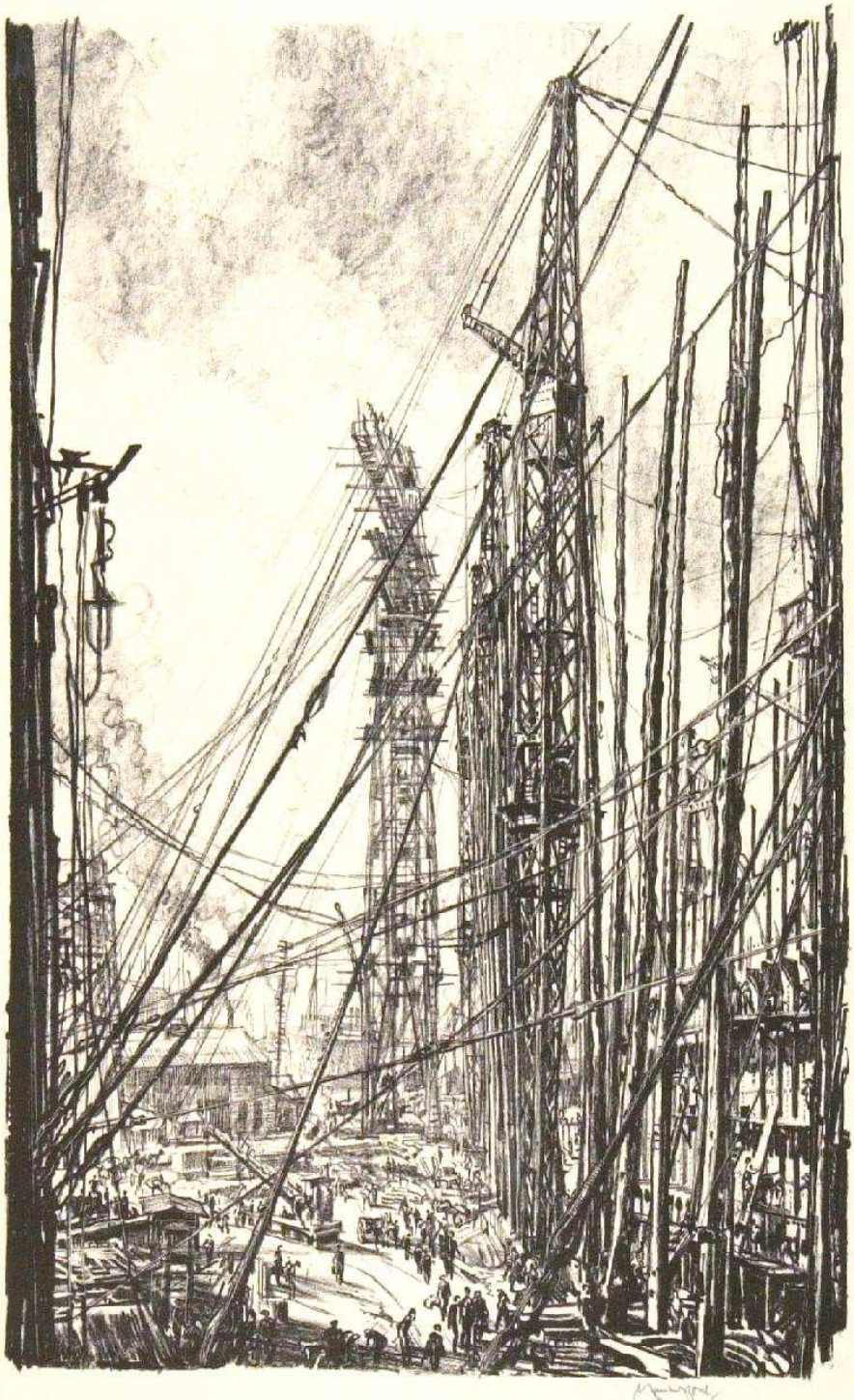

Muirhead Bone, *The Shipyard* (1917) ©The Hunterian Museum and Art Gallery, University of Glasgow

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Spinning Scotland: Exploring Literary and Cultural Perspectives

Editorial

"George Mackay Brown to Maw Broon: Scottish Literature in Context"

Responding to the growing desire for collaborative research in the field of Scottish Literature, and reflecting the inclusive positivism and the outward-looking perspectives afforded by the post-devolution critical landscape, the *Spinning Scotland* Conference Committee sought to create a forum to excite discussion regarding Scottish writing and its conjunctions with Scottish culture. As its guiding paradigm the conference considered the metaphor of the fabric of the Scottish nation—the collaboration between literature, culture, language, and history—to engage with the texture of the nation's artistic output. While some took the opportunity to demonstrate how Scottish writers have deftly interwoven legends, myths, languages, and rhetorical strategies into their poetry or narratives, other panellists choose to explore the interaction between texts and their wider cultural and socio-political contexts. In addition, other presentations explored the complex and rapidly-evolving relationship between film, television and the printed word, with one paper in particular exciting the attention of the national press.

The papers included in this issue were originally presented at the *Spinning Scotland: Exploring Literary and Cultural Perspectives Postgraduate Conference* at the University of Glasgow on Saturday 13 September 2008. The inclusive approach of the presenters and extensive range of the papers presented led to many diverse, yet at times, surprisingly concordant, themes to emerge through the course of day. The most recurrent conclusion of the ensuing panel discussions, however, was the need for further exploration of the interaction between texts and contexts, particularly with regard to Scottish writing and its relationship with international cultural and literary movements. Borne from that impetus, this special issue introduces a selection of papers which articulate the exploratory spirit of the conference.

In addition to stimulating further debate, the conference was also envisaged to celebrate the vibrancy of Scottish writing. To this end, the University of Glasgow's Department of Scottish Literature hosted a welcome reception on the evening before the conference, which included a performance by Liz Lochhead, Glasgow's Poet Laureate, while the University's Hetherington Research Club formed the venue for the post-conference gala performance. The Saturday night performances opened with thought-provoking readings from Anne Donovan and Alan Riach. Carl MacDougall followed with a bunnet-raising set while Alasdair Gray (assisted by *Spinning Scotland*'s Rodge Glass) read extracts from his latest play, *Fleck*, bringing the formal proceedings of the evening to a riotous close.

As guest speaker, Carl also delivered an engaging and comprehensive plenary address to conference on various aspects of urban Scottish writing. Carl's discussion referentially illustrated the industrial landscapes and intimate human details in the work of Muirhead Bone, the Glasgow born engraver and watercolourist. The

Spinning Scotland website has a few examples of Bone's shipyard studies and the Hunterian Museum and Art Gallery at the University of Glasgow houses a substantive collection of his varied work. Reflecting the international appeal of Bone's work, Carl's address focused on Glasgow and Scottish writers in order reveal the universalities of urban life and its representation in literature and art.

The theme of internationalism was echoed in the conference in various ways, including the links which many papers established between Scottish writers and their broader European contexts, and also by the delegates themselves, with conference attendees travelling from Japan, America and Spain to lend their support. Such interactions are essential when dealing with literature which engages with issues of community, regionality and nationality as they inevitably raise important questions about the nature of identity and identification – questions which, in twenty-first century Scotland, possess particular resonance.

The scope of the papers included in this special issue, spanning over five centuries of literary production, reflects the diversity of the conference as a whole. Their topics range from George Mackay Brown's appropriation of history to Maw Broon's use of Scots, and include reassessments of the writings of David Lyndsay, Robert Louis Stevenson, Fionn Maccolla, Irvine Welsh and Ali Smith. Nationalism and internationalism go hand in hand, and whether the writing being discussed is in the medium of English, Scots or Gaelic, all the papers in this selection successfully uncover the existence of the larger unifying forces which social stratifications and differences of language can too easily mask. Whether the specific differentiators or narratives under review are predicated by nationality, linguistic community, race, religious creed, class, gender, or sexuality, what all these papers demonstrate is the value of continued debate regarding the nature of

literary representation and the wider historical contexts in which such representations take place. With so much of the essential groundwork of Scottish literary studies already in place, it is not difficult to appreciate why researchers (such as those who have contributed to this issue) express a certain confidence regarding the integrity of Scottish Literature as a discipline; a self-assurance which empowers them to breach the boundaries between national canons and literary disciplines in search of the common ground of human experience from which all art springs.

The conference and the Saturday evening event were funded through the University of Glasgow's Graduate School of Arts and Humanities Collaborative Research Training Initiative. The Editorial Board of this special issue wish to thank the Graduate School for financing the conference and we wish to offer a special thank you to Dr. Vassiliki Kolocotroni for her invaluable advice and support. Thanks go also to Dr. Kirsteen McCue for providing the conference's initiating spark, and to Dr. Gerard Carruthers and the staff of the Department of Scottish Literature for their continued support and assistance. The Editorial Board also wish to thank the delegates, panel-chairs and organizers of the conference for generating the collaborative energy that fuels this issue. We also thank the issue's peer-reviews for their time and expertise, and finally *eSharp* for their guidance and for providing the platform from which this special issue will help to agitate further debate regarding Scottish Literature and its contexts.

Alexander J. Cuthbert & Lisa Harrison

The Looms of History in George Mackay Brown's Literary Landscape

J. Linden Bicket (University of Glasgow)

My paper deals with the metaphor of spinning and weaving in the work of the Orcadian writer George Mackay Brown; a man obsessed with what he calls 'the looms of history' (Brown, 1972, p.77). It looks particularly at Mackay Brown's work, *An Orkney Tapestry*, first published in 1969, which is a text that weaves together Orcadian, Scandinavian, and Scottish culture by virtue of the extended metaphor of spinning. *An Orkney Tapestry* is filled with references such as, 'the great looms began to hum' (1972, p.64), and 'History has other looms, where a Seamless Garment is being worked on' (1972, p.69), and 'From that green sanctuary Brodir watched the clashing of the great looms and the crimson growing web' (1972, p.65). This paper offers a comprehensive look at the ways in which looms and spinning in Brown's work weave a seamless garment that takes in all the estates of Orkney in a way that is historical and social. Brown talks of real battles and the ordinary men who fought in them, but his approach is also spiritual, because his weaving imagery is most comprehensively and strikingly used to depict the life and martyrdom of the islands' patron Saint, Magnus. The two battles described in *An Orkney Tapestry* show the different strands this imagery forms. They also demonstrate that despite the 'mingled weave' of Orcadian identity and the Orkney islands' fractured and multi-faceted past, Brown's view of all the estates of Orkney as 'stitched together in a single garment' (1972, pp.76-77) is harmonious and all-encompassing.

Mackay Brown was born in 1921, and died in 1996. He wrote prolifically in poetry and prose (short stories especially), and his first major publication, *The Storm and Other Poems*, in 1954, instantly situated him as part of the twentieth century 'Scottish Cultural Renaissance'. Douglas Gifford and Alan Riach have identified the movement this way:

> The Great War changed poets' perspectives utterly and fundamentally. Simmering national awareness became urgent questioning, exacerbating curiosity about what Scotland might be. Roots, tradition, the recovery of older languages as a means of recovering lost national consciousness and character, and an underlying belief in an ancient golden age were the hallmarks of this movement.
> (2004, p.xxvi)

This summation is particularly appropriate for *An Orkney Tapestry*, which is a rich fusion, or weaving together of poetry, prose, drama, ballad, and personal polemic, that travels back in time to before the Vikings. Brown claims near the start of the book that 'The Orkney imagination is haunted by time' (1972, p.26). His artistic manifesto is made clear when he writes:

> I will attempt to get back to the roots and sources of the community, from which it draws its continuing life, from which it cuts itself off at its peril. With the help of the old stories, the old scrolls, the gathered legends, and the individual earth-rooted imagination, I will try to discover a line or two of the ancient life-giving heraldry.
> (1972, p.30)

This is exactly what Mackay Brown does in *An Orkney Tapestry*. The recurrent imagery of spinning, weaving and looms stitch together the different genres that make up the book's patch-work texture, and this imagery – although dealing with Vikings, saints, selkie-ballads and a play about a guardian angel – is harmonious and unifying.

Brown commissioned local artist Sylvia Wishart to provide line drawings for the book, which eventually culminated in his creation of a much later play, the beautiful, almost illuminated, *The Loom of Light*, another text that takes up spinning imagery as its central motif, and includes photography and painting in its pages.

As mentioned earlier, Brown uses his spinning imagery to permeate both the historical and spiritual agendas of his literary tapestry, mainly through two battle scenes. The first of these is from the section, 'Warrior', of the chapter Brown has on Vikings. We hear about the Battle of Clontarf of 1014, a product of what has been called Ireland's golden age, and at first glance, not immediately recognisable as Orcadian history. Sigurd, the pagan Earl of Orkney, makes an alliance with Sigtrygg, King of Dublin, against the Christian King Brian Boru, the High King of Ireland, and Brown tells us that although Earl Sigurd knows the Irish crown was too impossible to be true,

> the high honour of the battle-centre was quite another thing; once offered, it could not be withdrawn, it was a genuine tribute to Sigurd's battle-wit and bravery, and to the rare magic of his mother's weaving. (Brown 1972, p.62)

The weaving in question refers to a magic banner also mentioned in *Orkneyinga Saga*, an Icelandic 13th century text that captured Brown's imagination throughout his life. He re-creates the saga tale of the magic banner Earl Sigurd and his army took to Ireland, and writes:

> Into the riddling region where gods and men negotiated only an elite could trespass – men who had made a long study of the black arts, professional enchanters and spell-binders, they were permitted to look into the seeds of fate and to see which would wither and which would flourish. Earl Sigurd's mother was a priestess of these mysteries. For her son she had made a banner that, borne

> in battle, would bring him victory. Woven into the flag was a raven, symbol of Odin – the bird of memory and foresight, that knew what had happened and what is to happen. The banner had one drawback; whoever carried it would himself be cut down in battle. (1972, p.61)

Perhaps predictably, Earl Sigurd ends up carrying the magic banner himself and so is killed in the battle. The impression given by Brown is that Sigurd longs to avoid dying in his bed as an old man, and instead ensures a glorious death that will lead to everlasting banqueting in Valhalla. He utters what Brown calls the witty death-utterance of the sagas, where a hero or warrior meets death with a jest, and when instructed by one of his troops to 'carry your own devil!' he says, 'Certainly the beggar should carry his own bag' (Brown 1972, p.65). Soon afterwards, Brown tells us, 'a spear transfixed the Earl'. However, it is not Earl Sigurd, but his witch-mother Eithne, the banner-weaver, who is allowed the best last word. She says, 'I would have brought you up in my wool-basket if I had known you expected to live forever' (Brown 1972, p.61).

This leads us to the other women who are tied up in all this wool and spinning and battle imagery. Brown writes:

> There have never been women in history like the Norse women of the sagas; they seem more like savage sea-birds than women; once the cold glaucous eye fell on son or lover or husband, these heroes ran meekly to obey their smallest whim. These women stirred the cauldrons of hatred generation by generation, when men would have let the fires die. (1972, p.61)

So far (we could argue) so sexist, but this is a good rebuff to those critics who would accuse Brown's women of being merely passive bearers of children. The strangest, most savage, and most supernatural element of the Battle of Clontarf that Brown imaginatively recreates in *An Orkney Tapestry*, are the Valkyries.

At this point we might consider two modern representations of Valkyries – Odin's handmaidens – who take stricken warriors from the battlefield to glory in Valhalla. *The Valkyrie's Vigil*, by Edward Robert Hughes (1906) is a rather pretty pre-Raphaelite representation, while Peter Nicolai Arbo's *Wild Hunt of Odin* (1872) depicts Valkyries that are probably far closer to the horrors that appear in the sagas. Perhaps Arbo's painting best fits Brown's descriptions of Valkyries in *An Orkney Tapestry*, too. Brown tells us that Clontarf was 'one of the bloodiest battles in history', and writes:

> In Caithness that day a man called Darraud saw twelve horsewomen riding into a hillside. He followed where they seemed to go, and saw through a rock-cleft twelve women setting up a loom, and singing. The song shuttles on for eleven verses, a lengthening tissue of ghastliness. (1972, p.66)

The source texts for Brown's version of their song are *Njal's Saga*, and the songs *The Woof of War*, and *The Fatal Sisters* – all of which Brown read. In his introduction to Sir George Webbe Dasent's translation of The *Woof of War*, Orkney historian Ernest Marwick tells us that the Valkyries had set up a loom, and:

> Men's heads were the weights, but men's entrails were the warp and weft. A sword served for a shuttle, and the reels were arrows. When the woof was complete the witches tore it apart, and, each retaining a portion, rode six to the south, and the other six to the north. Similar things happened in Faroe, in Iceland, and in Orkney, where an apparition of Earl Sigurd was seen by a man named Hareck.
> (Marwick, 1949, p.23)

Here is Brown's translation of the first two verses, and last verse, of the song:

> The warp is stretched
> For warriors' death.
> The weft in the loom
> Drips with blood
> The battle darkens.
> Under our fingers
> The tapestry grows,
> Red as heart's blood
> Blue as corpses,
> The web of battle.
>
> What is this woof?
> The guts of men.
> The weights on the warp
> Their slaughtered heads.
> These are our spindles,
> Blood splashed-spears.
> An iron loom-frame;
> And the reels, arrows;
> With swords for shuttles
> This war-web we weave,
> Valkyries weaving
> The web of victory […](1972, p.67)
>
> Horror cover all the heath,
> Clouds of carnage blot the sun.
> Sisters, weave the web of death;
> Sisters, cease, the work is done […](1972, p.69)

This is all rather grisly. Spinning imagery weaves together horrific mythological figures with a real battle and takes in Orkney, Ireland, Iceland, and Faroe, but we soon realise in *An Orkney Tapestry*, that Brown moves seamlessly from pagan mythology to Christianity. He writes that 'the real battle was fought out by supernatural beings, the heavenly legions against the principalities and powers of darkness' (1972, p.54) and 'the battle was between Christ and Odin for the soul of Ireland' (1972, p.54). Brian Boru the Christian King wins Clontarf, but is killed. Brown tells us that:

> We must think of King Brian Boru's head and heart as being exempt from the Valkyries' hands. History has other looms, where a Seamless Garment is being worked on. The shuttles fly perpetually, secretly, silently, in little islands where the brothers plough and fish and pray; in lonely oratories; in great churches from Galway to Byzantium. (1972, p. 70)

An Orkney Tapestry moves from talking about Earl Sigurd the warrior, to another man, Earl Magnus, or St. Magnus, the martyr. At first glance, the imaginatively recreated hagiography of a Saint might not bear much resemblance to the depiction of a bloodthirsty battle, and Brown is careful to Christianise St. Magnus as much as possible, so that his life in *An Orkney Tapestry* is probably more pious, and his death more freely accepted, than it is in its original saga version, but comparisons with the previous discussion of Vikings are stitched into the text. Brown writes:

> The battle of Clontarf and the Martyrdom of St. Magnus are both set in the season of The Passion and Easter. The actors move about under the cross. The fearful song of the Valkyries after the battle, about the garment of war woven from entrails, is not unlike the medieval hymns that picture Christ in his Passion, clothed in wounds and blood. (1972, p. 83)

Certainly, Brown goes to some lengths to knit the prior battle between a Christian king and pagan, Viking warriors, together with the story of the martyrdom of St. Magnus.

In brief, Magnus was the cousin of Hakon, and both were Earls of Orkney in the 12th century. *Orkneyinga Saga* tells us that they got on reasonably well early on in life, but soon had rival armies that trampled over Orkney, causing disharmony, bloodshed and misrule. A peace treaty was called on the island of Egilsay on Easter Monday in 1117 (the Battle of Clontarf was on Good Friday, a century

earlier) but Magnus was cheated, as Hakon brought eight ships instead of the agreed two. Magnus offered himself as a sacrifice and was killed, and from then on several miracles took place, with peace restored to the Orkney Islands. Magnus's nephew Rognvald Kolson, himself made a saint, commissioned the building of the magnificent St. Magnus Cathedral in Kirkwall, popularly known as 'the wonder and glory of all the north'.

Brown was fascinated by the story of St. Magnus. Reading about Magnus's martyrdom in the sagas inspired him early on, and he re-wrote the story in a variety of genres including opera libretto, play, poetry and novel. However, in *An Orkney Tapestry*, and *The Loom of Light*, his St. Magnus play, he defines Magnus's life and death meticulously through the spinning metaphor, and through the image of Christ's seamless garment, taken from John's Gospel.

Like Brian Boru during the Battle of Clontarf, Brown's Magnus does not fight in battle. In his depictions of Clontarf, Brown has Brian Boru praying, and surrounded, armourless, by his soldiers. St. Magnus is even less protected in the second battle this paper will discuss: the Battle of Menai Straits in Anglesey. The sagas tell us that Magnus was taken there on the side of the Norwegian King, but that he refused to fight and instead read aloud from his Psalter. Brown recognised that body and soul both matter in this story, and tells us, in *An Orkney Tapestry*, that 'In the web of being, spiritual and corporeal are close-woven' (1972, p.85). In *The Loom of Light*, Brown has Magnus recite psalms during the battle that mention clothing specifically. In the face of flying arrows Magnus recites:

> The King's daughter is all glorious within. Her clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought in to the King in raiment of needlework. (1984, p.18) [Magnus recites this from psalm 45:13]

> [and] Who is this that commeth from Edom, with dyed garments from Bosra, this beautiful one in his robe, walking in the greatness of his strength? (1984, p.19) [Magnus recites this from Isaiah 63:1]
>
> [and] The coat that Israel gave to his beloved son, Joseph, a beautiful garment of many colours, was taken from him. Steeped in the blood of beasts it became one colour… (1984, p.19) [Magnus recites this from Genesis 37:23]

Instead of a magic woven banner as a symbol of fate, magic, and Norse folklore and mythology, Brown presents us with Magnus reading aloud from his Psalter, sitting unarmoured, refusing to fight, and curiously he is left completely unharmed. Instead of a gruesome litany by Valkyries, we hear excerpts of beautiful psalms. The images that populate this text swarm together at this point and I would suggest that the raven on the pagan magic banner foreshadows Christ, with its divine knowledge and powers of protection and salvation, while the Psalter (a book of psalms) is used almost as a battle talisman. An especially pertinent piece of scripture (used elsewhere, famously, by Iain Crichton Smith) comes with Magnus reading aloud from Matthew (6:28):

> Why take ye thought of raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. They toil not neither do they spin. And yet I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. (1984, p.16)

Magnus is happy not to worry about his fate – he allows God to decide, and whether he wears a red coat of sacrifice or a seamless garment like Christ, he commits his soul to God.

In fact the mention of the Gospel according to Matthew and the seamless garment in John's Gospel become even more pertinent as *An Orkney Tapestry*, and also the play *The Loom of Light*, and novel

Magnus (1977), progress. After the battle in which Magnus refuses to fight, increased conflict arises between himself and his cousin Hakon, as both want to rule Orkney singly. The bishop in *The Loom of Light* notes that Orkney is coming apart at the seams, and says:

> To make peace, the 'pax Christi', is to weave the seamless garment. But to make peace as politicians understand it – that is simply to patch an old scarecrow over and over again […] What is desperately needed in Orkney this Easter is something more in the nature of a sacrifice: the true immaculate death of a dove'. (1984, p. 32)

Underlying scripture here points to John 19:23:

> When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took his tunic, now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top.

And as Alan Bold points out, Magnus:

> is being guided by an angel called the Keeper of the Loom who tells him he is to take the loom of the spirit and weave upon it an immaculate garment – the Seamless Garment of sanctity. (Bold 1978, p.104)

Brown reminds us in his novel *Magnus*, about 'that parable [Matthew 22] in which Christ compares the celestial kingdom to a marriage feast, and how it is good for a guest to wear to the feast his wedding garment lest, having some inferior garment on, he is shamed and put out into darkness.' (1977, p.137) So, Brown adds layers and layers to the spiritual aspect of his literary tapestry. His source texts for the constant symbolism of garments and weaving are now biblical, rather than mythological, or folkloric. The only problem is whether his constant reinforcing of the weaving and spinning imagery through psalms and scripture sounds unconvincing, and even dogmatic.

