommy to take up Tommy's story again in Tommy and Grizel (1900). This novel deals with the intense complexities of Tommy's imagination in adulthood. His faults only worsen and are more dangerous for those who love him. The desire for a return to childhood is again prominent but Barrie finds no means of resolving the problems Tommy's imagination causes and the ending of the novel is among the most bizarre of any discussed in this study.

All four novelists described in this chapter display a surprising degree of unanimity in their presentation of the position of the gifted individual in Scottish society. Perhaps the most striking characteristic of the towns and villages which are described is their triviality. Grown men and women idle their time away dreaming about their youth or gossiping about their neighbours. Finding it difficult to live in such repressive circumstances, people resort to deception no matter the emotional or financial cost. This analysis prompts one to ask what brought such a situation about.

This is not a subject on which Barrie dwells, but Munro, Brown and Hay offer two suggestions. Implicitly, Brown and Munro point to a lack of political power, while Hay suggests religious causes. All the novels present a microcosm of Scottish society by depicting local manifestations of institutions which, it is commonly argued, exhibit a peculiar and specific national identity for the Scots: the legal system, the schools and the church and to a lesser extent the universities and the Scottish regiments. In a Kailyard novel like Beside the Bonnie Briar Bush by Ian MacLaren, these institutions are shown to help the poor but gifted lad o' pairts to a full realisation of his talents. But in all the novels in this study, exactly the opposite is the case. Dominies, ministers and professors, wittingly or unwittingly, combine to repress and spoil individual talent. The great traditions of Scotland have fragmented and also lost their power to stimulate. They are no longer alive and able to absorb and interpret changes in contemporary society and instead they have become formal, innately conservative and inimical to change. Occasionally these institutions come alive again through the brilliance of one individual but he is never representative of his colleagues. The traditions of Scotland are no longer guarded by the insititutions.

Munro and Brown anticipate to some extent Edwin Muir's arguments about Scottish culture set out in Scott and Scotland (1936).[12] Though they do not use the term they often describe what Muir means by the phrase "the dissociation of sensibility." Instead of Scottish affairs being the concern of a Scottish government , they are the peripheral concerns of an English government as Scotland becomes ever more the junior partner in the union with England. With no national direction, Scottish institutions became isolated from each other, losing corporate strategy, by losing corporate identity. The effects of the Disruption of the Scottish church in 1843 and the ensuing chaos for education have been recorded by historians.[13] The fragmentation of the church and the extent of English control over education meant that these two institutions had lost the cohesion necessary to maintain an articulate Scottish identity.

Thus by the end of the nineteenth century, novels of the period depict the nadir of this historical process. The country, without adequate political expression has tried to preserve what it has, but in doing so has grown in upon itself and this national introversion has led to a debased and superficial quality of national life, where Scottish identity is located in external ritual, not in internal attitudes. As Scotland's old leaders faded away, new ones emerged, not lawyers or teachers or ministers, but business men. This is where Brown and Hay take notice. When Gillespie uses his financial power virtually to enslave the fishermen of Brieston, Hay shows how capitalism enforces poverty and brutalises the lives it oppresses; it is no wonder that the fishermen set fire to the boats which had so recently been their own, so deep is their alienation and their desire for revenge.

In a society where economic and material prosperity is seen as, if not the greatest good, then certainly a very respectable status to

have achieved, a quality as nebulous as the creative imagination, unless it is directed into designing machines or expanding a business, is little regarded; it has no cash value. Throughout this study it has been contended that the heroes of the novels are artists or potential artists because they have a gift which is greater and more full of life than anything else in their experience. However, the possession of such a gift becomes a burden, for none of the boys know what to do with it, and instead of being treated as cygnets, they are seen as ugly ducklings. Self-consciousness very quickly ensues and they feel acutely out of place, their circumstances being made worse by their sensitivity to all experience, especially insults. To control their self-consciousness they begin to adopt roles - a normal phenomenon of adolescence which becomes unhealthy for them for they never emerge from role to reality. They are looking for someone on whom they can model themselves, someone whose gifts will correspond to their own. Gilian who has the gift to be a poet finds no satisfaction in trying to be a soldier. He and the others never discover a tradition of Scottish culture and this severely handicaps their artistic development.

As their imaginations have nothing to feed on apart from their own immature experiences, they grow misshapen and a common danger is that they become either a writer or a mature adult but not both or in John and Eoghan's case, not either - their ability is so much part of their personality that unless they develop as a unity, the boys will be destroyed. Gilian and Tommy manage to live longer but they too have been stunted by the one-sided development of their imaginations. Finally they cannot cope with the real world. Although their writing produces a perceptive grasp of the human condition, they do not succeed in understanding themselves. Because their talent is a key factor in their personalities and because they have no framework which explains to them the significance of their talent, they do not understand this part of

themselves and do not learn to differentiate the functions of the imagination. Instead of using imagination to create art, they sometimes use it to try to create life by pretending the worlds they dream of are real. For these boys, to be a man is to be a writer, and if society so despises their gift that they cannot cultivate it, then they will fail to emerge into manhood. John and Eoghan die before they are grown up and although Gilian and Tommy survive into adulthood, emotionally they are still children, living in a time when their perceptions were relatively free from external influences. Although the authors of these novels suggest, sometimes haltingly, what has gone wrong with Scottish society, they do not offer any solutions, and destruction or disability is the inevitable end of their works - a fearsome comment on their analyses. Hay alone anticipates a new set of values which might instil meaning and direction into a chaotic and lost society.

Taken as a group, one of the most remarkable features of these novels is the unanimity of their authors' conclusions. They quite clearly anticipate the Renaissance critique of pre-First World War Scotland, propounded by MacDiarmid, Muir, Gunn and others. After the attenuated pessimism of the period from Barrie to Hay, MacDiarmid's sudden articulate expression of a rigorous critique of culture and proposals to reinvigorate it are welcome:

> The whole tendency of such a society as is to be found in modern Scotland is towards the average, the lukewarm, the mediocre. Any Promeathean opposition to the vast tendency of the time in such a society is a mere "charging of malaria with a bayonet."[14]

That was the position in which Brown and the others had found themselves. Thanks to MacDiarmid's energy, however, in another

decade or so, many Scots were encouraged to rethink their ideas on Scottish culture and apply such thinking to their art.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

1. George Douglas Brown, The House with the Green Shutters (London, 1901). Edition used edited by J T Low (Edinburgh, 1974). Future references will be abbreviated to HGS.

2. John Spiers, The Scots Literary Tradition, second revised edition (London, 1962).

3. John MacDougall Hay, Gillespie (London, 1914). Edition used with introduction by Bob Tait and Isobel Murray (Edinburgh, 1979). Future references will be abbreviated to G.

4. Bob Tait and Isobel Murray, 'Introduction' to Gillespie ibid., pp.vii-xvi and Alan Bold, Modern Scottish Literature (London, 1983), chapter 18, especially pp.118-119.

5. Francis Russell Hart, The Scottish Novel (London,1978), pp.137-139 and Kurt Wittig, The Scottish Tradition in Literature (Edinburgh, 1958), pp.273-274.

6. Neil Munro, Gilian the Dreamer (London,1899). Edition used (Edinburgh, 1905). Future references will be abbreviated to GD.

7. See Neil Munro, The Looker-On (Edinburgh, 1933), p.282 and Tom Scott, 'A Note on J MacDougall Hay', Scotia Review, 7 (1974), 35-39 (p.35).

8. Hugh MacDiarmid, 'Neil Munro' in Contemporary Scottish Studies (Edinburgh, 1976), pp.5-6 (p.6).

9. Hugh MacDiarmid, 'Neil Munro' ibid., (p.6).

10. Anne Smith, 'In search of the essential Celt' The Weekend Scotsman, 11 December 1982, p.one.

11. J M Barrie, Sentimental Tommy (London,1896). Edition used (London, 1913). Future references to this work will be abbreviated to ST.

12. Edwin Muir, Scott and Scotland (London, 1936).

13. A L Drummond and J Bulloch, The Church in Victorian Scotland 1843-74 (Edinburgh,1975), pp.3-4 and T C Smout, A Century of the Scottish People 1830-1950 (London,1986), pp.213-214.

14. Hugh MacDiarmid, 'William Jeffrey' in Contemporary Scottish Studies (Edinburgh, 1976), pp.43-44 (p.43).

CHAPTER TWO

LORNA MOON, IAN MACPHERSON, FIONN MACCOLLA AND ERIC LINKLATER

The move towards the Renaissance is more gradual than has been supposed. This chapter shows the development that took place through the work of four authors: Lorna Moon who shows affinities with J M Barrie and the other writers of chapter one; Ian MacPherson who begins to anticipate the Renaissance more clearly; Fionn MacColla who was a doctrinaire and flawed apostle of the Renaissance; and finally Eric Linklater, the first of the major Renaissance writers who within his own work spans the gap between the Renaissance and what came before it. The writers chosen in this chapter are representative of many others who were writing at this time. John Davidson in his novels shares with Brown and Hay a bitter attitude to his society. Edwin and Willa Muir, James Barke and George Blake wrote from a Renaissance point of view and a reading of their work will substantiate many of the points made in this chapter. Throughout the work of all these writers the archetypal character outlined in the previous chapter can be seen to develop from the destabilising presence of pre-Renaissance writing to the complex consciousness which affords a valuable perspective on Scottish life.

Lorna Moon (1886-1930) was born in Strichen, Aberdeenshire and grew up there. She married an American and spent the rest of her life in the United States, where she worked for a time as a scipt-writer in Hollywood. She died of tuberculosis at the early age of 46. Among her film scripts, she left two books: one a collection of short stories, Doorways in Drumorty (USA 1925; UK 1926); the other a full-length novel, Dark Star (1929).[1] Both these volumes display a realistic but humorous, sympathetic but strangely pessimistic, sensibility. Doorways in Drumorty shows a knowledge and transcendence of the Kailyard. The title signals its alignment with Kailyard writing as it is a play on Barrie's title A Window in Thrums and the fact that Ian MacLaren's parish in Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush is called Drumtochty. The significance of this title is that it encapsulates one of the distinguishing features of the

Kailyard village: the odd and devious ways in which people conduct their relationships, where windows and doors are important means of communication. Lorna Moon is fascinated by this fact and she often studies how people communicate without actually speaking to each other. Most of the main characters in her stories are women and she perceptively reproduces their emotional lives and is aware of the ways they use to get their message across, even when society demands that they should remain silent. She is also fascinated by physical deformity and mental illness: these things often form the background of her stories. Lorna Moon's informing wit prevents her from sentimentalising her subjects too often. Her writing contains an awareness of a bleaker aspect of the rural village. But unlike Barrie she describes a depth of emotional barreness and unlike Brown, she describes a lighter side of life. She is not without faults, however, which are mainly technical. Her incredible plot in Dark Star leads her into sentimentality, a fault not so evident in the short stories. In general, though, she stands alongside Barrie and Brown in her analysis of society.

All these concerns are found in Dark Star, the story of a young girl, Nancy Pringle, brought up in Strichen (or Pitouie as it is called in the novel) who is dissatisfied with the life of the small community and seeks to transcend it by extending her knowledge, her relationships and her dreams. She is Lorna Moon's contribution to the theme of the imaginative but unreliable adolescent.

The contrast in Dark Star between reality and fantasy is at once clear and muddled. The affliction of not being sure of the difference between these two modes which usually affects the heroes of the novels considered so far, in this case affects the novelist too. Realistic elements of the novel include Nancy's personality, her surroundings and concern for the social misfits she finds there. The fantastic element is the history of the Fassefern

family and how it comes to symbolize for Nancy a means of coping with or transcending her society. However, both those elements are destabilised by the universal presence of melodrama in the plot which weakens reality and fantasy at crucial stages, and finally prevents the author from facing the logic of her own conclusions.

Nancy is presented as a helpful, imaginative girl, whose life has been limited by her grandmother's illness. When her grandmother dies, Nancy is glad because she has a little independence. However, she is curious about the circumstances of her birth. Nancy knows that she is illegitimate but she does not know which of two men her father is. Sometimes rumour has it that she is the daughter of Ramsay Gordon of Fassefern; at others, rumour says she is the daughter of Willie Weams, a local groom. Nancy is horrified by the idea of the groom and entranced by the idea of the Fasseferns, some of whom have committed suicide because of love or madness. While she is a child, Nancy has two predominant dreams: one, that she is the child of a lord, and second, that the mourning she has to wear in respect for her grandmother is actually for a lover who died in romantic circumstances. However, these dreams are not debilitating because Nancy is also shown to be a happy child and a shrewd judge of character. Her dreams are not ways of escaping, they are ways of coping with illegitimacy, mourning and loneliness. Both dreams can be abandoned when they are outstripped by events.

The dream of the dead lover is outstripped by the appearance of the Whistling Boy, the chemist's assistant, with whom Nancy falls in love. He, however, is obsessed with music and is eventually sent off to study. Nancy spends her teens being educated, finding out about her sexuality and becoming more concerned for old Mrs Anderson, with whom she lives. (Mrs Anderson is the minister's mother and is disliked by his wife; Mrs Anderson and Nancy are at

her mercy.) Much of Nancy's life is rooted in reality, but her desire for education grows out of her dreams as she wants to prepare herself for the return of Harvey, the Whistling Boy,who has become a famous pianist.

Nancy discovers the mysteries of sex when young Mrs Anderson's brother comes to stay and attempts to make love to her. Nancy does not understand the conflicting emotions she feeels and takes her problem to Divot Meg, who owns a house which was "the transient home of knights and ladies of the open road." (DS p.90) Lorna Moon does not make any comments about society as such but there does seem at least to be an implication here. Most of the people Nancy observes in Pitouie are afflicted in different degrees with self-righteousness and so they cannot help Nancy with her troubles. Life as it is lived in Pitouie does not exhaust the range of human experience. Because it is controlled by the canons of respectability as Thrums was, it cannot cope with some of the deepest and most complex human problems. Divot Meg who has been rejected by Pitouie is equipped by her suffering to give Nancy a greater conception of what it means to be human than she can find in society around her. Divot Meg is, Nancy feels, a greater person than Pitouie can contain:

> Nancy felt this. Felt that out of all Pitouie, this woman lived, this woman was neither at the beginning of life, nor at the end of it, but was still standing with firm planted feet, boisterously laughing in its very midst. (DS p.129)

Divot Meg, who in anticipating the character of Meg Menzies in Lewis Grassic Gibbon's short story 'Smeddum' also anticipates the wider, freer world view which the Renaissance embraced, listens to Nancy's story and assures her that she has not lost her virginity and advises her not to despise love.

As Nancy's knowledge of herself deepens, so does her awareness of the narrowness of the people around her. Young Mrs Anderson's treatment of her mother-in-law is becoming more sinister. Under the pretext of burning everything that would breed fleas, the minister's wife burns all Mrs Anderson's portraits and letters from her courting days. The malice of this act is not lost on Nancy who knows that the younger woman hates the older one because she is cheerful and not given to asceticism. Young Mrs Anderson would have loved to live like this but has denied herself many things becaue she felt it befitted her position. Thus she has become proud of her "virtues" and paradoxically resentful of having to be virtuous. This town is like J M Barrie's Thrums in the amount of deception which occurs in everyday life, where people conceal real feelings and pretend to spurious ones in accordance with a strict social code. In the case of young Mrs Anderson, as in Thrums, deceit leads to an inversion of moral qualities.

At the beginning of the final movement of the novel, Nancy has negotiated herself through the worst crises of adolescence and stands ready to move out into adulthood. She has been working at the Public Library for two years with Andrew Morrison, the crippled librarian. While highly observant of people round her, there is still a part of her which is unfulfilled and that is the part of her which is bound up in dreams. Old Mrs Anderson tells Nancy that love, which is what she is waiting for, will come when she least expects it. Harvey Brune returns to Pitouie and takes up residence in the castle of the Fasseferns. Nancy sees this as the fulfilment of her dreams.

Nancy and Harvey meet and a bitter-sweet relationship begins, reminiscent of the unsatisfactory relationship between Tommy and Grizel in J M Barrie's novel for when Harvey is lost to music, he is lost to Nancy. At first Nancy tries to believe that this is not

so but she soon realises she is excluded from his work. Harvey is closely related to Sentimental Tommy chiefly in the irresponsibility of his emotions. In her perception of the limitations of society and the harmfulness of dreaming, Moon ultimately shows a strong correspndence with Barrie. Harvey is in love with Nancy for as long as it suits him but finally he withdraws to his music, as Tommy withdrew to his imagination. Nancy lurches from optimism to pessimism more frequently as the relationship staggers on. Nancy leaves Harvey for a week so that he can get on with his work. In Pitouie, gossip is rife about the exact nature of Nancy's friendship with Harvey. Although her dream of Harvey is more likely to be shattered than realised, she has achieved that final transcendance of the narrow limiting society and is experiencing the passion of life of which Pitouie knows nothing.

When Harvey reappears he seems to be about to break off the relationship but finds it too difficult and instead takes Nancy to a feeing market nearby. Nancy is miserable because nothing has been resolved but she realises she cannot count on mature behaviour from Harvey:

> she could not trouble this eager little boy
> with such grown-up emotions. (DS p.240)

What happens at the feeing market only confirms the immaturity of Harvey's character. Nancy sees a negro medicine man selling his wares with the help of a white woman and Nancy immediately wonders if this could be her mother, for her mother had absconded with such a man. Harvey finds the sight repulsive and takes refuge in stereotyped opinions which distance him from the reality he sees. "God! How can a white woman do that!" (DS p.242) Nancy clearly realises that Harvey protects himself from suffering, horror and commitment in life by transmuting his experience into his music.

Because he will not face these things he will not face the commitment of love either:

> He could escape into a world of sound where nothing could follow that he did not wish to follow. But she could not do that. It was not for her to walk away from painful things. . . Something made her claim them and carry them, as if all dark and hurting things were kin to her. (DS p.268)

Fundamentally, Nancy is not the kind of person who needs to escape from reality because she cannot cope with it. Unlike Tommy or Gilian or John Gourlay, she does not escape into dreams to obscure her failure, rather she seeks in her dreams a greater purpose for her life than she can find within the limits of Pitouie. However, the last scenes of the novel entirely obscure this aspect of her character.

What happens next is melodramatic and inappropriate. The woman at the Fair was Nancy's mother, Bella Pringle, and she stays overnight at Divot Meg's, saying she has come to stay with her daughter. Bella is a drug-addict now and Divot Meg decides for Nancy's sake that it would be better if she killed her. So Divot Meg murders Bella. Then after this Harvey leaves Pitouie without proposing to Nancy. She takes a cottage on the cliffs and lives there in stunned sorrow. During this period she receives a letter from Harvey saying that he has made some money over to her and implying that this ends their relationship. Nancy takes the news badly, the old insecurity about her paternity returns and in this mood she commits suicide.

Uncannily presaging the work of Jessie Kesson as Lorna Moon does, with her observation of women, her understanding of the tragic outcome of their situations, and her ability to deal with madness and physical handicaps, it has to be said that the two deaths at the end of the novel do not seem to be the natural outcome of the plot. It is one thing for Divot Meg to be sympathetic to Nancy, it is quite another for her to expedite matters by killing Bella, even if she is in the last stages of drug addiction. It is one thing for Nancy to feel numb after the irresponsible treatment she received form Harvey; it is quite another to throw herself off the cliffs. Melodrama has taken over. The author's attitude to melodrama is inconsistent. When Nancy indulges in it over her adolescent dream of the dead lover, the author treats the situation ironically. Throughout the novel, however, there is the melodramatic theme of the doomed heroine which the author does not treat ironically. Old Mrs Anderson's attitude to Nancy is, "I sorely misdoubt, bairn, if you were born but under a dark star." (DS p.82) The notion that because of her illegitimacy she will suffer a tragic fate persists in the novel. Although the Fassefern tragedies do have a function in providing Nancy with stimulating dreams, they are also used to heighten the atmosphere of impending doom.

Throughout the novel we are asked to believe that the circumstances in Nancy's life will compel her to commit suicide. But there is as much evidence in the novel for the shrewd, hard-headed Nancy to take Harvey's money and indulge in a round the world trip before returning to Pitouie to set herself up for life. Instead of being deepened by suffering as was Divot Meg, whom Nancy so admires, Nancy caves in and commits suicide and the Fassefern motif is in evidence to persuade us that Nancy's singularity precluded any other ending to the story:

> But as [her feet] left the firm rock, flying wingless on the blue, it came to her piercingly to think: "Would Willie Weams' bastard die for this? It is a Fassefern who dies!"
>
> And as the sharp black teeth of the sea came up to meet her, she smiled. (DS p.288)

The phrase "the sharp black teeth of the sea" is repeated in order to link Nancy's death with the suicide of the mad, young laird of Fassefern earlier in the novel to give the feeling that the novel has come full-circle to its inevitable conclusion. Like the novels of chapter one, the structure of Dark Star is not comprehensive enough to include all its various aspects. Just as Moon ties down one theme, another springs loose. In Dark Star it is Nancy, the doomed heroine who gains final prominence, despite all that has been written about Nancy the pragmatist.

Dark Star presents a society depicted through the lives of various women, which reflects the same deficiencies as other small societies we have looked at. The society is controlled by the divisive concept of respectability. As respectability only includes a few actions of which human beings are capable, a large sub-section of the main group live outwardly respectable lives while inwardly living in diametric opposition to respectability. Some people are rejected altogether. If the limitation of human action does not cause actual harm, it can cause general misery because so much of a person's personality cannot find expression in society. Unlike Harvey, Nancy does not retreat when faced with this misery. Despite the problems of her childhood, she emerges into adulthood able to size people up and to take care of them. However, she does have a streak of morbidity in her nature and it becomes more apparent when, in order to compensate for not knowing about her family, she links herself to the Fasseferns with their history of madness and suicide. Nancy succumbs to the black dream

and the author succumbs to melodrama. Moon cannot resolve the novel through its realistic elements. Once again the problem of the sensitive individual and the antipathetic society is raised and observantly analysed - in more detail than has been touched on here - but like Barrie and Munro, Moon fails to follow her observations to their logical conclusions. A general interpretation of Scottish society is not pieced together out of the particular observations and, lacking this coherent framework of ideas, the final impact of the novel is dissipated by the author's limited vision.

Although characters like Divot Meg and Nancy announce a fuller view of life which the Renaissance was to champion, with Ian MacPherson we come much nearer the themes of the Renaissance.

Ian MacPherson was born in Forres in 1905 and was brought up in Glensaugh in the Mearns. He distinguished himself at school and university. Before he died in a motorcycle accident in 1944, he had written four full-length novels: Shepherds' Calendar (1931); Land of our Fathers (1933); Pride in the Valley (1936) and Wild Harbour (1936).[2] In Land of our Fathers and Pride in the Valley, MacPherson discusses the changes that took place in Highland society during the nineteenth century. Unlike Neil Munro, he does not sublimate the issue of the Clearances but faces it openly. Though he has sympathy with the crofters who were removed from their land, MacPherson also takes account of the fresh impetus given to the Highland economy by incoming Border farmers. These novels provide a detailed description of Highland society and the people who constituted it. MacPherson's first novel Shepherds' Calendar conforms to the pattern of many Scottish authors' first novels by containing a hero who is not the author but who is not entirely dissimilar from him. John Grant is a clever boy, brought up on a farm who likes reading and later goes to university. Thus he is connected to Ian MacPherson. He is connected to the

sensitive young man of the Scottish novel by having the additional qualities of an unstable temperament, an uncertainty about his role in life and no idea of how his love of words fits in with the world in which he finds himself. MacPherson's development here is typical of other Scottish writers, who when they decide to write a novel find little help from English traditions which they know and are cut off from indigenous traditions. Therefore they write about one of their most acute personal concerns: the significance of their literary ability. This happens often enough to be worthy of note. Scott has his Waverley, Stevenson his Archie Weir, Douglas Brown his John Gourlaỳ, Munro his Gilian and Linklater his Juan. It is also noticeable that these novels seem to unlock the imaginations of those who write them. A huge amount of creative energy is released which propels the author through the novel often freeing him to write what he wants to thereafter. MacPherson is no exception to this type of development as a study of his novels will show.

MacPherson's analysis of Highland society begins in Land of our Fathers which covers 1820-1850 and is continued in Pride in the Valley which though it only covers 1867-1868, adds a great deal to MacPherson's view of the Highlands. Land of our Fathers is the story of Border farmer George Graeme, who comes to Speyside to farm sheep on land from which people have been evicted. He marries Margaret Grant, the daughter of Grant of Tulvey, "a drunken spendthrift of a laird". (LF p.12) Thus MacPherson links Border traditions of determination and courage with Highland tradition of recklessness and fatalism, creating an ideal situation in which to examine two traditions.

MacPherson is not ready to accept everything in Gaelic society as being healthy and beneficial. The description of Margaret's father suggest that lairds like him were too lazy to be good managers of

land and it was through their inefficiency and their abiding interest in wars, drink and misplaced notions of honour that the land became so badly managed that it was no longer able to sustain the crofters or produce a return for the clan chiefs. Today we are more familiar with the view, based on the novels of Gunn and Crichton Smith, that there was no justification in heaven or earth for the Clearances, that a quiet, industrious people were violently evicted from their homes for no other reason than to satisfy the greed of the clan chiefs. Like Munro, MacPherson does not entirely endorse this picture of pre-Clearance bliss. Indeed at times they show a society which has almost ground to a halt. Munro writes of feuds which disfigured and impoverished society. MacPherson shows crofters who scrape a bare subsistence from the land and who are at the mercy of any irregularity in nature. However, though Munro and MacPherson see that something needed to be done, there was no need to ravage an entire people and destroy their culture.

This protest is clearly seen in the characters of Margaret Graeme and her son, Donald. Margaret married George in preference to any Highlander because she respected his perseverance. However, she knows that there is a great cultural gap between them. George evicts Highlanders and sees nothing good in them:

> "A shiftless crew," he called them.
> "What! the women does [sic] all the work.
> Poaching, drinking, fiddling fools.
> What use are they?" (LF p.25)

But Margaret has relatives among the people he is evicting and says he is doing the work of a "savage". (LF p.31)

Meg's first three children take after their father but Donald, the youngest, is to be his mother's companion, to take the place of his

Highland grandfather. Meg speaks Gaelic to Donald and though he picks up English easily enough, both he and his mother "lived in another language." (LF p.35) Donald's adventurous streak makes him befriend the crofters and he sees them as a generous, resourceful people. He does not realise what is happening when he sees them walking away from their burning houses. Instinctively he goes with them, sharing their immense misery and does not want to go home when his father comes looking for him.