Alan Bold has been fairly critical of Brown in this respect: he claims he cannot see anything especially saintly in a man being murdered, and writes that Brown owes it to non-Catholic readers 'to explore the man Magnus instead of dogmatically accepting his sanctity' (1978 p.109). However, Brown's hagiography of St. Magnus does not concentrate wholly on one saintly man. Although *An Orkney Tapestry* describes the lives of Earls like Sigurd, Magnus and Hakon, as the sagas do, Brown also injects a new emphasis into his hagiography and descriptions of battle scenes, one that takes the common man into account. For Brown, the whole community is important, as well as those outsiders, like the tinkers, who wander through his literary landscape. In fact it is a tinker, or vagrant, who recognises Magnus's sainthood before Orkney or Rome or anyone else. Brown writes:

> In a wholesome society the different estates are stitched together in a single garment: the warmth and comfort and well-being of the people, a symbol too of their identity and their ethos. Their language, their work, their customs, all they think and do and say, decide the cut and style of the coat […] There was another coat; very precious and inviolable, their fathers and their grandfathers before them had imagined it and had given it to the looms of history; and this heavy heraldic ceremonial coat was not finished […] There was a third coat; as yet only the monks in the lonely islands wore it – the long white weave of innocence that they must have ready for the bridal feast of Christ… (1972, pp. 76-77)

Therefore, although St. Magnus is concerned with attaining the last long white weave of innocence, his martyrdom ensures that the heraldic coat of state does not have to be shared between two earls, like 'rich shameful beggars' (1984, p.11), and the common weal is clothed in a comforting symbolic coat. Magnus's death is

characterised by a symbolic handing over of garments to his executioner. In the end, in Brown's words:

> Magnus gave his clothes to Lifolf and knelt on the stone and went naked (it seemed) into the ecstasies of death. Yet all through history the shuttles are flying perpetually, secretly, silently. The wedding garment, the shirt of invisible fire, is being woven.
> […] Alone, as he was meant to do, Hakon Paulson wore the refashioned coat-of-state with authority and charity. In peace the crofters and fishermen broke their furrows of clay and salt, and on small islands the long bright robes chanted their litanies; into which an expected name had not yet been gathered. (1972, pp. 84-85)

There is nothing narrow and dogmatic about this writing. The spinning and weaving imagery is not inflexible and unbending throughout Brown's historical tour of medieval Orkney in *An Orkney Tapestry* – it takes in paganism, Christianity, Norse mythology, martyrdom, and sainthood – and moves from a bloody battle to the idea of the redemption of society. But it is not preaching; the impression given is that far more it is a writer taking pleasure mostly in re-creating history that is sometimes sidelined and marginalized in a Scottish context. As well as that, Brown's weaving together of *An Orkney Tapestry* takes sagas as its central inspiration, and it is worth questioning how often we concentrate on those in the Scottish canon. In Brown's later work for children, *Pictures In the Cave*, we see Robert the Bruce watching the legendary spider in a cave in Orkney, and soon, 'at the end of that famous day, King Robert finished the web-spinning, and his kingdom was established' (1977, p.53). It might be said that Brown's *An Orkney Tapestry* does something similar: it's an act of cultural retrieval that weaves Orcadian hagiography, legend and mythology into the looms of history, and not just Icelandic, Norwegian and Irish history, but Scottish history too.

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Reforming Rhetoric: The Immodest Proposals of David Lyndsay

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David Lyndsay (c.1486-1555) began his life at the Scottish court as attendant to the first and short-lived Prince James in 1508, thereafter holding the positions of Usher and Master Usher to his elder brother James V, working alongside Gavin Dunbar, who provided the prince's tutelage from the age of six. While Dunbar remained as tutor to James for a further two years after Archibald Douglas, the Earl of Angus, became the young prince's guardian, Lyndsay lost his position at court in 1524. James escaped from the supervision of the Douglases and commenced his personal rule *de facto* in 1528 and Lyndsay appears back in the exchequer rolls as an Usher shortly after this. By 1530 he is reported to be conducting the duties associated with that of a royal herald. He later held the office of Lyon King at Arms, Scotland's Chief Herald.

Lyndsay is now remembered primarily for his play *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis* (1540) a work whose literary and cultural significance has the potential to define its author, as is suggested by Walter Scott's appreciation in *Marmion* (Scott, 2003):

> The flash of that satiric rage,
> Which, bursting on the early stage,
> Branded the vices of the age,
> And broke the keys of Rome.
> [...]
> Still is thy name in high account,
> And still thy verse has charms,
> Sir David Lindesay of the Mount,
> Lord Lion King-at-arms! (IV:7.124-154)

In describing Lyndsay's satirical rage against the 'vices of the age', Scott echoes the sentiments of Henry Charteris, the Edinburgh burgess, publisher and patron of John Scot's 1568 first edition of Lyndsay's collected 'Warkis'. In his preface Charteris describes Lyndsay's 'ingenious poeticall inventionis', juxtaposing his personal and creative virtues against a 'tyme of sa greit and blind ignorance, of manifest and horribill abhominationis and abusis' (Hamer 1930, 397). Charteris's pro-Protestant reading, however, ignores Lyndsay's humanist credentials that provide an important background to his call for a 'spiritual and moral renaissance' (Edington 1994, 147). As Lynch highlights, the court of James IV into which Lyndsay was first employed stood at the head of a dynamic cultural confluence (2003, 160), and although the Scottish court at this time was influenced by a 'complex and shifting set of elements', the figure of the king still 'lay at the heart of an intricate web' of religious and socio-political interaction (Carpenter 2000, 137-138). Lyndsay's regicentric verse develops the figure of an archetypal Christian king, a just monarch whose sound moral judgment would ensure the temporal and spiritual welfare of all three estates. By repeatedly referencing his relationships with James IV and James V in his poetry, Lyndsay provides this figure with an additional level of rhetorical strength.

In *A Modest Proposal* (1729) Jonathan Swift's concern for the public good sees him deliver an ironic and unsettlingly macabre political parody, satirizing the mercantile and dehumanizing attitudes being openly expressed regarding the validity of preserving an impoverished underclass. Swift develops the suggested 'modesty' of the pamphlet's proposal—to let the Irish farm their children as a cash crop—into a potent rhetorical conceit, displaying the literary prowess of a satirist capable of redefining a genre while attempting to bring about social reform. Unlike the canonical literary appreciation for

Jonathan Swift's work, the satirical aspect of Lyndsay's writing has often distracted critics from the rhetorical playfulness and literary complexities on display. T.F. Henderson's judgement that Lyndsay 'was less a poet than a political and social reformer' (1910, 116) demonstrates how the pervasive view of Lyndsay as an anti-clerical polemist has resulted in the marginalization of his poetic abilities. Maurice Lindsay, in a similar vein, suggests that Lyndsay was a 'writer who would sell his soul for a rhyme', being 'so much a preacher with a purpose that he ceased to be a poet' (1948, 8). Lindsay goes on to suggest that Lyndsay's verse forms an 'attractive outhouse' in contrast to William Dunbar's 'main building' (1948, 8). Similarly, William Barclay lauds Lyndsay's contribution to the 'world of practical ideas' (1956, 353) over any literary prowess, while Matthew McDiarmid depicts Lyndsay as a 'practical moralist', and, although he views *Ane Satyre* as an outstanding example of the 'theatre of the absurd', McDiarmid continues to lend support to the traditional sectarian debate regarding the specifics of Lyndsay's 'theological position' (1977, 8-15). This debate regarding Lyndsay's 'confessional status' (1994, 146) is, as Edington rightly states, an academic 'red herring' (Edington 1991, 418), and whether he should be described as a 'reforming Catholic' or a 'Catholic-minded reformer' (Kenneth 1950, 91) is to equally lose sight of the important didactic intent operating within the poetry.

Such readings demonstrate the lack of 'critical paradigms' (Heijnsbergen 2004, 198) available in Anglo-American literary studies to discuss the European intellectual maelstrom that shaped Scottish culture during the first half of the sixteenth century. Counteracting these readings is the research of Janet Hadley Williams (2000), Carol Edington (1994) and Theo van Heijnsbergen (1998 & 2004) which seeks to establish a broader range of historical and

critical approaches, allowing Lyndsay's verse to be seen within the wider European literary context. Continuing this reappraisal of Lyndsay's *scriptible* verse, Kevin McGinley illustrates how Lyndsay's poetics express a 'polysemous, multi-voiced rhetoric' (2004, 1) whose ambivalence and multi-layeredness invites various, and often oppositional, readings from different audiences. In relation to Lyndsay's perspective on the use of vernacular language, however, there can be little ambiguity. As Gregory Kratzmann notes in relation to Lyndsay's *The Testament of The Papyngo* (1530), the poem's address to an unlearned audience, the 'rurall folke' (67)[1] is 'something more deeply felt than the usual modesty topos' (1988, 106). This establishes the notion, essayed further in the 'Exclamatioun to the Redar' in *Ane Dialogue Betwix Experience and Ane Courteour* (1553), that the audience for his poetry includes all those who use the 'toung maternall' (53), the language of common speech, which Lyndsay argues, is the true medium for the transmission of God's word.

This paper focuses on just one facet of Lyndsay's 'ingenious poeticall inventionis', namely his employment and development of the trope of modesty. In *Ane Dialog* this trope is used to further Lyndsay's socio-political and religious ends while positioning the author, the text and the reader in relation to each other. Lyndsay's use of modesty in his early poetry of advice and complaint establishes a context for this later application where his focus widens beyond the preoccupation with the educational and political development of the young monarch to the extended exploration of the temporal nature of earthly monarchies as witnessed in *Ane Dialog*. Thus, Lyndsay's

[1] All citations of Lyndsay's poetry are from Williams (2000) with the exception of those from 'Ane Exhortatioun Gyffin be Father Experience Vnto his Sone the Curteour' which refer to Hamer (1931).

implied audience shifts from that of the king to the kingdom, his reforming agenda extending beyond the court to the country.

The opening of Lyndsay's *The Dreme* (c.1526) depicts the poet-persona within the service of the young king, with the past tense construction of 'my seruyce done' (3) and 'excerst in seruyce' (6) being used to let the poem's implied recipient know that patronage is not being sought through the promise of future deeds, but rather, acts to remind the king that royal patronage would be the only just desert for service already conducted (McGinley 2005, 7-9). In 'The Complaynt of Schir David Lyndsay' (c.1530) a similar plea for patronage is used to call upon James to exercise justice and exert his authority in relation to the clergy so they may be reformed in accordance with the 'comounweill'. Comparing Lyndsay's *The Dreme*, 'The Complanyt' and 'Ane Answeir to the Kingis Flyting' (c.1535) with William Dunbar's 'Complaint to The King', 'Remonstrance to the King' and 'New's Gift to The King', we find similar references to the poet's long service, lists of unworthies, and the desire that the monarch's rule will further peace and justice. Despite the poetic dexterity of Dunbar's appeals, they lack the breadth of intimate detail or sense of familiarity between the persona and the implied audience. Where Dunbar artistically vies for patronage, Lyndsay suggests how best it should be delivered. In reminding the young king that he has been too long overlooked, being so long in want of 'recompence' (52), Lyndsay's 'Complanyt' is reminiscent of the petitions made by Johne the Comounweill in *The Dreme* and *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estatis*, who laments that he has been long 'ouerlukit' (2447), being forced to tolerate impoverishment while the corrupt prosper.

The implied intimacy between poet and patron in *The Dreme* is created through a series of domestic vignettes which detail

Lyndsay's service to the young prince from the moment of his 'natyuitie' (23), being his 'purs maister and secreit theasaurare' (22), 'Yschare' (23) and chamber groom. After *The Dreme*'s opening epistle to the reader establishes the relationship between author and audience, Lyndsay's persona delivers an apology for his inability to do adequate literary service to the poem's true 'mater':

> Bot humlie I beseik thyne excellence,
> With ornate termes thocht I can nocht expres
> This sempyll mater for laik of eloquence,
> Yit nocht withstanding all my besynes,
> With hart and hand my mynd I sall adres
> As I best can and moste compendious.
> Now I begyn. The mater hapit thus (50-56).

The kernel of the poem's matter is then suspended until the prologue, 13 stanzas of high style rhyme royal, has sufficiently demonstrated the poet's ability in aureate description, performed deftly despite the persona's self-professed 'laik of Eloquence'.

The opening stanzas of the prologue form an inverted *locus amoenus*, with the descriptions of the transmutability of the natural world acting as a pathetic fallacy to express the moribund and restless state of mind of the persona who is depicted 'Musing and marvelling on the misirie/Frome day to day in erth quhilk dois incres' (118-19). After decrying the moral 'instabilitie' (120) of the human 'mynd' (122), order is re-established in the natural world with Phebus ascending to his celestial throne, his 'fyrie chariot tryumphant' (176) illuminating all creation. Through the contemplation and appreciation of a higher beauty the persona temporally forgets his 'warldie cure' (188). This device is similarly employed in Dunbar's 'Mediation in Wyntir' and 'Of the Changes of Life', and while the brevity of both of Dunbar's poems ensure an exactitude of expression and tightness of form that is absent from Lyndsay's poetics, Lyndsay's

knowing use of form and device nonetheless reveal a poet who is clearly inspired by his subject matter and is confident about his ability to convey it to his audience. The allegorical and didactic nature of the dream vision as a poetic form provides the perfect vehicle to convey a persuasive argument as to why the king should rule justly. However, Lyndsay, with an eye ever on the hourglass, closes *The Dreme* by reminding the king of the short tenure of his mortal rule, the conventional *momento mori* serving to contextualise earthly monarchies within a larger historical and spiritual context. This earthly monarchy/divine kingdom juxtaposition is revisited in 'The Complaynt' with the king being reminded that he is 'bot ane instrument/To that gret kyng omnipotent' (499-500), being himself a subject to a truly divine ruler:

> For David, kyng of Israeli,
> Quhilk was the gret propheit royall,
> Sayis God hes haill at his command,
> The hartis of prencis in his hand;
> Evin as he lyste thame for to turne,
> That mon thay do withoute sudgeorne;
> Sum tyll exault to dignitie,
> And sum to depryve, in povertie,
> Sum tyme, of lawid men to mak lordis,
> And sum tyme, lordis to bynd in cordis
> And thame alutterlye distroye,
> As plesis God, that ryall roye. (484-98)

Just as his views on kingship are delivered within the context of an implicit relationship between poet and recipient, Lyndsay's statements of explicit modesty in regard to his poetic abilities are conceits for his audience to recognise and be amused by; he confesses falsely before his reader so he may be found out, wishing to be contradicted in their judgement. The concepts of confession and performance are important features of Lyndsay's use of literary

modesty, particularly in 'The Epistill', 'The Prolog' and 'Exclamtioun to the Redar' of *Ane Dialog*, allowing his poetic idiom to serve both his political and spiritual ends.

The opening epistle of *Ane Dialog* sees the poet-persona metafictionally address the text, defining it as a 'lytill quair, of mater miserabyll' (1), describing how its appearance should mirror its contents by suggesting that 'weil auchtest thou coverit be with sabyl' (2). Expressing the hope that his verse will advance 'the sincier word of God' (74) by reaching the ear of both the nobility and the clergy, the Courteour briefly recalls the biblical accounts of the Flood, Sodom and Gomorra, and the destruction of Jerusalem, so by establishing both the apocalyptic and didactic tone of the poem. The opening address also provides the opportunity to register the poem's first modesty *topos*; apologizing for the use of 'rurall ryme' (101), the lack 'Off Rhetorick' (103) and 'Ornat terms' (110). The reader is advised to exercise 'pacience' (115) over their reading. The metaphor developed is that of 'brutall beistis' (113) grazing on 'weidis' (112) in seemingly 'Barran fields' (112). Employing beast-fable imagery comparable with Henryson's opening stanza of 'The Cock and The Fox' in the *Morall Fabillis of Esope the Phrygian* (c.1450-1505), the suggestion is that, unlike the 'brutall beistis', the Christian reader has a soul and the God-given capacity for improvement, the ability to be 'amendit' (170) through thought and deed. The imagery of 'brutall beistis' is reworked again in Part Three of *Ane Dialog*, where the destruction of Sodom and Gomorra is presented as the natural consequence of the 'vnnaturall' (3395) behaviour of their citizens, who 'Lyke brutall beistis, by thare myndis,/Unnaturally abusit thare kyndis' (3398-3399). Echoing the earlier passage in the epistle, the didactic intent here is to reinforce the understanding that any temporal monarchy is always answerable to a higher authority, an

authority whose rule is all encompassing and whose judgment is absolute:

> Thae Kyng, thare Quene, and peple all,
> Young and auld, brynt in poulder small.
> No Creature wes left on lyfe,
> Foulis, Beistis, Man, nor Wyfe. (3462-3465)

Unsatisfied with leaving the proofs of God's fearful judgement as historical parables, Experience gives the warning that 'God sall slak his bow' (72) only when 'the peple doith repent' (71), thus bringing the significance of scriptural teachings into a contemporary setting. This is further supported by the plea aimed at those who 'have gouverance' (74) to 'conforme to Christis Institutioun' (76) before God's wrath is again invoked. By identifying his audience and addressing them directly, Lyndsay plays his part in directing his readers toward the 'straucht way' (23), and establishing his 'lytil quair' as a Christian handbook as well as a source text for social reform.

Despite the epistle's modest apology for the absence of ornate rhetoric, *Ane Dialog*'s prologue launches forth in gilded terms, describing the May morning on which the persona awakes to confront the 'malancolye' (127) brought on by his musings on the vices of humanity. Delivering a display piece of high style Classical allusions concerning 'Phebus', 'Synthea', 'Venus', 'Jupiter, Mars, and Mercuruis', 'Saturne', 'Neptune' and 'Eoll' (139-185), and an elaborate blazon to Dame Nature's artistry, the prologue forms an explicit display of Lyndsay's poetic authority, foreshadowing the authoritative delivery for the didactic histories which follow. Berating himself for wasting his time rehearsing such an 'vnfrutul and vaine descriptioun' (203) in 'raggit rurall vers' (204), the Courteour informs the reader that it will be in 'roustye termes' (213), not

'termes bryght' (211) that he will rehearse his mournful 'mater' (213).

Graham Caie (2003) explores how Henryson uses modesty *topoi* in *The Testament of Cresseid* to justify the authority and demonstrate the creativity of the vernacular poet, and I would argue that Lyndsay's adopts a similar ploy in *Ane Dialog* to show his artful control of rhetoric and his creativity as a storyteller. For Lyndsay, however, it is not enough that Scots ('Inglis') is seen to have validity as a medium for poetry and storytelling; his task is to justify why it should replace Latin as the mother tongue of the Church. It is perhaps of little wonder that divine assistance is sought to help with such an undertaking:

> Withoute ony vaine invocatioun
> To Minerva or to Melpominee,
> Nor yitt wyll I mak supplicatioun
> […]
> Raveand Rhammusia, goddes of dispyte,
> Mycht be to me ane muse rycht convenabyll,
> Gyff I desyrit sic help for tyll indyte
> This murnyng mater, mad, and miscrabyll.
> I mon go seik ane muse more confortabyl
> And sic vaine superstitioun to refuse,
> Beseikand the gret God to be my muse, (216-243)

To call upon a Classical muse would be the expression of a 'vaine superstitioun', and although recognising the eloquence of the pagan poets, he dispenses with elaborate allusion and calls upon God by name in a manner more akin to the Psalms than epic poetry. As well as a conventional trope, Lyndsay's modesty in regard to his poetic abilities is also an indication of the value he attributes to his subject matter; rejecting a series of potential Classical deities in favour of a heavenly muse, Lyndsay's Courteour calls upon the assistance that will turn his poetry in verse of 'wysdome' and 'eloquence' (285), just as Christ 'conuertit cauld water' into 'wyne' (296).

Choosing Calvary over Parnassus, the Courteour describes how drinking the water which is mixed with Christ's blood will save his verse from 'schame and syn' (298). The powerful allusion to the sacramental wine is used to suggest the possibility of moral correction, for both the poet and the reader, leading ultimately to the salvation made possible through Christ's passion. In a similar vein, Gavin Douglas's invocation of the muse in the Prologue of *The Eneados* [I:453] necessarily stops short of Lyndsay's direct addresses, forming instead a synthesis of Classical and Christian allusions which equate Calliopee with the 'Virgyn moder and madyn' and 'Sibill' with 'Christ's moder dear' (Prologue VI:145). While Douglas is striving to innovate as well as translate for a gentile audience, Lyndsay is free to address his 'hevinly muse' directly, yet like the Calliope of Douglas's *Palis of Honoure*, who mediates on behalf of the persona and ensures both atonement and harmonious rule, the Courteour's muse is the creator of order and harmony, who 'maid all thing of nocht' (246), and placed 'Hell in the mid centir of the Elementis' (247). The notion of a well governed, divinely ordered universe is first employed by Lyndsay in *The Dreme*, with Dame Remembrance guiding the poet through the divisions of Hell and Heaven and the revolutions of the celestial spheres, before juxtaposing a vision of universal harmony with the disorderly kingdom of contemporary Scotland. *Ane Dialog* laments Scotland's fallen state further and in a far more sustained manner, suggesting that it is not only the king and clergy but every Christian who must reform. For this national reform to happen the lay community must have, as the Courteour suggests, the 'bukis necessare' in the Scots 'toung vulgare' (600) as

> Thocht every commoun may nocht be one clerk,
> Nor hes no leid except thare toung maternall,
> Quhy suld of God the marvellous hevinly werk
> Be hid frome thame? I thynk it nocht fraternall. (552-55)

Highlighting the importance of a common language, Lyndsay's persona is calling for direct access to biblical texts to allow interpretation without clerical mediation. To illustrate his point he compares the 'bairns of Israell' (561), who were taught Moses's laws in their own 'vulgare language of Hebrew' (560), with the 'devote cunnyng Clerkis' (545) of Scotland's priesthood, who preach sermons in the 'Latyne toung' (546) to 'unlernit' congregations who 'knawis lytill of thare werkis' (547). Turning from biblical to Classical sources, the examples of Aristotle, Plato, Virgil and Cicero are cited as authors who wrote in the language that was 'naturall' (575) to them. He also uses the example of Saint Jerome, who translated 'The Law of God' (624) into his maternal language from Hebrew and Greek, suggesting that if Saint Jerome had been born in Argyle in 16th Century he would have written in Irish (627-8).

The series of literary precursors establishes a Judeo-Christian genealogy of language, demonstrating how God's word has been transcribed from Hebrew into Greek and Latin in turn, the next proposed stage being its transmission into the vernacular. Using the example of the apostle Paul who taught Christ gospel in 'the divers leid of every land' (630), Lyndsay argues that if people could 'pray and reid' (648) in their own language they would better equipped to understand the teachings being delivered to them from the pulpit, as well as being able to comply with the laws derived from Christian doctrine. The closing stanza provides a concise summation of this argument, and with the absence of authorial distance safeguarding against intentional fallacy, the reader can safely equate this stanza directly with Lyndsay's authorial intent:

> Bot lat us haif the bukis necessare
> To commoun weill and our salvatioun,
> Justlye translatit in our toung vulgare.
> And als I mak the supplicatioun:
> O gentyll redar, haif none indignatioun,
> Thynkand I mell me with so hie matair.
> Now to my purpose fordwart wyll I fair.
> (678-84)

Ane Dialog closes with an exhortation from 'Experience to the Courteour' in which Experience provides a last few words of comfort and advice before the Courteour begins the task of composing the poem. A final modesty *topos* addresses the reader, once again excusing the author's 'rurall rude Indyte' (6335), but the closing remark to let God be the judge gestures towards the presence of a greater authority than any earthly patron or gentile reader:

> And sped me home, with hert sychyng full sore,
> And enterit in my quyet Oritore.
> I tuke paper, and thare began to wryt
> This Miserie, as ye haue hard afore.
> All gentyll Redaris hertlye I Implore
> For tyll excuse my rurall rude Indyte.
> Thoucht Phareseis wyll haue at me dispyte,
> Quhilkis wald not *that* thare craftynes wer kend,
> Latt God be luge: and so I mak ane end. (6330-38)

As has been discussed, Lyndsay's use of literary modesty repeatedly draws the reader's attention to the supposed naturalness of vernacular language, the idiom which he argues should be the chief medium for the transmission of biblical texts. Throughout *Ane Dialog* the acts of reading and interpretation are repeatedly referenced, with such authorial intrusions as 'reid thee with pacience' (115), 'tak tent: for now I purpose to begyn' (299), 'mark weill in thy memory' (6267) and 'consydder, in thy contemplatioun' (6285), serving to remind the reader that despite the poem's lowly 'rurall rhymes' and 'rustye termes' its subject matter is of the highest import, being the salvation of the reader and the restoration the church into an institution that is once again fit for purpose. Belying the rhetorically

playful addresses to the reader are the vehement complaints of a humanist reformer calling for the word of God to be reinstituted into the common language of the people, a far from modest proposal.

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What is left in between: *Trainspotting*, from Novel to Film

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The radical challenging of some of the social conventions on which our Western societies are based is, from my point of view, one of the most interesting aspects of *Trainspotting*. The concept of difference, both in form and in content, is one of the most appealing aspects not only in Irvine Welsh's novel, but also in Danny Boyle's filmic adaptation of it. I can't agree with critic Geoff Brown when he defines the film as a story about 'a jumble of junkies, layabouts and psychos, aimed at youngsters willing to go with the flow' (Brown 2000, p.35). I consider it too simplistic and, to a certain extent, patronizing, to think of the film as a product 'aimed at youngsters willing to go with the flow' and, as I intend to show, there is much more to it than Brown suggests.

Before discussing the value of *Trainspotting*, I would like to introduce some general remarks about the often unfair comparisons between a film adaptation and its literary source. It is commonly claimed that the film will never reach the degree of excellence in the minds of those who have previously read the literary text. However, there are, paradoxically, many examples of film adaptations of great relevance whose literary origins are hardly known or considered mediocre, as it is the case of most of Alfred Hitchcock's films (*The Lady Vanishes* (1938), *I Confess* (1953), *Rear Window* (1954) or *Vertigo* (1958), to mention but a few) or *Gone With the Wind* (Victor Fleming, 1939) to include a paradigmatic case. The relationship between the film and its literary source becomes unbalanced because comparisons are usually made at the level of plot and character, that

is, the content of the narrative. In addition, the effort made by the reader in order to understand and construct the meaning of a written text is generally opposed to the supposed directness of film. According to Brunette & Wills:

> Traditionally, film is held to be natural and direct […] in opposition to the supposedly obvious artificiality of writing. We now know from the many semiological studies that have considered narrative cinema as industry and institution, as system of representation, and as subject effect, that cinema can never be directly 'spoken'. We would merely add that this is because it is always written (1989, p.61).

Thus, as Ramón Carmona notes, when analysing a filmic adaptation we shouldn't pay so much attention to the 'degree of fidelity in relation to the previous narrative content' but to the 'pertinent proceedings in the film taken from the discursive articulations of the literary source' (1993, p.212)[1]. What is relevant for this critic is the analysis of the 'translation process' implied in adapting the narrative strategies present in the novel to the film and not the inclusion (or exclusion) of a character, a situation or a particular event. In this sense, when commenting on Cocteau's adaptation of his own play *Les Parents Terribles* (1949), André Bazin praised it for using exclusively an external perspective, with the camera offering the only point of view the events are watched from in any play, that is, the public's.

If we apply the same criterion to *Trainspotting*, we can affirm that Danny Boyle is very respectful with the discourse articulating the narrative and, in particular, with those aspects related to the focaliser. Thus, we find Mark Renton as a diagetic narrator - a character implicated in the narrative - accompanied by different characters who "steal" the narration from him (Begbie, Tommy,

[1] All translations from Spanish are mine.

Liza), underlining the significance of the very act of narrating. The public's perspective is also included by means of objective shots and we may even find the point of view of the subject of the enunciation, in what Francesco Casetti (84) defines as an 'objective unreal shot', a situational shot taken from a non-realistic position which refers explicitly to the responsible of the film narrative[2]. There is an almost perfect match, then, between the narrative voice(s) in the novel and that/those in the film, as in the novel we also find highly intrusive focalisers (Renton, Begbie, Sick Boy), episodes narrated in third person singular (for instance, 'Speedy Recruitment' pp. 62-7, or 'The Elusive Mr. Hunt' pp. 278-9) and explicit references to the reader (pp. 85, 109) as if they were invitations by Irvine Welsh to participate in the construction of the meaning within the novel.

One of the most striking aspects in Boyle's film is his use of narrative voice which is subjective, intrusive and fragmented, and uses a strong Scottish accent. From a present day perspective the popularity of the film among youngsters all over the world may be taken for granted, yet the success of the film was not guaranteed. There were many doubts about the actors (most of them unknown to the majority of the public at that time) and, as Robert Murphy points out, 'there were precedents to warn that Irvine Welsh's Scottish vernacular might not reach beyond the relatively small circle of his admirers' (2000, p.3). Although this use of language is not new (Tony Richardson and John Schlesinger in the sixties and Ken Loach some years later) it was the first time that subtitles were considered as an option for the English-speaking countries. In my opinion, Boyle's directorial team decision to maintain the Scottish accent paves the

[2] The film opens with one shot of this kind, with the camera right on the pavement (a perspective you don't get "naturally") to show us Mark Renton's swift feet.

way to an understanding of 'difference' as one of the keystones for the film, taking the abrogation theory of Ashcroft et al. to its final consequences:

> The abrogation or denial of the privilege of 'English' involves a rejection of the metropolitan power over the means of communication. […] Abrogation is a refusal of the categories of the imperial culture, its aesthetic, its illusory standard of normative or 'correct' usage, and its assumption of a traditional and fixed meaning 'inscribed' in the words (Ashcroft et al. 1989, p.38).

This is a strategy employed in order to reject any kind of centralism or hierarchization attending to language parameters, sanctioning (and privileging) what is 'right' and 'normative' and what is not. By highlighting the linguistic aspect, Welsh and Boyle are giving the first steps in introducing changes in thinking structures determined in the past by colonial and imperialist hierarchies, consequently giving voice to those who were once silenced:

> Texts can employ vernacular as a linguistic variant to signify the insertion of the outsider into the discourse. In the same way, the vernacular appropriates the language for the tasks of constituting new experience and new place (Ashcroft et al. 1989, p.57).

In this sense, if the accent is what calls our attention first, the narrator and main character behind that accent moves away too from the traditional model of an omniscient and reliable narrator. From the very first moment in the film Mark Renton is introduced as a compulsive liar, manipulative and egotistical when compared with his friend Tommy, whose greatest defect according to Renton is that he cannot lie. Thus, both Welsh and Boyle are challenging the formal device of the reliable, omniscient narrative voice as the source of all truth and knowledge and, by extension, of hegemonic

discourse(s), so deeply installed in our societies and questioned systematically in recent years. In the case of *Trainspotting*, readers and viewers will have to take part actively in the construction of meaning of the novel and the film by contrasting not only the stories told by the narrators, but also the different (in some cases opposing) sources of information included simultaneously in the story. This forces the reader or audience to fill in the gap between what we see and what we listen to. That we cannot depend on Mark Renton as a narrator is made clear from the beginning. His addiction to heroin is prioritised for him and, and even more shockingly, with no apparent reason. As Renton argues 'who needs reasons when you've got heroin?' (Hodge 1996, p.5). In the first sequence of the film we can already observe some hints that we are faced with an alternative kind of narrative about life on the margins of society. Leaving aside the sarcastic 'choose life' mantra, I do find the first scenes are some of the best moments of the film visually speaking[3]. The succession of shots (more than forty in a one minute sequence) suggest the frantic life of the characters; the use of 'Lust for Life' by Iggy Pop as the soundtrack acts as a prolepsis for what is to come; the football game gives us clues about the personality of the characters in the film. Scriptwriter John Hodge describes this sequence in the following terms:

> The boys are outclassed by the team with the strip but play much dirtier. As each performs a characteristic bit of play, the play freezes and their name is visible, printed or written on some item of clothing. In Begbie's case, his name appears as a tattoo on his arm. Sick Boy commits a

[3] A good example of opposing discourses in the same sequence: as we listen to Renton repeating the institutionalized discourse of "choosing life" instead of drugs, we watch him running away from two security guards (one of them played by the scriptwriter of the film, John Hodge), a sequence included again by the middle of the film in a narrative loop which foregrounds the relevance of the moment as a turning point in the story.

> sneaky foul and indignantly denies it. Begbie commits an obvious foul and makes no effort to deny it. Spud, in goal, lets the ball in between his legs. Tommy kicks the ball as hard as he can (1996, p.4).

Finally, Renton is hit by a ball, he falls backwards and we see him falling by direct cut onto the floor after smoking some dope, thus introducing an ironic commentary about the effects of narcotics of both football and drugs on society.

The most explicit apology for the use of heroin as a way of life is to be found in the book, where we can read Mark expressing strong political statements, such as 'rehabilitation is the surrender of the flesh' (Welsh 1999, p.181) or in his lucid Lacanian analysis of his drug addiction:

> Ah have oedipal feelings towards ma mother and an attendant unresolved jealousy towards ma faither. Ma junk behaviour is anal in concept, attention-seeking, yes, but instead of withholding the faeces tae rebel against parental authority, ah'm pitting smack intae ma body tae claim power over it vis-à-vis society in general (1999, p.185).

Renton deliberately installs himself on the margins of society, taking the concept of difference to radical extremes. He chooses heroin addiction as his way of life, but he does so in a self-conscious, reflexive way, establishing the difference inside the difference. If the traditional representation of the drug addict is that of the brainless junkie with no capacity to discern, both Welsh and Boyle create a character whose main appeal is his thinking, his fast wit and his use of irony and sarcasm. To illustrate this point with another example from the novel, when Mark is caught stealing books the judge asks him what he wanted those books for. He replies that his intentions were to read them. The judge is incredulous about Mark's knowledge of Kierkegaard to which he answers:

> I'm interested in his concepts of subjectivity and truth and particularly his ideas concerning choice; the notion that genuine choice is made out of doubt and uncertainty, and without recourse to the experience or advice of others. It could be argued, with some justification, that it's primarily a bourgeois, existential philosophy and would therefore seek to undermine collective societal wisdom. However, it's also a liberating philosophy (1999, p.166).

This episode was not included in the film (although we do see Renton in front of a judge) but I think it is revealing not just in order to describe the character but also as a metafictive reference, as the topics mentioned by Renton in this extract are all included in the book in one way or another, namely: 'concepts of subjectivity', 'ideas concerning choice', and a good deal of 'bourgeois, existential philosophy' which 'would seek to undermine collective societal wisdom'. Whether that collective wisdom be Scottish, English or British is a question open to debate.

Another relevant issue is the treatment of gender roles and sexual options in *Trainspotting*. Far from what is the misogynistic and homophobic trend in films dealing with youngsters, Mark Renton is introduced as a character with a special sensibility about personal relationships and sexual tendencies. There are two good examples of this aspect in the film. The first is his meeting with Diane, the only girl in the adaptation with any kind of dramatic weight. She takes the initiative in their first meeting fiercely answering back to Mark's initial approach. When she sees Renton is in a state of shock, she comments ironically:

> The truth is that you're a quiet, sensitive type but if I'm prepared to take a chance I might just get to know the inner you: witty, adventurous, passionate, loving, loyal, a little bit crazy, a little bit bad, but, hey, don't us girls love that?

Mark is speechless when Diane says, 'Well, what's wrong, boy? Cat got your tongue?' and he finally gets into the taxi with Diane but only after the taxi driver asks him if he's getting in or not. From the beginning it's Diane who is setting the rules, to the extent that the morning after, when Mark discovers she is a minor and wants to stop seeing her, she threatens him with going to the police, so that he finally accepts her conditions once more.

Apart from this exchange of gender roles between Diane and Mark, images of what could be considered 'latent' homosexuality are to be found throughout the film, as in the close relationship between Sick Boy and Renton or through their hugs and kisses with Mother Superior, Spud or Sick Boy. However, the most entertaining sequence comes when Mark and the homophobic Begbie are in London. Renton describes his friend's meeting with a transvestite: they are at a disco and as we see Begbie leaving the place with a girl, we listen to Mark's voice over, noting how the world is evolving, 'even men and women are changing'. We follow Begbie and the girl to a car, they start kissing and as we see Begbie realising he's with a transvestite, Mark continues: 'You see, if you ask me, we're heterosexual by default, not by decision. It's just a question of who you fancy.'

Sexual tendencies do not have anything to do with morals, genetics or deviations, it's just a question of choice, although Begbie does not think the same. While we are listening to Mark, we watch Begbie's violent reaction when he discovers this girl is a transvestite. He is a character completely opposed from Renton and he could be described as a parody to the tough man, the central figure of what is known as the Clyde myth. Begbie never takes drugs because they are 'artificial', just a chemical substitute of the 'real thing', alcohol. He is extremely violent too and has everybody terrified: as Mark points

out, while 'some people do drugs, Begbie did people'. When both Mark and Begbie are back at the apartment and Mark dares to suggest the experience with the transvestite could have been wonderful, his friend threatens him with a knife and tells him he will use it if Renton mentions the incident again: 'I'm not a fucking buftie and that's the end of it'.

In the book, there are many more references to homosexuality (pp. 8, 10, 161, 234, 236) and Welsh introduces a whole episode ('Feeling Free' pp. 273-7) about the patriarchal society we live in, narrated by Renton's girlfriend (in the book named Kelly) and with two lesbians coming from New Zealand as protagonists. The episode narrates some word exchange between Kelly and her friend Ali and some 'workies' who whistle at them. The two friends reply and some old women comment about how terrible it is 'lassies talkin like that tae laddies'. Kelly retorts 'Aye, well what aboot *their* language?' (Welsh 1999, p.275) and both friends end up with the couple from New Zealand, smoking hash at Kelly's apartment and tearing men to pieces:

> We slagged off men, agreeing that they are stupid, inadequate and inferior creatures. Ah've never felt so close tae other women before, and I really did wish I was gay. Sometimes I think that all men are good for is the odd shag. Other than that, they can be a real fuckin pain. Mibbe that's crazy, but it's true when you think aboot it. Our problem is, we don't think aboot it that often and jist accept the bullshit these pricks dish oot tae us (Welsh 1999, p.276).

Once again, the issue of accepting or challenging social conventions is highlighted ('our problem is, we don't think aboot it that often and jist accept the bullshit these pricks dish oot tae us'), in this case concerned with gender relations. The episode continues when Mark gets into the apartment and they have a laugh at him:

> *Men* just look so strange, these funny, flat bodies and weird heads [...]. They're freaky looking things that carry their reproductive organs on the outside of their bodies. (Welsh 1999, p.277)

Kelly is just turning the traditional androcentric discourse inside out, although, as she says, Mark 'takes it well though. Just shakes his heid n laughs' (Welsh 1999, p.277).

However, in order to avoid presenting the protagonist as a romanticised, sympathetic version of the rebel, Renton is introduced as a character very difficult to identify with. Apart from his drug addiction, his unreliability as narrator or his selfishness, his positioning as far as his national identity is concerned is also problematic. He inscribes himself into the Scottish nation through language and by a certain conception of friendship as clan: the repeated reference to Begbie as a psycho but also a friend ('so what can you do?' all of his friends say repeatedly) makes us think of Mark's understanding of friendship as if it were out of any other (rational) consideration. By the end of the film he will free himself from such a tight conception of friendship and as a prolepsis of Renton's betrayal, he repudiates Scottish nationalist orthodox assumptions for their simplicity and gets angry with Tommy in one of the most iconic sequences in the film. After a stormy weekend Tommy persuades his urbanite friends into an excursion to the moors. On arrival Spud is the first one in expressing doubts about the idea, 'It's not… normal', he says. Excepting Tommy, they all seem out of place, dislocated in the natural environment which has been traditionally used as one of the identifying features of Scotland; the Highlands, the wilderness and the open spaces. When Tommy asks the question, 'It's the great outdoors. It's fresh air. Doesn't it

make you proud of being Scottish?' this question seems too much for Renton, who answers in rage:

> I hate being Scottish. We're the lowest of the lowest of the fucking low, the scum of the earth, the most wretched, servile, miserable, pathetic trash that was ever shat into civilization. Some people hate the English, but I don't. They're just wankers. We, on the other hand, are colonized by wankers. We can't even pick a decent culture to be colonized by. We're ruled by effete arseholes. It's a shite state of affairs and all the fresh air in the world will not make any fucking difference (Hodge 1996, p.46).

This sequence differs from the events narrated in the book (Welsh 1999, p.78): in this case, Mark is sitting with Begbie and his friends in a bar with a balcony, a moment which is also included in the film to describe Begbie's violent character. However, I consider the protagonist's discourse gains strength in the film, as the great 'Scottish outdoors' offer the perfect setting for the tension between the institutional discourse on Scottish national identity and Mark's feelings. He feels frustrated because he considers the topics shaping his national identity are just that, topics with no political strength, topics concerning themselves only with folklore (the bagpipes, the kilts), sport rivalry (in football, rugby) and picturesque elements to feed the tourist industry (the 'great outdoors'). There are more scornful references throughout the film to tourism and the Edinburgh Festival, perhaps in the line of thinking of Hanif Kureishi who affirms:

> If imperialism is the highest form of capitalism, then tourism is its ghostly afterlife in this form of commercial nostalgia which is sold as 'art' or 'culture' (1988, p.82).

Renton seems to share this view of tourism when he concludes that 'all the fresh air in the world will not make any fucking

difference' (Hodge 1996, p.46). However, we should not leave out the irony about English colonialism in this sequence and the Scots being unable 'to pick a decent culture to be colonized by' as if colonization were a process you can choose. Mark is a clear example of hybridization, understanding the term not as the ideal conjunction of two (or more) identities, but as the site of inner conflict and struggle for understanding. Paraphrasing Robert Young, hybridity is 'an active moment of challenge and resistance against a dominant colonial power' (cited in Ashcroft et al 1998, p.121).

Although this might be a damning indictment, Mark's feelings about his national identity are more fully explored in the novel. The episode included in the film is preceded in the novel by a reference to Frank Begbie, Renton's violent friend:

> Ah hate cunts like that. Cunts like Begbie. Cunts that are intae baseball-batting every fucker that's different; pakis, poofs, n what huv ye. Fuckin failures in a country of failures (Welsh 1999, p.78).

Frank Begbie (meaningfully nicknamed Franco after the Spanish dictator) incarnates, as alluded to above, the myth of the Clyde; a tough, hard-drinker macho-man always ready for a good fight. 'Clydesidism' can be seen as an answer to the other two archetypal 'discursive positions' (Colin McArthur 68) of Scotland, 'Kailyard' and 'Tartanry', and may be understood as the Scottish 20th century myth par excellence. It is another romantic representation of Scotland, although in this case it is an urban one:

> Shipbuilding was to remain a matter of great cultural pride in the west of Scotland, and the epithet 'Clyde-built' became as applicable to a particular kind of hard-living, hard-drinking, working-class masculinity immortalised in numerous novels, plays and films (Petrie 2000, p.80).

When the industrial recession hit Scotland after World War II many shipbuilders had to close down and the proud worker became 'associated more with violence and criminality than hard work and "rough" leisure pursuits' (Petrie 2000, p.80). It might be argued that Renton hates Begbie and the kind of stereotypical masculinity he stands for.

Mark is furious at these right-wing, nationalist, racist, violent, reductionist and over idealised images of his country. There are also attacks against Scotland as taking part of the British state and, in Tom Nairn's words, the 'formidable energies poured [by our Scottish] intelligentsia […] in formulating the new national and imperial culture-community [centred on London]' (cited in Petrie 2000, p.20). This is evident when Mark tells us about his brother's funeral, a soldier killed in Northern Ireland:

> Ah cannae feel remorse, only anger and contempt. Ah seethed when ah saw that fuckin Union Jack oan his coffin. [...]. They're fill ay shite aboot how he died in the service ay his country n aw that servile Hun crap. Billy was a silly cunt, pure and simple. No a hero, no a martyr, jist a daft cunt. [...]. He died a hero they sais. [...]. In fact, he died a spare prick in a uniform, walking along a country road wi a rifle in his hand. He died an ignorant victim ay imperialism, understanding fuck all about the myriad circumstances which led tae his death. That wis the biggest crime, he understood fuck all about it. Aw he had tae guide um through this great adventure in Ireland, which led to his death, wis a few vaguely formed sectarian sentiments (Welsh 1999, pp.209-210).

We learn that Mark's family is divided: his mother's side, Scottish Nationalists; his father's, Loyalists. And Mark's contempt for both sides is manifest: 'Ah come fae some stock, right enough. Ayesur papish bastards oan ma Ma's side, soapdodging orange cunts oan ma faither's' (Welsh 1999, p.218). Once again, in case we sympathise with Mark's positioning about his national identity, there

comes right in the same episode the moment in which he has sex with his brother's wife who is pregnant and drunk, at the funeral ceremony, a scene too hard to be included in the film.

We may affirm that *Trainspotting* the film includes most of the issues present in the novel if only in a reduced scale and after a process of commodification, as there are some questions (in particular, those related to drug abuse and politics about national identity) which would not find their way into a film production, depending as they do on external public funding. In this sense, the term 'independent' has been largely questioned in recent years when related to financial matters, as there is no filmmaker who does not 'depend' on other people's money, be it from TV channels, inter/national film festivals or local companies. As Peter Todd notes:

> Barbara Kopple, David Lynch and Spike Lee all received funding early in their careers from organisations such as the American Film Institute and New York State Council of the Arts. Hollywood looks on the American independents festival, Sundance, as a source of new talent and product (2000, p.24).

Thus, attention should be paid to form and content in order to determine if a film may be labelled as independent or alternative to hegemonic cinematographic narrations. Although this is not the place to analyse *Trainspotting* from this perspective, suffice to say that the film combines numerous characteristics of what could be understood as an independent production.

What is lacking in the film is the treatment of the character Spud who is stripped of his post-colonial importance from the book and reduced to a buffoon with little prominence in the film. He is in charge of the narration of several episodes, such as the one included in 'Speedy Recruitment' (pp.65-66), 'Traditional Sunday Breakfast' (pp.91-94) or 'Strolling Through the Meadows' (pp.153-161),

although it is the one titled 'Na Na and Other Nazis' (pp.119-129) where we get to know more about him. He comes from a dysfunctional family: Na Na, his grandmother, had "eight bairns by five different men, ken" (Welsh 1999, p.124); his family is ethnically mixed: Uncle Dode is 'likesay half-caste, the son ay a West Indian sailor' (1999, p.125). He is concerned about racism in society, in particular when he 'began to suss the kinday abuse [Uncle Dode] wis takin, at school n in the streets n aw that' (1999, p.126) and he is very critical of the extended belief that it is always other communities that are the racist ones: 'Ah sortay laugh whin some cats say that racism's an English thing and we're aw Jock Tamson's bairns up here' (1999, p.126). He points out the power relations and the institutional violence that racism provokes: 'thirs nothing like a darker skin tone tae increase the vigilance ay the police n the magistrates' (1999, p.126). Spud continues by describing the aggression he suffers while watching the annual march by 'these Orange cats fi the wild west [who], it has to be said, have never really bothered us [though] ah cannae take tae them' (1999, p.127). The episode ends with Spud and his uncle severely beaten up by some neo-nazis.