Donald's alignment with the Highlanders is focussed in his friendship with Kate and Alistair Fruachie. They own their property legally because Alistair and the laird fought together at Waterloo and afterwards the laird gave him some property. Donald's eldest brother, however, wants their land to graze his sheep on. He does not regard them as having any rights and allows his sheep to graze there anyway. When Donald realises what is going on he tells Kate to impound the sheep, then he brings his brother to negotiate. His brother is nettled that he has to depend on Donald to interpret so that he can get his sheep back and when he enters Kate's house he think it is small and smokey whereas Donald finds it welcoming and polite. Because Donald's brother has been taught to see the Highlanders as a nuisance and because he now finds out he has to respect their rights he is resentful and closed to their virtues. However, though Donald did manage to persuade Alistair to stand up to his brother, it was not easy. Though Alistair was a fearless soldier, he, like others, is afraid of the power of the landlord:

> he lacked moral strength to comfort him when his actions led him counter to authority. (LF p.82)

MacPherson argues that this sort of passivity could only be of advantage to incoming farmers. It also anticipates Gunn's arguments about Highlanders when he notes in Highland River that

Kenn's fear of the salmon is "infinitely complicated by fear of gamekeepers, of the horror and violence of law courts, of our modern social fear" and it is this same fear which causes the death of Kenn's brother.[3] The significance of the fear, as MacPherson and Gunn see it, is that in so far as the Highlanders were subject to it, they were at the mercy of those who wished to control them.

The incident marks a change in his father's attitudes to Donald. He refuses to be annoyed with Donald because he is impressed with his boldness. His attitudes are based on personal preference but later George begins to side with Donald because he comes to value what Donald values. There is not much room for action in Donald's society - very much like Neil Munro's analysis - and when he is sent to farm in Badenoch and finds he would have to evict crofters, Donald kicks over the traces and leaves home. His father then becomes friendly with Alistair Fruachie because they have Donald in common and George discovers that "His confidant, his friend, was one of those he despised and destroyed, a crofter. Alistair meant more to him than his sheep, and his sons' success, and the triumph of his life." (LF p.327)

What emerges from this discussion of Highland society is not the justification or condemnation of any side, rather it is the fact that there is good and evil on both sides and that in order to live together in peace, men should make diligent efforts to overcome their differences in their backgrounds and seek out and promote shared interests. Neither resentment nor triumphalism has a place in this scheme of things.

In Pride in the Valley, MacPherson pursues further this idea that personal happiness is to be prized above tradition. Ewen Cattanach is a loyal follower of his clan chief but this loyalty is almost

now irrelevant for Cluny has sold off most of his estate and is happy to entertain Queen Victoria when she visits. The old quarrels and the reasons for them have disappeared. Yet Ewen hankers for the old days - days which he never knew except through stories. As the physical evidences of his identity are taken away, Ewen turns his identity into a myth. He buys a kilt so that he can sit for a painting of a noble Highlander which Cluny wishes to present to the Queen. MacPherson was well aware of this Highland pattern:

> They are defeated, the country lost, they
> live like beggars in a land owned by strangers
> who hate them for what they represent, the
> past. And so the past is great in their hearts.
> The past is all they can possess of their own home.[4]

Because Ewen knows the reality of the struggles and the beauty of the past, the myth is a source of strength and comfort to him. Unfortunately, though the myth is a comfort to Ewen, people who do not know any better take it to be a reflection of present reality and the real problems of the Highlands are camouflaged in tartan. Ewen comes to accept the changes he has witnessed. They include the coming of the railways which means that Ewen can send his sheep to distant markets where they can be sold for better prices. The novel does end fairly peacefully, although the peace is a compromise in which Highlanders have had to settle for much less than they gave up. They no longer rule themselves; they cannot educate their children to the highest standards locally; they cannot provide all of their people with work. The ending is indicative of the uncertainty which existed in MacPherson's mind, just as it had existed in Munro's, about the state of Highland affairs. The ending purports to show that the way of acceptance is best, yet the presence of less pleasant elements in the ending reflects the fact that in other moods MacPherson sees the Highlanders' story not as a compromise, but as a sell-out.

MacPherson's first novel, Shepherds' Calendar, is set in the Howe of the Mearns and does not concern itself with Highland themes. Society in this novel is similar to lowland societies studied earlier. Life is hard. People are narrow-minded and dull and there is little room for action. It is not surprising that the details should anticipate life in Gibbon's Sunset Song published the next year. It is set in the same location and the hard life and the hard people resemble the characters in Jessie Kesson's Another time, Another Place(1983). In MacPherson's novels he delineates two different societies and he shows that both Highland and lowland societies cannot sustain their gifted members. Donald Graeme and John Grant have to move outside their provincial societies to find personal maturity. Donald is the first hero in this study who, after coming to terms with himself, is able to come to terms with his society. John Grant's position is open: he may return, he may not.

Let us consider the circumstances of the two boys. Donald Graeme is chosen by his mother to receive a Highland education. Protected by his mother he is free to explore to the world around him and delight in it. School for Donald is a soul-destroying experience, as it was for Kenn in Highland River. His teacher is incompetent and cruel and sets out to humiliate his best pupil because he is a constant reminder of his own inadequacy. In a most Gunn-like phrase MacPherson says of the teacher:

> He set himself to kill the child's delight. (LF p.61)

The effect on Donald is marked. He is forced further into himself for protection from the unkind world:

> He was become secretive who used to be as
> open as the day. . . His babbling days ended.

> He conposed his face to a white indifference
> to taunts and sneers and threats. (LF p.58; p.62)

The pattern is exactly similar to that of Kenn in Highland River. Donald's scchooldays end when Ross assaults him for forgetting to bring peat for the teacher.

George sees that his son is ready to work, but no career has been marked out for him. Donald does not want to be a sheep farmer but hides from his mother the fact that he thinks he might like to be a soldier. Meg realises that though she chose him to receive the Highland heritage, he has taken to it so well because of his likeness to his father and it is this likeness which makes Donald restless in the unchallenging farm life. Like his father who sought out the immense challenge of sheep farming in the Highlands, Donald too will need to seek out some equally large challenge.

He fritters away his late teens and early twenties. He falls in love with Muriel Sinclair who is his opposite: self-possessed, with middling ambitions and a hatred of anything risky. She thinks Donald should be a doctor. Donald, like Gilian, is still excited with the idea of the army because it represents an escape from the boredom he finds at home. Donald's similarity to struggling writers in this study is that he realises there is more to life than material provision. He is looking for a world beyond the parochial, earth-bound farming community.

Such deep restraints take their toll on Donald's behaviour and like other characters already discussed, he begins to adopt roles, an activity which gives him temporary relief from his suffocating circumstances. Donald's action had always tended to the grand gesture simply because he was extroverted but now "he was aware of

his theatricality." (LF p.169) MacPherson shows that it was because Muriel could not answer his need for life that he changed his behaviour in order to attract attention and enjoy himself by painting his behaviour in terms which would shock Muriel and add spice to his experience, rounding things off with a wholly spurious repentance. Muriel is taken in:

> She erred excusably. Donald was a convincing actor. (LF p.173)

Like Gilian and Tommy, Donald cannot express himself completely because so much of his personality is suppressed by his society. Because the internal pressure to articulate these inner aspects of himself is so fierce, he begins to act, to pretend he is someone else, to adjust reality to suit himself.

His life becomes an upward spiral of dares, poaching and violence which culminates in his attack on the minister for which he is sent to Badenoch to learn shepherding and to stay out of trouble. However, this does not last and he sets off round the world to work off his frustrations. Six years later he returns and on his way back to his father's farm, falls and has to be taken in by a nearby crofter who knows his father. Joe, who winters Gorge's sheep, wants to know from Donald how his father got on with the sheep in winter before he could afford to send them to Joe. In telling the stories of home, Donald is drawn to it. His stories reveal to himself that the life he rejected did have greater dimensions that he allowed when he was a boy:

> Since the picture of winter that he drew was heroic, those who dared its rigours for a puckle of ewes were also of heroic size. (LF p.345)

Donald thus achieves a new perspective on Highland life, one that will become more familiar in the work of Gunn and Mitchison especially in the advice that Ronnie gives to Finn in The Silver Darlings.

John Grant's early life is a mixture of pleasure and pain: pleasure from his own imagination and pain from people around him who bully him. Outside these unpleasant circumstances, John quite enjoys life. His dreams are marked with the dreamer's superiority over those who have authority over him in real life: his parents. There are two tensions in John's life. His love of the world of words opposes his love of the land. He loves the natural world and tries to write about it:

> In his search for words to express his emotions, he came always to the store of what other men had said. (Sh.C p.34)

His mother plans to send him to university to free him from the unceasing toil of the land, but then John thinks of the land as fulfilling and fine. At other times he feels constricted by its demands - this tension is clearly shown in Gibbon's Sunset Song. To make matters worse John has a black, intense temper and he moves between rage and remorse as often as his feelings oscillate about which world he values most.

The instability of John's reactions are not helped by the suffocating authoritarianism of his father. Although John respects his father, because Allan blocks his path to maturity, conflict is inevitable:

> There was no respite for the vanquished when father strove with son. (Sh.C p.98)

Apart from his father's habit of making trivialities tests of loyalty, John, like John Gourlay, is alienated from his father because they inhabit different thought worlds.

John's imagination is always at work enhancing his enjoyment of life. He is open and curious about life but his father is not. For Allan, life is only what his presuppositions allow it to be and this is harmful to John who is still trying to work out what his presuppositions are. As a member of the Free Church, Allan is a Calvinist who is charàcterised by the disciplines of hard work, family worship and Sabbatarianism. John's lack of enthusiasm for the church grieves his father. Like so many fathers in the Scottish novel, Allan expects John to follow his pattern of living without deviating from it, in order that the son, through his obedience, will justify the father's existence. Scott's Davie Deans expects Reuben to accept the historical interpretation of the faith he inherited from the Covenanters; Douglas Brown's John Gourlay expects his son to become a member of a profession so that his life of enterprise may be justified; Gibbon's John Guthrie expects his son to carry out his instructions about farm work to the letter and will brook no alternatives as if every point of farm management was a test of filial loyalty. The traditions which are passed on from father to son are usually so divisive that they split families and often end with the death or exile of the main protagonist, usually the son, who has become the wretched inheritor of these traditions - a certain view of history, perhaps, or of religion. These young boys who could become leaders of Scottish societies are often broken by controversial traditions before they are out of their teens. And so the sins of the fathers are visited on the children from one generation to the next. Men whose beliefs are more important to them than their relationships end up alienating their sons and postponing the possibility of a more open, more stimulating society in Scotland.

Family worship constrains John badly. If he has to take it because his father is away, he chooses a short chapter to read but his mother always suggests another one until they have read for the requisite amount of time. But John's reaction to these constraints is not outright rebellion because MacPherson subtly shows how his love for his parents forces him to obey them even when he finds life so entirely uncongenial.

John's uncle Sandy provides an alternative life-style. Sandy's view of life includes the beautiful for its own sake. Allan laughs at Sandy for having a flower garden instead of a more functional vegetable patch, but on a summer's morning, John is entranced by the beauty of the garden, something which his father would never have noticed. Sandy protects John from the worst tedium of the household, taking him for walks on the Sabbath and lending him secular books.

His father's niggling comes to a head on Christmas Eve, when his father accuses him of not having shut the stable door. This is the last straw in a petty but brutal domestic feud which Allan has been carrying on with John. John tries to keep his temper, though "He heard again the muttering of nameless dreadful beasts in the jungle of his undermind." (Sh.C p.93) Unfortunately his father's shouting frightens a cow which kicks John and before he knows it, he is thrashing the cow, transferring his fury from his father to the beast. MacPherson manages to avoid a serious assault here, as Gibbon also does in similar circumstances in Sunset Song. In The House with the Green Shutters though, Brown takes paternal domination to its most tragic conclusion.

During this protracted struggle with his father over his maturity, John finds himself in the middle of another conflict: his desire

for sexual experience and his desire to avoid emotional commitment. This incident shows how John reacts when faced with difficult choices. His actions here prefigure his final choice between the farm and university. Helen, the nurse from Arnhall, is injured during a storm and brought to John's farm to recover. During this period she falls in love with John and he is sexually attracted to her. After she leaves, they arrange to meet. They make love and afterwards John refuses to see her again. His irresponsibility, however, is never adequately accounted for in the novel.

Before John met Helen that day, he had already decided to break off their friendship because he thought she talked too much. When he meets Helen his resolve is melted by his sexual desire. However, he tells Helen that he must leave her because it would be best for both of them. This deceives no one but himself. He wants to leave her in order to keep his own life uncomplicated. However he refuses to admit this and patronises Helen by pretending the move is for their mutual benefit: a pretence of mutuality which sits oddly against his selfishness.

A further point which emerges from this forlorn incident is that Helen suffers from MacPherson's vacillation as much as she suffers from John's. Afterwards characters who had previously liked her turn against her. Sandy who had joked with John about Helen's prettiness, now says that she was a "little fool." (Sh.C p.173) As Helen recuperated she got on so well with John's parents that the reader was encouraged to think that this was a good match. John's attitude to his lovemaking, that it was a "fall", that Helen was to blame because she inflamed his desire against his will, produces another picture of Helen: a selfish woman who seduced an innocent boy whose physical desire outstripped the capability of his mind to react. John feels he should forget Helen:

> He thought of the nurse. . . and knew at
> last how little worth she had. (SC pp.205-6)

Finally John just buries the whole episode. As author, why does MacPherson present Helen as a woman wronged and then say nothing, and therefore seem to tacitly agree, when his hero writes her off? Why does the author make Sandy, who believes in free love and sincerity, dismiss the only other person in the novel who acts according to these values. Why, indeed, unless the author is not sufficiently competent to distance himself from the hero he resembles? As author, MacPherson can see things from Helen's point of view but as a man involved with his creation, he finds it easier to share John's contradictions rather than write coherently about Helen. The basic flaw of Shepherds' Calendar is that MacPherson cannot get far enough away from his character to point out his mistakes and the problems recur at the end of John's story, making it impossible to conclude from the novel what the reader is supposed to make of him.

Towards the end of the novel, Allan Grant is killed. Now it would seem the scene is set for John to enter joyfully into his inheritance. He discovers that the ceaseless farmwork begins to blunt his enthusiasm and his early plans to expand the farm vanish before the daily round of work which has to be done:

> He was coming slowly to what his father had
> accepted, the deadening rule of toil, the
> monstrous servitude of a man's body and mind
> to the land and the work he loves. (Sh.C p.234-5)

Chris Guthrie also comes to a new assessment of her father after his death, an understanding which helps her to be mature and confident about her purpose in life. It does not have such an effect of John. He immerses himself in self-pity. John's will,

influenced by the desire to respect the memory of his father and a similar desire to do what his mother wants, cannot come to a decision. Thus begins a period of dreams and inconsistencies and corroded will-power.

When his mother plans to send him away to university, the land that he is to be parted from seems more precious to him than ever. One day on the moor, where he identifies the moorland with his own sorrows, he has a mystical epiphany in which he comes very near the "secret of the land":

> There was no sorrow like his vast out-flung sorrow. The wind that went by him was the voice of his sorrow, days and nights were his sacrifices to sorrow. His life was consecrate to sorrow, sorrow that was landless, timeless. (Sh.C p.265)

For both John and Chris Guthrie, in her similar experience in Sunset Song, the land itself becomes a source of value because of its unchanging character. Both experience injustice and uncertainty, yet draw strength from the timelessness of the land. What John MacDougall Hay hinted at in Gillespie is fully expressed in these novels. The land is a reliable entity in a world of flux. Both Chris and John feel the attraction of the land and Chris is sure she cannot leave it. John's experience is more ambiguous.

It appears he is moving smoothly towards university. But in the next chapter this is not the case. He finds the attraction of the land so strong, he does not wish to leave it. He begins to dream of his own failure and believes that if he goes to university, he will have failed. This is the last insight we are given into his mind. He steps on board the train for Aberdeen and as far as we

know, regards his departure as a failure. We do not see into his mind because at this crucial point, MacPherson changes the narrative point of view and the final paragraphs are seen through the eyes of Mrs Grant whose dreams have been fulfilled. John's story is abruptly cut, never finally resolved.

Here is the eveidence of the real harm John's parents have done him. Because they always told him what to do, he has never been taught how to make decisions. The only influences on him are the principles of his parents and the strength of his own desires. Though he may "decide" in favour of one, the strength of the opposing influence often engulfs him. So with Helen, parental principles held sway but were deposed by personal desire which in turn was deposed by parental principles. John sees no middle ground. In the circumstances it is difficult to conclude what MacPherson wants us to understand from the novel. As Munro sketched in in Gilian the Dreamer the causes of Highland decline without articulating them fully, so MacPherson gropes towards an interpretation of John's behaviour. MacPherson does not seem to realise how destructive Allan's influence on John was.

MacPherson's habit of opting out in his writing, principally through his lack of perspective, lessens the impact of his novels and actually damages Shepherds' Calendar and the reader must remain content with the novels as stimulating but equivocal pastoral works. Although they come tantalisingly close at times to larger and more radical issues which the author cannot control, they are still fiercely wistful accounts of life in North East Scotland.

MacPherson writes on the fringes of the Renaissance with some striking anticipations of it but is still bedevilled by the lack of a coherent critique of his situation and led to structural

deficiencies in his novels. From him we turn now to Fionn MacColla who imbibed the ideas of the Renaissance from MacDiarmid. His extremism shows Renaissance ideas in somewhat deformed outlines and his famous novel The Albannach is unusual because although it is meant to show how Renaissance ideas would envigorate culture it succeeds only in showing the misery of dogmatism run riot.[5]

MacColla's view of Scotland was controlled by two ideas: first, that the decline of Gaelic in Scotland meant that one happily united nation was divided into two groups which literally did not understand each other and therefore began to distrust each other and second, that the Reformation of 1560 destroyed existing Scottish culture and prevented any expression of it thereafter. Both these ideas were commonly held by Renaissance writers. MacDiarmid had written of the need to keep Gaelic poetry alive and to teach Gaelic in schools; Edwin Muir in his biography of John Knox delivered his opinion that Knox was to blame for Scotland's cultural barrenness certainly in the seventeenth century and probably beyond. MacColla felt that the Renaissance would save Scotland from the cultural decline into which it had slid and this is his organising principles in The Albannach.

However, as I mentioned earlier, although MacColla would have loved to have been thought of as an apostle of the Renaissance, such was the certainty of his personality that he actually continues many of the deficiencies of the pre-Renaissance novel: chiefly, he lacks perspective. Such was the certainty of his personality, however, that he could not have chosen a more unsuitable medium than the novel to disseminate his opinons. It is not that a novel cannot be written to illustrate the opinions of an author, it is that by undertaking such an exercise the author runs the risk of letting his personal views predominate over the artistic demands of the form and finally may discover that he has not produced fiction, but

propaganda. At times MacColla seems marginally aware of the danger before the tide of certainty comes flooding in again. Before discussing The Albannach, I wish to discuss some points which arise from the rest of MacColla's writing in order to shed light on The Albannach; and also to discuss some of the problems involved when a Scottish writer writes about Scotland.

I do not wish to take issue with Fionn MacColla over any of the arguments he adduces in support of his views. I wish instead to examine how he constructs his arguments because it is my contention that in his writing and also in The Albannach MacColla manifests, unconsciously, the same characteristics. Let us clear up some initial points before exploring the main arguments. Firstly, it must be recognised that MacColla's dogmatism occasionally leads him to make some very eccentric claims:

> And certainly there is no doubt whatever that historically it was the Government's official policy to get rid of the Scots, especially the Highlanders, by having them killed in battle.[6]

Secondly, he gets so carried away with his dogmatism that he can see no good whatever in his opponents and attributes to them the worst motives and behaviour he can imagine:

> Knox appeared to me then and ever since as a bloody-minded, power-seeking gnyaff with delusions of grandeur and a ferocious gift of the gab, Moray as one whose military ability was wholly at the service of his boundless personal ambition as a royal bastard...Morton as a louse-ridden psychopath, Maitland as a slippery lawyer whom I would never have

> suspected of such an encumbrance as principle, Buchanan as one regarded by his own party as a liar...(TL p.41)

Thirdly, for MacColla his own subjective impressions are objective truth. Continuing this diatribe against Knox and the Lords of the Congregation:

> Seldom can such a set of graceless ruffians have afflicted any country. I would be tying my boots preparatory to going to school to listen to adulation of them and be admonished they <u>had</u> to be admired, knowing all the time that intellectually, and more than intellectually, not one of them was fit to do what I was doing at the moment, tying my bootlaces - that was not premature grandiosis in a ten-year old, but a simple glisk of truth. (TL p.41)

In relation to this point it should also be noted that MacColla throughout <u>At the Sign of the Clenched Fist</u> uses the secondary source of his own prose fiction to support a point in his argument about history as if he were quoting from a primary source. Fourthly, as can be seen from the last quotation, if MacColla anticipates adverse criticism he does not make a rational counter-attack, he merely states categorically that what he has said is correct. Thus in order to prove his arguments, MacColla is prepared to sacrifice generally agreed facts, the humanity of the people he criticises, any attempt to eschew unnecessary bias and reasonableness - all qualities which would be helpful in trying to persuade people of the credibility of his views.

In his extended essay <u>At the Sign of the Clenched Fist</u>, MacColla states his intention to write a novel about the Reformation - which would get to the truth of the matter - the first chapter of which,

Scottish Noel, had already been published, and the second chapter of which, Ane Tryall of Heretiks, is given as part of the extended essay.[7] MacColla's aims in the novels are very interesting. He realises it will be difficult to write a novel on which he has such strong views because he may end "by finding in his book what he himself has first put into it." (ASCF p.57) MacColla then says he has overcome this difficulty:

> I am speaking of course of a novel used as a method of enquiry, not of a novel written to a thesis, that is, designed of set purpose to illustrate and lead up to conclusions consciously present in the author's mind before he began to write the book. No such thing was the case with me... (ASCF p.57)

Again MacColla answers by categorical statement, not by rational argument. A few pages later MacColla sets out the context for his novels and far from giving a bald description of the facts, he immediately introduces value judgements:

> It [the Catholic Church and Medieval culture] would be correctly thought of in terms of an historic city full of magnificent buildings... suddenly attacked by a ferocious enemey purely bent on its destruction. (ASCF p.60)

This "novel of enquiry" then, even before it begins, is to deal not with an historical occurrence but with Beauty and Truth being destoryed by a ferocious enemy.

MacColla goes on to delineate John Tod, the priest who will turn Reformer. He is pretentious, arrogant, "physically unimpressive and otherwise ungifted." (ASCF p.61) He resented the world

because he could not "compel the world outside him to accept him at the lordly valuation his first and formative environment had accorded him." (ASCF p.61) John in able to preach about sin but unable to think about the Mass because thoughts of the numinous frighten him. This character is endowed with no feature which would endear him to anybody; he is simply a puppet who will condemn himself at MacColla's command. After this description, MacColla again feels impelled to anticipte and show to be groundless the action of which he is, in fact, guilty:

> I ought at this point to enter a caveat lest anyone should be tempted to think this person of the drama had been composed merely of characteristics thrown together at haphazard, or to serve some unavowed purpose of the author's own to represent the priest-who-was-to-turn-Reformer in a certain way. (ASCF p.64; my italics)

Just occasionally MacColla gives the game away completely as in chapter IV of this work when he is outlining what will happen in the next section of his novel of enquiry and begins with the words "The following chapter in the book was designed to illustrate..." (ASCF p.100) MacColla wants to write a novel but he wants his reader to share his views more, thus the lipservice MacColla pays to the virtues of the literary form is always betrayed by his dogmatic assertions of his own opinions.

The final set of contradictions I wish to discuss concern MacColla and his reasons for being so fiercely opposed to the Reformers. These arguments are taken from the section Ane Tryall of Heretiks. Here the Bishop is, with all patience, trying to make Reformers see the errors of their ways:

> First ye put forrit doctrines baith absurd and damnable; syne when it is faithfully shown ye they are no maintainable, instead of retracting them as would a guid-willant reasonable man, ye change about to hurling accusations on the ground of morals... (ASCF p.94)

MacColla through the Bishop, expresses his point of view that the Reformers hold opinions which are absurd, unreasonable and heretical, then when they cannot win their arguments, they slander their opponents. Earlier in the debate, the Bishop asked Cock, the man on trial, on whose authority he espouses this new interpretation of Scipture:

> The baker lifted up his eyes on him. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God," he quoted...
>
> The Bishop snorted in turn. "Man, Cock! ye pass aa! We interpret Scripture by nane inward and private, and therefore uncertain illumination; but openly, by the light of Reason, and conform to the harmony of doctrine in its divers parts, and under the authority of the Kirk. (ASCF p.91)

In other words, MacColla is annoyed with the Reformers because they claim their authority comes from a subjective experience which cannot be empirically verified. (Notice too that although the Bishop is supposed to be arguing reasonably, he is, in fact, confronting the heretics with another unproved and unprovable assertion.) MacColla accuses the Reformers of the very things that characterise his own writing: eccentricity, inhumanity, subjectivism and unreasonableness. The close similarity is surprising. How can such an odd merger of supposedly conflicting attitudes have come about?

MacColla's itemised disgust for the Reformers was not his first reaction to them. He was brought up in an evangelical family which was proud of Scotland's distinctive religious heritage. He was taught this type of Christianity had been "won for us by the Reformation":

> (even at this late day, at the phrase "won for us by the Reformation" my associated, conditioned emotions shout hurrah, hurrah hurrah! in me. I ignore them, because they are not, and are incapable of ever being, a judgement). (ASCF p.57)

I believe MacColla to have been split in his attitude to the Reformation. He rejected it intellectually but was drawn to its style. As he grew up he obviously decided that he did not believe in the Reformation interpretation of God, Man and Life so he substituted other beliefs which seemed to account more comprehensively for the facts of human existence. (TL pp.34-36) Being so dogmatic however, and not wishing to live with doubt, he had to repudiate his early feelings and beliefs in their entirety, even though some aspects of the Reformation appealed to him consciously or otherwise - notably, of course, the utter certainty the Reformers had that their beliefs were the Truth and that their rules for living were based upon this Truth. If such a turmoil did exist within MacColla's personality, then it would account for the vehemence with which he attacks the Reformers.