The discursive articulation of the film (the fragmentation, the narrative voice, intertextual references, metafictive devices, fantastic elements) is in perfect accordance with that of the book, something which pleased Irvine Welsh:

> I would have been disappointed if [the film] had been a kind of worthy piece of social realism. I think there's more to it than that. [...]. To see it as just a kind of reaction to social oppression, to social circumstances, is to rip some of the soul out of it and to make the characters into victims. I don't think that they really are. I think that they're people whose ideals and ambitions perhaps outstrip what society has to offer them, but I

> think they've got great strength in spite of that (cited in Hodge 1996, pp.118-9)

The final balance is definitely positive since *Trainspotting* proves to be a complex and multilayered film that addresses a variety of interests for a wide audience who may enjoy the movie for its entertaining qualities while also delving into deeper socio-cultural and political issues in contemporary urban Scotland.

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Motion and Agency in Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*

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As a young man, Robert Louis Stevenson described an occasion on which his thoughtless interference in an ant colony led to contemplations

> of how close we are environed with frail lives, so that we can do nothing without spreading havoc over all manner of perishable homes and interests and affections (Booth & Mehew, eds. 1994-1995, vol. 2, p.10).

Perhaps unsurprisingly, these reflections contributed to Stevenson's

> favourite mood of an holy terror for all action and all inaction equally — a sort of shuddering revulsion from the necessary responsibilities of life (Booth & Mehew, eds. 1994-1995, vol. 2, p.10).

However, ten years later, the victim of almost perpetual ill health, he lamented, 'I am condemned to a complete inaction, stagnate dismally, and love a letter' (Booth & Mehew, eds. 1994-1995, vol. 4, p.258). By October of 1885, a maturing Stevenson could affirm to William Archer that his own theory was 'that literature must always be most at home in treating movement and change; hence I look for them' (Booth & Mehew, eds. 1994-1995, vol. 5, p.143). Clearly, Stevenson desired — in literature as in life — to delegate a central role to motion as a practical ideal as well as a theoretical concept.

This paper will investigate the author's basis for literary heroism — whether the realisation of heroism for Stevenson's maturing protagonists is based in part upon an achievement of agency through motion. In other words, whether, for Stevenson,

heroism within the *bildungsroman* is defined by a protagonist's heightened ability to conceive of and execute ethical motion within the context of his adventures. The term *ethical* is important here (although hardly unproblematic) because it denotes a mathematical idea of velocity — motion in a specific direction. Stevenson, after all, came from a family of engineers.

In his biography of Stevenson, G. K. Chesterton observed that the author was not in the habit of committing

> murders without knowing it, in the manner of our more subconscious criminals and maniacs in modern fiction. He was not in sympathy with those more recent heroes who seem to seduce and betray and even stab in a sort of prolonged fit of absence of mind (1927, p.222).

Nor did he allow his protagonists to achieve any goal of significance by aimless wandering, for such is the territory of roving villains and anti-heroes, such as Long John Silver and *The Master of Ballantrae's* (1889) James Durie. Yet in *Treasure Island* (1883) Jim Hawkins does not recapture the *Hispaniola* by mistake. Likewise, in *The Black Arrow* (1888), Richard Shelton's battle tactics may be rash, but they are never accidental. If time permitted, similar arguments could be made for the actions of David Balfour of *Kidnapped* (1886), and Monsieur St. Ives in the novel bearing that surname (1898). All of these characters demonstrate a sense of movement. But if we can conclude that, for Stevenson's protagonists, the quest is not achieved by accident but rather through conscious ethical motion, is such motion necessary to their eventual realisations of heroism? If so, then does this realisation essentially invalidate the enormously popular critical conception of Stevenson's young protagonists as static characters — simplistic, unreliable, and amoral? The following case study examines the *bildungsroman* journey of young Jim Hawkins, the

protagonist of *Treasure Island*, in order to reach answers to these questions.

Due to its extraordinary popular appeal, *Treasure Island* has remained Stevenson's most translated work for over a century and has received much critical acclaim as an adventure story (Hubbard 2007, p.17). However, in a similar vein to many other critics, Robert Kiely argues that *Treasure Island* and certain of the *New Arabian Nights* (1882), 'are exquisite and captivating shells, beautifully contrived, a pleasure to behold, but brittle, insubstantial, and irrelevant' (1964, p.261). Yet a close reading of the text demonstrates that as a novel *Treasure Island* is neither 'insubstantial' nor 'irrelevant' within Stevenson's oeuvre. It is true that when Stevenson first embarked upon writing *Treasure Island*, he wrote that this was a story with 'no need for psychology or fine writing', but later he seems to have changed his mind (1922a, p.xxii). Indeed, after the original version of the story was serialised in *Young Folks*,[1] Stevenson decided to 're-write *Treasure Island* in the whole latter part, lightening and *siccating* throughout' for publication in book form (Booth & Mehew, 1994-1995, vol. 3, p.276). In his article 'Youth on the Prow: The First Publication of *Treasure Island*', David Angus provides an insightful comparison of the periodical and later print versions, pointing out that

> the conscious artist in Stevenson (an enormous part of him) was simply forced to take over, mayhap, and to provide an 'older' approach, a more responsible attitude altogether (1990, p.98).

Indeed, it seems that Stevenson's revision of the *Treasure Island* manuscript for book publication demonstrates that at some point he

[1] The story was serialized in *Young Folks*, under the pseudonym of Captain George North, from October 1881 through January 1882, then revised for publication in book form in 1883.

was overtaken by his lifelong preoccupation with finely crafted narrative and psychologically nuanced characters. That is, the original 'awful fun' boy's story came to be imbued with more of the author's typical depth (Booth & Mehew, 1994-1995, vol. 3, p.225). He would later write to his friend W. E. Henley that

> I do desire a book of adventure — a romance — and no man will get or write me one. [. . .] I want to hear swords clash. I want a book to begin in a good way; a book, I guess, like *Treasure Island*, alas! (Booth & Mehew, 1994-1995, vol. 4, p.307).

The very fact that Stevenson, the famously severe critic and consummate aesthete, should assign such a high value to any book, especially his own, is noteworthy. Thus, it seems that the novel can hardly be considered as 'naïve' as many critics would like to categorise it. Equally important to the analysis of motion as it relates to the heroism of Stevenson's *bildungsroman* is Angus' assertion that, for the most part, the pirates of *Treasure Island*

> came out pretty much unchanged in the book. It was the heroes, not the villains, that caused R.L.S. furiously to labor over his revisions (1990, p.97).

Stevenson's determination to perfect Jim Hawkins and Doctor Livesey in particular — the primary protagonist/narrator and secondary narrator — reveals his attention to the specifics of his protagonists' heroic endeavours. Thus, *Treasure Island* proves an especially helpful text for this investigation.

At the beginning of the novel, Jim Hawkins is an average adolescent boy — curious, eager for adventure and noticeably timid of the 'tall, strong, heavy, nut-brown man' with 'a soiled blue coat', 'ragged and scarred hands', and a 'sabre-cut across one cheek' who appears at the Admiral Benbow inn (Stevenson 1922b, p.21). Jim's

only recorded movements in regards to Billy Bones are those which fulfil the 'Captain's' orders: he serves the man rum, observes silence when Bones is drunk, and stays on the lookout for the dreaded 'seafaring man with one leg' (Stevenson 1922b, p.14). At this early point in the story, Jim's motion does not appear to be self-determined. Thus, when Black Dog appears at the inn, it is the pirate who determines Jim's actions: Jim reports that Black Dog 'motioned me to draw near' (Stevenson 1922b, p.21). Likewise, after delivering the black spot, Pew, the terrifying blind pirate

> suddenly left hold of me, and, with incredible accuracy and nimbleness, skipped out of the parlour and into the road, where, as I still stood motionless, I could hear his stick go tap-tap-tapping into the distance (Stevenson 1922b, p.37).

Quite noticeably, the early portion of this adventure is marked by passivity on the part of Jim whilst the agents of villainy — here symbolised by Black Dog and Pew — are characterised by action. This serves to set the scene so that while

> in the early chapters he [Jim] is a lucky boy who is on the spot through no particular doing of his own,' later 'having taken charge, he makes his own luck and forces the development of events (Hardesty *et al.* 1986, p.5).

Indeed, the first glimmer of initiative that we see in Jim takes place after Billy Bones has been issued the black spot and fallen dead. Since Jim and his mother know that the pirates will be returning later that night, they walk to the nearest hamlet to recruit help for the defence of the inn. However, their neighbours prove useless for any such task, causing Jim's shocked comment that

> you would have thought men would have been ashamed of themselves — no soul would consent to return with us to the 'Admiral Benbow' (Stevenson 1922b, p.40).

Despite their best attempts at persuasion, the Hawkins' only success is to have a messenger dispatched to Dr. Livesey in search of armed assistance. This experience awakens Jim to the realisation that 'cowardice is infectious; but then, argument is, on the other hand, a great emboldener' (Stevenson 1922b, p.41), an insight which will prove prophetic in the latter half of the novel. At this stage, however, Jim has perceived the need for action and found courage by attempting to persuade necessary measures to be taken by conventionally 'able' characters — the grown men. Yet it is still early in Jim's quest, and he shows himself unable to follow through with any major heroic movement, both physically, because of his age, and psychologically, because he lacks maturity and experience. Thus, he hides from the pirates who ransack the Admiral Benbow, for although, in Jim's own words:

> my curiosity, in a sense, was stronger than my fear [. . .] I could not remain where I was, but crept back to the bank again, whence, sheltering my head behind a bush of broom, I might command the road before our door (Stevenson 1922b, p.48).

Significantly, these are the very same pirates whom Jim will later actively oppose. However, although Jim possesses psychological and emotional courage even at this early phase of the *bildungsroman* — after all, he does help his mother to safety when she faints, rather than abandoning her to in order put more distance between himself and the pirates — he lacks the agency to act upon the situation in an ethical manner. Indeed, it is the pirates' own inability to initiate movement which prevents them from recovering the map: after realizing that it has been lifted from Bones' sea chest, they fall to quarrelling rather than searching for the Hawkins', inaction for which Pew accuses them of lacking 'the pluck of a weevil in a

biscuit' (Stevenson 1922b, p.51). Meanwhile an older, narrating Jim takes the opportunity to assert that this argument was 'the saving of us' (Stevenson 1922b, p.52), for it allows the necessary time for Supervisor Dance and the revenue officers to reach the Admiral Benbow, thus frightening away the avaricious buccaneers.

As the story progresses, it is important to note the distinct physical motion with which Dr. Livesey invites Jim to join the story's principle law-abiding adult characters in opening the oilskin packet containing Billy Bones' map:

> The squire and I were both peering over his shoulder as he opened [the packet], for Dr. Livesey had kindly motioned me to come round from the side-table, where I had been eating, to enjoy the sport of the search (Stevenson 1922b, p.60).

This is a crucial moment for Jim, when the doctor's invitation signals a sort of initiation or rite of passage as young Hawkins embarks upon the transition from youth to adulthood — a passage which will be marked by Jim's heightened ability to claim agency within his threatening surroundings. Moreover, Stevenson's use of the term *sport* in relation to the impending adventures surrounding the map could be interpreted as retaining latent physical connotations of motion.

The next major phase in Jim's development as a *bildungsroman* protagonist begins with his fortuitous discovery of the pirates' plan to mutiny, which he overhears whilst concealed from sight in the bottom of an apple barrel. After Jim reports his discovery to Captain Smolett, Squire Trelawney, and Dr. Livesey, they express a desire that he should act as a mole amongst Long John Silver's men, since the pirates are accustomed to him and will not find his presence suspicious. Jim admits:

> I began to feel pretty desperate at this, for I felt altogether helpless; and yet, by an odd train of circumstances, it was indeed through me that safety came (Stevenson 1922b, p.114).

This comment is especially relevant to any discussion concerning the 'static protagonist' idea, because a confession by Stevenson's heroes of feeling inadequate often seems to lead to a rather naïve, if unfortunately widespread, critical deduction of their actually being inadequate. Edwin Eigner certainly exemplifies this idea with his statement that

> the first and the last thing to note about Stevenson's characters is that they usually fail in life. There is scarcely a full-blooded success in the lot of them (1966, p.47).

Eigner also maintains that, for Stevenson, 'the only action that can come from good seems to be the act of resignation from life' (1966, p.127). Yet the states of being and feeling are hardly identical, as Stevenson's foreshadowing in the previously quoted passage demonstrates. Indeed, only a few pages after Jim has voiced these anxieties, he discloses that 'there came into my head the first of the mad notions that contributed so much to save our lives' (Stevenson 1922b, p.123). In this context, Jim's 'notions' transmute easily to motions, since action is always at the very heart of Hawkins' plans. The idea to which he is referring here is that of going ashore with the pirates in boats, whilst the remainder of the loyal crew stay aboard the *Hispaniola*.

After leaving the ship, as soon as Jim's boat touched the island's shore, he 'caught a branch and swung [himself] out, and plunged into the nearest thicket', totally disregarding Silver's order to stay. Jim reports that he 'paid [Silver] no heed; jumping, ducking, and breaking through, [he] ran straight before [his] nose, till [he] could run no longer' (Stevenson 1922b, p.124). These deliberately

chronicled movements end up saving his life. Alternatively, characters who find themselves unable to actively resist villainy often suffer, even to the point of death. A good example of this is Tom, an honest crewman from the *Hispanolia* who possesses the moral determination to resist Silver's pressure to turn traitor but who lacks the agency to physically do so. He is brutally killed by Silver and lays 'motionless upon the sward' while his 'murderer minded him not a whit, cleansing his blood-stained knife the while upon a wisp of grass' (Stevenson 1922b, p.130-131). After witnessing the murder from a hiding place, Jim recalls how 'I ran as I never ran before' (Stevenson 1922b, p.131), thus demonstrating his realisation that purposeful movement away from evil is essential to survival on Treasure Island.

Although at this point in the story Jim has achieved some degree of agency for motion, he has yet to demonstrate conscious and ethical action, which is established throughout Stevenson's fiction as the basis for heroism in a protagonist. Noticeably, soon after fleeing Silver, Jim remembers that he possesses the implements with which to take action (i.e. pistols): 'As soon as I remembered I was not defenceless, courage glowed again in my heart' (Stevenson 1922b, p.134). He has witnessed his ability to survive by moving away from danger, and now he is beginning to comprehend his own aptitude for taking initiative. Nevertheless, Stevenson refuses to present a world of simple morality for his protagonist. Thus, we know that Jim's envy of the doctor's errand into the forest is 'not by any means so right' (Stevenson 1922b, p.197), but it does open the way to useful, and even ethical, motion. Jim plans to sneak away from the stockade and find Ben Gunn's boat, an escapade which eventually leads to the re-capture of the *Hispaniola*. Jim acknowledges that leaving

> when nobody was watching [. . .] was so bad a way of doing it as made the thing itself wrong. But I was only a boy, and I had made my mind up (Stevenson 1922b, p.198).

Just as Jim freely admits his own morally ambiguous motives, so he owns that

> I was a fool, if you like, and certainly I was going to do a foolish, over-bold act, but I was determined to do it with all the precautions in my power (Stevenson 1922b, p.197-198).

With statements such as this, the adult Jim reminds us of the protagonist's youthfulness, but this is never used as an excuse for his decisions. That is, Stevenson never hints that Jim is ethically unaware or inculpable; in other words, Jim is not amoral. Nevertheless, readers are naturally lenient towards him precisely because he is in the midst of the maturing process — his perception of danger and realisation of the need for action is stronger than his cognitive ability to weigh up risk. Yet this weakness is also his strength, for, ultimately, as Hardesty *et al.* point out, 'what defeats the pirates is Jim's venturesome, youthful strategy' (1986, p.10).

The 'venturesome, youthful strategy' is the very thing which emboldens Jim to take Ben Gunn's flimsy coracle out to the *Hispaniola*. Upon reaching the schooner, he reports that;

> my hands came across a light cord that was trailing overboard across the stern bulwarks. Instantly I grasped it.
>
> Why I should have done so I can hardly say. At first it was mere instinct; but once I had it in my hands and found it fast, curiosity began to get the upper hand, and I determined I should have one look through the cabin window (Stevenson 1922b, p.207-208).

Here, Jim's action goes from being merely instinctive to being the product of volition, which allows him to accomplish his mission: cutting the schooner away from its anchor. This done, he continues journeying steadily toward the achievement of heroism, despite encountering moments of frailty, such as when he realises that his path to shore is blocked by treacherous rocks and unfamiliar animals, and records that he 'felt willing rather to starve at sea then to confront such perils' (Stevenson 1922b, p.212). Yet when the coracle fills with seawater, he bales it out, 'moving with all care' (Stevenson 1922b, p.213-214), while his plan to paddle toward land in the smoother areas of water is, 'no sooner thought upon than done' (Stevenson 1922b, p.214). When the morning light reveals him to be close to the drifting *Hispaniola*, Jim hatches a bold plan to retake the schooner:

> The scheme had an air of adventure that inspired me, and the thought of the water-breaker beside the fore companion doubled my growing courage (Stevenson 1922b, p.216).

Once aboard the schooner, the morality of his actions becomes even more apparent — he throws the pirate flag overboard and helps to bind up Israel Hands' wound (Stevenson 1922b, p.223-225). Indeed, it is also worth noting that Jim refuses to partake in what he believes to be immoral action — namely, tossing O'Brien's body into the water at Hands' suggestion (Stevenson 1922b, p.227-228).

After Hands has helped sail the *Hispaniola* to the North Inlet, the pirate attacks Jim with a dagger, but Jim eludes him — partly because he can play and dominate 'a boy's game' of dodging one's opponent (Stevenson 1922b, p.235). After a violent lurch of the ship knocks the two opponents off their feet, Jim takes immediate action:

> quick as thought, I sprang into the mizzen shrouds, rattled up hand over hand, and did not draw a breath till I was seated on the cross-trees [. . . where] I lost no time in changing the priming of my pistol (Stevenson 1922b, p.236).

Hands chases Jim and, following a brief standoff, throws a dagger at him, pinning the boy's shoulder to the mast. Jim's account of what happens next is fascinating:

> in the horrid pain and surprise of the moment — I scarce can say it was by my own volition, and I am sure it was without a conscious aim — both my pistols went off, and both escaped out of my hands (Stevenson 1922b, p.238).

Although Jim claims that his killing of Hands is subconscious — indeed, almost accidental — it is important to consider this assertion within the context of the book. Two things are noteworthy here. The first is that Jim's account, as we learn from its opening lines, is presumably an official document written at the request of prominent public figures, and therefore liable to be widely circulated. Thus, like Supervisor Dance earlier in the novel (Stevenson 1922b, p.55), Jim is understandably keen to exonerate himself from any guilt associated with manslaughter — even when the dead man is a pirate and the killing a seemingly clear case of self-defence. Second, we are given to understand from the adult narrator that, 'I was no sooner certain of [Hands' death] than I began to feel sick, faint, and terrified' (Stevenson 1922b, p.239), a reasonable reaction, especially when coupled with the observation that at the time Jim's psychological sufferings are worse than the physical pain of Hands' knife in his shoulder (Stevenson 1922b, p.241). Thus, it is also possible that the grown Jim is uncertain of how to explain the shock caused by psychological trauma to his boyish self.

Regardless of the rationale behind Jim's claim that Israel Hands' killing was inadvertent, the conscious motion involved with recapturing the ship and the battle with Hands has certainly changed the boy, and there is an underlying pathos in his admission that he can deal with O'Brien's body now that 'the habit of tragical adventures had worn off almost all my terror for the dead' (Stevenson 1922b, p.241). This action does not prove that Jim has suddenly abandoned his ethical code — only that he has encountered a revelation in the 'tragical' experience of adventure. With maturity comes the realisation that moral issues are not always as clear as we would like them to be, and sometimes an ethical decision involves choosing the lesser of two evils. Thus, Jim elects to favour the living over the dead — his action of throwing O'Brien's body overboard foregoes the opportunity to provide a proper funeral, but cleanses the ship of a contaminating presence, both literally and metaphorically.

After the recapture of the *Hispaniola*, Jim's adventures continue, as does his increasingly heroic behaviour — although in Stevenson's writing ideas of 'heroism' are invariably problematised. Christopher Parkes argues that, in *Treasure Island*, Jim Hawkins 'emerges an image of a heroic civil servant' (2006, p.332), but this is certainly something of a simplified picture. After all, by the novel's end Jim has single-handedly killed another man and been party to the marooning of three others — hardly the respectable behaviour of any conscientious civil servant, heroic or otherwise. Yet Parkes lucidly points out that, for Stevenson, 'the settled world may be respectable but with too much respectability comes a lack of heroism' (2006, p.337-338). In Stevenson's best fiction, the uncomfortable side of heroism, which might repulse polite society, comes glaringly to the forefront. Indeed, nothing could be more wrong then Kiely's comment that 'death in *Treasure Island* is quick,

clean, and above all, efficient for the rapid advancement of the plot' (1964, p.74). Some critics have even attributed Stevenson's substantial re-writing of Dr. Livesey for the story's publication in book form to his being 'toned down' because 'the ethic of the adolescent adventure novel requires heroism to be demonstrated and not merely insisted upon' (Hardesty *et al.*, 1986, p.7). Even in the final version, we find, as the story progresses, that Dr. Livesey's

> is a too intellectual style of play against opponents as desperate as Silver and his crew. Jim, on the other hand, plays a more adventurous, romantic game, emphasizing the offensive and relying on unexpected gambits such as stealing the ship back from the pirates (Hardesty *et al.* 1986, p.10).

Heroism in Stevenson's *bildungsroman* is anything but tidy, but it is this very rawness which haunts Stevenson's fiction in the best romance tradition.

Indeed, as the end of the novel approaches, even Long John Silver believes (or at least claims to believe) that Jim is 'more a man than any pair of rats of you [pirates]' (Stevenson 1922b, p.258). In other words, the tables have been turned — the boy who once hid in fear from the pirates ends up conquering them, both physically, as demonstrated by the stand-off with Hands, and psychologically. Perhaps nowhere is Jim's psychological agency better demonstrated than by his fiery speech to the pirates who have captured him at the stockade, which also invites reading as a catalogue of the boy's increasingly heroic movements:

> here you are, in a bad way: ship lost, treasure lost, men lost; your whole business gone to wreck; and if you want to know who did it — it was I! I was in the apple barrel the night we sighted land, and I heard you, John, and you, Dick Johnson, an Hands, who is now at the bottom of the sea, and told every word you said before the hour

> was out. And as for the schooner, it was I who cut her cable, and it was I that killed the men you had aboard of her, and it was I who brought her to where you'll never see her more, not one of you. The laugh's on my side; I've had the top of this business from the first; I no more fear you than I fear a fly (Stevenson 1922b, p.255-256).

Despite the fact that Jim does express some lingering trepidation of the pirates to Doctor Livesey in private, the very fact that this *bildungsroman* has progressed so far that a boy who a few months earlier hid in the bushes while pirates ransacked his home can now face them with such defiance is enormously significant. Jim's innocence at the outset of the story has been replaced with an experience achieved through ethical motion — motion which has proved crucial both to his survival and his attainment of heroism, but will inevitably haunt his dreams when the *Hispaniola* has sailed away from Treasure Island forever.

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Strands of Politics in the Poetry of Sorley MacLean: Exploring the Symbol of the Skye Stallion in a Scottish and European Context

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In the late 1930s the pubs on Rose Street in Edinburgh (such as Milnes and the Abbotsford Bar) were a hotbed of political and literary debate among the Scottish literati. The poets who frequented these pubs became known as the 'Little Kremlin' such was their reputation as advocates of Soviet ideas. The Gaelic poet, Sorley MacLean, was at the centre of many of these meetings and MacLean's long political poem, 'An Cuilithionn', which weaves the local symbols of his own native landscape of Skye into a European, and indeed, worldwide, context, could be viewed as the product of MacLean's political development during this time. 'An Cuilithionn' was composed in 1939, in seven parts, with MacLean envisioning himself standing on the peaks of the mountain, looking out from Skye to the whole of Europe. This essay demonstrates three points: the reality of MacLean's political understanding of events in Europe; the fact that locally based 'Gaelic' symbols in 'An Cuilithionn' have a Socialist dimension; and the likelihood that MacLean's poetry during the late 1930s interacted with his political ideals to the point of becoming almost inseparable.