MacColla shows clearly that strange phenomenon of Scottish studies: the anti-syzygy. During the Renaissance it can be unmistakably seen because so much of the authors' work depended on an initial rejection of earlier periods of Scottish history, especially the Reformation. And nowhere is the common bond of nationhood so dramatically and ironically tied than when one group of Scots rise up to proclaim their total dissimilarity from another. The

Renaissance is peopled with authors whose fiery and dogmatic eloquence rivals that of Knox. In Scottish Scene, we have MacDiarmid and Gibbons' attacks against people who disagree with them; thus they create a new set of reprobates. Yet Gibbon finds the role of the minister so useful for presenting material the way he wants to present it, that one of his most important summaries of twentieth century life is delivered by a minister from the pulpit. MacDiarmid often uses Biblical images to praise or condemn people in the Scots literary scene: he accuese J M Barrie of serving not God but Mammon; he accuses then Burns Federation and the Burns Clubs generally of playing a "false role" in regard to Braid Scots; and because of this idolatry, MacDiarmid prophesies "the day of reckoning will assuredly come". It is not surprising that in the light of this religious rhetoric Donald Carswell described MacDiarmid's actions as a "call to repentance."[8] This movement recognises false gods and false prophets against whom the true prophets inveigh, while calling people to repentance in the light of a future judgement. It is a stunning irony that some of the chief members of this fledgling literary movement should have demonstrated as their model, not the Renaissance they chose to adopt, but the Reformation they violently repudiated. It is a tribute to the rhetoric of both groups that it effectively communicated their ideas while obscuring the great similarity in approach between preachers and artists. Considering what took place in the 1920s and 1930s, Reformation is in many ways as apt a description as Renaissance.

Keeping in mind MacColla's contradictions and inconsistencies, let us now consider The Albannach, MacColla's first novel. Like Shepherds' Calendar, The Albannach is one of those nearly autobiographcial novels which are so common in Scottish literature. Again the problem of how to express literary talent is solved simply by turning the problems into the basis of literature.

In Gaelic, the title of the novel means "The Scotsman", in other words MacColla is trying to present us with an Everyman figure, especially an Everyman of the Gaelic culture of the Highlands. The Highland society presented by MacColla brings out of the shadows and into the daylight the dualistic interpretation of Highland society hinted at by Neil Munro. Having done this MacColla, unlike MacPherson, says categorically that there was nothing wrong with the Highlands before the Clearances and the Highlands were ruined by the Clearances. He categorically condemns the influence of the Reformation in the Highlands in the Free Church and the Free Presbyterian Church. He deplores the influence of Calvinism, which he feels rests on fear and breeds rigidity, hypocrisy and an unhealthy distaste for the natural beauty of life. However, MacColla values immensely the remains of an older Highland culture of poetry, music and Catholicism. Murdo, brought up in the religious side of this society, escapes to university in Glasgow where he takes up philosophy and learns Irish Gaelic. However, when Murdo is forced to return to the Highlands in order to provide for his widowed mother, he finds the Highlands confining and longs to express his personality more completely, as he had in the south where he had started to write poetry. After some years pass, he decides to renew his society singlehanded and organises ceilidhs for the local people, ignoring the opposition of the church and so the novel ends happily as the old life-giving society is restored and seen to triumph over the Calvinistic one.

The general expression of this argument is shared by most Renaissance writers who thought about the Highlands or the Reformation. Being published in 1931, the years which heralded a series of novels born out of the nationalistic activities of the previous decade, the book was well-received as an intense and uncompromising statement of Renaissance attitudes to the old authorities of Scotland. Intensity is an amoral characteristic, however, and reflecting on the novel fifty years later it is worth

considering whether the general elation of 1931 was justified by asking this question: is the argument outlined above an accurate reflection of the novel? My argument is that it is not, that Murdo is not the good apostle of the Renaissance but an arrogant and selfish man and that he does not replace a sick society with a healthy one but merely succeeds in replacing one repressive society with another.

Murdo's first antagonists, his mother and father, are presented so unsympathetically that the reader begins to feel sorry for them because of the rough deal they are getting from the author. When characterising people Murdo dislikes, MacColla does not use the novelist's usual technique of making the characters condemn themselves by their words and actions, instead he uses the more primitive technique of describing them as revoltingly as possible or by comparing them unfavourably with animals. Murdo says "Curious how people resembled animals". (TA p.115) What is even more curious is that it is only the people Murdo dislikes that resemble animals. The reader never gains the sense that these characters are to be taken seriously; they exist as what their author believes about Calvinists. MacColla's dogmatism prevents him from entering realistically into the mind of characters who hold views with which he disagrees. This imaginative inadequacy mars his presentation of those characters the reader is supposed to dislike. Here Murdo watches his father at prayer:

> he could see. . . the fleshy bags on his father's cheeks, the thick neck with a pulse bobbing in it, the veins, blue and red, that showed on the thick nose, with red hairs sticking out at the nostrils darker than the other tufts that grew in the ears. . .
> (TA pp.10-12)

Murdo cannot understand his parents' enjoyment of worship; his imagination is so limited. The inference is that if Murdo is unhappy then no one else could possibly be happy in the same situation. Here we see Murdo already as the unpleasant egotist MacColla never intended him to be.

If home pleases Murdo so ill, then the church of his parents pleases him less. He finds it hateful. He suspects the missionary (a term used by various Highland churches to denote a lay-preacher, auxiliary to the minister, who would preach in the remote areas of an extensive parish) of adultery, though he has no proof of this except his estimate of the man's character. Church services he finds boring in the extreme and incapable of meeting his personal needs for intellectual and spiritual stimulation. Murdo visualises what he hates about the church as he imagines them standing before God at the Day of Judgement:

> . . .but on His [God's] right hand His particular friends, His holy, His unreasoning, His groaning, moaning, chest-rattling, His sour-faced, His bovine, His dear, His constipated Seceders and Little Frees, the holiest of them all, those that never hesitated to condemn the indulgences of anyone else whatever, that never deviated from an iron adherence to the letter of the law, the dear old belly-ripping, baby-killing, foreskin-chopping Jewish law. . .
> (TA p.229)

Again the reader is faced with the problem that MacColla ridicules and abuses those who disagree with him rather than letting the supposed idiocy of their beliefs speak for itself. The entire society depresses Murdo and he seeks the old days. Unlike Munro and MacPherson he has no reservations about Highland society before the Clearances. He is obssessed with his own abilities and aptitudes

and feels sorry for himself because being so superior is a lonely business.

This strongly egotistical character is shown up more clearly as the novel progresses first in his time at Glasgow University and secondly in his relations with his family. As far as the 'official' version of The Albannach is concerned, Murdo's experience of university is important because it gives him an intellectual framework for his opinions. He breaks with Calvinism and becomes deeply involved with Gaelic culture, defending the Highlands at a time when Gaelic culture was disregarded. This activity releases him to write poetry.

While in Glasgow, Murdo has a lot of growing up to do. He sets out to gain experience of violence, drink and sex, crossing off these rites of passage like items on a list. He is provoked to a fight by a slur on Roman Catholicism, wins the fight and manages not to choke on a celebratory dram someone buys him. Though Murdo loves to expose the weaknesses of others, he would hate anyone to konw he was not used to drinking whisky.

His first sexual encounter reveals another unpleasant aspect of Murdo's personality: his attitude to women. He decides to sleep with a prostitute and his unease can be seen as he assumes an air of gallantry at least three sizes too melodramatic for him:

> Murdo swaggered along by her side, spouting in high-flown English, declaiming poetry, addressing her as Helen, . . . (TA p.184-5)

Murdo later puts his behaviour down to drunkenness. Having used the prostitute, Murdo is afflicted by guilt, like John in

Shepherds' Calendar, not because he is afraid of his parents but because he is afraid he might be sexually diseased. After this turns out not to be the case, Murdo callously rationalises the experience thinking that it is "another gap filled up". (TA p.190) Murdo uses then discards other human beings and thinks he has discovered something important about himself. Women exist to provide the means for him to become sexually experienced, for him to gratify his selfishness, or as he would put it, to realise his self-hood. His view of women is narrow and potentially violent.

When Murdo returns to the Highlands, in order to relieve the boredom he decides to sleep with Annie McIver:

> He glanced down at her, and, Why not? thought he.
> They went up into the woods of Strongorm where wisps of the blue dusk were beginning to flit between the tree stems. . .
> The second time, she scratched and bit like a cat. (TA p.224)

The atmosphere of content achieved by the literary euphemism is shattered by the final sentence with its implications of male dominance in intent and performance. Why bother describing the peaceful aspects of the scene if the feelings you wish to give prominence to are violent?

When Annie gets pregnant, Murdo marries her. No account is given of the wedding, although this would have been a good opportunity to display Gaelic culture (as Gibbon displays old Scots culture in Sunset Song.) At the beginning of the account of Murdo's married life there is a sop - and by this stage in the novel it is only a sop - to the argument that MacColla set out to prove:

> So he toiled, not with much joy and not with sorrow. But when his foot turned home at evening there was food for his hunger, a quiet word for the woman that in her body bore his young, for her and for that other that had carried him, and then the sleep of the labouring man, which is sweet. (TA p.237)

Though the woman is seen here as more than an object with which a man can have sex, she is still defined in sexual roles and it is the man who gives meaning to her existence. This description of life in terms of Reniassance values, stressing basic relationships and basic human needs in a pseudo-Lawrentian fog belies the fact that all is far from well in Murdo's marriage. When the baby - who is never named in the novel - is born, Murdo discovers that "the young" which "the woman" had carried arrives with vociferous needs and wants. Idealism is overcome by reality and Murdo conceives a fierce and unreasonable hatred for his child, exacerbated by his feelings of being buried in a parochial culture which are strong, despite the fact that Murdo tries to convince the reader that Highland life close to the land is the most satisfying that could be imagined. Slowly and tragically, the writing turns again to those vicious diatribes against human reality:

> Murdo had never been able to stand the child. . . He was always slupp-slupp-slupping at something, seizing it in his fat fingers with ferocity, glaring at it with lust and forcing it into his gaping mouth. . . (TA p.250)

One night when Murdo has been left to look after the baby, the baby begins to cry and Murdo does not know what to do. Finally he walks out, leaving the baby alone. While he is away the baby either chokes to death in the folds of a shawl hanging from its chair or

is burnt alive as the shawl, dangling in the grate, catches fire. The actual cause of death is not made clear. J B Caird says

> But we cannot sympathise with or even accept his physical revulsion from his own child or even believe in the indifference and criminal neglect that brought about the child's death.[9]

After the child's death, Murdo's actions are treated in the same vague way as they were when he felt guilty about sleeping with the prostitute. For all Murdo fulminates against the Free Church because he claims they endorse baby-killing - as noted in an above description - Murdo is the only person in the book who manages to achieve the deed, but when he does it, it is not blameworthy. Here is the clearest indication yet of one law for Murdo and one for the rest of the world.

Despite Murdo's inability to see any fault in himself, he is ostracised by the locals - not that he can understand this. Murdo rows out to a little island to contemplate his position. There he sees a wounded seagull which is ignored by the rest of the birds. This is, to him, a parable of his own condition. However, I have reservations about the efficacy of this revelation in changing Murdo from being the apotheosis of selfishness to being a humbler and wiser man. Murdo's identity with the seagull is false. Its deformity is physical, his is a failure of the will. Even here Murdo feels himself to be superior to others. Murdo achieves his restoration by saying that he could not help how he acted and it is better to have his disability than the normality of others. Selfishness and irresponsibility, the hallmarks of Murdo's character, are sanctioned by this vision. After Murdo has

justified himself to himself, no one mentions the incident again and Murdo is happily re-admitted into the bosom of society

The rest of the book only serves to demonstrate how little Murdo has changed. Annie returns to Murdo with gestures of penitence, though what she has to be penitent about is unclear. Murdo embarks on his transformation of society. He learns to play the pipes with brilliance. He organises ceilidhs in the local hall which had never been opened because of church opposition and he begins to write satirical poems about the ministers:

> They [the Christians] were at their wits' end, but not the godliest among them dared say a word openly for fear Murchadh Iain Ruaidh would make a song about them. (TA p.319)

It is easy to see from this quotation that Murdo has created a new authority which is as repressive as the one it replaces. Murdo has become its leader and revels in the new status accorded to him, using his position only for the good of those who agree with him and not for the benefit of the whole community. This society is not healthier than its predecessor. It is as unhealthy because it is as intolerant and despises a large group of its members.

And the Cock Crew (1945) does more justice to MacColla's opinions about Highland culture than The Albannach but ultimately his themes are scarred by the flaws which occur throughout his writing. However, for a much more sympathetic critique of MacColla, the reader should consult J Derrick McClure's ably argued essay on MacColla in Literature of the North.[10]

Finally it has to be said that in The Albannach, MacColla has written a novel of self-idolization, not self-realisation. Murdo becomes less, not more human. Murdo's self becomes so inflated that it squeezes other people out of his company, it castigates them for being different, it despises those who are left as inferior and it narcissistically adores itself and delights in the humiliation of those who would oppose it. Murdo is not an example of what is good about people, he is a poor person who has never grown to maturity. The fact that he achieves that poverty in Gaelic is an irrelevance and cannot possibly make up for his rampant egotism, MacColla's contribution to the theme of the gifted young man is almost wholly valueless because it is so prejudiced. As for his analysis of society, even if this novel were the only extant document describing the Scottish church, we would be bound to disregard it because of its obvious bias and because it fails within its own limits to substantiate the criticisms it makes. Like Munro and MacPherson, MacColla fails to give literary expression to his themes, not, like Munro, because he is unsure of where the blame lies, nor, like MacPherson, because he does not see the full impact of the nature of his characters, but because he is so sure of his own interpretation that he merely presents his own views, without bringing any reasonable arguments in support of them. It is curious that a writer who strongly desired only one view to emerge from his novel should have written into his work some of the most telling reasons for disagreeing with it.

Until now this chapter has dealt with the problems writers had before and even during the Renaissance as well as the ways in which they anticipate the coming changes in ideas. However, the outstanding changes from pre-Renaissance to Renaissance novel can be charted by studying the fiction of Eric Linklater (1899-1974). Though he had established himself as a writer before he became involved with the Scottish Renaissance - he had previously written

White Maa's Saga, Poet's Pub and Juan in America - Linklater found the Renaissance ambience conducive to creativity and the resulting novels, The Men of Ness and Magnus Merriman, are typically Linklaterian as well as being imbued with ideas and thoughts common to the Scottish Literary Renaissance. Here I shall discuss Linklater's relation to the Renaissance novel in general and his early novel White Maa's Saga, before examining in detail his contribution to the Renaissance novel.[11]

Linklater wrote White Maa's Saga the year after he returned from India before travelling to America. In his biography of Linklater, Michael Parnell shows that during this period, Linklater was undecided about a career.[12] He toyed with medicine, journalism and teaching before he turned to writing. He was spurred into this merely by the success of an old friend who had written a best-seller and evidently he felt that if she could write a novel so could he. Later on Linklater wrote that it had "some of the value of green things" and it is true that the novel is uneven because in its good passages it shows a potential which is not fully realised in the novel as a whole. In this respect it is like the pre-Renaissance novels looked at earlier but in Linklater's case the problems can be put down to inexperience - an absence of such problems in later novels bearing out this view.

"White maa" is the nickname of Peter Flett, the young Orcadian who is the hero of this novel. "White-maa" is the Orkney word for a sea-gull, a byword for ferocity and boldness. Linklater's novels are often developed from autobiographical experience. However, in different novels he does not always assume the same relationship to the character which is based on himself, nor does that character remain constant. It is therefore important to determine Linklater's attitude to his hero in any given novel. The relationship in White Maa's Saga is quite straightforward: Peter

Flett, though based on Linklater, is merely a stock hero from romantic fiction with a few original embellishments from the author. Having returned from fighting in the First World War, Flett and his friends find it difficult to adjust to civilian life, because there is nothing in it which explains their horrific experiences of war. Their consequent restlessness requires a life of constant stimulus in order to keep panic at bay. The gnawing fear at the back of this novel that life is not worth living is offset by traits and activities commonly associated with Linklater's heroes. Peter is an erratic student, pawning his textbooks to finance a day out with a girlfriend. This devil-may-care attitude does not catch up with Peter the way it will with Magnus Merriman in one of Linklater's maturer works.

The more obviously romantic side of Peter's character - the wilful hero as opposed to the hedonistic student - appears in the part of the plot set in Orkney where Peter's ancestry goes back to the time of St Magnus. Yet after the War Peter can see no way of connecting his stable past and his present unstable condition. He spends his vacations in Orkney and there is the idea that Orkney with its vibrant history should be able to satisfy him. Life in Orkney is more elemental than life at university and Peter begins to restore meaning to life. However, the main theme of the novel, the impact of the war on Peter, is not resolved by placing Peter in idyllic Orkney. Peter's attempt to come to terms with civilian life is seen in his feeling that is he not acting, but spectating. This particular metaphor provides a link with pre-Renaissance novels discussed earlier which neatly shows how different they are from White Maa's Saga. Gilian and others like him watched events and did not participate in them because their imaginative participation gave them more pleasure than actually participating would have done. By contrast, Peter's spectating is not induced by his unruly imagination but by his experience of war. For a short time during an inter-University boxing match, Peter feels that he

is "an actor this time, not a spectator." (WMS p.192) This sort of fighting only provides a temporary release from the uninvolvedness from which Peter suffers. Finally Peter is unable to discipline himself to the quietness of Scottish civilian society and determines to sail to America, putting more time and distance between himself and his past.

At this stage in Linklater's career, the claims of the individual take precedence over secondary matters like his relation to his community and past traditions. Unlike the heroes of pre-Renaissance novels, Peter Flett has had no time nor any reason to reflect upon the nature of the community because the War ensured that when he was eighteen he left the community and by the time he returned things would never be the same again. This novel demonstrates the shock of the First World War and the state of personal emergency which followed it in the lives of many; traditional and national themes cannot be faced until the individual has had time to adjust to peace-time life.

Having established the dominant theme of the novel, Linklater seems to have felt the need of more "action" to carry the novel through to its conclusion. The result is a pair of unsatisfactory sub-plots. In the first Peter kills a man in a fair fight, as he regresses to his roots and assumes the character of a "berserker", although this is not made explicit in the text. In the second subplot, Linklater hints at deeper implications as Peter walks past the Standing Stones at night in order to find out who has been killing lambs there. During the walk, he thinks about the Vikings and his relationship with the atavistic past. To use the supernatural as a means of establishing a link with ancestral personalities is to use a common Renaissance pattern but in this instance Linklater leaves it quite undeveloped. Both subplots have

the germ of Renaissance ideas but neither are adequately expressed in the novel.

As this novel represents a beginning for Linklater so it represents a transitional stage between pre-Renaissance and Renaissance novel. Between these two groupings lies the history of the First World War which changed the perceptions of a new generation of writers. There are already some signs that Linklater would not find the Renaissance position uncongenial. He puts significance on Peter's Orcadian heritage and ancestry and on the relation of the present to the ancient past.

In his next novels Poet's Pub and Juan in America, Linklater solves his structural problems by employing an episodic plot and considerably strengthening his comic hero in the character of Juan, who is alternately racked by romance and realism. These advances prepare him for the rest of his literary career and the Renaissance novels we shall turn to next.

The account of Magnus Merriman's return to Scotland after literary success in London is similar to Linklater's own return as described by Parnell. (Although MacDiarmid and others were engaged in a great deal of literary activity while Linklater was at university and during the year between his Indian and American trips, neither he, nor Parnell, evidence any knowledge of, or interest in, the Renaissance prior to 1932.) Linklater heard of the resurgence of interest in Scottish nationalism through Moray MacLaren. Linklater returned to Scotland and met most of the figures of the Renaissance and quickly absorbed its attitudes to literature. He was also involved politically as he agreed to stand as the Nationalist candidate for East Fife. Parnell points out that Linklater did not always agree with Nationalist views; notably, he saw no reason to

dissolve the British Empire. However, not a few Nationalists of the period found it easier to agree on generalities rather than particular policies.[13] Linklater's not being in complete agreement with every tenet of Nationalism does not make him unusual or remote from their central concerns. As far as literature is concerned, his pronouncememts are typical and representative of the period:

> Social life in Scotland has at present no peculiar and individual significance. It has no essentially native culture to inspire it, no sense of independent nationality to integrate it. It is derivative and provincial.[14]

Linklater's attachment to the ideas of the period was creative as well as typical. Out of this period come two novels of distinction: The Men of Ness in which Linklater draws on Renaissance ideas and Magnus Merriman, a satirical novel reflecting on the events of the period.

The Men of Ness is the direct result of the Renaissance view that ancient history was of great significance for the modern author. Linklater's interest in the Norse tradition and the sagas is coupled with his ability to immerse himself in styles not his own.[15] Linklater was judging himself by Medieval standards which prized how ably an author could work within a tradition; not how different he could be from what had gone before.

The plot concerns a family and an unavenged murder. Signy, the wife of Thorlief, wants her sons, Grim and Kol, to avenge the death of her first husband, Bui, who was murdered by Tholief's brother, Ivar. Although there is a sensation of the characters being similar to each other, strongly individual characters do emerge

from the neutral tone of the prose. The tone of the prose contributes much to the saga-like atmosphere of the narrative. Although violent and dramatic events are reported and although the corresponding emotional upheaval is also reported, the narrator simply records these events. His tone is laconic. It is this apparent absence of psychological interpretation which makes the novel seem "two-dimensional" in the manner of the sagas. Yet it is only an apparent absence because in reality Linklater has woven into the tapestry the third dimension which does not exist so markedly in the saga - the individual psychology of character; but he does this without disturbing the prose surface. This is a notable achievement to have married the individualism of the modern world to the corporateness of the ancient, without losing the equilibrium of the work. Yet it is Alan Bold's opinion that:

> In cutting the Vikings down to suitably human proportions Linklater also reduced his prose style to a descriptive standstill by theoretically letting actions speak louder than words.[16]

Can this opinion which refuses to admit any value in the prose style Linklater chose to dramatise his material be sustained? (Is the opinion itself syntactically coherent? Either actions do speak louder than words in Linklater's novel or they do not, surely?) By paying close attention to a short passage from the novel I hope to show that in making this judgement Bold fails to understand or value both understatement as an aesthetic device of the sagas or Linklater's use of this device which leads sometimes to pastiche, sometimes to a gripping fusion of modern and ancient minds. In this extract, Ivar has just killed Bui, a fisherman. His wife, Signy, comes to see what is wrong:

> There she saw Ivar and his men, and her husband dead of a great wound that near split him in

> two. For a time she was silent, and then she began to rail against Ivar in a loud voice and with very bitter words.
>
> Ivar listened and said, "I am not Bui your husband."
>
> Then Signy grew red in the face and said more quietly, "But a little while are hands fain of fighting, and I shall live to hear of your death."
>
> "They live long who are slain with words alone," said Ivar, and bade his men push out the skiff. And so they rowed homè. (TMN p.10)

The reader is presented with the grieving wife accusing her huband's murderer. Then, like a blow, comes Ivar's cruel reply. It has a formulaic ring which contrasts strongly with the brutality of what Ivar is actually saying. Ivar allows Signy no dignity but reduces her distress for her dead husband to the ridiculous by comparing it to a domestic brawl. The author then registers Signy's humiliation and her prophecy of revenge, which Ivar sweeps contemptuously aside. He quotes a proverb which lets him tell Signy that he regards her threats as inconsequential but the general nature of the proverb means that he does not have to speak to Signy directly - another insult. Simultaneously he achieves the appearance of calmness while verbally assaulting Signy. The enormity of the episode is belied by the understatment of the final sentence. One of the reasons why The Men of Ness is such an engrossing novel is that it demands a high level of participation from the reader, who, while enjoying the understatement, formula, proverb and spareness of the saga-style is forced by Linklater's adaptation of that style to imagine a series of emotions in the characters which are not literally stated in the the text. Psychological explanation of character and action is often long and densely written but this passage has no words longer than two syllables, no complicated sentences, the most basic conjunctions, hardly any metaphorical language, most words are used in their

primary meanings and the story is told in a simple past tense. Actions do not speak louder than words "theoretically" - whatever Bold means by that. In fact the distinction between actions and words is quite misleading. Neither the sagas, nor the novel contain anything but words. In the sagas, actions are laconically evoked by judicious selection and edition of words and Linklater uses similar means to achieve his own ends in The Men of Ness.

Certain other aspects of the novel stand out: the Vikings' relationship to the supernatural, their cruelty and their humour. Both Ivar and Kol are haunted by supernatural fear, Ivar because he opened a grave at night and Kol because he tried to stop a ghost from "walking" and because of this the ghost curses him. Kol is haunted by the curse and at crucial points in the story almost goes mad, losing his tremendous courage.

In many respects the life of the Viking is cruel and often in the sagas there seems to be little or no moral sense. In The Ultimate Viking (1955), a later essay, Linklater comments on the Vikings' sense of right and wrong:

> they saw clearly a difference between right and wrong, and the difference was aesthetic. If what they did became a story that would please the ear, then it was right and beautiful.[17]

Both Hart and Parnell quote this discussion in connection with The Men of Ness. It is right in so far as it goes that the Vikings often seem to act amorally. Ivar kills Bui because he wanted his fish. Kol and Grim would rather go raiding than stay at home. However, it is a superficial judgement on the novel to say that the main characters do not act morally, only aesthetically. There are two moral worlds in the novel and one is more sophisticated than

the other. Thorlief's desire for peace makes him respect other people's desire for justice:

> Then Thorlief bade his wife be quiet, for Hoskuld was in the right of it, and he should have the atonement he asked. "How shall men come to me for counsel," he said, "if I cannot judge rightly in a matter that touches my own household?" (TMN pp.44)

Viking society is characterised by brutality, violence and a large measure of injustice. Linklater shows various ways of responding to the human chaos such a society produces. Thorlief finds it more comfortable to live at peace than at war - it requires less physical effort, suiting his lazy temperament. To secure this peace, Thorlief realises that he has to take other people's sense of justice seriously. Thus on occasions he will make juudgements against himself. However, Ragnar, Thorlief's father and Ivar, his brother, prefer war to peace. The code of war is more stark but it is still a code nonetheless. Ragnar acts justly under the war code. Someone gratuitously insults him:

> That put Ragnar in such wrath that he struck at Thord and cut off his right arm at the shoulder. (TMN p.28)

Ivar, however, is different from Ragnar and Thorlief because he refuses to act justly under any code. Finally it is clear that Ivar is killed because he broke the codes. When he is confronted by Grim and Kol about to kill him, Kol recounts Ivar's murder of Bui and says, "I do not count that as likely to bring you fame." (TMN p.212) This speech contradicts what Linklater said about a Viking's deed being beautiful if it could be turned into a story. Kol regards Ivar's actions under the Vikings' code as mean and the reasons he gives for this judgement are moral not aesthetic. There

is no evading the fact that the characters inhabit a moral universe and are judged by its laws. If Linklater's remarks in The Ultimate Viking can be construed as a gloss on The Men of Ness then Linklater has gone further in his essay than he has in his novel which finds all its characters under obligations of one kind or another. As far as cruelty is concerned, in The Men of Ness Linklater is doing two things. He is recreating the codes of the Vikings and simultaneously, as a modern writer, taking a stance towards his material. Through the words of Thorlief in particular, we see a modern mind selecting and giving prominence to "modern" values. (George Mackay Brown displays a similar approach as out of the violent Norse society he depicts, he chooses to give prominence to Magnus and Christian values.)

The starkness of many episodes is underlined by the black humour and understatement which is given as a comment on them. When Thorlief's farm is attacked, by some rogue Vikings, Thorlief, nicknamed Coalbiter because he likes to sit by the fire, gets up, defends himself and fights off his attackers:

> "Many days I am content to lie on my back,
> but not now." (TMN p.66)

One of Linklater's favourite aspects of the sagas was the fact that he enjoyed them as "cracking good stories" and he is able to reproduce this facet too in his novel.[18] It is most clearly seen in the section 'Skallagrim's Ship' which tells of Kol and Grim's dangerous voyage from Orkney to Northumbria. This piece of extended description includes superb description of the natural elements, a full account of the interplay of character, dangerous moments offset by comic ones and, pervading everything, a sure evocation of the tense atmosphere of a group of men facing death.

Linklater had, in this novel, taken the course that MacDiarmid had urged on Scottish artists. He had saturated himself in ancient tradition, which together with Linklater's own ability to reproduce other styles made for healthy creativity. Linklater had found an enabling tradition. Instead of theorising, he put theory into practice and came up with a startlingly good novel, as, quietly and tellingly, he recreated an ancient world by adapting its life-giving traditions.

It provoked little critical comment. Reviewers muttered about the sea and adventure stories. There was no reflection on what made the novel different from a multitude of other such tales. The heart of the novel-,Linklater's achievement in effacing himself in an ancient literary style - lay undiscovered. The disappointment remained with Linklater for the rest of his life. (EL pp.130-131)

In terms of the Renaissance, The Men of Ness is important because it demonstrates the potential which writers found in Renaissance ideas. In Sun Circle, The Corn King and the Spring Queen and Spartacus, Gunn, Mitchison and Gibbon all produced such a novel before considering specific Scottish problems. These writers use the ancient world for different purposes. Gunn uses Pictish Scotland as a base for an elaborate historical thesis about Scotland which is continued in Butcher's Broom and The Silver Darlings. Mitchison transposes Scottish problems to the classical ancient world. Gibbon, ransacking history for a figure he can use as a prototype for a Scottish leader, chooses Spartacus and works out his theories in the context of the Roman slave revolts. By using ancient settings, writers distance themselves from contemporary problems and provide themselves with a breathing space, giving themselves time to bring their ideas to maturity. Unlike their immediate predecessors who were shut up to their own parish or nation, who became frustrated and inward-looking, the new

writers are confident enough to take a longer view, to avoid being rendered helpless by claustrophobic autobiography.

While it is true that historical distance provides writers with the possibility of achieving a clearer perspective on modern Scotland, it is also true that the shift from the modern to the ancient world is bound up with the question of identity. In her introduction to the 1983 edition of The Men of Ness, Marjorie Linklater draws attention to the fact that Linklater felt that nothern traditions had much greater significance for northern people than southern ones. Linklater refuses to accept that another tradition, especially one mediated to the Scots by English or "British" attitudes, can satisfactorily define Scottish identity.[19] Recourse to these traditions liberated many writers from the pre-1914 position where Scottish novelists were struggling against the centralising effects of "British" traditions and finding it difficult to discover any Scottish identity whatsoever. Linklater's contribution to the debate about the nature of identity in The Men of Ness is not so much that he posits a new national identity but that he realises that concepts like "North Britain" do not adequately reflect Scottish reality and that old Norse myths are sources which might hold clues as to what would constitute a northern or Scottish identity. Linklater is not concerned to make detailed analogies between ancient Norseman and modern Scot. Simply by choosing northern subject-matter, he is refusing to accept English ideas about Scotland and is forcing the reader to engage with northern traditions about roots and values rather than southern ones.

The same movement towards Scotland can be seen in Magnus Merriman (1934) which is set during the Scottish Renaissance. In this novel we return to a consideration of the Scottish archetype found in pre-Renaissance novels- the imaginative youth at odds with his

society. Linklater's literary development had reached the stage where he was able to write a significant, indeed seminal, novel on issues central to the Scottish literary tradition. In The Men of Ness, Linklater, influenced by the prevailing ideas of the Renaissance, had examined the roots of Orkney people in order that he might be able to interpret their present identity accurately. In Peter Flett, Linklater had a hero firmly rooted in northen tradition. In Juan Motley, Linklater developed the wayward and idiosyncratic hero with a mocking, deflationary and satirical comment on surrounding society. In Magnus Merriman these two elements are blended as the title itself suggests: Magnus, the name of Orkney's patron saint, emphasises traditional values, while Merriman is the self-explanatory description of the wry, slightly off-beat, somewhat disturbed consciousness through which Linklater wished to view Scottish society. Magnus Merriman is an important novel for Linklater in two respects. Firstly, it is the culmination of all his thinking about the Scottish Renaissance. Thus the novel is not merely influenced by Renaissance ideas but a quintessential expression of them, so deep has been Linklater's identification with the movement. Secondly, the novel marks a new stage in Linklater's development as a writer. He reached artistic maturity in Juan in America, he studied northern tradition for The Men of Ness, now in Magnus Merriman he has assimilated his own literary tradition to the extent that he is able to contribute to it and expand it.

The first chapter of Magnus Merriman shows a distinct resemblance between Magnus and characters like Gilian and John Gourlay. The reader is not four sentences into the novel until he reads:

> A disorderly imagination had made him [Magnus] cowardly. . . (MM p.9)

The rest of the description of Magnus is a perfect verbal silhouette of those characters with whom Magnus is linked. Magnus is discovered to be quite intelligent during his teens but the cowardliness of childhood "overlaid with the truculent inspiration of adolescence gave little promise of stability." (MM p.9) Magnus suffers from teachers - "solid unimaginative men" - who, like Donald Graeme's teacher, are able to administer corporal punishment but from whom he did not receive "incentive to further scholarship nor stimulus to the creative spirit that was dormant in him." (MM p.9) Unlike his predecessors who were destined to suffocate in parochial communities, at seventeen Magnus is able to leave Scotland to go off to war. (Again Linklater distinguishes his characters from earlier versions by showing the difference the War makes for Magnus.) Even in France, Magnus goes on exhibiting more similarities to the earlier characters. Like John Gourlay, he discovers his imagination can be stimulated by drink. (MM p.10) When in France he begins to dream about how glorious it would be to be decorated for military service, just as Gilian thought how glorious it would be to be a soldier. Magnus's thoughts grow "more and more romantic". (MM p.11) As Sentimental Tommy's dreams of Grizel and Gilian's dreams of Nan fragment when confronted with reality, so Magnus's dream of warfare is mocked by reality. When he volunteers for a dangerous raid in the hope of getting a medal, Magnus is blinded by a Very light:

> Merriman, lurching forward on his belly, thrust his bayonet stiffly ahead of him and heard a muffled cry of pain.
>
> "What's the matter?" he asked.
>
> Another muted whimper answered him first, and a moment later one of the patrol, in the broad untroubled accents of Buchan, said hoarsely, "Michty God, you've fair ruined the Captain. You've stuck your bayonet clean up his airse!" (MM p.12)

This is the first recorded incident of Magnus' "perverse fate" which dogs his progress throughout the novel. (MM p.12) It also suggests how Linklater is going to cope with this character whose volatile presence unbalanced so many earlier Scottish novels.

These first pages of Magnus Merriman read like a compendium of the traits which make up the archetypal character with which this study has been concerned. Magnus is imaginative, unreliable, undisciplined and dreamy. He cherishes illusions of his capabilities which are comically deflated when they meet reality. However, Linklater gives us all this information in chapter one, unlike earlier writers who spent whole novels on the subject. Linklater's deflation of Magnus' dreams is wholly comic, unlike Munro and Barrie's treatment of their heroes which has a touch of pathos in it; and wholly unlike Brown and Hay's treatment of their heroes which is tragic. A significant change has taken place in the attitude of the author to this character.

It is not that Linklater is not involved with Magnus. There is such a strong autobiographical strain in the work that Linklater is impelled to preface the work with an "Admonition" in which he attempts to define the perimeters of autobiography and fiction in relation to this novel. What makes Linklater different from previous writers is that as author he can control his main character and his relation to the author's biography within the accepted perimeters of fiction:

> I have written a novel: I have not filled a photograph-album . . .
>
> Magnus Merriman, then, is neither photography nor history but a novel. And the material of a novel is fiction.

(from the Admonition which prefaces Magnus Merriman)

For earlier novelists the relation between protagonist and autobiography was so deeply bound up with the writer's deepest personl aspiration that they emerged as the controlling element in the fiction, frequently throwing it out of gear. In Magnus Merriman what happens to Magnus can be explained by literary considerations alone.

Given that Linklater's attitude to autobiography in fiction is not one which damages the formal necessities of his art, it still remains the case that once again a Scottish author has seen fit to base his fiction closely on his life. Why should this be such a frequent occurrence? The question is full of difficulty, but a suggestive comparison bewteen Juan and Magnus may shed a little light. It is incorrect to assume that Magnus Merriman is a Scottish version of Juan in America. Juan and Magnus are quite distinct. Magnus does not have the same "devil-may-care" attitude to life that Juan has when circumstances cease to run smoothly for him. Juan shrugs off his misfortunes, Magnus is temporarily depressed by them. It matters to Magnus whether he succeeds or not, because despite Fate's mocking, he had seriously intended to be a poet or an MP or whatever. It is interesting that Michael Parnell describes this characteristic in Linklater himself:

> It was part of his view of himself that he was a clown who could expect only to fall on his face, but there was, though unacknowledged, a good deal of quite serious intention in his behaviour. (EL p.137)

Parnell, in his commentary on the by-election in East Fife, in which Linklater stood as a Nationalist MP and lost, coming bottom of the poll, is right to point out that though Linklater tried to

make light of the defeat he actually suffered keenly, because he took the event so seriously. It is over this failure which affected Linklater deeply that he makes a definite link between his life and art:

> From time to time I have felt a craving for more overt action, and. . . that craving was about to lead me into a calamitous experiment in a sort of action for which I had no natural gifts, but from which I emerged with the unscrupulous recompense reserved for writers. They can always write a novel - preferably a comic novel - about the misfortunes they suffer.[20]

In America, Linklater was a spectator and what the country thought of him did not matter much but in Scotland, where Linklater was trying to settle down and contribute to the country's well-being, rejection, even in this oblique way, mattered much more.

The first section of Parnell's biography is called "In search of an identity". He records how Linklater, though born in Wales, did nothing to dispel the widely-held belief that he was born in Orkney. He thought of being an academic or a poet, before deciding to become a novelist. This confusion about what he should do was mirrored in his choices of subject at university. He made no headway studying medicine but was in his element studying literature. His realisation of the significance of his own gifts took time to dawn, as he chose journalism before novel writing. This slow realisation may be partly due to his self-awareness - an affliction for him. He could always see his foolishness with great clarity and it is difficult to believe that his self-esteem was very high. Throughout the biography are scattered the phrases "he saw himself as" or "the idea of himself as". When The Scotsman

published a tribute on his seventieth birthday, he described himself, fetchingly but imprecisely, as "an old peasant with a pen".[21] Two years later this "old peasant" moved from Pitculzean House to a house on the estate of the Marquis of Haddo who personally offered him the lease. Even with such a long list of novels and other writing behind him, Linklater, at the end of his life, still seems to undervalue his vocation as a writer - appearing here to make it subsidiary to a central occupation. Even though Linklater was friendly with other Scottish authors, was involved with Scottish PEN and was generally recognised as a literary figure, he doubted his worthiness to hold such a position, especially at the end of his life. Parnell writes:

> He had put everything he could into A Terrible Freedom, and nobody wanted to know. His haunting, dark, wildly funny, deeply touching, philosophically invigorating and stylistically pleasing story had failed. What could be going on? He railed comically against the critics in letters to his friends, and essayed a shrug; but the rejection of this novel finally made him doubt himself. Almost persuaded that the spring of his fictive talent had run dry, he resolved to put up the shutters. (EL p.328)

Part of the blame for Linklater's loss of confidence must lie with the quality of reviewing he received. Evelyn Waugh, an admirer of Linklater's, probably accounts accurately for the English reviewers when he wrote, "I am sure they resent your being Scotch." (EL p.312) But where were the Scottish reviewers? Of the reviews Parnell quotes their most noticeable feature is their lack of critical engagement with the text. Concentrating on superficial aspects of the novels, they do not define and explore the true critical issues raised by the novels. If a writer is not acknowledged at this level of himself where he is at his most

extended, his most human, then it is not surprising that he lives in doubt of his own ability. What is surprpising is the endurance of the creative impulse, though it is vulnerable to carelessness and neglect.

Linklater adopted and discarded roles throughout his life. Was this a means of coping with his insecurity as a writer? Writing was the one activity where there was no distance between himself and his actions. Whatever he may have said he was, he was actually a writer. The role deflected attention from his writing shielding it from miscellaneous criticism. Although during the Renaissance most writers including Linklater, managed to stave off the problems of identity which beset the Scottish writer, not allowing them to affect their fiction adversely, the problems still existed. Because of the unusually high interest in the national culture during the Renaissance, the problems seemed to have receded. Magnus Merriman (1934) dates from this period and though Linklater has more at stake personally in this novel than he had in Juan in America, it does not show the signs of bitterness against Scottish culture which a later novel, The Merry Muse, exhibits, in which the old Scottish problems have resurfaced. Yet even at this high-point, Linklater looks to his own experience to provide the basis of his plots, just as pre-Renaissance writers had had to.

In Magnus Merriman, Linklater uses an episodic form which allows him to evoke the atmosphere of the Renaissance. By following Magnus's progress it is possible to demonstrate more fully his similarity and dissimilarity to the protagonists of pre-Renaissance novels.

After being demobbed, Magnus has various adventures which lead to him being lionized in London because of a recent literary success.

Being bored, he responds to an invitation from Francis Meiklejohn (a fictional name for Moray MacLaren) to return to Scotland, as great things are happening:

> "Come to Scotland. A renascence is on the way - political and literary - so come and be its midwife. . .(MM p.34)

Magnus arrives in Edinburgh and meets Meiklejohn who is on fire with enthusiam about the Renaissance. Magnus adopts an air of scepticism but is attracted to Meiklejohn's ideas:

> It [the National Party of Scotland] means the re-creation of a people, the rebirth of the nation of Scotland. . . [Magnus] considered with growing interest the intoxication of politics, that alluring perversion of patriotism. (MM p.41)

Magnus and Meiklejohn spend their first evening in Edinburgh looking for Hugh Skene (a fictional name for Hugh MacDiarmid), drinking and quarrelling. Magnus realises that support for nationalism in Scotland is not so widespread as Meiklejohn had led him to believe. However, he wakes up the next morning thinking that Nationalism sounds good. He persuades himself further into the role of patriot by comparing himself with Lenin and Chopin and by overruling mentally the objections any Scots may have to independence:

> If Scotland did not yet want independence it should be made to want it. (MM p.63)

Magnus has talked himself into a new role. He spends time reading about the Nationalist cause and a mere ten days later "regarded himself as one of the earliest apostles of the Scottish political renascence." (MM p.66) Linklater's satire is unmistakable.

Magnus is now ready to explore the Renaissance more fully. He knows it involves changes in literature as well as in politics. As a preparation to meet Hugh Skene, Magnus reads Skene's latest volume, which gives Linklater opportunity to opine about modern verse and parody MacDiarmid's poetry. The inteview with Skene is well-done. Linklater catches something in the nature of MacDiarmid himself in his description of him. The conversation turns on nationalism and the weird amalgam of views Skene holds. They get round to literature in due course and Skene delivers his opinion. Once again the authentic note of Renaissance life is sounded:

> [Skene] aimed his slender and rather dirty forefinger at Magnus and said, with cold and deliberate ferocity: "You're feeding on corpse-meat. In all its traditional forms English literature is dead, and to depend on the past for inspiration is a necrophagus perversion. We've got to start again, and the great literary problem confronting us today is to discover how far we must retract the horizontal before erecting a perpendicular." (MM p.72)

Magnus does not understand all he says but realises that true greatness does lie behind the pretentious facade and he sees Skene actually become gentle when considering a literary problem.

Magnus' interest in Nationalism continues unabated until he and Meiklejohn are involved in a brawl in a restaurant for which he must spend a weekend in custody:

> He felt a passionate desire for the cleanliness of an ascetic life, the hard decency of strenuous work in the lamp-lit severity of a scholar's library . . . (MM p.155)

However, he gets home to find a letter waiting from George MacDonnell (the fictional name of John MacCormick) inviting him to stand as a candidate in a forth-coming by-election at Kinluce. Magnus is entranced by the dream of a great political career, which affects his perception of the weekend in custody:

> Magnus almost felt that he could claim to have been a political prisoner. . .   (MM p.162)

From the two episodes of Magnus Merriman which have been discussed here - Magnus' wartime adventures and his first encounters in the Renaissance - a pattern emerges and it is to be repeated several times before the novel ends. Magnus' life is built on a series of illusory ambitions. As Magnus fails to achieve one ambition, it is replaced by another. The pattern when analysed reads as follows: scepticism, absorption, climax, anti-climax and a period of rationalising which merges with a new attraction. At each stage, Magnus acts as if no other inimical stage had existed. His actions are controlled by a temporary mood which he treats as if it were a permanent state of affairs. Linklater makes this pattern quite clear not only by repeating it in Magnus's adventure but also by tracing it in his love life.

Magnus's participation in the Kinluce by-election provides Linklater with another setting ripe for satire as he describes the muddle and intrigue of the election campaign. Magnus's election agent, Captain Smellie, gives the appearance of knowing what to do but is totally incompetent. At first Magnus is annoyed with his prospective constituents who do not seem to share his views. His first audience consists of "twenty or thirty oafish rustics." (MM p.182) A few days later the rustics have been transformed into the salt of the earth, as Magnus, not his audience, has changed his mood. Neither meeting is convinced by his arguments and though

there is a short burst of enthusiasm for Magnus before the campaign ends, all is dissipated when it turns out that Smellie has made off with Magnus' deposit.

Coming last in the poll is a bigger blow to Magnus' self-esteem than was landing in jail because of the humiliation of Smellie's actions:

> "If you can't look after a hundred and fifty pounds, how can you look after the National Debt? (MM p.201)

Magnus needs to get right away from such a personal disaster. He takes a boat to Orkney:

> as the 'Saint Giles' faced the strong easterly wind that blew up the Forth he found an exhilarating illusion of escape. . . (MM p.208)

Like Gilian and John Gourlay, Magnus tries to evade the responsibility for his own foolish actions induced by an unreliable imagination. Linklater shows him no pity:

> presently the sea turned rough, and for most of the voyage he lay in his bunk and was either actively or passively sick. (MM p.208)

Orkney provides a peaceful and restorative environment for Magnus after the trials in Fife. Orkney is presented very much as it was in White Maa's Saga. It is a place where people's lives are regulated by the seaons and their related tasks. No one is in a hurry. No one cares passionately about the state of English literature. Magnus eats, sleeps, fishes, wanders about and

gradually regains his self-esteem. He finds he is able to write poetry again and turns to the poem he began in Edinburgh called The Returning Son, written in celebration of the virtues of the Renaissance. He tones down the harshness of the satire and feels "the bitterness he had felt in Kinluce was now transmuted to a bland ironical perception of politics' vulgar intrigue and perverted folly." (MM p.215) He finishes the first part of the poem which is a satirical comment on the prevailing condition of Scotland and sets out to write the constructive criticism which is to form the sequel. This is a more difficult task:

> He began with an evening vision of the western sea: the poet, standing on a cliff, was watching the great orb of the sun drop down the sky with all its company of roseate clouds and golden mists, draining the firmament of colour. . .; down to a hand's breadth from the stiff horizon came the sun, and the wall of the cold sea was ready to obscure it: but like some aureate bird, fat, and with feathers of flame, the sun perched on top of the wall, its circle flattening somewhat with its weight, and then, rebounding slowly, rose again. . . (MM p.223)

Without drawing attention to the fact, Linklater seems to show Magnus taking his constructive inspiration form the aureate allegories of Dunbar. It looks as if Magnus has really imbibed MacDiarmid's dictum "Not Burns, Dunbar!" literally and Linklater is commenting on the senselessness of wholescale, uncritical reappropriation of the Medievalists, which MacDiarmid, among others, was advocating. It is possible to see Linklater describing an anti-zysygy here as he makes Magnus swing from a clipped, satirical modern style to an expansive, Medieval style and then Linklater takes a hand and reduces Magnus' new-found, supposedly profound, style to absurdity by making Magnus see his sun as nothing grander than a fat bird.

Although Magnus seems to be showing a consistent interest in his own writing, his thoughts have been assaulted by another dream: the quest for a perfect cow. (As far as Linklater is concerned this is satire with the gloves off.) Magnus's friend Peter Isbister is a farmer who breeds cattle and shares with Magnus his ambition to breed quality beasts. Although "Magnus was hardly ready yet to admit his new and delicate imaginings. They were still dream-like and vague.", it can be seen that Linklater is preparing his last satirical offensive of the novel: his satire on the Renaissance emphasis on the search for roots and the value of the rural community. (MM p.221)

Though vague, these dreams do begin to affect Magnus's poetry. His constructive vision of Scotland is to include Celtic and Norse elements and Magnus thinks of his problems in terms of "cross-breeding". (MM p.223) It is not long until Magnus leaves his poetry and begins to work on the farm, his journey into rusticity and the peasant role has begun. Magnus is enchanted by Orkney's natural simplicity. Linklater shows no diffidence in sending up this Renaissance commonplace:

> he dreamed that the heather was growing into his armpits and overgrowing his legs, that the moss was yielding and the hillside making him its own, one soil with its soil, till the wild bees found honey in his hair and whaups made a nest in his navel. . .
>
> It was either a death-wish, he thought, or else he had visualized the earth as Demeter and was re-entering the womb. And as he walked home he composed a bawdy poem about psycho-analysis.
> (MM p.233)

In Magnus' dream, reminiscent of the grotesqueries of Edward Lear, Linklater mocks the notion of having an important union with the land itself. If after reading this, it is thought that Linklater is being outrageous in his satire, this passage should be paralleledd with the ending of Grey Granite, where Gibbon has his heroine merge into the landscape, and is utterly serious about the fact and the significance he attaches to it. No matter how Magnus may try to shrug it off, he has become deeply attracted to farming life and the aptly-named Rose, the daughter of his friend Peter, with whom his notions of human generation are bound up. By the time of the Dounby show, Magnus can hardly differentiate the elements of his role. Linklater shows the confusion of ideas in Magnus' head in this passage where Rose, cows, farming and marriage are all mixed together:

> Magnus was filled with admiration for its [the cow's] sleek and solid beauty: his devotion to his horses weakened; his admiration for the cow and his affection for Rose mingled, he held her hand, and almost asked her to marry him on the spot. He was determined to be a farmer. (MM p.235)

There is less time now between the climax of Magnus' dreams and Linklater's deflation of them with quite uninhibited sarcasm. Though he had not intended to, Magnus sleeps with Rose and before the end of the chapter, Linklater records that "a certain trepidation was displacing the pleasure in his mind". (MM p.240)

A few days later, Magnus is offered a job in London. "In his mood of rural disillusion this proposal appealed very strongly to Magnus." (MM p.245) His London experience displays the same pattern as the preceding episodes. Magnus finds the tension of London invigorating and felt "that he had returned to his own country." (MM 248) After his recent disquisition about Orkney as

a spiritual and physical homeland, it is almost superfluous to point out that the last remark is massively ironic.

It is obvious that Linklater is working the novel to its comic climax. Magnus is moving much more quickly from one debacle to the next and the ironies involved in his constant switching of roles are so huge that they demand resolution. Magnus' final folly is the purchase of the bull Jupiter. Magnus returns to Orkney partly because his job does not work out and partly because Rose writes to him telling him she is pregnant. Magnus marries Rose and at his wedding is so heartened by the character of the community - its closeness, its culture and its care - and so fuddled by drink that he decides he will "prepare to become a tradition." (MM p.297) So in passing Linklater takes a potshot at the Renaissance reverence for tradition by suggesting that Magnus, inconsistent and unreliable, thinks he could become one of Orkney's eternal verities.

Some time after the wedding, Magnus decides to breed cattle. He is on this way to the mainland when he meets Mr Carron, a farmer from Caithness, who owns Jupiter, a bull, "perfect in his kind." (MM p.311) Amid drinking on the boat and on the farm, Magnus sees Jupiter, is impressed and buys him. Jupiter's pedigree shows that he is the culmination of Scottish breeding:

> The black-polled aristocracy of Scotland were Jupiter's ancestors, and Jupiter was their proper scion. (MM p.313)

When the bull reaches Orkney, all goes well for a time until the bull slips and has to be killed. Magnus' ambitions are dashed again.

This episode is an elaborate structural joke, subtly done. Throughout the novel Linklater has shown a liking for verbal jokes - characters often have placenames as surnames: Miss Beauly, Segeant Denny, and the inverted form, Colonel Gowrie-Blair. The Jupiter episode shows the same delight in disguised, witty, authorial comment. Looking at the section in more detail then, the poem which Magnus works on intermittently is "The Returning Sun". The title is a pun as Magnus is a returning "son" coming back to help Scotland at this crisis in her destiny. The poem satirises Scotland's contemporary problems, then envisages a hopeful future for her in the image of a sun which almost sets but miraculously rises again. Now, the bull Magnus buys is called Jupiter - the Raman name for the chief god, often portrayed by the sun. Jupiter is also a returning sun. The aspects of the Renaissance on which the poem commented directly were the needs for a deliverer and a fresh look at ancient Scottish traditions which were to be "crossbred" in order to provide a new Scottish identity. What was a indirect comment in the poem has in the Jupiter episode become a comic swipe at Renaissance notions of tradition and generation. The bull even follows the progress of the sun in Magnus' ludicrous image: "He slipped and fell, and rose again slowly." (MM p.315) Through this misfortune, Linklater completes his own literary pattern and with disguised ferocity delivers a violent blow to Magnus's continued pretensions about the Renaissance. Instead of being midwife to a new movement in Scottish life, he has nothing to show but a load of dead bull.