Correspondence Between MacLean and Young

In Iain Crichton Smith's 1973 essay, 'The Poetry of Sorley MacLean', Iain Crichton Smith asserted that, 'there is no evidence of much other than emotional commitment [to Communism].' He

added, 'In this he is unlike MacDiarmid who does give the impression that he has actually *read* some of the texts.'(1973, p.39). However, MacLean's correspondence to Douglas Young, the eminent Classicist and one of the father-figures of the Modern Scottish Literary Renaissance, proves otherwise. These letters, which are contemporary with 'An Cuilithionn', include discussion of Marxist texts and various political theories. Even before the letters are considered, MacLean shows he has thought deeply about Marxist philosophy in relation to 'An Cuilithionn', writing in the introduction to the poem that 'The first two parts of the poem were made by June 1939, when I was closest to Communism, although I never accepted the whole of Marxist philosophy, as I could never resolve the idealist-materialist argument.' (1999, p.63). Unlike Douglas Young, who, as a Scottish nationalist, resisted conscription during WWII, MacLean signed up to the army because his hate of fascism overrode any Communist principles he held. He wrote to Young early on in the war:

> I am full of sorrow that I should not be with you and Hay rather than with the people I am with but I cannot. I loathe and fear the Nazis and fear is the more dynamic emotion than contempt (National Library of Scotland, Acc 6419, Box 38b).[1]

In other words, he did not take this decision lightly. On the 1st October 1940 MacLean argued out his case to Young:

> As for my conscience, well! Am I being a traitor to Scotland and more so to the class struggle? Am I just in the army because I haven't the courage to object? All I can say is that I have such an instinctive loathing and fear of Nazism and such a distrust of its demagogy that I

[1] I would like to thank the Trustees of the National Library of Scotland for permission to publish extracts from the Sorley MacLean-Douglas Young correspondence.

> cannot accept for myself the [?] of refusing to resist it even with the co-operation of English imperialist capitalism (Acc 6419 Box 38b).

To a certain extent, a development in MacLean's belief system can be viewed. During his university days, MacLean was preoccupied with an idealistic form of socialism centred on a Promethean ideal (Acc 6419 Box 38b), but by this point his ideas had moved towards a dilemma of whether it was better to be a man of action or inaction. Many years after the war MacLean wrote in an essay that:

> Ian Lom's famous words to Alastair MacDonald "You do the fighting and I'll do the praising" I consider disgusting, however expedient they might have been to the exigencies of the situation, and however wise they might have been in the long run. I could not have been an Ian Lom at Inverlochy or an Auden in America in 1939 (1985, p.12).

In the early 1940s MacLean and others did not have the information that is now available about Stalin and Soviet atrocities. While 'An Cuilithionn' deals with issues which are universal and relevant to any time or place irrespective of specific politics, making the poem still meaningful to modern readers, it is perhaps inevitable that MacLean would become embarrassed by some of his opinions from this period of his work. However, in the late 1930s, MacLean put his faith in the Soviet power because he viewed it as the strongest force against Fascism as well as being an intellectual power to challenge what he viewed as the capitalist and colonial powers of the West. He wrote to Young:

> The Bolshevik achievement in the past twenty years must be unparalleled morally, just as it is perhaps unparalleled physically. It is I think the [sic] by far the greatest thing hitherto recorded in history that the courage, self-sacrifice and achievement of a non-theistic, non pie-in-the-sky humanist optimism should

> completely overshadow the German inferiority complex neurosis and all other myths (Acc 6419 Box 38b).

MacLean's hope and faith in Communism remains steadfast throughout his service in the British army. On 3rd August 1941 he wrote to Young:

> The most desirable result would be that Britain and Germany should smack one another and enable Russia to impose Communism on Europe. I have not lost my belief that Jo [Stalin] and Dimitrov have done all that is possible for socialism but I never thought they were omnipotent...The British empire is relatively a ramshackle business and would dissolve of itself. The only positive progressive forces that I can see are Russia and China (Acc 6419 Box 38b).

While MacLean's opinion of Stalin changed considerably – he wrote in his introduction to 'An Cuilithionn' that 'the behaviour of the Russian Government to the Polish insurrection in 1944 made me politically as well as aesthetically disgusted with most of it.'(1999, p.63) – his faith in the concept of a 'Red Army' did not alter. This is why the Red Army is referred to in the published version of 'An Cuilithionn' but all mentions of Stalin that were present in the manuscript of 'An Cuilithionn' have been excised. In November 1941 MacLean is still hopeful that the influence of the Red Army will spread across Europe. He wrote to Young in November 1941:

> To me, now as before, everything depends on the Red Army. I want their victory [...] and if the Red Army holds out I think there will be many Red armies (Acc 6419 Box 38b).

His feelings here are connected to what he says in 'An Cuilithionn'. In Part I of the poem he writes:

> 'S gus an tig an t-Arm Dearg còmhla
> le caismeachd tarsainn na Roinn-Eòrpa
> drùidhidh iorram na truaighe
> air mo cridhe 's ir mo bhuadhan. (1999, p.74).
>
> *[And until the whole Red Army comes*
> *battle-marching across Europe,*
> *that song of wretchedness will seep*
> *into my heart and my senses]* (1999, p.75).[2]

For MacLean, the Red Army symbolises energy, hope and a sense of movement, despite the negative connotations which would later become attached to the Red Army after Soviet atrocities became more widely known. Energy reverberates throughout 'An Cuilithionn' and is perhaps best exhibited in MacLean's symbol of the Skye Stallion, which holds the same sense of hope that MacLean equates with the Red Army in his letters to Young. The Stallion appears as a symbol of MacLean's own local landscape of Skye (it is a topographical feature in Waternish, Skye, although far removed from the Cuillin itself). The Stallion then becomes more universal as the poem progresses, emerging from the depths of the landscape before ascending to the heights of the Cuillin. He is associated with the sea and is rugged in appearance due to actually being a representation of the great sea-cliff of Waternish. MacLean makes this clear in the manuscript of the English translation in a footnote – 'The Stallion or wild Stallion is the magnificent sea-cliff at Waterstein used as a symbol of the heroic conception of Skye in Scotland.'(MS 29559, f.15). By the time 'An Cuilithionn' was published the footnote had been removed but it is clear from the descriptions of the animal as 'rocky' and 'craggy' that the Stallion is a part of the landscape which has taken on a life of its own:

[2] All translations are by Sorley MacLean

Bha roghainn nan each móra creagach
a' bocail air Sgurr a' Ghreadaidh,
leum an Eist mhór fhiadhaich
tarsainn iomallan nan crìochan; (1999, p.96).

[The choice of the big craggy horses
was bounding on Sgurr a' Ghreadaidh,
the great wild Eist leaped
across the utmost bounds of the land;] (1999, p.97).

The symbol of the Stallion is most pronounced in Part V but he has already been mentioned before this. In Part III MacLean connects the Stallion to the events in Glendale and Braes where the people rose up to challenge the authority of the landowners – it was an inspiring event during an oppressive period of Highland history and for this reason the power and energy of the Stallion is a fitting symbol. However, MacLean shows that more events such as the Battle of the Braes are needed if the Stallion is to rise up from oppression and impotency and reach his full power. MacLean shows that history has not been kind to his people and that it is only now, at the time of composing 'An Cuilithionn', that the Stallion can rise up to his full strength due to the presence of Communism which is moving across Europe. The symbol of heroism has been heard of in Braes and Glendale but apart from this MacLean hints that the Stallion is largely unheard of in other parts of Scotland and that it is from other countries that it must emerge:

An deach innse dha na Dalaich
mar thachair dhan each lùthmhor allail?
An deach innse anns a' Bhràighe
dìol an ainmhidh mheanmnaich làidir?
Chualas anns an Ruis 's 's na h-Innsean
san Fhraing 's le muillionan na Sìne,
ach cha d' ràinig am fios Alba, (1999, p.88).

[*Have the Dale men been told*
of the fate of the powerful renowned horse?

Has there been told in Braes
the fate of the mettlesome strong horse?
It has been heard in Russia and in India,
in France and by the millions of China;
but the news has not reached Scotland,] (1999, p.89)

This stanza is the strongest indication that the Stallion not only symbolises heroism for MacLean, but a specific brand of Socialist heroism, since the countries that MacLean mentions above have all had chapters of revolutionary left-wing politics in their own history. Part V, in which the Stallion makes his most pronounced appearance, is the lyrical peak of 'An Cuilithionn' and thus the Stallion can be viewed as a central symbol. He represents energy and power directed in a positive way in the eyes of the poet. He challenges the Establishment that MacLean mistrusts so much. The Stallion is an embodiment of MacLean's desire for a surge of energy to move the world out of the bourgeois bog. He writes:

Siod ort fhéin, Aigich lùthmhoir,
prannaidh tu bùirdeasachd nam fùidsean, (1999, pp.96-98).

[Here's to you, mighty Stallion,
You will pound and smash the pimps' bourgeoisie,] (1999, pp.97-99)

The Stallion's Movement on the Peaks of the Mountain

The Stallion, with his entrance in Part V, moves from peak to peak on the Cuillin and the route he takes deserves attention in relation to the overall sense of movement inherent in the poem. The Stallion is first glimpsed on Sgurr a' Ghreadaidh:

Bha roghainn nan each móra creagach
a' bocail air Sgurr a' Ghreadaidh (1999, p.96).

[The choice of the big craggy horses
was bounding on Sgurr a' Ghreadaidh,] (1999, p.97)

His size can be imagined when MacLean writes:

> Chuir e chas air Sgurra nan Gillean
> 's e prannsail air bàrr a' Bhidein, (1999, p.96).
>
> *[He put his foot on Sgurr nan Gillean*
> *while he was prancing on the Bidean*,] (1999, p.97).

In other words, the Stallion is able to be on Sgurr nan Gillean and the Bidean at the same time – these two peaks are relatively far apart and hint at the sheer mythic size of the Stallion. This is no normal-sized animal but instead a vision matching the sublime landscape of Skye, and in particular the magnificent Cuillin range. So far the Stallion has been moving in a clockwise sweep around the mountain peaks and this direction is continued when he jumps from this area of the Cuillin to Sgurr na h-Uamha and then to Blaven, Garsven and Sgurr an Fheadain. While MacLean himself has claimed that the Stallion symbolises the heroic presence of Skye in Scotland and also stands for the force of Socialism, which MacLean would like to see sweep across Europe and reach Scotland, the Stallion also mirrors the poet's own energy and drive in relation to his hopes for Scotland and the rest of the world. The Stallion moves from peak to peak, but throughout 'An Cuilithionn' it becomes evident that the Skye landscape is a miniature of the world itself, suspended in a mythic environment containing all of space and time. Therefore, in a figurative sense, the Stallion could be said to be moving around the whole of the world, spreading his energy and power to heroes from all periods of history. For this reason MacLean can connect him with the struggle of the Glendale men as well as the political power of an emergent force of twentieth-century Socialism. The Stallion is the energy which is required for any historic struggle, and it is no coincidence that he rises up to the heights of the Cuillin, since the

Cuillin also symbolises heroic strength in the poem. This movement on the mountain which adds the sense of hope that begins to develop in the latter parts of 'An Cuilithionn'.

The Stallion in Classical Imagery

While the Skye Stallion appears to be a symbol which is firmly located in the local landscape and is thus a highly original creation of MacLean's, it is possible that the poet was subtly influenced by the idea of Pegasus from Classical Greek mythology. Pegasus has always been linked to water. His name is similar to the Greek, *pege*, meaning 'spring' and Pegasus was said to have made water spring from the mountain-side by striking his hooves on the rocks (Chevalier & Gheerbrant 1996, p.746). The Skye Stallion is in keeping with this imagery since the descriptions of him in Part V in particular relate him to water:

> Eich mhóir a' chuain,
> mo ghaol do ghruaim;
> eich mheanmnaich
> an t-seana chin chruaidh:
> [...]
> a steud nan cuantan
> 's tu th' air mo bhuaireadh,
> 's mo chridhe luaineach
> le d' luasgan shùl. (1999, p.98).
>
> *[Great horse of the sea,*
> *my love your gloom;*
> *spirited horse*
> *of the hard old head;*
> *[…]*
> *steed of the oceans,*
> *how you have stirred me,*
> *and how restless my heart is*
> *with the unrest of your eyes!]* (1999, p.99).

The Stallion appears as a representation of the great sea-cliff of Waternish, made up of the sea and of the rocky landscape, hence the

description of the bubbling crags becoming hard as rock:

> Chunnacas manadh mór is uilebheist,
> an t-Aigeach a' sitrich air a' Chuilithionn,
> éirigh nan creagan a bha builgeadh,
> air an tug an spiorad tulgadh. (1999, p.96).
>
> *[A great portent and a monster was seen,*
> *the Stallion neighing on the Cuillin,*
> *rising of the bubbling crags*
> *that the spirit made to rock.*] (1999, p.97)

In this section, seemingly, the purifying energy of the water, which in the shape of the Stallion has washed away the stagnant bog, hardens to become one with the mountain, brought into being with the effort of the spirit. The sea has always played an important part in the shaping of any island and the Skye coastline is no exception. Just as Pegasus was born from the sea, so too is the Skye Stallion a symbol of the energy which is born from water and rock. As well as Pegasus being linked to water he was also viewed in relation to storms – 'bearer of thunder and the thunderbolt for wise Zeus' (Chevalier & Gheerbrant 1996, p.746). The image of the Skye Stallion stamping the bourgeois into the bog also suggests the thundering of his hooves:

> gheàrr e boc dhe Sgurr an Fheadain
> 's e fàgail uamhaltachd na creige
> gus an d' ràinig e 'n càthar,
> a stamp e mar aon pholl-dàmhair. (1999, p.96)
>
> [*he made one bound off Sgurr an Fheadain,*
> *leaving the wild lonely cliff,*
> *until he reached the moss,*
> *which he stamped into one rutting bog.]* (1999, p.97)

Continuing the theme of Classical imagery in relation to MacLean's symbol, writer J.E. Cirlot relevantly mentions the myth of Neptune (the Roman equivalent of Poseidon) with his trident, lashing out of

the waves the horses which symbolise cosmic forces and 'the blind force of primigenial chaos,' (1971, p.152). Interestingly, the horse was also dedicated to Mars and the sudden appearance of a horse was thought to be an omen of war (Cirlot 1971, p.152). The relationship of the horse with water, chaos and war is extremely appropriate when MacLean's Stallion is considered. In 'An Cuilithionn' the Stallion comes out of the sea and heralds a period of chaos in which the 'old order' of capitalism and colonialism is severely challenged. Part V, in which the Stallion gains his strength and rises up, begins with a description of the dawn of a new age, presumably a Socialist age:

> Chuala mi gum facas bristeadh
> agus clisgeadh air an fhàire,
> gum facas ròs dearg ùrail
> thar soaghal brùite màbte; (1999, p.96)
>
> *[I heard that a breaking was seen*
> *and a startling on the horizon,*
> *that there was seen a fresh red rose*
> *over a bruised maimed world*;] (1999, p.97)

The establishment of a Communist regime throughout Europe and beyond could not be put in place without an element of chaos and it is perhaps not too difficult to imagine that MacLean viewed the appearance of the Stallion as a bringer of conflict and a symbol of resistance.

The Mythic Horse

When the symbol of the horse is studied more generally it can be seen that its connection to water and earth is more widespread. Chevalier & Gheerbrant give the following description in their *Dictionary of Symbols:*

> A belief, firmly seated in folk memory throughout the world, associates the horse in the beginning of time with darkness and with the chthonian world from which it sprang, cantering, like blood pulsating in the veins, out of the bowels of the Earth or from the depths of the sea. This archetypal horse was the mysterious child of darkness and carrier both of death and life, linked as it was to the destructive yet triumphant powers of Fire and to the nurturing yet suffocating powers of Water (1996, p.516).

MacLean's Stallion certainly corresponds to this description, being connected as it is with water and the rocks and mountains of the Skye landscape. Although it is clear in 'An Cuilithionn' that MacLean views the Skye Stallion as a positive force, the reader is nevertheless left in no doubt that the Stallion is wild and frightening. Horses frequently foretell of death in Greek mythology as well as in European folklore. One reason for this may be that because they are often connected to the depths of the earth they came to be seen as manifestations of otherworldly power. The gloomy pale horse of night is associated with death mainly due to the pale horse of the Apocalypse and the pale horse in English and German folklore (Chevalier & Gheerbrant 1996, pp.519-520). The Stallion is mentioned as being pale, perhaps like the rocky landscape of Skye as seen on misty days – 'eich ghlais sgiamhaich/ [*beautiful grey horse*]' (1999, pp.98-99). In addition, in Scottish folklore Kelpies were horse-like water demons who would tempt people to mount them. Once mounted, the Kelpie would pull their riders under the water. Breton folklore also has many stories of underworld horses trying to lead travellers astray or dash them into quagmires or morasses (Chevalier & Gheerbrant 1996, p. 520). This point is very significant in relation to MacLean's Skye Stallion since he writes that the Stallion reached the moss 'a stamp e mar aon pholl-dàmhair/ [*which*

he stamped into one rutting bog]' (1999, pp.96-97). The Stallion is seen to win the battle over the morass, conquering it and stopping the suffering in its depths – 'Chaill na boglaichean am mealladh/ [*the swamps have lost their wiles*]' (1999, pp.98-99). Clearly, if the Stallion in 'An Cuilithionn' symbolises the potential death of anything, it is the death of capitalism which figures highest in MacLean's purpose in the poem. Therefore, MacLean turns the negative connotations of the death horse into a positive celebration of the imagined end of capitalism - the Stallion is the foreteller of the end of an oppressive era and his journey around the Cuillin results in hope for the future of the world.

Chevalier & Gheerbrant write that the symbol's 'swiftness associates the horse with time and hence with its continuity.' (1996, p.521). For this reason horses are often symbolised as the bringers of fertility and renewal after the harsh times of the winter months in agrarian communities. James Frazer describes an eyewitness account of Irish midsummer celebrations in which a wooden frame with a horse's head was made to 'jump' over the bonfire, thus becoming a symbol of 'all the livestock' and a symbol of plenty in general. This ritual is based on the horse's driving power and dynamism and fits in well with the idea of the turning of the seasons to times of seasonal growth (Chevalier & Gheerbrant 1996, p.522). The connotations of land and fertility in relation to horses evokes the mythic horses who were able to make wells spring up by striking their hooves on the earth – in the Massif Central in France there is a whole series of wells attributed to a magic horse who took this route and left wells along the way. In this context the symbol of the horse awakens the land and the water just as it awakens the flowing imagination, creativity, and the driving force of the libido which are associated with these elements. The Stallion is often viewed as an erotic symbol of youth

and 'the triumph of the life force' (Chevalier & Gheerbrant 1996, pp.522-523). In a general sense MacLean's Stallion channels this sort of energy – he rises up, becoming a potent force on the Cuillin and stimulating the poet with his presence.

In conclusion, the Stallion is an important symbol – in both social and literary context – throughout MacLean's 'An Cuilithionn'. MacLean does not keep his political ideals, as expressed to friends such as Douglas Young, detached from 'An Cuilithionn'. On the contrary, his socialist beliefs – that the Red Army will revive and re-energise the land –enhance the symbol of the Stallion, giving it another dimension and adding to the richness of its folklore and imagery. The individual strands of politics and poetic vision become difficult to separate in MacLean's work. MacLean was certainly not the only writer who was experimenting with this sort of fusion during the 1930s and 1940s and when this aspect of the Scottish literati is explored further, it will add to our understanding of Scottish literature, culture and its place in Europe in the past as well as the future.

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The Very Heart of Beyond: Gaelic Nationalism and the Work of Fionn Mac Colla

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In his essay 'Real People in a Real Place', Iain Crichton Smith, who grew up in Bayble on the Island of Lewis, notices the delicateness with which people from the islands of Scotland perceive their position within Scotland:

> To grow up on an island is to grow up in a special world. Many of the books that I have read on the Hebrides, however, make this world appear Edenic and unreal: others suggest that the islander is a child who appears lost in 'the real world', and even invent for him a language which was never spoken by anyone. It is easy to assign the islander to this misty, rather beautiful world, and leave him there if one first of all succeeds in making that world unreal, and its inhabitants unreal, off the edge of things, a noble savage with his stories and his unmaterialistic concerns. After all, is he not a Celt, and are the Celts not meant to be rather vague, impractical, poetical, not at all like "us," who succeed in both admiring and patronising the natives, simultaneously accepting that it would be nice to be poetic (and after all the islanders are nice) and also believing that such niceness is not after all suitable to the world in which we live (Crichton Smith, 1986, p.14).

What Crichton Smith is saying is not that the islanders are misrepresented, but rather, that they are misrepresented as *being* misrepresented. For example, a man from Barra in the Western Isles is likely no more misrepresented than a man from Dover in the south of England. There are many respected novelists, poets, artists and musicians lauded for presenting the voice of a particular place, and the Highlands and islands of Scotland – through their history and folklore,

in particular – lend themselves to be hijacked by such artistic romance. It is extremely rare to find the 'true voice' of any place as depicted through art. Any 'true voice' is very rarely authentic, and almost never true. What is clear from Crichton Smith's essay is that there are people of every temperament in every place. Islands, however, provide us with very real geographical borders which enable us to clearly distinguish, or set apart, the life and people there as somehow more interesting or curious because it is distant, or remote, or on the fringe. Though, of course, a place is rarely remote if one lives there.

Of course, the Scottish Islands differ from other parts of Scotland because of the once mighty Gaelic culture, which founded Alba. Gaelic was the language of a large percentage of her population until relatively recently, the remnants of which are now almost unique to the Hebrides. Gaelic has slowly retreated behind these borders over the centuries, suggesting a culture on the fringe, geographically, but also on the fringe in terms of its very existence, indicating a plurality of meanings for this idea. Perhaps then, something like: 'Gaelic and the Islands: geographically on the fringe, but culturally on the edge of existence' would be a more fitting concept to consider.

It is necessary, of course, to also examine the geographical Highlands, but more particularly the ever-decreasing area of the Gaelic-speaking Highlands, or the Gàidhealtachd, the borders of which have also been fiercely beaten back over the years. Indeed, it is interesting to note that Gaelic was spoken widely across Scotland, and far more recently than many people perhaps care to realise.

Arguably, geographically (and until relatively recently) the Highlands were even more inaccessible and on the fringe than the islands. Throughout literary Highland Romanticism, the Highlands have been depicted as remote, mysterious, and dangerous. To take one of the more famous examples, think of Edward Waverley's exhilaration

upon first stepping on to the foothills with Evan Dhu. The mountainous Highland terrain can seem more exciting and uncertain than the islands, and can certainly lay claim to having been internationally portrayed as such in romantic adventure stories. They can be geographically different, but the islands and the Highlands are both a traditional stronghold of Gaelic culture**,** and this is where Fionn Mac Colla fits in. Despite the fact that he did not write about the islands specifically, he wrote about Gaelic, and if a culture transcends its current boundaries through a particular art form, this should not render it irrelevant to the 'heartland'. Conversely, shared language and culture can connect places as geographically distant as Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia, for example, to the islands of Scotland.

Thomas Douglas MacDonald adopted the name Fionn Mac Colla - a suitably heroic and patriotic name combining mythical Celtic origin with Highland Clan Warfare. The name is a Gaelicised version of Fionn MacCool, the legendary Hunter-Warrior-seer and central hero of the Fenian Cycle in Old and Modern Irish Literatures, but is also a reference to the feared seventeenth-century Highland warrior Alasdair Mac Colla Chiotaigh Mac Dhòmhnaill also known as, 'The Devastator'. Mac Colla's decision to choose a name which clearly highlighted a recognition of the strong Gaelic ties which linked Ireland and Scotland, serves to demonstrate not only the political direction of his work, but also a statement of its cultural origins. Mac Colla's presence, through writing and campaigning, would greatly contribute to the foundations of nationalist politics, and to the Scottish cultural renaissance, of the twentieth century. His fiction in itself would connect these areas of carefully constructed arguments relating matters of cultural and historical importance, demonstrating the influence that his own developing political and philosophical ideas had on his writing. Among these, it is his assault on the issues surrounding the 'life-

denying' Calvinist doctrines with which he has perhaps become best associated. Connecting the historical to the cultural and political, he believed that 'the close cooperation between church and England destroyed the Celtic heritage of Scotland' (Schwend, 1990, p.341), and, therefore, facilitated the loss of Scottish national sovereignty. These ideas distinguish his early novels from his later work as a cultural thinker (even though these ideas were in development throughout his career), most notably in his book of polemic essays, *At the Sign of the Clenched Fist* (1967), though also in his posthumously published autobiography *Too Long in This Condition* (1975). At times Mac Colla was fierce, wild and provocative, though never less than compelling as a result.

J.B Caird writes in an essay entitled 'Fionn Mac Colla - The Twofold Heritage' that 'Mac Colla's works […are…] concerned with man in relation to the community in which he finds himself, to the tradition and civilisation that have moulded him' (Caird in Morrison, 1973, p.31). This relationship between man and community, or man and culture, and the relationship between place and history, is precisely what Iain Crichton Smith later determined as the examination of 'real people in a real place.' This type of examination is what is so important to the underpinning of the cultural influences in Mac Colla's work.

Aside from commenting on the decline of traditional Gaelic communities through his fiction, Mac Colla often contemplated elsewhere that Gaelic had been in a much more prolific cultural position - more widely spoken in the recent past, for example, than was commonly believed or understood, and that an appreciation of this was crucial in creating the idea of a separate Scottishness. He writes, in *At the Sign of the Clenched Fist*, 'Gaelic gave the nation its unity, despite later incursions of Northern English, it continued to be the national language in almost every part of the country' (Mac Colla, 1967, p.46-

47). MacColla was to become certain that the decline of Gaelic could be ascribed to the rampant growth of Protestantism and he believed, '[…] beyond question that Gaelic was the majority speech of Scotland until the effects of the "Reformation" had made themselves felt, and persisted in certain non-Highland areas practically into modern times' (Mac Colla, 1975, p.105).

He wished in his later writing to challenge and expose the lazy cultural and historical 'truths' concerning the position of Gaelic in Scotland, the myth that Gaelic was an ancient irrelevance and a fringe culture, and he sought to highlight his belief that for Scotland to be mostly English-speaking was an unforgiving psychological state. Gaelic's reach, he rightly claimed, had stretched very comfortably outside of what is routinely considered to be the Gàidhealtachd of today. The following, from Charles W.J. Withers and Kenneth MacKinnon, is an example of just how widespread Gaelic was spoken only 15 years before Mac Colla's birth:

> In 1891 the area of indigenous Gaelic was particularly extensive. In the whole Highland massif (as far east and south as Nairnshire and upland areas of Moray, Banff, Aberdeen, Perth, Stirling and Dumbarton counties) there was an above-average (6.84 per cent) incidence of Gaelic. Buteshire was quite strongly Gaelic (20.7 per cent), and only a short distance separated the great Lowland cities from a Gaelic-speaking countryside. Gaelic predominated in the central Highlands, north-west Perthshire, Badenoch, Strathspey, Lochaber, Loch Ness-side, mainland Argyllshire (except the tip of Kintyre and eastern Cowal), most of Easter Ross (except eastern Black Isle) and throughout Sutherland. Over three-quarters of the population spoke Gaelic throughout the Hebrides, the mainland coasts from Lorne to Strath Halladale and the inland parishes of Fortingall, Laggan, Daviot, Moy, Urquhart and Glenmoriston, Kiltarlity, Kincardine (Ross-shire) and Rogart (Thomson, 1994, p.111).

Gaelic had been a major language in Scotland as recently as the early twentieth century, and Mac Colla believed that its fate was inextricably linked to any moves towards political independence at a time when Gaelic faced steep decline and nationalism was stirring throughout Europe.

Mac Colla's natural gift for prose and his commitment to his philosophy and ideals led him to pursue a career with which he may not have always been entirely satisfied or even happy, though his sheer ferocity of political and cultural conviction determined that a devotion to his history, his country and his people, was not only necessary but unavoidable. 'I was a born writer. By which I do not mean that I had a desire, or itch to write or an ambition to be known as a writer - on the contrary, writing has always caused me intense suffering and being well known intense embarrassment' (NLS dep. 265/17).

Mac Colla is not known as a poet. He published four books during his life; two full-length novels, *The Albannach* (1932) and *And the Cock Crew* (1945), a short novel *Scottish Noel* (1958), and a book of political and philosophical polemic essays, *At the Sign of the Clenched Fist* (1967). He also published articles and further essays on the state of the Gaelic language in the 1930s as well as short stories, poems, letters and haiku in Scottish literary magazines, mostly during a brief resurgence of popularity in the early 1970s. His autobiography *Ro Fhada Mar So a Tha Mi* (Too Long in this Condition) was published in the months after his death in 1975.

Mac Colla's style was to become characterised by his promotion of Gaelic culture and the deconstruction and examination of Scottish history, as well as Scotland's psyche, religion, and loss of sovereignty. These main themes are so complexly interwoven that it is beyond the scope of this essay to convey the significance behind Mac Colla's reasons for doing this. However, it is important to note that Mac Colla

has, conversely, been accused by some of being over-cautious with his religious arguments to the point of exhaustion, in order to avoid accusations of religious bias. Others accuse Mac Colla of being so obsessed with the idea that the seeds sown at the Reformation grew to uproot Gaelic and end Scottish sovereignty that it came to define his work.

As Fionn Mac Colla saw it, Gaelic had not had its important place at the heart of Scotland fictionalised or imagined in the eighteenth century when the adoption of Highland/Gaelic culture as a national symbol romanticised the history of the 'noble savages' who dwelt there. Gaelic was, rather, a language and a culture which had had its genuine place at the heart of Scotland removed and transplanted with a false representation or, as has been demonstrated by Crichton Smith, 'a language that was never spoken by anyone' (Crichton Smith, 1986, p. 13). Notably, kilts, bagpipes, heather and the rugged Highlands – all of the easily transposed cultural determiners – have come to represent Scotland internationally, but the Gaelic language has not. Language is a far more difficult creature to export, but it is also a dangerous identifier, and a weapon against any sort of cultural imperialism. As Mac Colla notes in an early essay:

> […]language is the very crux of the whole matter. It is idle and windy nonsense to deny the fact, and indeed it is everywhere implied in the invariable and undisguised haste which the conqueror shows the conquered. And in the (sometimes desperate) attempts made by the conquered to retain the native tongue. There you have a tacit admission of the importance of language to peoples – having it they can never be destroyed, and if conquered they will rise again; losing it, they disappear' (Mac Colla, 1933, p.6).

Gaelic culture exists and existed - but not as it is presented or as, perhaps, it appears today.

Mac Colla's themes develop from his first novel *The Albannach* (1932), through his most successful work *And the Cock Crew* (1945), to the final work of fiction published in his lifetime, *Scottish Noel* (1958). In *The Albannach*, Gaelic culture is embraced by the anti-hero Murdo Anderson and he uses it as a cultural tool to overthrow the oppressive and, in Mac Colla's own words, 'Nay-Saying' Presbyterian Church elders who have taken from the community the spark of life that a joyous traditional culture both fuels and embodies. Music and poetry are celebrated as a window through which another Gaelic world can be celebrated. In *And the Cock Crew*, Mac Colla moves back chronologically to examine the initial wave of the Free Church through the Highlands and the part it played in facilitating the Highland Clearances. In *Scottish Noel*, he writes from the perspective of two priests embroiled in different sides of the Reformation Wars. The tone of his work becomes more sombre – some might say more bitter – as he presents his thesis on how the Reformation facilitated the 1707 Union of the Parliaments, suppressed a Gaelic culture which left it open to an evangelical religion, and which in turn helped to facilitate the Highland Clearances.

In a review of Mac Colla's autobiography, Alan Bold takes issue with Mac Colla's representation of Scottish history: 'There is a time, he would have us believe, when Gaelic was the national language, when Scotland basked in a glow of independence, when individuality was applauded' (Bold in Morrison, 1975, 26), and this is the view of Mac Colla's work which has, on the whole, prevailed. However, when Mac Colla says that Scotsmen sensed a loss, or that 'there had once been a glory' (Mac Colla, 1975, p.20), he does not necessarily allude to a golden age of Gaeldom, even though the evidence is available to anyone who wants to discover just how widespread and recently, for that matter, Gaelic was spoken throughout much of Scotland. Rather,

Mac Colla argues that Scotland had lost an integral part of its history. To his mind, Scotland had lost its sovereignty and it had lost a language which was representative of, and instrumental to, the nation's sovereignty. In a long sequence in *And the Cock Crew,* the protagonist, a Free Church minister, debates the history of Scotland with the rival he ousted 20 years before, the atheist bard and one-time leader of the local community, Fearchar:

> How was it possible for England that time to get our Parliament so easily to sign away the freedom of their country which their forefathers had valued above everything and always given their lives to preserve? Why were traitors so many in a nation so devoted to freedom? It was because there had begun amongst us those that were not altogether Albannaich for they had forgotten the language of their forefathers… and taken on an English language, with English ways. Now a man who speaks English and is English in his ways will begin to feel like those whose language he speaks, and it is his own countrymen that will seem like foreigners to him, for their ways are strange and he does not understand their language. And so it was easy for them to be traitors and betray the nation's liberties, for as they themselves were already English in a sort it became much less easy for them to see good reason why they should not also be subjects of England, more especially if they could profit by it…If they had been Albannaich, true Albannaich, who had never forgotten our language and the ways of our forefathers, they would not have sold those liberties for their lives, for they would have known that to be English and the subjects of England was for them the same thing as to cease to be (Mac Colla, 1945, p.92).

Mac Colla's assertion is that language, culture, even sovereignty are so interlinked and symbiotic, that in order to remove one aspect it is necessary to destroy the others.

In 1941, Mac Colla moved with his young family to take up a teaching position in the Western Isles. He taught on Benbecula for four

years, before moving to Barra where he remained until 1967. When he first graduated as a teacher in 1925, aged nineteen, he immediately applied to be placed in Laide in Wester Ross so he could experience at first-hand a place where Gaelic was still the primary tongue. However, his experiences in the Western Isles less than two decades later only served to further diminish his spirits. He described his 20 years in the Western Isles as 'a never-ending horror of totally schizoid activity' (Mac Colla in Morrison, 1973, p.27), as he felt he was complicit in what he considered the de-Gaelicising of the children there. While he was living in the islands, he wrote *Scottish Noel* (1958) along with short stories and poetry. The islands were also where he began his political work, *At the Sign of the Clenched Fist,* his attempt to bring together the themes which he had been developing over the previous 40 years.

Among his poems is 'Ecumaniacal' 1972. The poem deals with Mac Colla's themes of Gaelic culture, religion and loss of sovereignty, though it serves, perhaps, as a clear argument against the more widely-held criticism that Mac Colla's work only attacked the Protestant Church and that he laid all of Scotland's ills at its door.

The poem is a critical attack on the established Church and its representatives who pushed their own agenda, and he likens their sermons to propaganda, 'it's our own particular Goebbels-ian Truth/i e a Colossal Lie/ so oft repeated it has become / the only Truth we know…'(Mac Colla, 1972, 9) He is not referring to a Christian Lie (he was a Roman Catholic convert though he had been brought up in the Plymouth Brethren faith and had even served, ostensibly, as a united free Church Missionary to Palestine in the early 1920s). Rather, Mac Colla was a firm believer that the great Lie was preached by the negators, the tenth-rate bums, or as MacDiarmid called them, 'the inferior Hordes' (Gunn in Pick, 1987, p.19) who had always been determined to assert their mediocrity on to the rest of the world. Mac

Colla drew comparisons between Communism, Fascism and the Church and it is these people, theses 'Gnyaffs' (who he felt he had encountered all his life, in the Church, in politics and in the education system) who are the targets in his work. It is unfair and simplistic to criticise Mac Colla's themes without taking this context into account. The writer John Herdman who has edited some of Mac Colla's unpublished work has written that '"Gnyaff" was one of Mac Colla's favourite words and that he found himself perpetually beleaguered by this species, which he believed to be always vigilantly on the alert to frustrate him and put him down because of its instinctive hostility to his innate distinction of mind…' (Herdman, 1999, p.21). Of course, as the saying goes, just because 'you're paranoid doesn't mean they're not out to get you'.

In 'Ecumaniacal' then, Mac Colla criticises not the Church, but the subjective nature of preaching. He uses the names Reverend Father X and the Reverend Mister Y, and he attacks men of their ilk for the destruction of Gaeldom and loss of Scottish Sovereignty which led him to declare that Scotland had lost what should have developed into 'the most brilliant national culture in history' (Mac Colla, 1967, p.204) without the slightest hint of irony.

> […] Unknown thousands of Scots
> anxious to do the right
> would swither in the very voting booth
> remembering having heard
> somewhere
> with authority
> God has disapproved of the SNP
> and swithering would send Scotland and all our hopes
> down the Liblabatory… (Mac Colla, 1972, 7).

Whether a Priest, a Minister or a complicit and absent Highland Chieftain, it is their utter belief that they are in the right – that they

know history – that they claim the right to impose their views onto their congregation or subjects which Mac Colla saw as a key contribution to the initial lack of resistance to the Highland Clearances and the terminal decline of the Gaelic language and culture. Resistance, perhaps, is the luxury of the few. The long poem concludes:

> Mister Y did you suppose
> Gaelic was so nearly dead
> no one would have known that poem
> not one or two to understand
> how deeply your tongue deceived
> but maybe I am wrong
> unfair
> maybe the Reverend Mister Y
> did not set out with conscious and express intent
> to deceive the multitude
> gaping at him in the Box
> and send them in the wrong direction
> looking for the Soul of Scotland
> and incidentally for their own
> which is certain to be found in the same place
> maybe before coming to the second verse
> he juist
> happened to stop
> mise nach creid
> Father X and Mister Y
> lovely men
> what lovely men
> with such authority upon the Box
> or Mister X and Father Y
> for all is equal nowadays
> down here where we are
> tha sibh air an aon ramh ri cheile
> you are pulling together on the self-same oar
> your efforts have the same effect.
> Scotland in its Box
> Nailed wi Scripture
> in falseness treason and lies
> the Kirks united at last (Mac Colla, 1972, 12).

Religion is seen by many critics as Mac Colla's major lasting theme, and 'Ecumaniacal' is a very tame example of what he often described as the argument with himself. A poem of two stanzas which appeared in *Scotia* in 1972, entitled 'Cet animal est mechant: quand on l'attaque il se defend', is again clearly based on religion, but it manages to address what seems today like Gaeldom's almost eternal struggle with religion and nation:

> Ulster- where the hard men
> with blood in their minds
> brush their hard hats
> and in their bowler hearts
> will the Gael to die
> and the Gael are precisely as vicious
> as the animal which
> when attacked
> defends itself (Mac Colla, 1972, 4).

Gaelic, then, surely, is Mac Colla's main concern and his most potent and important theme. Religion is a theme because it became involved in Gaelic's story. Nation became involved, because Mac Colla saw Scotland as – initially perhaps – a Gaelic nation.

Finally, a late untitled poem appeared in *Scotia Review* in 1973 and highlighted Mac Colla's clear belief in what Scotland's future needed to be, with a knowing appreciation of what he considered to be its problems, both historical and contemporary:

> To some who are too nice in their judgement
> of what is necessary to be done for Scotland
> to support the S.N.P
> I at least didn't prance off the field
> in presence of the enemy
> mounted on my ego (Mac Colla, 1973, 17).

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The Banal Daily Drudge: Telling Stories in Scotland

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Ali Smith is rightly looked upon as a Scottish writer, however her Scottishness is not as easy to recognise as it is with other writers: she does not use any dialect and rarely locates her fiction in Scotland. In short any sense of Scottishness she presents to her reader is more than subtle. This paper will attempt to show how Smith's fiction draws upon an oral tradition of storytelling that is prevalent in Scottish fiction. This will be established by looking closely at Smith's narrative techniques and her attention to detail.

In his essay 'The Proof of the Mince Pie' Tom Leonard suggests that criticism of the local in literature often comes from those who are in a privileged position:

> But one thing I've noticed, on my odyssey through Western Culture, apart from the absence of the single pie, is that most of the heroes of the literature I was reading didn't seem to work a great deal of overtime […] So this is another aspect of "high culture" that because of its simplicity tends to be overlooked; the fact that the people who are having all the "noble emotions", have them removed from the banal daily drudge of earning a living. (Leonard, 1995a, p70)

It is this notion of 'the banal daily drudge' that is of interest to my discussion. James Kelman argues in relation to his work that 'Glasgow just happens to be the city I was born within […] I could have been born anywhere I suppose.'(Kelman, 1992, p78)

This contention seems to be as relevant to Ali Smith's fiction. I would argue that Inverness just happens to be the city that she was born within, as her fiction is largely devoid of location.

At this point it is necessary to distinguish between locality and localised. For Smith locality is of little interest. It is localised events that dominate her narrative. The setting of the fiction is not important, as Smith devotes a large part of her narrative to the description of everyday detail. It is this sense of the local in her narrative that will be analysed

In *The Practice of Everyday Life* Michel de Certeau argues that the use of the everyday provides the means for a writer to subvert the established literary and social hierarchy:

> A way of speaking this received language transforms it into a song of resistance, but this internal metamorphosis does not in any way compromise the sincerity with which it may be believed nor the lucidity with which, from another point of view, the struggles and inequalities hidden under the established order may be perceived. More generally, *a way of using* imposed systems constitutes the resistance to the historical law of a state of affairs and its dogmatic legitimations. (de Certeau, 1988, p18)

When this is applied to Ali Smith it would seem that her adoption of the everyday as a subject matter for her fiction is an agency for challenging the established order of literature. That is to say she is a writer who focuses on the minutiae of everyday life while adopting high literary techniques. The result of which are texts that subvert the traditional roles adopted by literature and criticism.

Smith treats the everyday and extraordinary as equals and one of the most obvious examples of her utilisation of the everyday occurs in the chapter entitled 'Future Conditional' from *Hotel World*. The action of the chapter is concerned with Lise's attempts to fill out

a form to help with her illness, anything else is either reported or a summary of her thoughts:

> *About you – continued.*
> *If you need help filling in this form, or any part of it,*
> *phone* 0800 88 22 00.
> *Tell us about yourself.*
>
> Well. I am a nice person.
> It was sometime in the future. Lise was lying in bed.
> That was practically all the story there was.
> (Smith, 2001, p81)

This quotation from the opening of the chapter stresses the sense of nothingness that pervades this section and the overall book. 'That was practically all the story there was' is a fair summation of the chapter for the reader. Most of the narrative of this chapter is spent quoting from the form and focussing on Lise's attempts to complete it. Lise's narrative slips between first and third person and, as is the case for the majority of Smith's fiction, no distinction made between speech and narrative. Smith's narrative does not retain any hierarchy between character speech and narrative. And this allows her to formulate subtly observed social commentary. This social commentary is extended into Lise's form filling and also into the anti-war subtext of *The Accidental*, which will be expanded on later in this paper. For the time being I will look at Smith's narrative technique. Ali Smith borrows her narrative structure from James Kelman, in that she does not make the distinction between narrative and speech. Kelman discusses this technique in relation to his novel *The Busconductor Hines* in an interview with Duncan McLean:

> It's very possible, you see, that Hines could be writing that novel. I mean it is technically possible within the framework of the novel. Nothing that happens happens outwith the perception of Hines...So Hines could have

> written absolutely everything…I could describe it as a first person novel written in the third person. (McLean, 1995, p101-102)

Kelman states that this is a first person novel written in the third person, this also holds true for Smith's narratives, as the boundaries between narration and speech are broken down. Her text does not participate in the traditional hierarchy that privileges speech over narrative. By simply removing quotation marks from her work, narrative and speech are placed on the same footing. This is clearly demonstrated in the following quote from *Hotel World*:

> Now again. The woman in the hotel uniform is saying something but Else is dizzy and can't hear properly. She looks at the woman's shoes. They are recent and fashionable; they have thick soles of the kind of moulded plastic that looks industrial and prehistoric at the same time.The woman gets up. She stops, stoops down again and picks up something. Here, she says to Else, holding out her hand. In her thumb and forefinger is the one pence piece Else couldn't reach earlier.
> Else nods, takes it.
> Yours, the woman says. The one that got away. Nearly.
> (Smith, 2001, p62-63)

Notice the division between narrative and speech becomes obscured. This whole passage sounds like an internalised first person narrative, narrated from Else's point of view, when in fact it is a reported third person account from an impersonal narrator. Again this is achieved through the removal of any speech marks. The reader has to instead rely on the lack of the first person pronoun to determine who is narrating. Thereby the consciousness of the narrative is dictated by the conjunction of speech with narrative The last line, 'Yours, the woman says. The one that got away. Nearly,' demonstrates the ambiguity of the narrative. When it is read, it becomes clear that it is an ambiguous statement, as it could either be said by the woman or

thought by Else. This ambiguity is the essence of Smith's narrative where the lines between subjectivity and objectivity become blurred. This can also subsequently be observed in the passage taken from *The Accidental*:

> Astrid kicks her trainers off on to the floor. She slides back across the horrible bed. Or possibly the beginning is even further back than that, when you are in the womb or whatever it's called. Possibly the real beginning is when you are just forming into a person and for the first time the soft stuff that makes your eyes is actually made, formed, inside the hard stuff that becomes your head i.e. your skull. (Smith, 2006, p8)

This passage begins with an account of Astrid's actions and swiftly moves into her thoughts, the use of the word 'horrible' is part of the third person narrative while also being the type of word that Astrid would use to describe the bed. Thereby the character's thoughts are implicitly contained within the narrative and this is developed further as the narrative slips into Astrid's stream of consciousness.

Storytelling is at the forefront of Smith's narratives and this can be demonstrated by looking at the structure of her third novel *The Accidental*. The narrative of *The Accidental* is arranged into three sections, each is entitled 'beginning', 'middle' and 'end' and this reflects the model of a story, in that traditionally stories are expected to have a beginning, a middle and an end. However, *The Accidental* undermines this expectation, with each section having four different perspectives on the same events. Each point of view has a recognisable voice and as these are read it becomes apparent whose perspective is being shared with the reader. The effect of this technique is to place in doubt the authenticity and reliability of each narrator as the reader pieces together the whole narrative. The complete story can only be ascertained by reading all of the

individual narratives. Effectively Smith is taking a traditional technique of narrative [beginning, middle and end] and using them in an innovative fashion in order to subvert the established reception of a text.

Hotel World also plays around with the narration. The novel is divided into six distinct chapters, and each is headed as follows:

1. Past
2. Present Historic
3. Future Conditional
4. Perfect
5. Future in the Past
6. Present

These can be viewed as a play on the reader. They are grammatical terms, specifically verb tenses, and as such these chapter titles give an indication of the temporality of the narrative, while the type of narration is in part derived from the headings. Effectively Smith is playing with the expectations of the reader as these titles give the impression that each chapter will be set in the past, present historic, future conditional and so forth.

Robert Crawford identifies the experimental nature of the narrative:

> *Hotel World* marks a stylistic advance in Smith's fiction that is as striking as the stylistic discoveries made in prose by James Kelman two decades earlier[1]. Like Kelman's, Smith's breakthrough appears technically simple, but has led to profound consequences. Unjustifying the right-hand margin of her prose, so that her line endings look like those of poetry, Smith produces a text that is 'freed-up', able to operate like a fusion of traditional fiction

[1] In fairness the typography of *Hotel World* owes a debt to the advances made by Alasdair Gray in both his novels and short fiction. Smith pre-empts this comparison in an article on Janice Galloway for *Chapman;* 'Galloway, really the first woman to take advantage of the pioneering styles of Kelman and Gray.' [Smith, 1993, p177]

> with aspects of poetry and conceptual art. (Crawford, 2007, p710)

By linking Smith's prose to poetry Crawford subconsciously calls attention to the property of her fiction that she shares with other Scottish writers and that is the sense of voice. This is particularly prevalent in her novels where she exploits multiple narrators – each with a distinctive voice of their own.