After the death of the bull, Magnus continues with his farming and begins to transfer his ambition from himself to his son. Thus Linklater moderates the blow dealt to Magnus with the death of Jupiter and the novel leaves him dreaming in Orkney.

From this account of Magnus' activities and character it is possible to see how closely he is linked with pre-Renaissance heroes. He is an imaginative boy whose creative gifts were stifled at school. So powerful is the strength of his imagination that it is easier for Magnus to live in dream worlds than the real one. Magnus moves from role to role with no more than a few shudders of self-criticism. Because of the quality of his imagination which is added to a "quality of shifting enthusiasm", when he fails, he refuses to face up to failure and runs away from taking any responsibility for the chaos he leaves behind. Because of this he will never belong to the comfortably safe middle-class world which he seems to inhabit. He cannot combine ordinary life with his extravagant imagination. When one of his girlfriends takes him to task for his failures, he responds:

> "I'm going to be a grandiose, multiple and consistent failure. . . I'll be alive, really, really alive, able to make a fool of myself. . . when your successful men are limping around three-parts dead under the weight of their success. (MM p.206)

It is this sort of speech which differentiates Magnus from earlier heroes. Instead of trying to seek a reconciliation between himself and society, Magnus would rather follow his own nature even though that will bring him into conflict with his society.

However, conditions in Scotland have changed since the earlier novels were written and it is due to these changes Magnus can make such a speech. The First World War has changed people's perceptions. There is a definite feeling among the characters of this novel that things are different now. Changes have taken place in poetry; they have taken place in attitudes to authority. For the writers institutions are no longer the sole expression of

national identity. Linklater hardly mentions them. Authors like him are much more likely to look for Scottish identity in the stories and traditions of the country. It is the same spirit which allows Magnus to discount the disapprobation of his class and to live how he pleases.

Linklater, though he satirises Renaissance beliefs and ideas, does still seem to be in agreement with them He satirises Magnus's search for roots but he does show that Magus enjoys farming. Magnus is always impressed with the natural beauty of Scotland and these impressions are not satirised to the extent that they are made ridiculous. In Linklater's parody of A Drunk Man Looks at the Thistle where Magnus is struck by the beauty of an Orkney snowscene one night when he is returning home drunk, Linklater, though he is gently satirising MacDiarmid and Magnus, is not satirising Orkney and his genuine delight in the landscape is obvious. While this incident reminds the reader most strongly of MacDiarmid's poem, it does seem that the novel itself is, both in its style and content, a parody of the anti-syzygy as Magnus keeps swerving from one extreme to another. However, as the Drunk Man's thoughts always return to Jean, Magnus always returns to Orkney, where he seems to achieve domestic peace in the land of his birth and cultural heritage. It is unusual for any Linklater novel to end in stasis and far more usual for it to end with the main character contemplating another journey. Though Linklater sees the comic side of Renaissance ideas, he still finds them congenial and is able to leave Magnus at rest in the centre of them.

Apart from finding the Renaissance congenial, Linklater was able to free himself from the crippling restraints of autobiography, which characterised earlier novels. Linklater was sufficiently confident of his own ability to distance himself from Magnus. In allowing Magnus to suffer failure, Linklater, by displaying his own

satirical talent, was able to put personal success in the place of failure. This achievement of perspective helped Linklater to take the destabilising character of Magnus and bring about a comic resolution of character and theme.

Linklater's atrraction to Renaissance values can be seen again in some of his short stories, especially Sealskin Trousers and The Goose Girl which were not written until more than ten years later. In them Linklater examines the relationship between human beings and animals in a magical setting. In a fashion similar to Naomi Mitchison in Five Men and a Swan, Linklater revitalises and adapts the Leda and the Swan myth in The Goose Girl. He also seeks to explore the depths of human personality which have been overlaid by industrial progess in the manner of Gunn in The Green Isle of the Great Deep. Linklater's short stories typify the use of the genre during the Renaissance. As with Gibbon's Clay and Greenden, Linklater's stories are symbolic, centred on a quest for roots through myth. For all these Renaissance writers, Renaissance ideas were a rich seam to mine and satisfied them long after the general Renaissance impulse was at its strongest.

However, not all of Linklater's writings display the resolution and contentment of those just described. In The Merry Muse (1959), Linklater again writes about the Scottish literary scene but the atmosphere of enthusiastic bonhomie, evident in the Edinburgh scenes of Magnus Merriman, has evaporated and been replaced by pessimism and bitterness.[22] Part of this change in attitude might be put down to Linklater's age - he was sixty - but whatever the reason, he seems to have grown out of sympathy with the world. The character of the love-making is a good shorthand guide to the temper of any Linklater novel and in The Merry Muse it is bitter, recriminatory and hurried. Characters do not make love because they want to but because they want to prove something - that they

are still young, that they have the power to hurt others. Linklater has also changed his relation to the main character. Max Arbuthnot is a successful Edinburgh lawyer definitely part of the middle-class that Magnus rejected. Eachainn Dhu (or Yacky Doo) as he is familiarly and reductively known occupies a role similar to that of Magnus, but his character is different. He is a young poet who is bent on suicide and telling people how suicidal he feels. In Magnus Merriman the world is bright enough to make Magnus comic but in the later novel it is not noble enough to make Yacky Doo tragic. Yacky fails as Magnus did, but Linklater has lost patience with him and kills him off. The Scottish literati come to bury the poet; many of them being figures of the Renaissance grown old. This collection of old authors shows more clearly than anything the death of the Renaissance spirit. The fire and enthusiasm has gone. The world has changed again. Its young poets are bent on suicide, not, like Magnus, on life, and its old writers are no longer needed. Arbuthnot the character most like Linklater is a laywer, not a writer, and he is an unpleasant, boasting, vain, old man. Traits which were amusing in Magnus are preposterous in Max. He is a meaner character than Magnus in every sense of the word, as if in order to survive he has had to lose some of his essential humanity. For Linklater, part of the attraction of the Renaissance was that it made satisfying conclusions possible.

Like other Scottish novelists, Eric Linklater is concerned with identity, both personal and national. Secondly, like other Scottish novelists of his time, he found the ideas of the Renaissance created an atmosphere in which he could easily work. The myth of artistic inspiration, subscribed to by some Romantic writers, was that if an artist had been given the gift of poetry, he would be compelled to write come what may, because the gift could not be destroyed by human opinion or circumstance. This myth still lingers and it is surprising to discover just how fragile human creativity is and how susceptible it is to adverse human

opinion and circumstance. Eric Linklater was thirty before his first novel was published. His education, culture and life-experience had been such that, despite his literary ability, writing was not his first or even his second career choice. When he did begin to write novels his confidence in his artistic abilities was mirrored by enthusiastic reviews. However, a theory began to appear that Linklater had only enough ability to entertain and should not be taken seriously. This superficial and often unexamined theory grew to such proportions that it bacame the accepted wisdom about Linklater and formed the basis of most reviews of his work until it eventually undermined the man's creative confidence. (EL p.328) However, before this sorry process reached its conclusion, Linklater had written a number of successful novels, two of which, Magnus Merriman and The Men of Ness, grew directly out of the Renaissance. The Renaissance emphases in these works has often been missed, probably because Linklater applies ideas less directly than Gunn or Gibbon. Both The Men of Ness and Sun Circle are based on the Renaissance belief that studying a country's ancient traditions would bring about a better understanding of national identity, but not in the same way. Linklater enacts the idea by choosing a source for his novel which is both northen and ancient. Gunn seeks to prove his idea in the action of the novel. Linklater's less direct method has often been overlooked. However, his novels hold just as many Renaissance motifs as others. He comments on the power of history, the search for a new poetry, the power of myth, the search for roots and the importance of the land. The positiveness of many of these ideas appealed to Linklater as well as the enthusiastic atmosphere they generated. Linklater was not greatly in sympathy with much of the twentieth century - it was too mean, bitter and fragmented for him. Thus he responded wholeheartedly to the boisterous surge of confidence produced by the Renaissance. In so many ways the Scottish Literary Renaissance is out of step with other literary movements of the twentieth century. It was not pessimistic or disillusioned, even though it shares many of its ideas with

pessimistic movements. It did not concentrate on brokenness and unhealthiness. Scottish literature had known all too much about these things in previous years. At the beginning of the twentieth century, when, ironically, many writers had their secure worlds shattered, Scottish writers wrote about the broken world being joyfully healed and restored. By using the archetype of the imaginative and unreliable boy, Linklater demonstrates his affinity not only with the novel of the Scottish Renaissance but with the Scottish novel more generally. It is evident that there are tensions in Linklater's identity between his Scottishness and his affection for prestige English culture in which he liked to shine. Though English culture attracted him however, it was the northern culture of Scotland and Orkney which kindled his creative vision. With Magnus Merriman, Linklater turned his attention to the theme of Scotland's relation to the creative artist. Linklater, like Barrie and Munro before him, isolated this subject as a crucial one and like earlier writers he approached it in a similar way by developing in Magnus the character with the eccentric, unreliable but imaginative consciousness through which the nature of Scotland was to be seen. The links between Magnus and earlier characters strongly suggest that it is more than coincidence which has produced them, and these characters have this nature because their authors have realised independently that this is the sort of literary consciousness Scottish culture produces. Like Gilian, Magnus imagines himself in heroic roles and like Sentimental Tommy, Magnus' identity almost disappears in the welter of roles he assumes. Like these earlier characters, Magnus fails consistently but what differentiates him from his predecessors is that he makes a virtue out of this necessity by making comedy, not tragedy, out of Magnus' misfortunes. Because Linklater has a perspective on this character he writes a novel which has none of the odd stylistic gaffes or structural tension of Lorna Moon, Ian MacPherson or Fionn MacColla. Though Linklater wrote a successful novel out of this material, he does not fully answer the problems inherent in the theme. Magnus survives despite his instability:

his depressions do not last long and he soon asserts himself as a maverick cum literary celebrity. However, the Scottish cultural landscape remains unchanged for the artist has adapted himself to it and not vice versa. Linklater never really came to terms with the fact that Scotland does not value its writers and though he produced fine novels throughout his life, the evils embedded in the Scottish literary scene caught up with him and towards the end of his life actually caused him to doubt his creativity. The fictive talent which was able to mould The Men of Ness and Magnus Merriman out of the Scottish Renaissance should never have been in doubt, nor should Linklater's place in the Scottish literary tradition, to which these novels give him title.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

1. Lorna Moon, Doorways in Drumorty (London, 1926). Dark Star (London, 1929). Edition used (Aberdeen, 1980). Future references to Dark Star will be abbreviated to DS.

2. Ian MacPherson, Shepherds' Calendar (London, 1931); Land of our Fathers (London, 1933); Pride in the Valley (London, 1936); Wild Harbour (London, 1936). Future references will be abbreviated to Sh.C, LF, and PV.

3. Neil Gunn, Highland River (London, 1960) p.8.

4. Alistair McCleery, 'Ian MacPherson Rediscovered', The Scottish Review, 24 (1981), 14-18 (p.17).

5. Fionn MacColla, The Albannach (London, 1932), edition used (Edinburgh, 1971). Future references will be abbreviated to TA.

6. Fionn MacColla, Too Long in This Condition (Thurso, 1975), p.36. Future refemeces will be abbreviated to TL.

7. Fionn MacColla, At the sign of the Clenched Fist (Edinburgh, 1967) and Scottish Noel (Edinburgh, 1960). Future references will be abbreviated to ASCF.

8. Hugh MacDiarmid, 'Sir J M Barrie' in Contemporary Scottish Studies (Edinburgh, 1976) pp.3-4 (p.3); Hugh MacDiarmid, 'The Modern Scene' in Scottish Scene by Lewis Grassic Gibbon and Hugh MacDiarmid (London, 1934) pp.33-52 (p.46 and p.52); Hugh MacDiarmid, Lucky Poet: A Self-Study in Literature and Political Ideas (London, 1972) p.73.

9. J B Caird, 'Fionn MacColla - the two-fold inheritance' in Essays on Fionn MacColla edited by David Morrison, (Thurso, 1973), pp.31-37 (p.31).

10. J Derrick MacClure, 'Fionn MacColla: Unity through Trilingualism' in Literature of the North edited by David Hewitt and Michael Spiller (Aberdeen, 1983) pp.162-175.

11. Eric Linklater, White Maa's Saga (London, 1929), edition used (London,1963); The Men of Ness (London, 1932), edition used (Kirkwall,1983); Magnùs Merriman (London, 1934), edition used (London,1959). Future references will be abbreviated to WMS, TMN and MM respectively.

12. Michael Parnell, Eric Linklater: A Critical Biography (London, 1984), future references will be abbreviated to EL.

13. Dissension among Nationalists is described by F R Hart and J B Pick in Neil M Gunn: A Highland Life (London, 1981), ch.8.

14. Eric Linklater, 'The Novel in Scotland', Fortnightly Review, 144 (1935), 621-624 (p.62).

15. See Michael Parnell, op.cit., pp.123-124.

16. Alan Bold, Modern Scottish Literature, (London, 1983), p.186.

17. Eric Linklater, The Ultimate Viking, (London, 1955), p.8.

18. See Marjorie Linklater's introduction to Eric Linklater's The Men of Ness (Kirkwall, 1983), pp.1-4 (p.1).

19. Marjorie Linklater, ibid., see especially pp.3.

20. Eric Linklater, Fanfare for a Tin Hat (London, 1970), p.135.

21. Raeburn Mackie, The Scotsman, 8 March 1969, p.1.

22. Eric Linklater, The Merry Muse (London, 1959).

CHAPTER THREE

LEWIS GRASSIC GIBBON

Most of the novels in this study have received little or inadequate critical attention. However, this is not true of the work of Lewis Grassic Gibbon (1901-1935) which will be considered in this chapter. Along with The House with the Green Shutters, Sunset Song has received more critical attention than most Scottish novels; its basic critical issues being well understood. This position has advantages and drawbacks. What has been understood about Gibbon's achievement here - the significance of the character of Chris, the portrayal of the dying community and the emphasis Gibbon places on the value of the Land - not only provides an introduction to Gibbon's personal artistic interests; these literary characteristics identify him most strikingly with other Scottish novelists of the period, notably Neil Gunn. For the best expression of the line of interpretation, Ian Campbell's book Lewis Grassic Gibbon in the 'Scottish Writers Series' may be consulted.[1] The chapter titles, 'The Land', 'Civilisation', 'Scotland' and 'A Scots Quair', while providing a framework for understanding Gibbon also link him with the Renaissance. Not that this is Dr Campbell's particular brief in this book; but it is a reflection of the fact that Gibbon is so much a man of his time that any perceptive study of his work cannot help but identify the themes that link the author with contemporary issues because these issues are his major concerns. While all the ramifications of the Scottish Renaissance may not be fully understood, extant criticism of Gibbon is a veritable compendium of Renaissance themes. However, there are drawbacks which result from the status of Sunset Song. The first is that its status has deflected critical attention from the rest of Gibbon's work (10 novels, various full-length non-fiction works, numerous short stories, academic essays and journalism), which in turn has led to the stagnation of criticism of Sunset Song itself. The novel's complexity does not begin and end with the 'two Chrises' speech. To summarise, the most usual interpretation concerns the tension in Chris Guthrie, the heroine, to seek material and intellectual benefits outside her local community or to find spiritual satisfaction in the traditional Scottish life of

Kinraddie, even though as she grows older, she sees this community lose its relevance to modern society. However, there is more to Sunset Song than this interpretation suggests and it is surely not without significance that what is not contained by this interpretation are elements in Sunset Song whose significance becomes richer and clearer in comparison with the rest of Gibbon's work.

It is in commendable reaction to this stagnation that it is best to see William K Malcolm's monograph A Blasphemer and Reformer: A Study of James Leslie Mitchell/Lewis Grassic Gibbon.[2] Malcolm's starting points are that Scottish literary critics have limited Gibbon's achievement, that critics have based their remarks on "a small part of his total output" and that Gibbon's "personal ideology" needs to be better understood in order to provide a new and better interpretation of A Scots Quair.[3] Studying all Gibbon's work in order to shed light on A Scots Quair would seem to be a stimulating occupation and a worthwhile objective However, it seems that Malcolm's discussion begins to founder when he attacks existing criticism of Gibbon and this betrays weaknesses in his understanding of Gibbon himself. For Malcolm attempts to divorce Gibbon from Scottish literary traditions and from the Scottish Renaissance.[4] However, Malcolm's attempt to make light of the Scottish elements in Gibbon's writing is unsuccessful and in fact meaningful discussion of Gibbon can take place in these areas. Firstly, in this chapter, I will discuss Gibbon's relation to the Scottish Renaissance by looking in detail at Sunset Song and then I shall go on to discuss how the darker issues of the Scottish novel, so opposed to the optimism of the Scottish Renaissance, can indeed overtake a writer from that period.

How then does A Scots Quair, and Sunset Song in particular, show an identity with the other novels of the 1930s? Sunset Song shows

clearly how Gibbon's diagnosis of Scotland's ills and his remedies for them were similar to those being demonstrated by other novelists of the time. It is as well to remember this fact for before Gibbon wrote Sunset Song, he had little or no personal contact with other Scottish writers. It is striking that similar questions and answers should have occurred to MacDiarmid and Gibbon independently. Sunset Song charts the growth of a soul and the decline of a community and even in this bald outline of its theme, it is easy to see that it is concerned with a dominant theme of the Scottish novel: the relation between the individual and the community. In order to place Gibbon's work in context perhaps it would be as well to review the position so far.

In Scott's novels, the resolution of this theme is a compromise. At the end of Waverley, society is not under the threat of war from the Jacobites but their memory has not been forgotten and the values Scott associated with them - courage, nobility and adventure - are retained in a modified manner in the life of the hero who lives in a secure and prosperous society. Thus the qualities which stimulate the imagination are subordinated to the claims of reason. Such a resolution of deeply opposed sets of values is uncommon in novels after Scott's. Scotland is big enough for Davie Balfour, but not for Alan Breck. By the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, writers represent society as severely limiting the life of the imagination and frowning on any human activity which is not primarily functional. Thrums is such a society where spontaneous action is impossible because of the fear of gossip. Barbie, Brieston and Inverary suffer the same malaise. For an imaginative individual growing up in such a community, Barrie and Brown posit two outcomes, neither of which is optimistic. Barrie shows Tommy outwitting other people by utilising his imagination. But he becomes so adept at deceiving that he loses his individuality - the very thing that he was trying to preserve. For young John Gourlay, the outcome of similar social pressures is his tragic

death. Society and the individual cannot resolve their differences. Against this must be set the Kailyard's view which held that a rural society nurtured its gifted members, fitted them for whatever further training they needed and sustained them when they returned from the wider world, the scene of their significant activity.

Gibbon was heir to all these views and he had the advantage of being distant from his Scottish experience by time (he had not lived in the Mearns for any length of time since he was eighteen) and distance (he lived in Welwyn Garden City). This distance prevented him from writing against the community out of black anger (as Brown had done) because the slights of his youth were for the most part a thing of the past, though he could still vividly convey the resentment that he had once felt. Along with his maturity had come the ability to see that the problems he had were, to a certain extent, ones which he had aggravated or caused and the fault had not always lain entirely with his parents or with neighbours. Maturity enables him to express his love for the community into which he had been born and to praise its virtues and natural beauty without feeling that this undermined his more critical remarks about his society, achieving a critical balance which Brown in the earlier novel could not sustain.

Gibbon's balance and detachment are hallmarks of the Renaissance novel and how well he manages to keep his own - usually unruly - passions in check can be seen in the way in which he makes jokes against himself and his Diffusionist beliefs in the course of his work. Chae Strachan laments that if Socialism is not embraced by all men "we'd all go back to savagery." (SS p.22) Chae supposes that this is the worst fate that could befall civilised man but Gibbon believed that living in the ways of primitive man would be beneficial to civilised man. He preserves the historical accuracy

of Chae's character by the remark while at the same time being ironical about its content. Chae is one of the characters whose beliefs and attitudes Gibbon endorses throughout Sunset Song. However, he is sufficiently detached from Chae to be able to give him views with which he does not personally agree. Thus he mocks Chae's superficial views of early man. Gibbon's characters are not mouthpieces for their author's views as Murdo is a mouthpiece for Fionn MacColla's in The Albannach.

While Gibbon's Kinraddie is not as black as Barbie, it is no Kailyard paradise either. Gibbon knows the limitations of rural society. His narrative technique allows him to dramatise these faults instead of representing them. The main narrator is Chris Guthrie but at other times other characters narrate. In Gunn and Gibbon, Douglas Gifford has called this narration "allocated speak"; "speak" being the Mearns word for a subject of conversation or the talk of a community.[5] (GAG p.77) At other times a character who is unnamed narrates - "unallocated speak" - whose remarks describe the nature of the community. This voice has no time for the complaints of people better off than the majority of inhabitants:

> But ministers' wives were aye folk to complain and don't know when they're well off, them and the silver they get for their bit creatures of men preaching once or twice a Sunday . . . (SS p.20)

To respect people with money automatically would betray an inferiority which the community does not feel. Nor is this voice put out by the immature and coarse behaviour of some members of the community as long as their action can be sanctioned by custom:

> on the eve of Ellison's wedding they took him as he was going into his house and took off his breeks and

> tarred his dowp and the soles of his feet and stuck feathers on them and then they threw him into the water-trough, as was the custom. (SS p.18)

The community has a very high estimate of its own importance but it is ironic that both excerpts quoted above show up its narrowness of sympathy, its shallowness of knowledge and its own coarseness. However, the paradoxical effect is that the reader is not only repelled but also attracted by the speak. (GAG p.77) In Sunset Song, the reader is more often than not on the side of the speak against its target. Despite its narrowness, the vigour, energy, pride, and above all, the humour of the speak overcome the reader's reservations about its content.

As the less attractive side of Kinraddie is often ameliorated by humour, it is strongly contrasted with the positive virtues of the community, mainly demonstrated by the richness of human relationships. Sunset Song benefits enormously from the fact that Gibbon found it possible to describe sexual relationships openly and without shame. This opened up a new area for the Scottish novel which had previously been restricted to describing romantic and sexual feelings in a stilted and formulaic manner. Here is Gibbon's description of love in old age:

> Sinclair and his old wife would just shake their heads. . . and in their bed at night, hiddling their old bones close for warmth, give a bit sigh that no brave billy had ever show [sic] inclination to take [their daughter] to his bed. (SS p.27)

Like Edwin Muir in Poor Tom, Gibbon associates sexual openness with a past, healthier society and opposes the coy and unhealthily repressed attitudes of some in his own day. There is sexual happiness in Kinraddie and Chris grows up to enjoy it.

There are also happy family relationships. Chae Strachan is proud of his daughter, Margaret, and works hard so that she can go to College. Relationships amongst neighbours are deeply loyal, even though disfigured on occasion by disagreements. Chae's neighbours rush to his aid when his farm catches fire. Will Guthrie raises the alarm. John Guthrie wakens the sleeping family. Long Rob rescues the contents of the house and Erbert Ellison, usually dismissed by the speak as gentry, brings ropes and pails. At Chris's father's funeral, Alec Mutch and Long Rob both bring whisky with them to help the occasion go off smoothly. Long Rob's praise for Chris's father is expressed in terms of how well he helped the general life of the community:

> he said He was a fine neighbour (SS p.93)

As relationships are a positive feature, so is the quality of certain individuals. In Chae Strachan, Long Rob of the Mill and John Guthrie the best of the community is expressed. For these men the community is more than a collection of people. It is a traditional way of life, controlled by the seasons, dependent on the Land, which has a greater significance than the labour it demands: it is what underpins a rich life of song, dance, food and language. John Guthrie, though bowed down by the unremitting hard work, does not have much time for reflection, but sometimes he thinks of his place in time and history:

> Now also it grew plain to him here as never in Echt that the day of the crofter was fell near finished, put by, the day of folk like himself and Chae and Cuddieston, Pooty and Long Rob of the Mill, the last of the farming folk that wrung their living from the land with their own bare hands. . . the country-folk climbing on silver, the few, back in the pit, the many; and a darkness down on the land he loved better than his soul or God. (SS p.67)

Both Chae and Rob are also distinguished by their hard work and love of the land. All three men are considerate to animals. In these features, Gibbon enlarges the meaning of their lives, by seeing them as descendants of the Picts, the first farmers of the Mearns. They carry something of the Golden Age in their hearts in their reverent attitude to the soil. So influential is the land in their lives, that their mood is often caused by it:

> for every harvest there came something queer and terrible on father, you couldn't handle the thing with a name, it was as if he grew stronger and crueller then, ripe and strong with the strength of corn. . . (SS p.61)

They are interested in getting the best out of the land but they do not exploit it. Thus Chae is angry when the Kinraddie forest is felled firstly because it exposes his own crops to the winds, but secondly because it is against the Land itself:

> In his last bit leave folk said he'd been awful quiet, maybe he knew right well he would never come back, he tramped the parks most of the time, muttering of the woods they'd cut and the land that would never get over it. (SS p.188)

Long Rob's atheism, Chae's socialism and John Guthrie's independence are beliefs and qualities which, while forward-looking are also backward-looking to a Golden Age when the spirit of these beliefs was prevalent. These men are explicitly connected with the Elder People. Long Rob looks like a Viking. John Guthrie is one of the few who appreciates old Mr Colqhoun's sermon which describes the Golden Age and in the passage quoted above Gibbon implies that at harvest-time, Guthrie is the Corn King whose death will bring new fruitfulness for his children. Guthrie shivers at the Standing Stones calling them "coarse, foul things" and says that the savages

who built them are eternally damned. But fundamental though Guthrie's faith is to him, the Land and the ancient men who raised the stones and worked the Land mean more. (SS p.43) Chae Strachan on his way back to the Front meets the ghostly soldier from the battle of Mons Graupius, another ordinary soldier caught up in war, whose appearance to Chae marks him out as a true inheritor of the past.