There is an implied backdrop to *The Accidental*, that of the Iraq war, and this is demonstrated in the 'public narratives' that the characters of the novel are aware of. In the example of Magnus' account of a narrative he has witnessed on television:

> The television is full of the news about Saddam's dead sons. The Americans killed them in a shoot-out a couple of days ago. The tv shows the photos of them again, the ones taken directly after the killing. Then it shows the photos the Americans took after they shaved them to look more like they're supposed to look, like they looked when they were recognizable. The photos taken after that prove they're clearly the sons. This is a turning point, the tv says. It has broken the back of the war, which will be over now in a matter of weeks. (Smith, 2005, p146)

Although Magnus makes no specific comment upon how he feels towards either the events or how they are reported his overall tone is one of indifference. Magnus reports them to the reader as if they were everyday occurrences. The implication of this is that Magnus has become sanitised to events like this appearing on the news and as such their magnitude becomes distilled.

In an interview with Louise French, Ali Smith claims:

> Although people won't think this immediately, I think it's a war novel. We lived through a war as though it were not a war in this country. We saw it on television

> but we saw a very different version of it which would be unrecognisable to people from elsewhere. (Observer, 22/5/05)

Not only does this hint at Baudrillard's notion of simulacrum in relation to the first Gulf War[2], but also it is the crux of *The Accidental,* for the version of events presented to us through the media is empowered - this version is not necessarily what is happening but merely one interpretation of events. However if this representation is the only version that is relayed to us then this is all that we have to interpret from. Effectively Baudrillard's view of the war demonstrates that events are mediated by those in power in order to manipulate our interpretation. It therefore follows that narrative is similarly empowered as we do not always read the same events from all perspectives. Thereby *The Accidental* is subverting the normal modes of narration by presenting four separate accounts of the same events. It is a novel that is about seeing the same events through the diverse perspectives of the various narrators and it is for this reason that each narrates a beginning, a middle and an end to give a complete story.

For Smith there is an emphasis on storytelling. Her narratives continually remind the reader that they are reading a work of fiction. In the case of *The Accidental* each narrator reminds the reader that they are reading a text as each of their narratives begins with 'the beginning', 'the middle' or 'the end' and as such this blurs the boundaries between the written and the oral.

The opening paragraph to 'The Universal Story' from *The Whole Story and Other Stories* demonstrates that Smith is playing with the conventions of fiction or storytelling:

[2] See Baudrillard, Jean – *The Gulf War Did Not Take Place* [Indian University Press, Indiana, 1995].

> There was a man dwelt by a churchyard.
> Well, no, okay, it wasn't always a man; in this particular case it was a woman. There was a woman dwelt by a churchyard. Though, to be honest, nobody really uses that word nowadays. Everybody says cemetery. And nobody says dwelt any more. In other words:
> There was once a woman who lives by a cemetery. Every morning when she woke up she looked out of her back window and saw – Actually, no. There was once a woman who lived by – no, in – a second-hand bookshop. (Smith, 2004, p1)

Smith's narrative parodies the writing of and the telling of a story. Furthermore the line 'There was a man dwelt by a churchyard.' is precisely the type of traditional opening to a story that she is parodying. The fact that it was a man allows Smith to subvert the traditional story. The narrative now focuses on a woman and then consciously updates the archaic language to give a contemporary tale about a woman who lives in a second-hand bookshop.

This obsession with 'the story' is further indicated by the titles of Smith's most recent collections of stories *The Whole Story and Other Stories* and *Other Stories and Other Stories* within each of her collection there are numerous stories that draw attention to the fact that these works are stories, for example 'The Universal Story'; 'The Heart of the Story'; 'More than One Story' and 'Kasia's Mother's Mother's Stories'. These titles hark back to the structure of *The Accidental* and combine to emphasise the fictionality of the fiction itself. In the introduction to *The Oxford Book of Short Stories* Douglas Dunn discusses these notions in reference to John Galt, James Hogg and Walter Scott:

> Although strikingly different in what they set out to do, the stories here by Hogg, Scott and Galt, have in common a conspicuously audible narrator. 'Sit near me, my children, and come nigh, all ye who are not of my kindred, though of my flock' […] An immediate

> audience is the first priority of his artifice, closely followed by a mimetic portrayal of the preacher's voice. There is a strong element of performance to it. Galt's midwife opens her 'autobiography' by saying: 'When my gudeman departed this life, he left me with a heavy handful of seven, the youngest but a baby at the breast.' There is a similar spokenness, a proximity of writer to reader which encourages a collusion in the tale, and an absence of preliminaries. Scott is more artful in that he delays the identity of the narrator until later in the story. All three writers are in touch with a newer art of story-telling which demanded a written negotiation between the voice and page. (Dunn, 1995, p xi)

In essence the same arguments can be suggested for the fiction of Smith and furthermore there fictions are united thematically through her shared consciousness of the domestic, the everyday and the social. There is a long tradition of short story writing in Scotland. It formally begins with Walter Scott's publication of *Chronicles of the Canongate* in 1827, but perhaps owes its existence to the oral ballad tradition[3] and a reaction to the proliferation of gothic tales in the latter part of eighteenth century; it carries on through James Hogg and Blackwood's magazine and is continued through Stevenson and Lewis Grassic Gibbon, and is picked up by many contemporary Scottish writers.

Dunn also views the rise of the short story as a successor to the ballad and oral tradition and he links this to the 'heightened sociability of Scottish literature'. [Dunn, 1995, pix] He establishes a connection between Scottish literature and its *demotic* identity, which he then links to the art of storytelling:

> A compact between speech and print is an important dimension of short stories in almost every modern

[3] Indeed a number of Scott's stories owe a debt to ballads as they can be viewed as expansions of individual ballads. For example 'The Two Drovers' bears more than a resemblance to the ballad 'Graeme and Berwick'.

> tradition; but in the Scottish story it is especially significant as a consequence of the authority of oral story-telling in prose and verse, and of the position of vernacular language stemming from the social and linguistic stresses of Scottish society. (Dunn, 1995, pxi)

It is these factors that are relevant to my discussion. The Scottish short story seems to be born out of an oral traditional of storytelling: whether these stories are sung as ballads or told as tales they are the roots of Scottish short stories. Furthermore it would seem that these stories share a common sense of the social that manifests itself as a portrayal of the domestic or everyday. Ali Smith's fiction immerses itself in this tradition - her fiction leans towards a representation of the everyday that in turn results in a narrative that emphasises the act of telling a story.

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Jackie Kay's Representation of 'The Broons': Scotland's Happy Family

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1. Introduction

This paper focuses on the contemporary Scottish poet Jackie Kay and the comic strip 'The Broons' by studying Jackie Kay's representation of this family in contrast to its characterisation in the comic strip. [1] This study presents a brief introduction to Jackie Kay and 'The Broons' and pays attention to Kay's referential portrayal of this Scottish family in five of her poems: 'Maw Broon Visits a Therapist' (2006a, p.46-47), 'Paw Broon on the Starr Report' (2006a, p.57), 'The Broon's Bairn's Black' (2006a, p.61), 'There's Trouble for Maw Broon' (2005, p.13-14) and 'Maw Broon goes for colonic irrigation' (unpublished).[2] Each of the poems will be approached stylistically by using the advantages offered by corpus linguistics methodology; in particular, the program *Wordsmith Tools 3.0.* (Scott 1999) will help to show the collocation of certain words through concordances.

2. Jackie Kay

Jackie Kay is a Scottish writer, born in Edinburgh in 1961 to a Scottish mother and a Nigerian father. She was adopted by a white couple at birth and brought up in Glasgow. She studied at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, and she studied English at

[1] Acknowledgements: I would like to thank D.C. Thomson & Co. for allowing me to use 'The Broons' illustrations in this paper and sending me some comic strips, as well as Joyce Gunn Cairns for allowing me to use the illustration of her painting 'Jackie Kay, Poet Extraordinaire'.

[2] The unpublished 'Maw Broon goes for colonic irrigation' was read by Jackie Kay during the conference 'Reading after Empire: Local, Global and Diaspora Audiences' (Stirling University, 3-5 September 2008).

Stirling University. In 2006 she was awarded an MBE in recognition for her services to literature.

Figure 1. Jackie Kay Poet Extraordinaire. Joyce Gunn Cairns

A great part of Jackie Kay's poetic production deals with the notion of identity, and gender, sexuality, origin, race, and nationality play a central role in her work. Her poetic works include, among others: *The Adoption Papers* (Kay 2005a); *Other Lovers* (Kay 2001); *Off Colour* (Kay 2006a); *The Frog Who Dreamed She was an Opera Singer* (Kay 1998a); *Life Mask* (Kay 2005b); *Darling: New & Selected Poems* (Kay 2007a); *Red, Cherry Red* (Kay 2007b); and *Lamplight* (To be published). She has also written in other literary modes: prose fiction, *Trumpet* (Kay 1998b); short story collection, *Why Don't You Stop Talking* (Kay 2002a) and *Wish I Was Here* (Kay 2006b); and drama, *Take Away* (Kay 2002b).

Kay's work is strongly influenced and highlighted by the Scottish literary tradition; in particular, two characteristics in Kay's production are perceived. Firstly, Jackie Kay both represents and performs poetry through varying poetic voices:

> I loved that poetry could be performed, that poetry could be dramatic. I really do see myself as being part of

> a tradition that wants to see the drama that is in poetry, through its poetic voices. (Severin 2002, n.p.)

Secondly, the poet juxtaposes seriousness and wit. The language and the union of a humorous and dramatic tone are features that distinguish Scottish poetry from English, according to Scottish poet Edwin Morgan:

> In England, you write in English and that's it. In Scotland you have not only English but various kinds of Scots, and Gaelic […] Also […] Scottish poets have much more interest in comedy in poetry and believe that comedy can be used seriously. (Cambridge 1997, p.41)

Finally, popular socio-cultural references are frequent in Kay's poetry, as evidenced here by her portrayal of the 'The Broons' family.

3. 'The Broons'

Figure 2. Illustration obtained from 'The Broons' webpage. The Broons © The Sunday Post D.C. Thomson & Co., LTD Dundee Scotland

'The Broons' is a weekly comic strip, created in 1936 by Dudley Dexter Watkins, and published weekly in *The Sunday Post,* a popular Scottish Sunday newspaper. The only time the Scottish population was not able to read their favourite Sunday comic was due to paper shortages during a period of the Second World War. Moreover, an annual of 'The Broons', which collects the different comic strips, is published every two years, alternating with the bi-annual publication of similar collections of 'Oor Wullie,' a parallel D.D. Watkins comic strip, also published weekly in *The Sunday Post* next to 'The Broons'. These comics deserve more study as part of popular culture since Scots have read them for over seventy years, spanning multiple generations. In this way, 'The Broons' have become part of Scotland's collective community and will probably continue to live amongst future generations. This illustration (fig. 2) of 'The Broons,' used as the front page of the 1949 annual (with its caption 'Scotland's Happy Family that makes every family happy'), confirms both the 'Scottishness' of this comic and its social impact, to which this paper will later return.

The family's surname, 'Broon', is the Scottish pronunciation of the surname 'Brown'; however, they are always referred to as 'The Broons' within the comic. In the same way, the mother, father and little child of the family are called 'Maw', 'Paw' and 'Bairn' respectively, again using Scots. These Scots words establish a strong relationship between this family and Scotland. Likewise, Jackie Kay also uses words such as 'Broons', 'Maw', or 'Paw' to refer to them.

Figure 3. Illustration obtained from 'The Broons' webpage. The Broons © The Sunday Post D.C. Thomson & Co., Ltd Scotland

The members of the family are Maw and Paw — the parents; Granpaw — the grandfather; Hen and Joe — the two elder brothers; Horace — a very studious boy; Daphne and Maggie — the elder sisters; the Twins and the Bairn. The stereotyping and variety of characters enables different kinds of readers to identify with certain characters. For instance, readers might feel closer to Daphne who is brunette and chubby and is always unsuccessfully trying to diet and has problems finding a date, than to Maggie who is blonde and slim and characterised by her beauty. Other examples of stereotyping of opposites are found in such characterisations as Hen and Joe: Hen is lanky, awkward and unfit, whereas Joe is muscular, handsome and athletic. Similarly, the Twins are archetypal adolescent boys, constantly playing pranks. In contrast Horace is always reading and studying.

Three aspects of 'The Broons' context should be highlighted, as surmised in the comic caption mentioned previously: 'Scotland's Happy Family That Makes Every Family Happy'. Firstly, 'The Broons' are a Scottish family; secondly, 'The Broons' influence

Scottish society so as to make every family happy; and finally, 'The Broons' are a traditional family characterised by their union and happiness.

3.1. A Scottish Family

The 'Scottishness' of this family can be perceived in their diet, their Scottish spirit, and their traditions. 'The Broons' follow a traditional Scottish diet shown in many cartoons as well as within the books *Maw Broon's Cookbook* (D.C. Thomson 2007) and *Maw Broon's But An' Ben Cookbook* (D.C. Thomson 2008a). As an illustration, *Maw Broon's Cookbook* includes recipes such as 'stovies', 'porridge', 'breakfast […] by Hen Broon', or 'orange marmalade', among others. This book of recipes, which represents the passing of customs from one generation to the next, belonged to Maw's mother, and it was given to Maw when she married Paw. It also includes recipes from friends and clippings that Maw has collected from *The Sunday Post* or from cartons of flour (*Books from Scotland* website). This book places the mother at the centre of the family, as cook and housewife.

The family is proud of representing their Scottish culture. In the following comic, 'The Broons' travel to Blackpool, where they meet an English family who shares their surname, 'Brown', as well as the number of family members. At first, each member of the family quarrels to defend their cultural tradition. Horace believes in Scotland's superiority in regards to football, scenery, engineering, and poets like Burns; in contrast, the other boy defends Shakespeare, for example. Other family members and their corresponding figure argue similarly, as seen in the strip.

Figure 4. D.C. Thomson 2008b, p.15. The Broons © The Sunday Post D.C. Thomson & Co., Ltd Scotland

Nevertheless, this conflict between the two families is solved amicably when Paw suggests to the 'Brown' father that they play a football match. This solution brings a moral and humorous tone to the comic strip. The identification and union amongst Scottish people is revealed when the Forfar referee proclaims his fellow countrymen the winners. The time is up and there is no score; therefore, the referee decides the winner on class and sides with the Scots. The mothers, the sensible figure in each of the two families,

discuss the kind of food they give their children and are the only ones who, instead of playing, remain outside encouraging their team.

'The Broons' is also representative of Scottish traditions. In these illustrations, they can be seen celebrating Easter at their but n' ben, rolling eggs down the mountain, or talking about 'Hogmanay'— Hen and Joe are perfect first-footers since Hen is tall and has brown hair and Joe is handsome.

Figure 5. D.C. Thomson 1975. The Broons © The Sunday Post D.C. Thomson & Co., Ltd Scotland

Figure 6. Illustration obtained from http://www.new-year.co.uk/thebroons.html**.** The Broons © The Sunday Post D.C. Thomson & Co., Ltd Scotland

3.2. 'That makes every family happy'

'The Broons' present a strong familial and cultural influence on Scottish society, which is emphasised in the words 'that makes every

family happy': firstly, the use of this strip by the Fire and Rescue Service of Strathclyde in fire safety education; secondly, 'The Broons' celebration of the end of the Second World War and the country's victory; and finally, some nutritionists' alarmed response to the publication of *Maw Broon's Cookbook* (D.C. Thomson 2007).

'Strathclyde Fire & Rescue', which is the second largest Fire and Rescue Service in the United Kingdom, uses 'The Broons' and 'Oor Wullie' to illustrate the behavioural models which should be followed to avoid fires. For instance, to explain that fire alarms should be placed on the ceiling, and not on the walls, they use the following comic strip:

Figure 7. Illustration obtained from http://www.strathclydefire.org/cs/bowIntro.asp. The Broons © The Sunday Post D.C. Thomson & Co., Ltd Scotland

In this comic, none of the men in the family knows how to reach the fire alarm before heading to the football match since Maw is always the one to do it. It is the smallest child, the Bairn, who explains to them how to reach it.

The comic strip 'The war's over' shows the way in which 'The Broons' form part of Scottish society, supporting and enhancing the spirit of a Scottish population. Published in *The Sunday Post* on 13th May 1945, this comic strip shows that the two elder brothers in the family, Hen and Joe, are serving their nation during the Second World War.

Figure 8. Illustration obtained from 'The Broons' webpage**.** The Broons © The Sunday Post D.C. Thomson & Co., Ltd Scotland

This comic represents the moment in which the family becomes aware that the war is over, as the ringing bells signal. All the family together celebrates victory — 'Victory day' or 'V day' — and the arrival back home of their two elder sons. To celebrate it they create banners out of old shirts, construct a poster, and enjoy all the nice food that they had probably reserved and stored out of fear of food rationing during the war period — sardines, salmon, peaches, corned beef, pears and cream. The last frame includes direct historical and contextual references to the Second World War. Firstly, in a poster

titled 'The Lads that Won the War', there is an illustration of Hen and Joe together with a picture of Mr. Churchill and Monty (Second World War English General Bernard Montgomery's nickname). Secondly, Horace, the most studious brother, refers to the end of 'black-outs'.

The controversial debate which arose after the 2007 publication of *Maw Broon's Cookbook* (D.C. Thomson 2007) is another example of the comic's influence and social impact. Contemporary nutritionists criticize this book since 'The Broons' diet, which is presented as being traditionally Scottish, can lead to obesity, as it includes fried meals, greasy food and too much sweetened food.

3.3. A Traditional Family

The characters in the comic strip remain the same despite the passing of time since they form part of a tradition which their successive strip cartoonists have respected. Peter Davidson, present cartoonist and childhood friend of Watkin's son, highlights the comic's representation of a tradition, as Gilchrist examines:

> The present incumbent, the freelance Peter Davidson, is well aware of the iconic nature of the strips he has drawn weekly since 1995: "I don't see it as my job to impose my style on these beloved characters. But, as a commercial artist, I've done many things, so while I'm aware of the importance of keeping the tradition going, let's just say it's an interesting job". (Gilchrist 2006)

Another example of the comic's adherence to tradition is the public negative reaction towards the colour printing of 'Oor Wullie' and 'The Broons' by D.C. Thomson in 1992. The comic returned to its original colour, black and white, after a few months, as a result of its readers' complaints. Following this idea of tradition retention, the

comic strip is always presented in regular squares and in regular series. This distribution contrasts with other more experimental comics.

Figure 9. D.C. Thomson 1975. The Broons © The Sunday Post D.C. Thomson & Co., Ltd Scotland

The comic strip arose in 1936 within *The Sunday Post*, a paper which is still considered to be conservative. During war time, 'The Broons' represented a humble, traditional and large family living happily together in a tenement, and this was aimed at raising the Scottish population's spirit during this difficult period. Also, Paw most certainly belongs to a respectable working class. Finally, this family can be valued as traditional if we consider issues such as the division of roles, their characterisation and their union. This is a traditional family in which women and men's roles are clearly divided. In figure 9 we notice that Paw is reading the newspaper while Maw is knitting. Hen is reading a book, and Joe is completing some football pools while Maggie is doing her nails and Daphne is reading a romance magazine. Finally, one of the Twins is playing with his toy car; however, the Bairn is playing with her doll. The following pictures (figs. 9, 10) show the same division in regard to

house tasks: women do the cleaning whereas men do the harder physical work which involves strength.

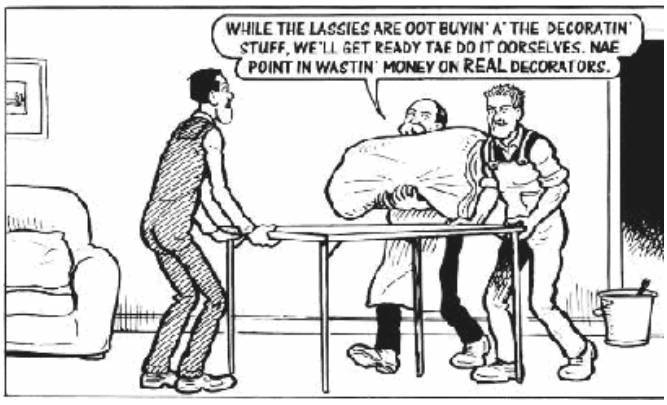

Figure 10. D.C. Thomson 2008b. The Broons © The Sunday Post D.C. Thomson & Co., LTD Dundee Scotland

Figure 11. D.C. Thomson 1975. The Broons © The Sunday Post D.C. Thomson & Co., Ltd Dundee Scotland

In the same comparative way, there are many images in which either Granpaw or Paw are smoking; however, Maw never smokes:

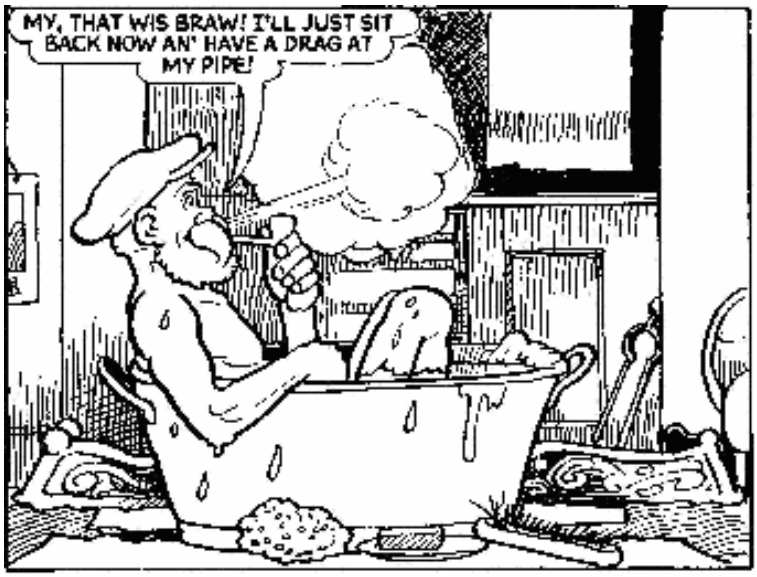

Figure 12. D.C. Thomson 2008b, p.97. The Broons © The Sunday Post D.C. Thomson & Co., Ltd Dundee Scotland

Gender differences within this family are also portrayed through their personalities. For instance, as a man Paw believes that he should be strong, so as to accomplish his role as head of the family. Therefore, he does not reveal his fears. In these illustrations, Paw, who is frightened of dentists, has to visit one since he suffers from a terrible toothache. When he arrives home, he lies and boasts about having attending the dentist without any worries and advises his children to follow his example.

Figure 13. D.C. Thomson 1975**.** The Broons © The Sunday Post D.C. Thomson & Co., Ltd Dundee Scotland

The atmosphere surrounding the comic strip is positive: despite possible economic difficulties or arguments, all these situations are solved with humour. Moreover, this is a part of their close and pleasant relationship. There are multiple illustrations which show this union in their daily lives at parties, at home or at their but n' ben. For example, here 'The Broons' celebrate the New Year together at home, welcoming their neighbours:

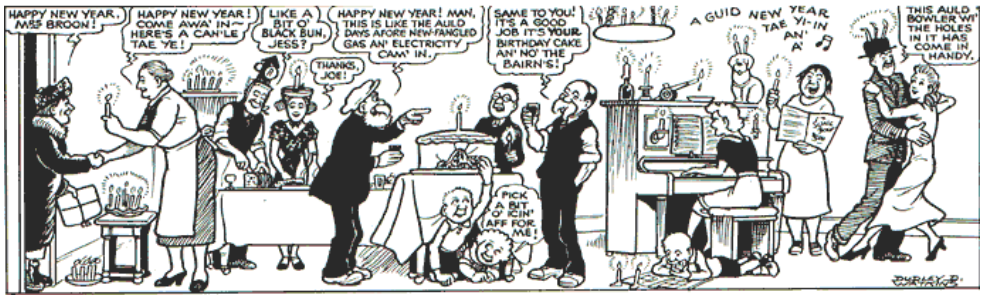

Figure 14. D.C. Thomson 2008b. The Broons © The Sunday Post D.C. Thomson & Co., Ltd Dundee Scotland

Jackie Kay's Poems

As the next five sections consider, it is Jackie Kay who breaks some of 'The Broons' traditions through her representation of the family in five poems. The writer places them in a contemporary time, facing situations such as infidelity, a therapy session, a sexual encounter, a racist attitude, and a process of colonic irrigation. The humour of these poems lies in the ironic contrast between the characterisation of 'The Broons' in the comic strip and their portrayal in Kay's poems. Also, this contrast provides a window for comparison of old and modern Scottish values.