This community, attractively described by Gibbon, is coming to an end. The novel charts how external influences, given a sharp impetus by the First World War, break up the community. The men who go to war die and their farms are not taken over by new farmers but are bought up and added to larger farms. Those who stay at home make money by selling farm produce. The Kinraddie woods are felled, making arable farming almost impossible. At the end of the novel instead of nine different farms or dwellings there are three. Rob's mill is derelict. Ellison puts sheep on Blawearie. Cuddieston makes his money from poultry, not crops. Kinraddie may not have suffered the fate of the Belgian and French countryside but even during the War it "looked as though it had been shelled by a German army." (SS p.163)

Sunset Song is also about the growth of a soul. How does the unusual or sensitive individual get on in this community? By following the progress of Chris and observing her relation to the community, Gibbon again identifies an area which has been considered by many other Scottish writers. In Scott's novels the heroes come to terms with their society by sacrificing part of their imaginative vision and the extremities to which it might lead them. Barrie and Brown's heroes seek wider experience outside their own communities and return only at their peril. Ian MacPherson's hero, Donald Graeme, finds a period away from Scotland helps him to return and enjoy his home community. Magnus Merriman

appears to have settled in Orkney, but can such constitutional restlessness as his ever be quieted? In this problematic and unhappy relationship, how does Chris fare? Qualifed resolution? Exile? Outright rejection?

Chris is a participant in those satisfying human relationships which characterise Kinraddie. Her mother, Jean, is beautiful, capable, sharing in the pithy folk-wisdom of the people. With her brother, Will, Chris enjoys a relationship of mutual intimacy and comfort. At crises in each other's lives Will and Chris help each other. Chris comforts Will after his father has beaten him and Will often takes Chris on the more adventurous jobs which have to be done about the farm. After her father's death, Chris remembers that though her father had been hard on his family, he had been kind to her when she was small, "how he'd smiled at her and called her his lass in days before the world's fight and the fight of his own flesh grew over-bitter, and poisoned his love to hate." (SS p.95) The poisoning of Chris's father (considering the way Jean died "poisoned" is surely dramatic irony on Gibbon's part) changes the atmosphere in the family from happiness to fear. John Guthrie is tormented by his religion which, as he understands it, teaches that sexual desire is sinful and that sex within marriage is a duty to be discharged, not enjoyed. This understanding militates against his own strong sexual passions and means he feels guilty about being attracted to his wife. Because of this, he uses sex as a means of punishing his wife for being attractive, while trying to hide from himself the knowledge that the reason he makes love to his wife, increasing the risk of pregnancy, is because he wants to, not because of any externally imposed duty. Jean Guthrie's fine spirit is broken under this pressure and when she finds herself pregnant for the sixth time, she poisons her two youngest children and commits suicide. After Jean's death, Guthrie continues to tyrannise Will and Chris and they come to hate him. This develops into a full-blown father-son conflict, so common in the Scotiish

novel. More than once Will and his father almost come to blows. Guthrie's domination of Chris takes another form, which will be dealt with later.

When Chris goes to school and her intelligence becomes evident, problems arise as she realises she gets a satisfaction from books, studying and the English language which is new to her. All at once the old Scottish tension has arisen between the life of the mind which is associated with English and education, and the life of the home which is associated with Scots and the local community. This dilemma is cogently expressed in the "two Chrises" speech. (SS p.37) Chris can have one world or the other, but not both. Education provides her with no intellectual understanding of her Scots identity. At home, when her father finds her reading, he cries:

> Dirt! You've more need to be down in the house helping your mother wash out the hippens. (SS p.43)

But in school Chris is mocked because she is Scots, by teachers who chose the English, not the Scots way and have rejected the communities which reared them. Gibbon portrays such people satirically. (SS p.45) Yet on the farm Chris has to undergo the drudgery of farm work and has no time for the thoughtful reflection her intellect enjoys:

> Still the sun smouldered behind its mists and out by Kinneff the fog-horn moaned all hours, you felt like moaning like that yourself long ere the day was out and your back near cracked and broke with the strain of bending. (SS p.62)

The argument goes back and forth and Chris is too young yet to leave home, the time of decision lies in the future.

The tension comes to a head when her father dies. At first she is determined to leave Blawearie:

> And now she could do as she'd planned, she'd go up to the College again and pass her exams and go on to Aberdeen and get her degrees, come out as a teacher and finish with the filthy soss of a farm. (SS p.96)

So we are prepared for the usual rejection of Scotland, which has again been found insufficient to sustain the whole person. Chris leaves the house, however, and goes out to walk in the fields after it has been raining to be alone and reflect on her life. Walking in the midst of her own land (Gibbon carefully inserts a litany of place names to emphasise the familiar local landscape of her home), she remembers a phrase from the essay 'On Nature' by the Greek author Heraclites, which she had learnt at school and which translates as "nothing endures", or "everything flows on". It is significant that at this watershed in her life Chris is able to use her education for its most important purpose, which her teachers neglected: she uses it to make sense of her own life and country, thus resisting and overcoming the anglifying impulse which characterised much of her education. Engaged on this train of thought, she develops it and thinks how important the land and its life is to her and how, though it changes, it does give a guarantee of permanence unlike any other:

> And then a queer thought came to her there in the drooked fields, that nothing endured at all, nothing but the land she passed across, tossed and turned and perpetually changed below the hands of the crofter folk since the oldest of them had set the Standing Stones by the loch of Blawearie and climbed there on their holy days and saw their terraced crops ride brave in the wind and sun. Sea and sky and the folk who wrote and fought and were learned, teaching and saying and

> praying, they lasted but as a breath. . .but the land was forever, it moved and changed below you, but was forever, you were close to it and it to you, not at a bleak remove it held you and hurted you. And she had thought to leave it all!
>
> She walked weeping then, stricken and frightened because of that knowledge that had come on her, she could never leave it. . . (SS p.97)

This reaction is unique among the novels so far discussed. Instead of rejecting the land Chris affirms its value. Instead of going into exile, she turns toward the land. And this is no sentimental affirmation. It is a rational decision and it takes into account the previous criticisms Chris had made of Kinraddie life. Chris affirms new values which incorporate and transcend both the local and intellectual worlds in which she wishes to live. The claims of her intellect are satisfied because she thinks about her position deeply, imaginatively and critically and moreover she realises she is part of a world where - contrary to what she has been taught - these activities were traditionally valued and practised, hence the emphasis on writing and learning in the old world in the quotation above. The claims of the world which gave her her own identity are satisfied because the experience takes place in that familiar world, in those familiar words, in that familiar rhythm. Chris has only been able to resolve the tension between these two worlds because of a third more powerful force, which is the revelation of the character of the Land itself, which imbues her life with meaning. Here we touch on the third way in which Gibbon's novel resembles other novels of the period: its demonstration of values which are non-material but not the property of any religion.

It is as well to follow the example of other critics and use a capital letter when discussing the Land in Gibbon's fiction,

because it is much more than an elaborate version of the pathetic fallacy. Firstly, the Land contains Gibbon's attitude to History. In discussing Chae, Long Rob and John Guthrie, reference has already been made to Gibbon's belief in Diffusionism and a Golden Age. Gibbon believed that civilisation developed because of the chance discovery of agriculture by men observing the regular action of the Nile. Instead of being hunters, they became farmers, because the land flooded by the Nile guaranteed a regular crop and secured their domesticity. However, because these men were now in communities, power struggles began; religion and barbaric sacrifice began and man lost his earlier freedom and simplicity. As a result of these beliefs, Gibbon was constantly critical of civilisation and saw no future for man until he returned to Golden Age values. In Sunset Song, old Mr Colquhuoun,is the first to propound such ideas:

> he pictured the dark, slow tribes that came drifting across the low lands of the northern seas, the great bear watched them come, and they hunted and fished and loved and died, God's children in the morn of time; and he brought the first voyagers sailing the sounding coasts, they brought the heathen idols of the great Stone Rings, the Golden Age was over and past and lust and cruelty trod the world: (SS p.52)

This theme was very popular in the literature of the period and many writers have an equivalent of Gibbon's ideas. For Neil Gunn, the ideal Highland community, vulnerable to the ravages of history, has the function of Gibbon's Golden Age communities. Eric Linklater has Orkney as a place of peace cut off from the rest of the world. Edwin Muir uses Orkney in a similar fashion but is much more explicit, seeing in his own life a childhood Eden in Orkney from which he was sadly expelled. These writers treat their theme in various ways but it is generally true that all value this peace and treat this miracle of the past as a measure of the

future. This note of optimism distinguishes them from earlier writers who had been bleak about the nature and future of Scottish communities. But by bypassing the events of Scottish history, traditionally interpreted as seminal, writers found hope in pre-history or in places the traditional view of history had deemed unimportant. Further, these writers did not see themselves as chained to the past, as earlier authors had been, because they used their Golden Age as an ideal which could be achieved again. Instead of pessimism, there is optimism; instead of stagnation, action; instead of despair, hope; instead of division, unity. This is another aspect of the authors' belief in a Golden Age - it provides the promise of resolution for the divisive issues of the Scottish novel.

Gibbon's beliefs in the possibilities of a Golden Age are related in part to his interpretation of the First World War, and though this can be seen in A Scots Quair, the first intimation of the view occurs in The Thirteenth Disciple.[6] The hero of that novel is Malcom Maudslay, who fought in the First World War and who is concerned to use his Diffusionist beliefs to help man towards a free society. Domina Riddoch, his lover, agrees with him that the time has now come to make such a move because of the unrest generated by the War. Domina believes that the War made ordinary men see the uselessness of most beliefs - "religion and morals and faith and fantasy and fear, escaping belief in authority and tradition, good and evil, gods and devils, heavens and hells, right and wrong" - and made them ready for a new age. (TTD p.193) For Gibbon the knowledge that the War effected such radical changes is an encouraging sign and characters like Domina Riddoch and Robert Colquhoun believe that a new age is almost come and after a little political change everything will be as right as rain. This is the gospel Robert preaches in Segget:

> he said that God had made neither night nor day in human history, He'd left it in the hands of Man to make both, God was but Helper, was but Man himself, like men he also struggled against evil, God's wounds had bled, God also had died in the holocaust in the fields of France. But he rose anew, Man rose anew, he was as undying as God was undying-if he had the will and the way to live, on this planet given to him by God. (CH p.266)

However in both The Thirteenth Disciple and Cloud Howe, this hope recedes as the novels progress. Malcom makes up for his personal disappointment by seeking personal fulfilment but Robert is not so lucky. His world-view that all men are basically men of goodwill and will act upon their goodwill once they have seen a wrong that needs to be righted, is optimistic to the point of naivety. Cloud Howe is the story of how one social group after another look to their own self-interest, and not to the needs of others. Robert tries to help the spinners, the most deprived section of Segget's working class. He begins by trying to enlist the help of the educated and prosperous people in the town. However, Geddes, the schoolmaster, speaks for them all when he says, "leave the lot alone, if there's anything a hog hates it's cleaning its sty." (CH p.270) Once again we are confronted with the theme of inadequate government in the portrayal of yet another failed local official from one of Scotland's major institutions. Neither the teachers, nor the laird will help Robert and he sees the only course open to the workers to improve their conditions, is to become increasingly radical. When the General Strike collapses, Robert's bitterness is deeper than his earlier optimism. In Grey Granite, Ewan is not inspired by a past ideal of peace but by the history of oppression and his Communism is more realistic than Robert's humanitarianism. Living in the light of this history, Ewan has no illusions about the nature of his colleagues (he is not surprised when Seldon absconds with the Party funds), the proletariat (the strike at

Gowan's collapses after his arrest), or the length of the struggle (he does not expect victory will be achieved in his lifetime). However, there is one image which suggests that though Ewan is cautious about what will happen when the struggle is over, he, as much as Robert, is inspired by an ideal, which he is sure is worth striving for. It occurs when he says goodbye to Jim Trease:

> they shook hands, liking each other well, nothing to each other, soldiers who met a moment at night under the walls of a town yet unstormed. (GG p.493)

Although this image promises death and destruction, its effect is not disheartening. It speaks of coming victory and triumph, a time when justice will be done and the town will belong to its rightful owners. It is Ewan's equivalent of a Golden Age and to give up that vision for material gain as Ellen does and as Chris is tempted to do, is unthinkable.

In different ways, then the Golden Age informs much of Gibbon's writing, especially in A Scots Quair. In Sunset Song, it is seen entirely in terms of the land-based life of the community; in Cloud Howe, Robert expects its imminent arrival. When Robert's vision collapses, Ewan recasts the means to achieve it but is nonetheless inspired by another version of this mythical concept. The repeated appearance of a Golden Age motif in Gibbon's fiction provides a strong and attractive stimulus to action for the characters, as it imbues their lives with meaning and purpose.

The Land, out of which the Golden Age springs in Sunset Song, likewise affords characters meaning and purpose in living. Gibbon does not use external nature as a means of externalising internal states. In his fiction, the Land is more than it is even in

Hardy's fiction where it could be said on some occasions to fulfil the role of a character. Gibbon is akin to Wordsworth in that the Land causes his characters to experience heightened states of emotional and psychical consciousness. In Gibbon's fiction, the Land assumes the importance of what we would elsewhere regard as a god. Many critics have recognised the presence of the numinous in Gibbon, but have steered clear of discussing the fact. Douglas Young says:

> What both Lawrence and Mitchell were seeking was the recapturing of some ancient spontaneity of being which has been lost by civilised man, an almost religious discovery of the fundamental essence of living.[7]

Ian Campbell says:

> None of this is to deny the potent effect the land has on Gibbon, in memory or at the moment of encounter, to evoke emotional, unintellectualised response. (LGG p.16)

(In both cases the emphasis is mine.)

In discussing this area we must take into account Gibbon's atheism. As with many of Gibbon's characteristics, he is and he is not an atheist. He did not believe in any god or any system of revealed religion and he is sceptical about characters who believe in a god. Spartacus proves the best example of this, where all the characters have gods and idols to pray to and where Gibbon regards the gods as being extensions of their human supplicants, having no independent existence. And yet some of his experiences drew him to believe in Something, or found him wanting to believe. His work is always shot through with spiritual insight and observation. Again it is in The Thirteenth Disciple, a novel which Gibbon admitted was

highly autobiographical, where this idea appears significantly. In conversation with a friend, Malcom says:

> "I don't think I was ever in love with living. It was something else." He sought back through dusty memories. "Religion, I think."
> "Religion?"
> "Oh, not gods and prayers and alter-whinings. The light that never was... It had to do with the horizons and the Milky way, I remember, Heaven knows why!"
> (TTD p.176)

His mention of the Milky Way relates to his boyhood, when as a child on a Mearns farm, he looked at the stars and saw vastness, emptiness and the possibility of adventure, action and a purpose in life, if what these stars boded to him were true. It is that vision of travelling to horizons which governs Malcom. What is significant is that Gibbon describes the power of these visions as "religious". Malcom's childhood visions are similar in function to those of Chris, and to understand what they have in common with religion it will be helpful to discuss the numinous. I discuss it here because it is of central importance to a proper understanding of Gibbon and his resemblance to his contemporaries. Douglas Gifford has already drawn attention to the the importance of Christianity in Gibbon's thought. He points to the use of Christian imagery which pervades all Gibbon's work and to the appearance of the Christ figure, or the sound of his voice, at climactic moments of Spartacus and Cloud Howe where Christ is seen as the "outstanding martyr". (GAG p.59) Inconsistent though Gibbon's beliefs are - Communism and Diffusionism logically preclude a belief in Christianity - Gifford argues that it is simply not possible to study Gibbon without taking account of his attitudes to Christianity. In approaching this difficult area, I acknowledge the help of Rudoph Otto's book The Idea of the Holy.[8] Otto asserts that experience of the numinous is a common factor in

all religious experience, primitive or complex, Christian or otherwise, and although this experience is common it is not definable except by itself. It is an a priori phenomenon. He describes the numinous as the sense man has of Something being there, or of Something beyond him. We have already seen that Gibbon possessed and valued this sense. Otto describes the phenomenon as the "mysterium" and gives it five characteristics: awefulness, overpoweringness, urgency, being wholly other, and fascination. How Otto elaborates these characteristics can be seen to equate to Gibbon's view of the Land in Sunset Song. This can be clearly seen in the scene where Chris decides to stay on the Land and all the characteristics are present at once.

The Land sometimes exhibits wrathful and urgent qualities as on the night of the storm:

> Outside the night flashed, flashed and flashed, she saw Kinraddie lighted up and fearful, then it was dark again, but not quiet. In the sky outsidea great beast moved and purred and scrabbled... there was the roar and the flash of its claws, tearing at the earth (SS p.104)

Despite the terror of the storm and the Land in anger, Chris goes out to the fields to bring the horses to safety. Although she is purposeful, the measure of her fear of the strangeness of the Land in this mood can be seen in the relief she feels when other human company approaches. The Land is wholly other than her and awesome because of that. Chris, Chae and Ewan have this good fear of the storm in contrast to Chris's uncle who is cravenly afraid.

At other times the Land comforts Chris gently:

> she'd hear the wisp-wisp of the beech leaves near to the window, quietening her, comforting her, she never knew why. . . (SS p.143)

This inexplicable gentleness is part of the fascination of the Land. On the day Chris decides to stay, she experiences the Land as being wholly other and as a corollary of this she knows her own littleness in its presence and the overpoweringness of this feeling makes her "stricken and frightened". (SS p.97) These words are characteristically used to convey the emotions aroused by numinous experience. She hates and loves the Land which hurts her and comforts her, and in Gibbon's memorable phrase, she imagines telling her lover of rain on the roof at night, "the terror and the splendour of it." (SS p.64) Of course the example of the numinous everyone comments on the succour Chris derives from the Standing Stones. We have already noted that they make Guthrie shiver and it is also true that local folk avoid them because they seem eerie, not of this world only. In his section 'Means by which the Numinous is expressed in Art', Otto takes Standing Stones as his first example:

> One can hardly escape the idea that this feeling for expression must have begun to awaken far back in the remote Megalithic Age. The motive underlying the erection of those gigantic blocks of rock, hewn or unworked, single monoliths or titanic rings of stone, as at Stonehenge, may well have been originally to store up the numen in solid presence by magic;[9]

It is not surprising to see Gibbon trying to return to these ancient powerful values in his depiction of the Stones:

> There were the Standing Stones. . . Cobwebbed and waiting they stood, she went and leant her

> cheek against the meikle one, the monster . . .
> it was strange and comforting - (SS p.89)

A concomitant of these experiences is often a desire to become nothing and to be identified with the numen. This feeling, though known to the West through its mystics, was often described as morbid pessimism by others but because of the recent upsurge in the popularity of Buddhism, it has become much more familiar. The paradox of it is that though this identification is often worded in negative terms, the feeling excited by it is positive. Nirvana is just such a concept.[10] This framework provides for a more complete justification for Chris's progress and destiny in the trilogy. Chris withdraws more and more from ordinary life. She preserves her own identity which needs to be sustained in Grey Granite by visits to the countryside. This detachment could be said to reach its fulfilment when Chris dies in an act of identification with the Land. It is easy to find rational objections to this ending - some of which will be looked at later - but it is hard to argue with it as the culmination of the trans-rational aspect of the work. Many critics have interpreted Chris's death in this way. Again Gibbon is able to make a negative scene appear positive. There should be sorrow, grief and pain in death but the quiet calm of the final sentence, in the face of all objections, suggests only ineffable peace:

> But she still sat on as one by one the lights
> went out and the rain came beating on the stones
> about her, and falling all that night while she still
> sat there, presently feeling no longer the touch
> of the rain or hearing the sound of the lapwings
> go by.
> (SS p.496)

This sentence is strongly reminiscent of the closing sentence of Wuthering Heights which against all the odds suggests peace:

> I lingered round them, under that benign sky; watched the moths fluttering among the heath and hare-bells; listened to the soft wind breathing through the grass; and wondered how anyone could ever imagine unquiet slumbers for the sleepers in that quiet earth.

The effect of this way of writing about the Land is similar to the effect of the Golden Age passages. Both concepts supply frameworks for living. Gibbon rejects traditional Western world views such as orthodox Christianity, humanism and rationalism and substitutes the new concepts of "Land" and "Golden Age" which he derives from numinous experience. This view goes some way to explaining the power of the scene in which Chris decides to stay on the Land. Although I said earlier we were prepared for Chris to leave Blawearie and become a teacher, in fact, the reader is much better prepared for her decision to stay on the Land because it is the culmination of all the references to the "terror and the splendour" of the Land and when she turns to face it, such is its power that she cannot resist it and is frightened by her own profanity in ever thinking any differently. The powerfulness of this scene does not lie completely in the drama of the choice open to Chris, it lies in her full, deep and profoundly satisfying realisation of the nature of the Land. Chris is involved physically, rationally, emotionally and also spiritually and it is the comprehensiveness of this involvement which brands the scene as outstanding.

I think too the recognition of this element in Sunset Song helps to explain why Cloud Howe and Grey Granite do not live up to the expectation created by the first novel. In later novels, Gibbon never again blends so successfully the numinous with the historical and psychological aspects of the novels. He tries to in the Kaimes

scenes and the cloud imagery of Cloud Howe and the Windmill Steps scenes and Ewan's identification with history in Grey Granite but none of these effects convey the numinous as powerfully as it was conveyed in Sunset Song. Like any other aspect of the novel, its powerfulness is dependent on the author's ability to express it in literary terms. And in Cloud Howe, Gibbon is repetitive and obvious. The Windmill Steps scenes in Grey Granite are a deliberately empty echo of the richness of previous novels. Through this emptiness Gibbon shows how spiritually bankrupt life is in bigger towns, remote from the sorts of places Gibbon feels are resonant with the numinous. Schematically, the Land represents a stage of human development which humanity has outgrown, though Chris never sees this. However, in Grey Granite, Gibbon fails completely to imbue History with a sense of the numinous. This is another version of the dicotomy of Grey Granite referred to by Douglas Gifford as the message of progress lies with Ewan, but the "emotional conviction" wrought by the numinous experiences of earlier novels lies with Chris, and Gibbon never succeeds in synthesising the two. (GAG pp.110-115)

The decision Chris makes the day after her father's funeral is celebrated in the rest of the novel by her marriage to Ewan Tavendale, a young man who has the same knowledge and love of the land that characterised Guthrie. Ewan is a simple man and a good farmer. He can plough, sow, reap and shoot as well as any other man in Kinraddie. He is not given to reflective thinking or to expressing his opinions but he is just and generous and the bad temper which characterised him subsides when he marries Chris. The contentment of Ewan and Chris, presaged by their wedding, one of the last communal festivities described in Sunset Song, where all the helpfulness and humour of the community is summed up, is pictured in the lyrical descriptions of farmwork as both Chris and Ewan find satisfaction in their lives on the Land among their neighbours. Although Ewan does not share all her interests, this

does not impair their relationship. Chris is fulfilled as a wife and mother and content with Ewan. That such a character as Chris, with intelligence and imagination, is able to live this pastoral existence is not something which has been portrayed in the Scottish novel up till now. However, the very resolution which Gibbon achieves, he does not present as permanent and the peace breaks up because of the strength of its virtues. Being unable to put into words what he feels about Chris and his way of life, Ewan is vulnerable to others who can express themselves. He enlists after War breaks out. Unable to discuss the decision with Chris, he writes to her:

> he'd grown sick of it all, folk laughing and sneering at him for a coward, Mutch and Munro aye girding at him. (SS p.162)

Thus the War, warning signs of which had been appearing in Kinraddie before now, has come to Chris and the world she knew, the life and the people, begin to fragment. The War destroys the community, brutalising people who had been peaceloving. The ugliness of Ewan's leave before he goes to France makes a stark contrast with the previous idyll. In France, however, Ewan realises the folly of War, the goodness of his life in Kinraddie and the cruelty of his behaviour to Chris. He manages to convey this to Chae and it is only when he has come to this realisation that he gets back to his old self. He deserts - the logical conclusion of finding out he is fighting for something which is totally irrelevant to him - and is shot. He is still able to make his peace with Chris, as she has a vision, characterising her as one of the Elder People - of the repentant Ewan:

> The snipe stilled their calling, a cloud came over the sun. He was close to her now and she held out her hands to him. . .
> Oh lassie I've come home! he said, and went into

the heart that was his forever.
(SS p.182)

Despite its being broken up by War, Gibbon is at pains to affirm the reality of the life and community of the Mearns people before the War. Those intimations of a transcendant reality which encompassed the lives of the people and were profoundly experienced by some through the Land, the Standing Stones, visions and the myth of a Golden age, are celebrated and their passing lamented when the new minister, Robert Colquhoun, the son of the old man who preached about the Golden Age, makes the Standing Stones the Kinraddie war memorial.

In considering which aspects of his work link Gibbon with the Renaissance, we have discussed his detachment, his view of the community and his use of different systems of value which give characters a purpose in living and reasons for action. Taken together these four points contribute to the fifth quality Gibbon's work shares with other work of the time: Gibbon's work is cast in an epic form. The framework of the three-volume work is well-known. In each volume, Gibbon looks at different stages of Scottish life beginning with the peasant on the land, moving to the skilled worker in the country town and finally to the worker in the city. In the second volumes he concentrates on the relationship between the Scots and the church, where the other volumes deal with the Scot and the Land, and the Scot and industry. He spans three generations from John Guthrie through Chris to her son Ewan. The characteristics of each volume can be ascertained by listening to the quality of the unallocated speak. Segget, the small country town is divided into Old and New Town. The New Town is where the shopkeepers and the skilled workers live and has little to do socially with the Old Town where the Spinners, who are so often unemployed, live:

> The Segget wynds were crowded with spinners, lolling about in the sun, the dirt, you turned one moment from cursing the brutes for their sweirty and living off the like of yourself, and the next you had nearly moaned your head off that there wasn't a thing they now bought in your shops. (CH p.337)

The Segget voice is characterised by extreme coarseness, malicious gossip and a dismissive, contemptuous tone, first heard in Kinraddie and always heard in Segget. Yet even the shopkeepers of Segget have to bow before the economics of the twenties, for all their pride and self-sufficiency. In Dundon, there are fewer connections between people reflected in there being fewer connection between speakers - the antithesis of Sunset Song. The reaction of educated, employed, genteel Dundon is given in a series of unlinked paragraphs allocated to representative members of this class, like the Rev MacShilluck and Bailie Brown. Unallocated reaction belongs to the working class who complain of exploitation and reveal lives of misery and despair:

> you forgot the wife, that you hadn't a meck, the hunger and dirt, you'd alter that. They couldn't deny you, you and the rest of the Broo folk here, the right to lay bare your grievances. (SS p.394)

The events of A Scots Quair are unified by the character of Chris, who lives through and comments on them. Given that such a conception lies behind the work, we must ask whether Gibbon's achievement reflects his ambitions.

In literary terms, Gibbon faced that challenge of two complex sets of problems if his epic framework were to succeed in carrying the

weight of his view of Scotland. The first set of problems concerned Scottish history itself; the second set comprised the problems which I have been discussing throughout the thesis as those characterising the Scottish novel. In overcoming the historical problems, Gibbon was hindered from the outset by the nature of Sunset Song as a lament for the past. The community he conjured up out of the Mearns is as sweet and as past as the Golden Age it reflected. Gibbon's plan meant that he had to move from 1910 to the 1930s, but this militated against the continuation of the resolution he achieved in Sunset Song. Almost as soon as this resolution was achieved, it had to be qualified, because the community which made it possible shattered under the impact of war. Being realistic about history meant forfeiting the community idyll and inviting the charge that "resolution" was merely heavily disguised nostalgia. Exactly the same criticism could be levelled at Neil Gunn in The Silver Darlings, where he too achieved resolution, but in the historical past. As it was Gibbon's aim, so it was Gunn's to work through an epic scheme of Scottish history. But the difference is that even in the modern, industrial age Gunn achieves resolution. For Gibbon, however, the past had again caught up with the Scottish novelist, not that it controlled his destiny but that it was irretrievable. In the discussion of trancsendental values in Gibbon, it was noted that as the trilogy progressed, Chris, the one by whom these values were most completely understood, withdrew to the edges of the action. The centre stage was then occupied by Robert and Christianity and Ewan and Communism, neither of these characters or creeds inspiring Gibbon to the great lyrical sweeps of Sunset Song. Gibbon had to address the great social inequalities of the twenties and the hungry thirties; his scheme forced him to. In Robert and Ewan he gave vent to the reforming side of his character and showed Robert's unwearying efforts on behalf of the spinners, efforts which caused him to lose his faith, his sanity and later, his life. Ewan, rejecting all human relationships which did not advance the Communist cause, accepting any means of furthering the cause no

matter how wrong they may seem by other standards, was also to devote his life to helping the oppressed working class. The problems which affected Scotland may have been different from those recorded by Brown and Hay, but they did not admit of any easy solution for all that, promising no rest to those who tried to overcome them. This observation leads on naturally to the second set of problems Gibbon had to face - those of the Scottish novel itself.

As we have seen, Robert was destroyed by Scottish apathy:

> you felt a bit better to see him like that, decent and douce, as a minister should be - not trying to alter things as he'd done - who the hell wanted alterations in Segget? (SS p.348)

At the end of Grey Granite, Ewan is on the threshold of a new life but it is to be an international one. He himself has no special love for Scotland. Like his uncle Will, who left Scotland before him, he can see no useful reason for staying in the country. When Will returned to Scotland during the War he stated his objections to the country and Chris was upset because she did not share his views. At this stage, Chris herself is able to assert Scotland's viability as a land in which meaningful life is possible. (SS p.165) However, during the trilogy, Chris seems to retreat from this view. I said earlier that Sunset Somg ended by affirming Scotland as a rich place to live, but is that Gibbon's last word? It does not seem to be, because in Cloud Howe the Chris of the manse is as satisfied by rest, solitude, books and English as she was by farming and looking after the house. Robert understands Chris's mind in a way Ewan could not. Yet Robert does not fully share Chris's attitude to the Land which identified her so closely with Ewan. In Dundon, Chris is miserable, lonely and worn out; the Chris who promised so much in Sunset Song, as the young heroine

ready to face the world, ready to live fully in a Scotland from which she expects so much, has become utterly inconsequential and very small, a woman on the fringe of things, out of sympathy and having no desire to engage with the contemporary world. This diminution of Chris is one of the saddest features of Grey Granite. Instead of a heroine with power, courage and the ability to assert herself - "smeddum" - and dictate her own life, Chris is acted upon by the forces of history and the conventions of society. It looks as if this work which boded such a change in Scottish literature has run aground. We appear to be back with the weakness and pessimism of the heroès of the pre-Renaissance novels, living unsatisfied lives with no power to change them. Certainly A Scots Quair has an epic structure, but though it gives a panoramic view of Scottish life and raises issues not often commented upon in the Scottish novel, this structure, which grows out of an optimistic and confident outlook, forces Gibbon to face problems which have swallowed up more optimism and confidence than his own. Gibbon is faced with the impossibility of resolution and ending, and Grey Granite's ending bears similarities to the imposed endings of pre-Renaissance novels.

Gibbon is best understood for the qualities and themes which link him with other Scottish writers of his time. However, when his themes begin to be studied more closely, it becomes clear that this understanding of him does not nearly exhaust the content of his fiction. In discussing the last point about the effects of epic structure upon the work, it has been shown that there is a dark and pessimistic side to Gibbon. Dark episodes in Gibbon's fiction have often been seen as a part of a larger whole which is predominantly pleasant and optimistic. However, on closer inspection, it seems that this is more than just a balancing amount of realism; it can actually sustain a whole interpretation of Gibbon's work which is at odds with the commonly accepted one. It may be difficult to accept after the recent discussion of Sunset

Song, but it is nonetheless the case that Sunset Song can be seen as a deeply pessimistic novel. This fact relates to earlier remarks about Gibbon's divided attitudes. If his optimism links him with the Scottish Reniassance, then his pessimism links him more generally with the Scottish novel. At this period in Scottish literary history even Gibbon is haunted by the perennial problems of the Scottish novel. In order to understand this man and the whole of his contribution to the Scottish Renaissance we must also consider the emphases in his work which at first sight do not seem to belong there. In undertaking this part of the discussion, I hope to disprove William K Malcolm's assertion that the artistic fulfilment of the aims of A Scots Quair owe relatively little to Scottish literary traditions.[11]

I was alerted to this strand in Gibbon's fiction by Douglas Gifford's chapter, 'A Scots Quair: Sunset Song and the song of death' in his book Gunn and Gibbon, in which he draws attention to the disruptive and disturbing features of Sunset Song. The features he describes are the fact that there are more than two Chrisses, Chris's tendency to dream and Chris's morbidity. (GAG p.95ff;p.91ff) Gifford comments:

> An overused critical comment on the novel has emphasised 'the two Chrisses' of the Land and of books. To remain with this view of her throughout the novel is to ignore the fact that she not only solves this dilemma with the death of her father, but discovers other Chrisses and many more dilemmas throughout A Scots Quair. (GAG p.95)

Not only is the above-mentioned critical comment overused, it is also imperfectly understood. As becomes clear from other novels, the notion of more than one "person" inside a personality is often simply a literary technique of Gibbon's for marking the maturing of

a character. Both Chris and her son Ewan have selves which take their leave of them, thus marking the transition of the character from one period of their life to another as can be seen by comparing these passages:

> And Chris Guthrie crept out from the place below the beech trees where Chris Tavendale lay and went wandering off into the waiting quiet of the afternoon, Chris Tavendale heard her go, and she came back to Blawearie never again. (SS p.137)

> And that Ewan Tavendale that once had been. . . slipped away and was lost from his life forever. (GAG p.430)

In The Thirteenth Disciple these ideas are very pronounced and they also add up to a view of personality which is more complex than the succession of selves of A Scots Quair. The story of the earlier novel is of Malcom Maudslay's search for fulfilment. He grows up in Leekan, an equivalent of Kinraddie and has an upbringing which resembles Chris's. More emphasis, however, falls on Malcom's self-education and intellectual growth than falls on Chris's. His tension is not between a love of two worlds but between a love of one and a hatred of the other. Looking on the land and sky, Malcom is impressed not by these great things being in his locality, as Chris is, but by the sense that they call him to a meaningful life beyond the rural community. Malcom is not satisfied by any role afforded to him by his Leekan society and he models himself on an "un-Leekan-like model inspired by his books". (TTD p.41) He draws up a list of actions he must take to change himself. He must learn to walk properly, bathe daily, use a handkerchief, stop blushing and "Speak English, never Scots". (TTD p.42) In the same situation as Chris, Malcom makes a different decision and leaves the community. However, Malcom's character development does not end with this decision and his maturing is pictured, as Chris's is,

by a succession of selves. After his chilling experiences in Glasgow and his bungled attempt at suicide, Malcom says that there would be no point in blaming "a self which had temporarily ceased to exist." (TTD p.118) After a period of rehabilitation in the army, "No new self, but his old self came back". (TTD p.122) However, after his terrible war experiences, when he had to shoot his best friend, Malcom's personality is again is disarray. He watches:

> other Malcoms, dead, dispossessed, strange and remote, incomprehensibly enthusiastic, incomprehensibly alien: Malcom of the Dundon College, Malcom of Glasgow, Malcom of Salisbury Plain, Malcom in France. . .
> (TTD p.170)

At this stage, Malcom is very near to break down and is saved by the help of a friend who tells him:

> "This girl of yours who died, and your friend you killed so splendidly: they still live so much for you that they're killing your life."
> (TTD p.175)

She tries to get Malcom to accept their deaths by exhibiting in his own life the virtues they had had which he had loved. Malcom tries to do this but he makes the friend's advice more metaphysical than metaphorical:

> Rita - Metaxa - Robert: if they were of him, living and undead, all of them? For what? What had they laboured to shape and bring to birth through him? (TTD p.179)

After this Malcom exhibits the strange belief that he can fulfil in his own life the unfulfilled lives of people now dead. He thinks:

> "And maybe all that Metaxa wanted of himself to survive survives in me now. I am as much him as I am myself in lots of those things: more, I sometimes think." (TTD p.228)

The process of character development leads to two different conclusions: a self alone and an inclusive self. Malcom and Chris are types of the first, Ewan and Spartacus (the eponymous hero of Gibbon's novel) are types of the second.[12] Malcom and Chris die alone in pursuit of something they did not find on earth. In life their purpose was to understand and find meaning for their own lives. Their different experiences are marked by different selves. Each self is at the time accepted but later another self may think its actions misguided. Spartacus and Ewan do not have this same clearly defined individuality. Instead they achieve maturity through the individuality of the people they identify with and their identity diffuses through the people they lead:

> And to the praetor Manlius, it seemed he saw more than the Strategos Spartacus, he saw THE SLAVE himself. (Sp. 179)

> But Ewan had now the soap-box trick of pretending to be all things to all kinds of keelies - That was damn mean and wasn't true, there was no pretence, he WAS all things - sometimes, frighteningly, it seemed to her that he was the keelies, all of them, himself. (GG p.489)

This discussion of how Gibbon depicts character development in his fiction began from the use of the "two Chrises" speech in Sunset Song. It is correct to see this speech as the dramatisation of the Scots-English tension in Chris, but it is not a sufficient comment unless Gibbon's technique is followed to its conclusion, as it is in the work of Gifford and Campbell, where other stages in Chris's

story are identified. The other issues which this discussion raises relate Gibbon quite closely to the Scottish novel. Firstly it can be seen that he exhibits a much more fluid view of personality which distinguishes the Scottish novels from the fairly stable view of personality seen in the English novel. For Gibbon is not just saying that these successions of selves are merely a way of saying that character is developing: these selves can "die" when the personality lives on, selves can come back from the dead, the self can be entered by other selves - the essence of a dead friend or the essence of a group of people. We know from Robert Wringhim and Henry Jekyll that the Scottish self is often presented as split and open to the influence of non-material worlds. Gibbon carries on this trans-psychological view of personality in his writing and, in the case of Chris, the succession of selves and the deeply unsettled mind reflects the vision of earlier authors of a restless, fragmented and unpacified psyche.

This last point is supported by other features Douglas Gifford sees as disturbing in Chris, the second being her tendecy to dream. Dream is a very important category in Gibbon's writing and again it will be helpful to look at its occurrence in his other work. A dream is a transitional state, and for Gibbon it can be a transition between many sets of states, but there are two main sets. Dream, (or visions, as they often have the same function) may either be the transition between the temporal and the eternal or between the Horror and the ideal. Malcom illustrates the first use when he calls himself "the dreaming boy of Stane Muir". (TTD p.122) As a boy, Malcom found the Standing Stones a source of inspiration. They led him to think of the past and provided a place for him to dream - to dream about the horizon and the adventures he would have as he explored his way there. For Malcom, dream transports him from the confines of the temporal to the limitless, exciting, meaningful eternal:

> And then, conjured up in some misty fusion of images, he saw, across the star-floored Galaxy, the riding of an immense horseman, helmed and armoured, the shatterer of the horizon. . .
> The vision vanished. (TTD p.39)

In Spartacus the dream separates the Horror from the ideal. When Crixus finds Spartacus's group he tells his friend, "Now I know we are really free Oenomaus. All the way in ditches and thickets that line the road from Capua I've sworn it a dream." (Sp. 52) In the early parts of the novel, Spartacus's total immersion in dream is a sort of mental illness. He remembers himself in Thrace, one of Gibbon's Golden Age hunters. He cannot remember how he left that existence:

> "But I can't understand! Who am I? I can't remember! Darkness. . . and the forests, and waking." (Sp. 53)

When Kleon begins to instruct Spartacus in the basics of Plato's Republic, Spartacus accepts the teaching with "undreaming eyes". However, the unrelenting rationalism of Kleon is too much for Spartacus and after he realises this he senses the "mystic kinship of the blood" with the slave horde. When he is in his "fey" mood, that Scots word which means strange or other-worldly (and which Gibbon cannot help using here), Spartacus knows that there is more to his existence than the inarticulate dream of Thrace and the abandoning of Kleon's dream because he is bound to the people:

> So long he had thought of himself as the Strategos, as the Statesman that Kleon the eunuch would have, that it was with a wrench as with bodily pain that he knew himself less and more and beyond. (Sp. 174)

It is this sort of dreaming that Gibbon asserts as a valuable way of living. It is noticeable that in Spartacus knowledge is never mentioned with approbation; knowledge is by Gibbon's definition, alway partial:

> But Kleon, Gershom, and the Ionians did not worship knowing the sun to be but a ball of fire three leagues away. (Sp. 34)

Gibbon is always ironic about the possession of knowledge; dream, a much more intuitive cognitive process, is a more favoured means of guiding the characters through life.

However, having given this very high position to dream, making it a form of guidance, there is another thought which worries Gibbon and which does not develop until A Scots Quair. This is the tension between the dream and the REAL (as Gibbon capitalises it in Cloud Howe). In this set, dream is a transition between the ephemeral and the enduring reality which binds up all things known to man. In this set, dream is not a valuable thing but a hindrance to grasping this reality. In Cloud Howe Robert's dreams are of this sort and Chris has to fight them because they are fake dreams, unlike Spartacus's epiphanies. Thinking about Robert's dreams, Chris compares them to the attitudes of Scots who know that life is only a play:

> no Scots bodies died but they knew that fine, deep and real in their hearts they knew that here they faced up to the REAL at last, neither heaven or hell but the earth that was red, the cling of the clay where you'd alter and turn, back to the earth and times to be, to a spraying of motes on a raging wind. . . (CH p.236)

Robert's dreams are terrifying because he doubts them and when he doubts that what he wants to happen will happen, he is left with fear:

> So Robert believed: but now, as you heard his feet coming down the stairs in haste, out of his mood and happy again, you knew that he knew he followed a dream, with the black moods REAL, and his hopes but mists. (CH p.236)

When Robert's dream collapses with the collapse of the General Strike, he substitutes a "madman's dream", his "vision" of Christ in the woods. In Robert's case dream has become absolutely corrupt, as he substitutes a dream itself for the happy reality it portended. In <u>Grey Granite</u>, Ewan is presented as being insensitive to spiritual suggestion. However, as I indicated earlier, Ewan's belief in history is as much a dream as any other in Gibbon's fiction, even though Ewan declares that it is purely logical and rational.

As Douglas Gifford points out, Chris "dreams" throughout <u>A Scots Quair</u>, and part of the reader's problem is that:

> we tend to accept whatever she's saying or thinking at any time rather than seeing that they [her thoughts] are limited and temporary perceptions of a character created like all the other characters in the novel. (GAG p.109)

He outlines the main changes which occur to Chris because of dream: she dreams of finding satisfaction in books, in a lover, in Ewan, in Ewan's leave. All these dreams she rejects and this can be contrasted with the satisfaction she finds with Long Rob which she has not previously dreamt about. In <u>Cloud Howe</u> the withdrawal of

Chris from the centre of activity is compounded by her dreaming. Robert and Ewan often joke about her being lost in another world. When she becomes pregnant she does not tell Robert about it, she just thinks:

> A month ago since she'd known for sure, had puzzled for days with the second no-go. Robert would frown, 'What on earth's gone wrong? You're dreaming, Christine!" (CH p.297)

Because so much of her times is taken up with thinking, Chris acts less and less. She becomes more introspective, trying to find a satisfactory identity:

> She seemed to stand here by the kirkyard's edge looking back on the stones that marked the years where so many Chrises had died and lay buried - back and back, as the grave-yard grew dim, far over those smothered hopes and delights, to that other Chris that had been with child. . .Remote and far to think she was YOU! (CH pp.296-7)

In Grey Granite her dreaming is compounded by weariness. It is as if she has aged dramatically and is about sixty or seventy, not thirty odds. She sees what will happen to Ellen but she does not advise her as she advised Cis Brown. She does not really want to marry Ake but feels she ought to. She gives up and laments the past. Trying to decide whether or not to marry Ake, she appeals to Robert:

> Oh, Robert man, had you stayed to help somehow we might have found the road together. (GG p.447)

Chris is not and never was the self-sufficicent, cool character she seemed to be in Sunset Song. She is always looking for security and never finding it. No matter how much she dreams, her identity eludes her. In Cloud Howe she wants to be back in Sunset Song; in Grey Granite she wants to be back in Cloud Howe. The great resolution of her marriage to Ewan proves as illusory as everything else.

So far in this thesis we have seen that the presence of dream in the Scottish novel usually alerts us to the presence of the creative intelligence in difficulty, unsupported by the community. In Gilian the Dreamer, Gilian is the imaginative youth who is given to dreaming but there are various other characters in the community who also dream. The reasons for the dreaming were the unusually restrictive community and the lack of training of the creative imagination, which instead of being allowed to mature healthily, expresses itself in dreams.

This pattern can be paralleled in Chris. She is cleverer and more imaginative than her contemporaries but these gifts do not find adequate expression in Sunset Song, despite the strong effort Gibbon makes to try to achieve a synthesis. The institutions, thought to retain a distinctive Scottish identity, are anglicised and remote from local control or need. "At school they wrote [that Chris] was the clever one" (SS p.36) and though Chris gets on with her first teacher, at her second school she is mocked because of her Scottishness and her rural background. Instead of treating it as if it were different but nonetheless important, teachers treat her background as something she must cut herself off from if her intellect is to flower. The model of Scottish literature held up to her by her sympathetic teacher is the poetry of Mrs Hemans - a sort of sentimental, uncritical view of Scotland. Ian Campbell remarks:

> An educational system which can offer no more incisive cultural assistance than this leaves Chris to find her own cultural identity, and this suits the purpose of the trilogy admirably. (LGG p.61)

If there is no help from the school neither is there any help from the church where language is always standard English, sometimes with embellishments which characterise individual ministers. Apart from the Rev. Colquhoun's sermon, the only other help Chris gets from the church is the offer by the Rev Gibbon to lend her books. Chris's application is not a success. Gibbon says he will choose "something light and cheerful" and comes back with Religio Medici. (SS p.55) This emphasises not only the lack of awareness about what a teenage girl might be expected to understand, but also the minister's lack of care or concern in the matter. He feels he is in a backwater and the quietness of the life drives him to distraction and immorality. Finally he leaves for a Presbyterian church in New York, which is attended by expatriate Scots. The author's irony is telling here since the minister is going out to appear the authentic Scotsman, come to bring a breath of the old country. He who found Scottish life soul-destroying and contributed to its decline is now going to America, where he will eulogise it unreservedly.

As in Gillespie and Gilian the Dreamer, the processes of government are remote from Kinraddie. During the course of Sunset Song, the sitting member dies and a by-election is called. Both Liberal and Tory parties put up a candidate. The Tory is called Rose and is English and says that the Tories look after the working class. At this Chae causes such a disturbance that the meeting has to be closed. The Liberal, "with as many ships to his name as the others had fields", has a campaign with a whiff of Home Rule about it, with its slogan Vote for the Scottish Thistle and not for the

English Rose. (SS p.81) The Liberal wins and Chae is sure he helped him to victory but the voice of the speak does not see the value in the new member that Chae saw:

> and God knows if he thought that fine he was easily pleased, they never saw the creature again in Kinraddie. (SS p.82)

The prospect of self-government for Scotland is as remote as the prospect of relevant government for Kinraddie. The system does not represent the views of the people and a man like Chae who holds Socialist views has no hope of influencing matters because he is poor and not related to those in government. This leaves Kinraddie vulnerable to Government policy and just how vulnerable it is can be seen during the war when it is the Government who orders the felling of the Kinraddie woods, without realising the long term effects of such an action on the surrounding farmland. It is not surprising that Chae disrupts the Tory's meeting. Long Rob and John Guthrie, the unofficial leaders of the community, support Chae in his attempt to be heard. The old question arises: what is the point of an individual coming to maturity in a community which can be radically altered by forces over which he has no control? Both the school and the kirk tell Chris she must leave her Scottish roots and the motivating force behind this message is political. By speaking English or continuing her education Chris would be aligning herself with the power that governed her society. But in order to gain that alignment, she would have to reject her background. There is no compromise. The only Scots who make it in an English-dominated society are Mrs Hemans and Stuart Gibbon - sentimentalists and sycophants.

In this society it is therefore not surprising that when Chris is not working - and hard work does take up most of her time - when she has time to reflect, she does exactly what Gilian and the

others do, she dreams. Earlier I quoted Ian Campbell to the effect that because education provides no cultural identity, Chris is free to explore or recognise her own; I disagree with the sense in which Dr Campbell says it suits Gibbon's purpose. He continues:

> Lewis Grassic Gibbon is able to make Chris the product of her environment, but also a self-directed character of fixed limits which are largely self-imposed through a series of crises experienced in her life. (LGG p.61)

Looking at Gibbon from the point of view discussed in the first half of the chapter, this reading is correct. However, what it seems not to acknowledge is the extent to which Chris cannot find a cultural identity because of the lack of enabling traditions. She seems to find identity in the scene where she decides to stay on the Land, but the security is illusory and shattered by war. As Douglas Gifford has shown, Chris embarks on a series of dreams, each dream postulating a new self and a new reaction to a changing situation. Chris has to dream because in her society she cannot act. She is not self-directing in this sense. While in the face of Chris's seemingly boundless self-assurance in Sunset Song this may seem a strange judgement to make, it is difficult to miss the patterns of other older novels echoed here by Gibbon. Because the institutions which are thought to preserve a distinct Scottish identity have become the means of disseminating English culture and the means of destroying Scottish culture, if Chris is to retain her Scottish identity, she must forego the help of the institutions. Thus far I readily agree with Dr Campbell. However, if she cuts herself off from the institutions, she jeopardises her own personal and social fulfilment. Her intellect still functions but because it is not properly trained, it is uncritical and subjective. Thus Chris dreams and her dreams are always about identity, purpose and satisfaction. Any identity she does find will be for her only, not one that will stand as a national pattern; and only in this, her

non-achievement of personal identity, does she retain a larger significance. Gibbon's heart wishes for resolution such as the marriage of Chris and Ewan forebodes and he is unusual in being able to formulate this so articulately, but the honesty of Gibbon's head is such that he knows the forces of destruction are too strong for such a fragile peace and the resolution he brilliantly achieves, he quickly shows to be without foundation and unable to withstand the pressures brought to bear upon it. Gibbon stands beside Brown, Hay, Munro and Barrie in _not_ being able to see a resolution of the predicament of the gifted Scottish child in a Scottish culture controlled by forces inimical to its continued existence.

Douglas Gifford points to a third alarming feature about Chris: her morbidity. In some ways this point incorporates the last two. Chris has selves which "die" and she often dreams about death. In Gibbon's work, dream also separates life from death as it separates other categories. Gibbon's writing on Death is closely linked to his writing on sex and violence. This is a classic nexus of themes and they are so closely linked that it is difficult to separate and analyse them. However, the aim of this part of the discussion is to show how the occurrence of sex and violence in Gibbon's work underpins his obsession with death - everything in his fiction strains towards death. It is a literary commonplace that sex and death are linked by the oblivion each experience consists of; sexual oblivion being transitory, it is usually used as an intimation of the enduring oblivion of death. While one of the distinguishing features of the early twentieth century novel is the reappearance of sexual frankness and the view that sex is a joyful celebration of human love, the ancient link between sex and death still characterises Gibbon's fiction. Gibbon does see sex as a therapeutic experience as the relationships between Spartacus and Elpinice and between Ewan and Ellen show. Sometimes, however, sex becomes the Horror itself, as in _Sunset Song_ when Daft Andy goes on

the rampage and nearly rapes Chris. It is sobering to note that most of Chris's sexual experiences are linked with violence and death. The sexual relations between her father and mother lead to murder and suicide. There are two innocent encounters in Chris's childhood which although they evoke no tangible sexual feelings on Chris's part, foreshadow later events. After their father has beaten Will, Chris sleeps with her brother and tries to soothe him. The next wounded man Chris sleeps with is Robert and the awareness of his war scars is so painful that she changes her mind about having another baby, if she has to bring it into this violent world. The other event of this kind is Marget's kiss. Chris and her friend Marget have a morbid conversation about death. Marget jokes about it and wonders how she would feel if she discovered that one of the corpses she was to practise surgery on was Chris's. Chris continues this morbid train of thought and her day-dreams take on the quality of John Gourlay's lurid imaginings. She looks at Marget's veins and thinks:

> [that it] beat in Marget's throat, a little blue gathering where the blood beat past in slow, quiet strokes, it would never do that when one was dead and still under grass, down in earth that smellt so fine and you'd never smell; or cased in the icy darkness of a vat, seeing never again the lowe of burning whins or hearing the North Sea thunder beyond the hills. . . the right things that might not last and so soon went by. And they were only real and true, beyond them was nought you might ever attain but a weary dream and that last dark silence - Oh, only a fool loved being alive. (SS p.46)

Just after this Marget pretends to be Chris's lover and kisses her and Chris is more vitally aware than ever that the lovely things

which are real and true are also transient and so she dreams of death. Throughout Sunset Song, Chris is aware of her father's desire for her. This is implicit in the harvest-madness scene and explicit in the last stages of his illness. Chris pictures him in grotesque and horrible terms:

> seeing her father somehow struggling from his bed, like a great frog struggling, squattering across the floor, thump, thump on the stairs (SS p.90).

Her sexual experience though it begins ideally with Ewan, is haunted by dreams - will Ewan die? will she die in childbirth? what will the child be like? - and is finally engulfed in cruelty, as the scenes of Ewan's last leave demonstrate. Ewan only makes his peace with Chris after he is dead. Even in Chris's night with Long Rob, death is present. While it is true Gibbon "sets their love in the background of a long harvest, on a land almost animate and breathing, so that their act is natural, clean, and part of the ultimate rhythm of nature", (GAG p.86), it is also true that it is set against the sunset of death of the song:

> So this also ended as everything else, everything she had ever loved and desired went out to the madness beyond the hills on that ill road that flung its evil white ribbon down the dusk. . .and lying so in the dark, held to him, kissing him, she sought with lips and limbs and blood to die with him then.
>
> But that dark, hot cloud went by. . .
> (SS p.176)

In her desperate search for permanence, Chris clings to Rob and sex gives Chris the momentary release she seeks ultimately in death. Chris and Robert's wedded life is haunted by ghosts of dead Ewan,

dead John Guthrie, dead selves of Chris which make her think about death, her own dead baby, the dead baby of the Kindnesses. Robert, like Will, urges Chris not to succumb to the approach of death in trivial ways but it is surprising how often such comments are made:

> Robert got angered when she sat and darned,
> 'What, waste your life when you'll soon be dead?'
> (CH p.206)

In Cloud Howe death is often sickening as in John Muir's tales of struggling corpses and in the episode of Dite Pete and the pig, the themes of death, sex and violence are all brought together. Chris often overlooks the graveyard and some of her deepest thoughts surface in this context, as during the conversation where Robert asks Chris if she is choosing a place for her coffin. It is after this conversation that Chris is put off conceiving because of Robert's scars. In this mood action is robbed of any meaning because death makes a nonsense of anything Chris plans or purposes. Chris becomes more and more fascinated by death and non-being:

> from the earth's beginning you yourself had been here, a blowing of motes in the world's prime, earth, roots and the wings of an insect long syne in the days when the dragons still ranged the world - every atom here in your body now, that was here, that was you. . . these had been there, there was nothing but a change, in a form, the stroke and beat of a song. (CH p.235-6)

She goes on to say that Scots do not believe and are strong enough to face up to the real at death. Chris has changed her position from that in Sunset Song. No longer is it the human verities that are real but the earth which contains them. By Grey Granite, Chris has become completely death-centred:

> Oh, mixed and queer soss that living was, dying, dying slowly a bit of yourself every year, dying long ago with that dim lad, Ewan, dying in the kirk of Segget the time your hand came red from Robert's dead lips (GG p.357)

Sex and violence recede and Chris thinks purely of death, afraid of life's speed. The language of her thinking is much bleaker than any previous thoughts, as Chris realises that even the Land itself does not endure and everything is in constant flux - there is no rest or permanence to be found anywhere. All Chris's action in Grey Granite is a struggle, household chores seem endless and exhausting, and Chris has less and less desire to live. She takes a cottage in Echt and is haunted by the twins, her mother, her father and Will. She knows she cannot live forever, her past life seems to have lost its reality and her croft is a "little shelter in Cairndhu a dream of no-life that could not endure." (GG p.496) Chris is past human companionship; she remembers only the dead and tries finally to understand the great unseen forces she has been aware of in her life:

> And that was the best deliverance of all, as she saw it now, sitting here quiet - that that Change who ruled the earth and the sky and the waters underneath the earth, Change whose face she'd once feared to see, whose right hand was Death and whose left hand Life, might be stayed by none of the dreams of men, love, hate, compassion, anger or pity, gods or devils or wild crying to the sky. He passed and repassed in the ways of the wind, Deliverer, Destroyer and Friend in one. (GG p.496)

Change is the ultimate reality controlling death and life. Despite Chris's earlier statement about the endurance of the land, (and the intimation of permanence she found there), she discovers that the

governing reality of life is impermanence. Men try to work out connections between death and life by dreaming, which necessitates the engagement of their emotions, but only by facing up to Change is true knowledge to be found. Either this is an act of identification with the land or it is a profoundly nihilistic act, in which Chris responds to the impermanence of things with devastating logic. If Change makes human action (symbolised by dreams and emotion) meaningless, then only death frees her from such absurdity.

Gibbon has a strong sense both of the pleasure of life and of its transience. This transience leads him to worry over death. The worry is increased by his abhorrence of suffering and makes him make Chris unable to enjoy life's pleasures. A large part of Gibbon's fiction is taken up with the attempt to fuse the ideal eternal with the suffering present. Spartacus, Malcom, Robert and Ewan all try to bring about a more just and caring society. While Gibbon is writing about these characters, he is passionately idealistic, trying desperately to put his idealism into practice. When he turns to write from Chris's point of view again, however, he is overcome by a feeling that the ideal is unreal. Only the Horror is real. Because of this the ideal cannot replace the Horror and anyway, Death mocks all human endeavour. Death is the outcome of all struggles. The final struggle is not, as Robert saw it against inhumanity, but against mortality. And yet, just when one strand of Gibbon's ideas has been teazed out, that death swallows up all human hope, we find another set opposing this.

Gibbon seems to believe in immortality: this is one of the strangest properties of the self in Gibbon's understanding of personality. In The Thirteenth Disciple, Gibbon uses the phrase "the dim peoples who enghost the fringes of history." (TTD p.264) This word "enghost" characterises this aspect of Gibbon's work. It

is partly linked to Gibbon's notion that dead people can find fulfilment in the characters of the living. But mostly it seems as if he expects us to take ghosts seriously. Sunset Song is ghost-ridden. Chris meets the messenger who talks about the ships of Pytheas and she meets Ewan after his death. Chae meets Calgacus's soldier and Pooty has seen regiments of dead German soldiers marching through Kinraddie. During her father's funeral Chris wonders:

> Maybe so the dead walked in a still, clear, deserted land, the coarse lands of death where only the chance wanderer showed his face, Chris thought, and the dead lapwings wheeled and cried against another sun. (SS p.93)

Frequently after this Chris sees or hears both her dead parents and dead husbands. For most of these occurrences Gibbon supplies a rationalisation - madness, dreaming or imagination - but it has to be admitted that in his fiction ghosts are the rule not the exception. Although the idea is not prominent at the end of Grey Granite, it is expicit at the end of Spartacus where Kleon sees a vision of Spartacus, who is dead, merged with a vision of Jesus, with the implication that the cause of Spartacus will certainly triumph. In Gibbon's fiction the brightest optimism and the blackest pessimism co-exist and it is simply impossible to harmonise such an opposition.

The sight of an author straining at the bounds of mortality or trying to fuse the eternal with the present is not unusual in the Scottish novel. It is a commonplace of Scottish literary criticism that the supernatural engages practically all the major authors. Why this should be so is difficult to say. Partly it seems due to the fact that Scottish literature is nearer to folk sources than is, say, English literature. Partly it may be due to the cast of the Calvinist imagination - ghost stories are also common in

American literature inspired by Puritan sources. Because Calvinism is much more concerned with the rational (doctrine) than the non-rational (the sacraments), the non-rational, an area highly charged with potential and eternally attractive to the creative artist, is pushed to the back of the mind where it seems to have lost its impact, until its potency comes rushing out in a short story, or in an inexplicable episode in a novel, or in an entire work which is so conceived that it seems at first to deny rational interpretation, like The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner, for example. It seems that Gibbon has not lost this "enghosted" imagination, indeed he seems to have developed it into a personal mythology. Although Gibbon has repudiated a number of creeds including Christianity, those he has embraced all have a highly personal cast dictated by Gibbon's own view of man and his relations to the eternal. Despite his atheism and his materialism, what are essentially religious, or transcendental, values still characterise his fiction.

In 1919, in his book Scottish Literature, G Gregory Smith recognised "two moods" in Scottish fiction.[13] One was the attention to detail which characterised writers and the second was their "airier pleasure to be found in the confusion of the senses, in the fun of things thrown topsy-turvy, in the horns of elfland and the voices of the mountains."[14] This may be romantically described but the underlying perception is sound. He says that Scottish artists are at home in "both rooms of life". He sees the two moods as "Contraries indeed, but as warp and woof." Since Henryson had the leprous Cresseid call into being a court of the gods to hear her complaint, till Hugh MacDiarmid had his drunk man rail at the thistle, the moon and the universe, Scots have consistently exhibited in their writing a tendency to link the finite mortal with the infinite eternal. This too may be partly the modification of Calvinism for artistic purposes. An

influential emphasis of the Reformation was the doctrine of "the priesthood of all believers". This doctrine explained that any regenerate man or woman could pray to God, without the mediation of any other man or woman. The effect of this doctrine is to dignify the individual believer and to place him in a position of power. Modified by writers, this belief gives a very high status to the individual who feels that he has a right to a place in the universal, eternal scheme of things. This reassuring idea often enables him to act on that scale. However, the possibilities for action have been limited in Scotland by other factors and so often there are figures of enormous potential in ludicrously restricted situations; so MacDiarmid writes A Drunk Man and Gibbon has a heroine ready to set the world to rights only to be stopped by the incipient deterioration of Scottish society. The consequences of such restrictions are a fragmented self (no personal wholeness), a tendency to dream (no intellectual wholeness) and an obsession with death and its paradox of complete, or whole, disintegration. Up till now it has been understood that the response of many writers to Scotland has been pessimistic; study only shows how complex, comprehensive and profound this pessimism is. Exile is always attractive Will Guthrie without Chris's finer gifts, achieves employment, wealth and happiness. . . in Argentina.

The fourth aspect of his work which links Gibbon with earlier writers is his attitude to autobiography in fiction. As much as Scott and Hogg, Gibbon was a divided man, divided between the Mearns country of his boyhood and his hatred of the enslaving life and narrowness that the countryside produced in those who lived there. We have noticed that pre-Renaissance novelists who had similar problems had difficulties keeping these problems out of their fiction. It is interesting to introduce into the discussion one of Gibbon's unfinished manuscripts which contains the beginning of a novel called The Speak of the Mearns of which about three thousand words are extant.[15] This novel is similar to Sunset Song.

It is set in the Mearns, though not in Kinraddie but in a village near it, Kinneff. (Chris mentions this name in a list of neighbouring places on the day she decides to stay at home.) Historically it is set at the same time as Sunset Song, if a little before it. Keith Stratoun will grow up to experience the same dilemma as Chris and Malcom. As Gibbon did not finish the novel, it is useless to speculate about what Keith's decision may have been - no hint of it remains in Gibbon's notes for the novel - but it is interesting to see how close Chris is to Keith and to discuss the implications of Chris's femininity in A Scots Quair.

Keith is the youngest of three boys. Keith's family is much more stable than Chris's. Keith's father, in particular, is a kind, patient, honest man. Keith, however, takes seriously ill not long after the family have settled in Kinneff. During this illness, he hallucinates and the quality of his dreams makes a strong impression on the doctor, who is used by Gibbon to pronounce Keith's destiny:

> the Doctor said "Faith, have you never used your eyes on him? He's as full up of fancies and whigmaleeries as an egg of meat, he's been telling me his dream and his fancies, - faith, that's a loon that'll do queer things in the world." (TSM p.75)

In the remaining pages Gibbon consistently asserts the power of Keith's imagination.

Would this boy be able to weld intellectual or creative activity with his Scottish identity? Is Chris's decision to stay in Kinraddie easier for her to make because she is a girl? Could a boy have made the same decision? Will did not, Ewan did not,

Malcom did not. James Leslie Mitchell did not. Most of the main characters discussed in this thesis have been boys and we have to go back to The Heart of Midlothian to find in Jeannie Deans a heroine of comparable stature to Chris. What is memorable about Jeannie Deans is that she is able to make the journey to London to save her sister's life, while her father has to sit at home, paralysed by principle. Jeannie is able to talk to robbers, gypsies and Episcopalians, those people with whom her father could not associate in case they contaminated his righteousness. While this novel shows the potential of the female character in Scottish literature, it also shows her limitations because when its comes down to it, it does not really matter if Jeannie breaks her father's principles because she is a mere woman and her father does not really expect her to understand the enormities of what she is doing. Sometimes women may appear to have more freedom than men in the Scottish novel but it is usually after a restraining male influence is taken away or because excuses can be made for them as they are not so strictly answerable to the unwritten social codes as men are - especially if they achieve something a man would have liked to achieve but could not because of his principles. In the Scottish novel, Scottish society is portrayed as handing down traditions and values from father to son. Because the traditions thus handed down are extraordinarily divisive and because fathers expect their sons to accept the traditions without modification (to do otherwise would be to question the father's own identity, shaped as it has been by the traditions he has upheld), the result of these strictures is that the father-son relationship is the bloodiest in Scottish literature. Fathers and sons are always quarrelling and falling out. Mothers and daughters may be applied to for sympathy and advice but ultimately they cannot influence significantly the male-dominated society. So if the main character of a novel is a woman, the author neatly evades one of the thorniest problems of the national literature. Jeannie Deans gets the pardon and Chris stays on at Blawearie. Could they have done it had they been men?

The third of Gibbon's novels to address this problem is The Thirteenth Disciple, and in it Malcom Maudslay, following the history of Gibbon's own experiences very closely, leaves the Mearns during his teens and never returns there to live. Even though Malcom chooses exile when Chris chooses identification, Malcom still remembers with love the countryside of his boyhood:

> [Malcom and Domina] would lie unsleeping far into nights and hear the sound of rain on the roof, the woof-woof-woof of night-wings, and go back to their childhood in Leekan for memories that seemed inexpressibly dear, little things of touch and glance forgotten and resurrected to startle the darkness with low laughter. (TTD p.264)

In an essay, Ian Campbell describes how the same tension existed in Gibbon:

> Mitchell was in the familiar Scottish dilemma of the love/hate relationship with the environment from which he drew his very considerable artistic strength and originality.[16]

In his book, he develops this theme:

> The contradiction is that Gibbon, like Stevenson, could not wholly achieve this act of voluntary exile for the sake of his art. Physically he could remove himself, and like Stevenson write in memory from a good geographical distance, and probably make artistic gains as a result. Yet the world of his imagination was haunted by specifically Scottish symbols: land, seasons, cycles - the sound of peewits, an obvious signal in his writing about Scotland -

> and language. It is to language we turn for the full exploration of the contradictions in Gibbon's Scottishness. (LGG p.49-50)

In The Thirteenth Disciple, Gibbon is so closely involved with the hero through whom he is explaining the past, that he makes the same mistakes as Ian MacPherson did in Shepherds' Calendar. He sacrifices the hero's girlfriend to the hero's progress. This occurs in the section where Malcom's girlfriend, Rita, dies. Malcom meets Rita, to whom he is sexually but not intellectually attracted. He moves in with her and they begin an affair which is idyllic until Malcom realises that Rita is taking up the time he should be spending on his Communist activities. Some time after this he decides he must end the affair. After this, Rita tells him she is pregnant. Malcom sees himself locked into a marriage which will destroy both himself and Rita because of the flimsy foundation on which their relationship was based. Rather unworthily, he wonders if he is the father. At this time the rest of his life is not going well. His embezzlement at the newspaper offices has been discovered and he has been accused of cowardice because he has not joined up. When he returns home one evening, he discovers Rita has fallen into a cellar and killed herself. Instead of exclaiming "How tragic!", the reader is more likely to say "How convenient". Though this scenario works better than MacPherson's botched job on the nurse in Shepherds' Calendar, it still smacks of convenience. Malcom does not want to face married life with Rita, who does not understand his Communism or his incipient Diffusionism. Gibbon needs an unfettered but honourable hero for the rest of the novel. Rita has an accident. Malcom is thoroughly priggish through this episode but Gibbon rarely drops his support for him, even passing over some of his more outrageous remarks and behaviour. During the war, Malcom's superior is John Metaxa and at a stroke the sensitive hero is loosed from the barbarism of barrack-room life (where he had not only stuck up for himself but become widely known for his

aloofness and ferocious ability to defend himself) and allowed to do whatever he wants.

After the War, Malcom sets up a new radical party then leaves it because he thinks it has grown too conservative. He takes credit for giving it its unusual vision but makes it clear that only inferior people would stay in it now - even though its new leader is his best friend. Throughout the novel all the sympathetic characters consistently defer to Malcom; no one is allowed to cross him and survive unscathed. His is the standard by which all other people are measured. The only thing wrong with this is that the standard is so biased in his favour that it is impossible for the reader to have any sympathy for Malcom at some stages in the novel when everyone else is being so sympathetic to him. This phenomena, described so accurately below by Douglas Young, links Gibbon very closely indeed with the problems of the pre-Renaissance novelists:

> Mitchell is no longer able to look at Malcom objectively; the distance between the author and his subject has disappeared and they have become identifiable with each other. Malcom is unable to trace his political development coherently and satisfies himself with hollow, romantic rhetoric. That is all right, and could be used to show us something of Malcom's personality. The trouble is that Mitchell is wholly uncritical of his hero and accepts what he says as a sound and mature commentary on contemporary politics. We are meant to feel that here is a man who has reached real insight and is now looking back over his career, but this is not how it appears to the reader.[17]

The inability of the author to distance himself from his main character is the most obvious flaw in The Thirteenth Disciple.

By contrast, in Spartacus, Gibbon appears to have total control over all his characters and again it is instructive to note that this novel is set in ancient times. This period provided Gibbon, as it did many of his contemporaries, with a setting in which he could discuss the themes that concerned him most without having to address simultaneously the problems of developing those themes in a Scottish context. Spartacus is very close to Cloud Howe and Grey Granite in that it concerns men's dreams for a free state and the kind of leader they would need to lead them to it. Kleon's dreams are based on Plato. Gershom dreams of having a son to pray with him in the Temple and a new society where Jehovah is properly worshipped. Brennus dreams of the aurochsen of the northern communities that he wants to return to. The development of Spartacus as a leader is carefully charted. From his state of dream-possession, which alternates with intense physical activity during battle, Spartacus becomes the pupil of Kleon, who hopes to mould him into the perfect leader. This would be dangerous however, because Kleon is training Spartacus to be passionless and logical and to use whatever means he wishes to secure his ends. But Spartacus is greater than Kleon and will not follow this course. This is seen most clearly in his attitude to Elpinice. Elpinice reminds Spartacus of his humanity and of his ideals, uncorrupted by utilitarianism. Kleon knows that he must get rid of Elpinice if he wants to control Spartacus. Elpinice is pregnant and has told no one. Noticing this, Kleon plans a long foray at the end of which they will have to abandon Elpinice and return for her after the battle. To leave her is to allow her to be discovered by the Romans who will kill her. But Spartacus waits with Elpinice until their child is born, and after the birth, it is Elpinice herself who begs Spartacus to go to lead the slaves into battle. So Elpinice is not sacrificed; she sacrifices herself. The psychology of this affair is so much more convincing than that of the Rita/Malcom or Ewan/Ellen affairs. This more sophisticated approach shows how Gibbon was gaining mastery over his art and improving his control over his characters. The consequent rape and

murder of Elpinice is tragic, but it is not Spartacus's fault, nor is it shrugged off by him. On the contrary, out of this experience of pain "a new Spartacus" is born, one who urges and disciplines his troops. (Sp. p.130) After the betrayal of Crixus, Spartacus's friend and best commander, Spartacus says, "I have become a statesman." (Sp. p.161) Then he orders the captured Romans soldiers to be forced to fight each other to the death as a revenge for Crixus. All these experiences lead Spartacus towards his ultimate articulate identity with the slave host. The claims of reason and imagination meet and are reconciled in myth. The credibility of the character of Spartacus is one of Gibbon's finest literary achievements. His detachment is perfect and complete.

However, some of the lack of balance observed earlier finds its way into the trilogy. Ian Campbell comments:

> A Scots Quair eloquently shows the conflicting emotions and loyalties of its creator, yet (because it is a novel) fails, I suggest, as a wholly satisfactory artistic presentation of these conflicts, and in the failure may lie the root of the unease many feel (quite apart from the very evident blunders of artistic tact) in Grey Granite at the end of the trilogy.[18]

Because Gibbon's own attitude to the Land is split between love and hatred, Chris's identification with the land is only likely to be partially successful because in so far as she is the product of Gibbon's loves and hates and not a fully detached fictional creation, certain parts of her character will not be satisfied by the life of the land. It is true that Chris Colquhoun has the English life that Chris Tavendale yearned for but did not choose. There is evidence to suggest that Chris Colquhoun felt guilty about her new lifestyle, as if she had betrayed her inheritance, even though she does enjoy her life of ease and solitude. However,

after Chris has opted for the manse life, she becomes unable to face up to new challenges and becomes preoccupied with staying alive. The division in Chris becomes a split between Chris and Ewan, as they represent the conflicting claims of the two irreconcilable sides of Gibbon's nature. As Chris retreats into herself, Ewan begins to come out of himself and become identified with the working class. This process is similar to the one Spartacus went through but it is impossible to believe that Gibbon could portray Spartacus so well and yet make Ewan such a prig. While all Ewan's worst excesses are to be excused on the grounds of higher loyalty to the Party (these excesses include cruelty to Ellen Johns and lying about his employers), Gibbon does not show us how such behaviour can have a psychologically credible interpretation. Because Ewan is a Communist, Gibbon has to show his loyalty to the Party and he has no room within the limits of Communism to make Ewan like Spartacus, who put human relationships before the cause. The rights and wrongs of Communism are not the point here; the point is that however Communists behave, Gibbon cannot chisel his propaganda stereotype into a psychologically realistic character who might inhabit this novel. At the end of Grey Granite, Chris and Ewan represent two opposed ways of looking at life. Chris represents Freedom, believing in nothing, unable to say or do anything but be realistic about her own limitations and mortality. Ewan represents God, believing in Robert's new creed, a more realistic creed but a creed nevertheless with a supreme power (the Party), a new myth (the Communist interpretation of history) and a code of behaviour based on this belief (loyalty to the Party is the only goal and the achievement of this end is the only justification of the menas used to achieve it). Chris goes to Echt to die; Ewan goes to London on hunger strike in search of a new society. Ian Campbell comments:

> This polarisation is the ultimate position achieved in A Scots Quair. (LGG p.110)

In conclusion, this discussion has sought to show something of the complexity of Gibbon's writing. Of all novelists discussed so far, Gibbon gives the clearest example of a work related to the Scottish Renaissance. He discussed the life-giving aspects of the community, the position of the individual, a new set of values, a new interpretation of history and a new breadth of conception. Yet this understanding of Gibbon's work does not exhaust it. Like so many Scottish novelists, because of the cultural and historical conditions prevailing in Scotland, Gibbon presents deep divisions and contradictions in his novels, as did writers like, Scott, Hogg and Stevenson before him; they were all challenged by the problem of making art out of such contradictions. As with these writers, so with Gibbon, it is fruitless to try to harmonise the beliefs or minimise the contradictions. While Gibbon can be helpfully linked with other writers of the Scottish Renaissance, it must be noted that there is a strand of his work which is pessimistic, sceptical and fragmented, quite at odds with the optimism, belief and unity which links him to the Reniassance. This strand of Gibbon's work, beset by the problems of the Scottish novel, links him clearly with earlier writers, in particular the pre-Renaissance novelists discussed in this thesis. Gibbon shows a transpsychological view of personality, the corruption of the imagination by dream, an obsession with death straining to link the mortal and the infinite. The high point of Sunset Song where Chris has her complete revelation of the Land is an index of Gibbon's success and failure as a Renaissance writer. After this decision there is a period of stasis during Chris's marriage and then the resolution begins to fragment as Gibbon has to contend with the divisive issues of the Scottish novel. However, until 1932, few other authors since Scott had conceived of resolution, far less come so close to achieving it. Gibbon does provide new ways of evaluating Scottish life and he almost succeeded in reconciling seemingly irreconcilable issues. Certainly Gibbon achieved more rapprochement between the individual and the community than any novelist studied so far. Linklater achieved a quirky peace for Magnus, but when Gibbon identifies

Chris with the Land, Chris stands for all like her and Gibbon achieves a more significant peace than Linklater. However, this resolution proves unworkable as the trilogy develops. Gibbon's work is more successful than other novels studied so far in relation to this theme. It remains only to compare his work with that of Naomi Mitchison and Neil Gunn to see if they can match his achievement.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER THREE

Gibbon's work will be footnoted by the name under which he published them

1. Ian Campbell, Lewis Grassic Gibbon, Scottish Writers Series (Edinburgh, 1985). Future references will be abbreviated to LGG.

2. William K Malcolm, A Blasphemer and Reformer: A Study of James Leslie Mitchell/ Lewis Grassic Gibbon (Aberdeen, 1984), p.vii.

3. Lewis Grassic Gibbon, A Scots Quair (London, 1946), comprising Sunset Song (London, 1932), Cloud Howe (1933) and Grey Granite (London, 1934). Future references to these works will be abbreviated to ASQ; SS; CH; GG.

4. William K Malcolm, op.cit., p.128

5. Douglas Gifford, Neil M Gunn and Lewis Grassic Gibbon (Edinburgh, 1983). Future references will be abbreviated to GAG.

6. James Leslie Mitchell, The Thirteenth Disciple (London, 1931). Edition used edited by D F Young (Edinburgh, 1981). Future references will be abbreviated to TTD.

7. Douglas F Young, Beyond the Sunset: A Study of James Leslie Mitchell (Lewis Grassic Gibbon) (Aberdeen, 1973), p.29.

8. Rudolph Otto, The Idea of the Holy, translated by John W Harvey (Oxford, 1926).

9. Rudolph Otto, op.cit., p.68.

10. Rudolph Otto, op.cit., p.39.

11. William K Malcolm, op.cit. pp.128-130.

12. Lewis Grassic Gibbon, Spartacus (London, 1933). Edition used (London, 1970). Future references will be abbreviated to Sp.

13. G Gregory Smith, Scottish Literature: Character and Influence (London, 1919).

14. The references to G Gregory Smith's Scottish Literature, op. cit., are p.19, p.35 and p.40 respectively.

15. Lewis Grassic Gibbon, The Speak of the Mearns edited by Ian Campbell (Edinburgh, 1982) Future reference to this work will be abbreviated to TSM.

16. Ian Campbell, 'Chris Caledonia: the search for an identity', Scottish Literary Journal, 1 (1974), 45-56 (p.55).

17. Douglas F Young, Beyond the Sunset op.cit., p.41.

18. Ian Campbell, 'Chris Caledonia: the search for an identity', op.cit. (p.55).