4. 'There's trouble for Maw Broon'

4.1. Summary

In the poem 'There's trouble for Maw Broon', Maw as the poetic voice, recalls different changes in Paw's behaviour and character which led her to deduce that Paw was unfaithful to her. The poem highlights not only Maw's jealousy but also her frustration, sadness and disappointment.

4.2. The Poetic Voice and the Addressee

Maw's poetic narrative offers us her inner thoughts and feelings through the use of the first person singular, in many examples of

personal pronouns. 'I' is repeated twenty-six times and 'me' six times. The reflexive pronoun 'masell' or 'mysell' is repeated three times, while the possessive article 'my' or 'ma' is repeated five times. Finally, the possessive pronoun 'mine' is repeated twice.

Maw Broon is not an unknown character for many readers of this poem who are familiar with 'The Broons' and can recall their characterisation and family life in the comic strip. In a BBC interview, Kay says, 'I like just to try to imagine unexpected things for Maw Broon' (*Lyrics BBC World Services* website). In both 'There's trouble for Maw Broon' and 'Maw Broon visits a Therapist', Kay shows an unexpected perspective of Maw. In the first one, Maw is jealous and frustrated when she finds out that her husband is unfaithful, and in the second one, as will be considered later, Maw is fed up with her life and does not recognise herself.

The poetic voice in 'There's Trouble for Maw Broon' also makes several references to her husband Paw Broon, through the personal pronouns 'he' (repeated twenty times) and 'him' (once). The possessive article 'his' (repeated eight times) and his name 'Paw' (repeated seven times).

4.3. Paw and Maw

Sometimes Maw's poetic voice refers to both Paw and herself through the possessive article 'oor' (repeated seven times), the personal pronoun 'we' (twice), and the adverb 'thegither' (twice). Paying attention to the words which collocate with the possessive article 'oor', readers notice that the elements which they share (the quilt, the table and their cottage's roof) are very old, showing not only their long marriage but also its deterioration. Their shared possession of the 'but n' ben' is defined as 'sacred' or as a 'special place'; therefore, the loss of the 'but n' ben' symbolizes the

relationship's demise. The following concordance obtained through *Wordsmith 3.0.* (Scott, 1999) shows the collocates of the possessive 'oor':

# of occurrence (N)	Collocates	Node	Collocates
1	Wiring plugs. Cleaning	*oor*	auld quilt. I wis abl
2	´s been hauving it aff in	*oor*	but n´ ben under oo
3	g but no the thought o´	*oor*	but n ben. It´s spoil
4	ie fake it. Then he fixed	*oor*	shoogly table. That
5	in oor but n´ ben under	*oor*	wee frail tin roof in
6	in and stormy weather,	*oor*	sacred but n´ ben o
7	oor wee frail tin roof in	*oor*	special place when-

Table 1. Concordance of 'oor'

Finally, the personal pronoun 'we' and the adverb 'thegither' refer to actions in the past, since they are no longer a couple at the present time. These collective personal pronouns each occur twice in the poem.

4.4. References to Infidelity

The eagerness to look for the truth is also revealed in the repetition of the noun 'truth', appearing four times in the poem, grouped towards its end (lines 47, 49, 49, and 52). This term introduces the culminating statement of infidelity.

# of occurrence (N)	Collocates	Node	Collocates
1	I couldnie run from the	*truth*	anymair. I´d had it
2	I ken the truth, it´s the	*truth*	I ken Paw´s been
3	r special place when- s´	*truth*	efter a´ we´ve be
4	it up tae here. I ken the	*truth*	, it´s the truth I ke

Table 2. Concordance of 'truth'

It is not until the end of the poem that the poetic voice is able to openly and directly pronounce the words: 'Paw's been hauving it aff in oor but n' ben' (line 50). The poetic voice retains this information

until line fifty. In the previous lines, Paw's infidelity is only revealed in an indirect manner through the description of Paw's changes and the use of the pronoun 'it'. This holding of information emphasizes the reader's expectations and highlights the poetic voice's agony and difficulty in facing reality.

The poetic voice uses the pronouns 'it' or 'this' during the whole poem to make reference to Paw's infidelity. The difficulty to say some words also shows the innocence of the poetic voice. In this way, the pronouns substitute possible taboo words linked to swear words or sex words, neither of which would appear within the comic strip:[3]

# of occurrence (N)	Collocates	Node	Collocates
2	n Paw´s been hauving	*it*	aff in oor but n´ ben
3	quilt. I wis able tae see	*it*	clear as a day. There
4	ouble for Maw Broon	*It*	dawned on me, aw of
7	jacket. I couldnie take	*it*	.I couldnie fake it. Th

Table 3. Concordance of 'it' (Paw's infidelity)

# of occurrences (N)	Collocates	Node	Collocates
1	bad like my thoughts.	*This*	wis final. This wis
2	houghts. This wis final.	*This*	wis ma lot. I wis d

Table 4. Concordance of 'This'

4.5. Paw's Representation: Poem vs. Comic

Jackie Kay utilises the stereotypical figure of Paw in the comic and completely changes it, while imagining what Maw would think if she noticed this transformation. Some of Paw's frequent characteristic habits are enumerated in the poem but are not shown in the comic strip. Kay humorously exaggerates Paw's negative behaviour; for

[3] The concordance program offers other instances in which the pronoun 'it' is used in the text, which are not utilised here since they do not refer back to Paw's infidelity.

instance, as belching or dribbling. In this way she stresses the contrast between Paw's previous and later manners.

In the poem Maw is aware of Paw's bad conduct, which she seems to accept. Moreover, she starts to feel angry and insecure when she perceives his changing habits. The poetic voice explains that the man seen in the comic strips (bald and unfit with a long moustache, often smoking and unable to cook) is the very same man that now has gone through a transformation. Firstly, Paw's physical condition is shown to improve, as 'wan sudden day I saw Paw wis fit' (line 6).

Figure 15. D.C. Thomson 2008b, p.25. The Broons © The Sunday Post D.C. Thomson & Co., Ltd Dundee Scotland

The comic demonstrates Paw's formerly characteristic bad physical condition. Unable to follow his father's rhythm, Paw asks Granpaw to slow down, pretending to be worried about the children getting tired. In the poem, however, now his 'tache' is 'clipped neatly' (line 7), and he is unsatisfied with his baldness: 'He'd had toyed wey the thocht o' a toupe, he telt me' (line 8), as compared to Paw's representation within the comic strip: bald, with a thick moustache.

Figure 16. D.C. Thomson 1995**.** The Broons © The Sunday Post D.C. Thomson & Co., Ltd Dundee Scotland

To Maw's despair, he is now thinking about significantly altering both. Further, he has bought himself 'a brand new bunnet' (line 9). The word 'new' appears in the text twice, and the repetition of this word underlines Paw's change:

# occurrences (N)	Collocates	Node	Collocates
1	ally! He bought a brand	*new*	bunnet. I couldnie
2	ther shoes, a mint on a	*new*	jacket. I couldnie t

Table 5. Concordance of 'new'

'New's antonym, 'auld', appears twice in the poem so as to refer to Paw's transformation or to the quilt which Maw and Paw shared:

# of occurrences (N)	Collocates	Node	Collocates
1	th. He chucked oot his	*auld*	tackety boots. He t
2	ring plugs. Cleaning oor	*auld*	quilt. I wis able ta

Table 6. Concordance of 'auld'

In addition to changes in physical appearance, Paw has also changed his behaviour. For example, he has 'stapped drinking spilt tea / frae his saucer' (lines 13-14), and now 'He didnae belch and say / Guid fir me! (lines 14-15) or 'tut at the TV' (line 15). His personal hygiene

has improved, as 'If he dribbled he wiped his chin' (line 16) and 'If he coughed he covered his mooth' (line 17). The illustration below, taken from a 1975 comic strip, shows Maw Broon trying to cope with Paw's snoring, suggesting this is part of Paw's past annoying habits.

Figure 17. D.C. Thomson 1975. The Broons © The Sunday Post D.C. Thomson & Co., Ltd Dundee Scotland

Figure 18. D.C. Thomson 2008b, p.25. The Broons © The Sunday Post D.C. Thomson & Co., Ltd Dundee Scotland

Figure 19. D.C. Thomson 1995. The Broons © The Sunday Post D.C. Thomson & Co., Ltd Dundee Scotland

Figure 18 shows Maw and Paw relaxing in their living room enjoying the quiet. By contrast, in the poem, now Paw has stopped smoking both his pipe and tobacco: 'He threw oot his pipe and his baccie' (line 19). Whereas in figure 19 Hen, Joe, Paw, and Granpaw are taking pleasure in a football match, in Kay's poem 'He lost interest in fitba' (line 20) and gains an interest in fashion, spending 'a wee fortune on a pair / o good leather shoes (lines 25-6) and 'a mint on a new jacket' (line 26). He has also 'started eating his veggies raw' (line 21) and is no longer 'a skinflint anymair' (line 24).

Figure 20. D.C. Thomson 1995. The Broons © The Sunday Post D.C. Thomson & Co., Ltd Dundee Scotland

Regarding changes which describe how Paw carries out some household tasks, figure 20, taken from a 1995 comic strip, reveals that Paw's actions, although he might be willing to do some work, are always accompanied by some catastrophe. In Kay's poem he aptly 'fixed oor shoogly table' (line 28) and has begun 'Wiring plugs' (line 29) and 'Cleaning oor auld quilt' (line 31). In a crescendo of incriminating behaviour, it is revealed that now 'Paw wis looking swell / aw spruced up and smelling o' Old Spice' (lines 38-9) and 'wis late hame eight nichts in ten' (line 45).

The comparative aspects of Paw are approached via very different media in poem and comic. In the poems readers have no illustrations to help to characterize the poetic voice; therefore, the poet can only rely on language for definition. In the poem, Maw Broon is identified as the poetic voice through: (1) the use of her name; (2) the references to common topics in the strip; and, (3) the kind of language she uses, including Scots words. Jackie Kay comments on this third aspect for a BBC interview and highlights that the language of 'The Broons' seems to be very useful in conveying powerful emotion such as jealousy (*Lyrics BBC World Services* website).

5. 'Maw Broon Visits a Therapist'

This poem presents a dialogue between Maw Broon, the poetic voice, and a therapist. In this conversation, readers only hear Maw who talks about her feelings and worries. Maw is again placed in an unexpected situation; therefore, the reader is surprised by Maw's feelings of frustration and loneliness since these are not perceived in the comic strip, in which we assume Maw's happiness is fulfilling her role as a housewife.

The poem is constructed through the inferred conversation between Maw and the unseen therapist, who is deduced through Maw's questions, complaints and references to him/her. Through the use of questions, Maw's state of mind is revealed: first, she shows her anger and uncertainty towards the therapist's behaviour by asking 'How come you've no get anything tae say' (line 17) and 'Whit's wrang. Am A' no daeing it right?' (line 19). Similarly, her complaints are presented in an affirmative form: 'You've no opened yir mooth.' (line 18), 'A' dinny ken hoo yir supposed tae dae therapy.' (line 20), 'Michty. This is awfy awkward.'(line 22), 'You've no said a dickie bird' (line 23), and 'Och. This therapy's making me crabbit.' (line 28). Second, Maw Broon gets 'feedback' from the therapist by asking 'ken whit A' mean' (line 6), 'Jings. Dae A' jist talk on like this? (line 21), and 'A'm quite guid / at this therapy lark eh?' (lines 41-2). Additionally, by reproducing the therapist's words, she enables the readers to hear this second voice through the poetic voice's repetition:

> Tell you a dream? (line 24)
> An image? Whit kind of image? (line 26)
> What comes tae mind?(line 27)
> Whit represents whit? (line 28)
> How dae A' see masell? (line 32)

Finally, the poetic voice addresses the therapist informally through the use of the pronoun 'you' and the possessive 'yir':

# of occurrences (N)	Collocates	Node	Collocates
1	therapist. Sit there like	*you*	are, glaikit, a box
2	This is awfy awkward.	*You*	've no said a dickie
3	got anything tae say?	*You*	've no opened yir m
4	the noo. How come	*you*	've no got anything t
5	said a dickie bird. Tell	*you*	a dream? Crivens,

Table 7. Concordance of 'you'

# of occurrences (N)	Collocates	Node	Collocates
2	ay? You've no opened	*yir*	mooth. Whit's wran

Table 8. Concordance of 'yir'

Maw even imagines herself replacing the therapist:

> Here Maw Broon could be a therapist.
> Sit there like you are, glaikit,
> a box o tissues and a clock,
> a few wee emmms and aaas. (lines 43-6)

The features which characterise and dishearten the poetic voice coincide with those which represent her in the comic strip. The comic strip character accepts them, but the poetic voice can no longer stand that situation. This poem can be understood as a social criticism of traditional values that put women in the house to take care of the children, emphasizing the way that Kay joins drama and humour.

Maw's description in the poem can be classified in three areas: physical, psychological and familiar. For instance, Maw is imagined talking about her bun as an onion, and this may be a way of expressing her disappointment and perception of herself:

> How dae A' see masell?
> Weel. Am fed up wey ma bun.
> It is jist a big onion.
> at the back o'ma heid.
> A'canny let ma hair doon. (lines 32-6)

The poetic voice achieves willingness in the poem; however, in the comic strip, it is never imagined whether Maw would like to 'let [her] hair doon.' The poetic voice continues describing Maw's physical appearance, comparing herself with a cottage and describing herself as a sturdy person with the following unpleasant words: 'A'm built like a bothy, hefty' (line 37).

Regarding her mood in the poem, Maw feels stress and, consequently, considers that she is frequently tired and angry, in line 38. Compared to the comic, we notice that, even though Maw is often the one who keeps it all together, she has loads of work and gets annoyed at the members of the family who usually misbehave, as figure 21 shows:

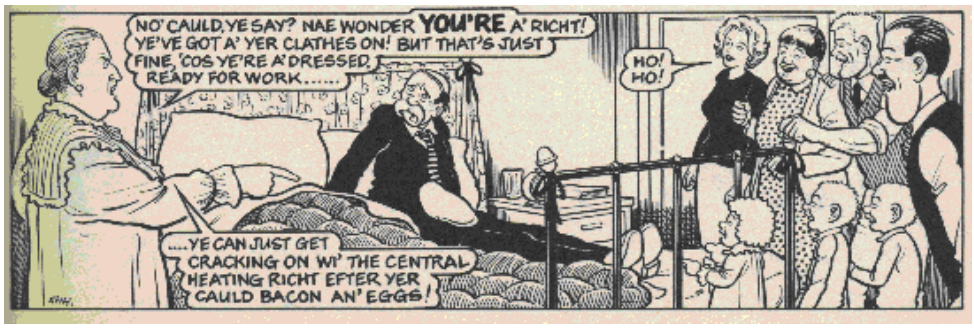

Figure 21. D.C. Thomson 1995. The Broons © The Sunday Post D.C. Thomson & Co., Ltd Dundee Scotland

Figure 22. The Broons © The Sunday D.C. Thomson & Co., Ltd Dundee Scotland

Figure 22 illustrates Maw's housewife role and all the work she has to complete as the serious and responsible member of the family. The family take advantage of this situation and do not think that their mother could give up and leave everything behind. The comics confirm her anxieties and her indispensable role in the family's daily life, as mother, keeper, organizer, and referee. By contrast, in Kay's poem, Maw expressly confesses her worries:

Ma hale family taks me for grantit
A'll aye be the wan tae dae it.
whitever it is (lines 39-41)

6. 'Paw Broon on the Starr Report'

Paw Broon, after reading *The Starr Report*, tries to convince his wife, or rather imposes upon her, to have oral sex in the same way President Clinton had.

In the poem, there is a double cultural reference: first, the reference to 'The Broons'; the other, the reference to *The Starr Report* — the 1998 text which examines the relationship between Monica Lewinsky and President Bill Clinton. Paw tells Maw that he too has his rights as a married man and attempts to assert those rights.

Several reasons could have led Jackie Kay to refer to *The Starr Report*. First, it establishes a link between Paw Broon, a comic character, and the real world. In this way, Paw develops as a human being, a citizen, who lives in the same world as the reader. Second, it contextualizes Paw Broon, a person who has lived during or after *The Starr Report* publication, around 1998. Third, it includes the taboo word 'sex' and the even more taboo 'oral sex'. Additionally, it establishes a contrast between traditional society as represented in 'The Broons' and contemporary society living in the moment in which *The Starr Report* was published. Finally, it encourages thinking about new societal values in comparison to the old ones.

There are differences between Paw's portrayal in the comic strip versus in the poem. The poetic voice of Paw commands his wife, ordering her and being impolite. This behaviour is exemplified by affirmative statements which do not allow Maw the possibility of refusal, such as 'I'm hauving it wey you' (line 5) and:

There's no use in you
saying 'Naw Paw' again Christ,
the President
gets it, so so kin I. (lines 7-10)

The imperative sentences Paw uses to command his wife further exemplify this portrayal in the poem, such as 'Get yir heid doon wuman, / an hae a guid sook.' (lines 11-12), 'Christ, wait a minite.' (line 13), and 'Dinny lick gingerly' (line 15).

As Jackie Kay confirms at a BBC Scotland interview, 'The Broons are the last people you expect to be sexual' (*Lyrics BBC World Services website*):

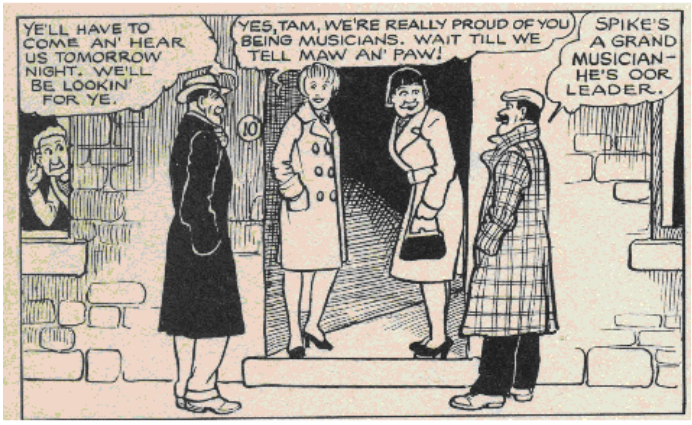

Figure 23. D.C. Thomson 1975. The Broons © The Sunday Post D.C. Thomson & Co., Ltd Dundee Scotland

In figure 23 the elder sisters — Maggie and Daphne — and the elder brothers — Joe and Hen — share their time with possible boyfriends or girlfriends; however, there is never a sexual encounter, and the family is always aware of the different partners with whom their children go out.

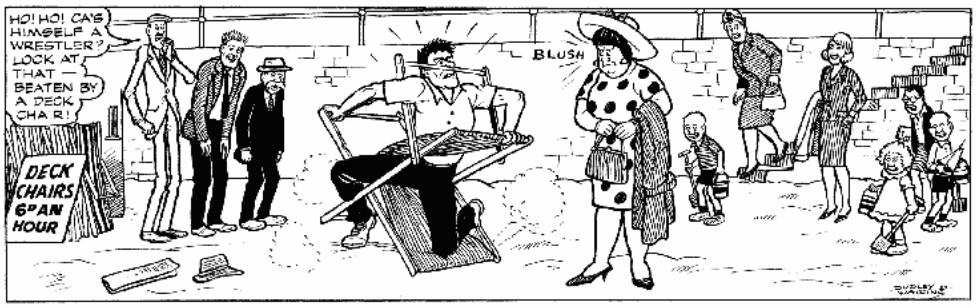

Figure 24. D.C. Thomson 2008b, p.111. The Broons © The Sunday Post D.C. Thomson & Co., Ltd Dundee Scotland

In this comic, the whole family meets Daphne's new boyfriend – apparently, a fighter; however, the family laughs out loud since he is unable to open a deck chair.

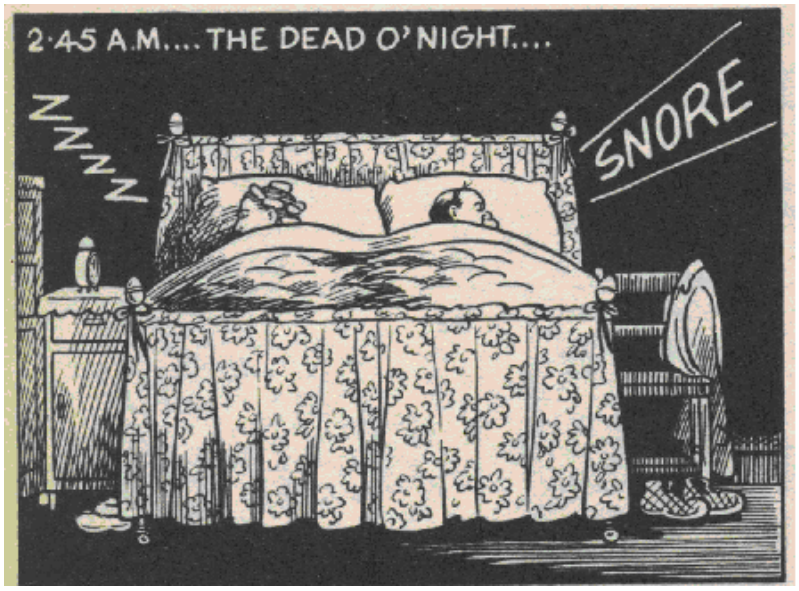

Figure 25. D.C. Thomson 1995. The Broons (c) The Sunday Post D.C. Thomson & Co., Ltd Dundee Scotland

Further, marital intimacy is portrayed in the comic strip, but both husband and wife are sleeping looking at opposite sides without touching each other. Maw is dreaming peacefully and wearing curlers while Paw is snoring.

7. 'The Broon's Bairn's Black'

Figure 26. Illustration adapted from 'The Broons' webpage. The Broons (c) The Sunday Post D.C. Thomson & Co., Ltd Dundee Scotland

In this poem, in contrast to the others, no member of the family seems to be the poetic voice; however, reference is made to the younger child of 'The Broons', the Bairn. A personified Scotland finds out that this little girl, characterised by her golden curls, blue eyes, white complexion, and chubby cheeks, is black.

This poem follows the format of a skipping or nursery rhyme; however, the content is not so innocent. This contrast highlights the cruelty of racism in Scotland as well as possible failures in the education and values which Scottish society has offered its population, since this socially impacting comic strip is meant to transmit happiness and family values. The parallelism of the three first lines, 'Scotland is having a heart attack / Scotland is having a heart attack / Scotland is having a heart attack', underlines their content. However, it also emphasizes the only line which is not repeated in the poem: 'The Broon's Bairn's Black' (line 4).

8. 'Maw Broon goes for colonic irrigation'

In this poem, Kay not only reproduces the language in 'The Broons' comic but also the format. As she explained during her reading at Stirling University, she decided to introduce a rhyme at the beginning of the poem: 'Maw Broon finds a new hobby / says

cheerio to the impacted jobby'. This rhyme is similar to the ones that serve as an introduction to each comic strip. Maw, the poetic voice in this poem, is again placed in an unpredicted situation, describing her experience of colonic irrigation and the physical and psychological relief she felt afterwards. This poem is surprising and different from the comic strip, not only due to the unforeseen scene but also due to its topic, colonic irrigation, and its consequent lexis, such as the child's word 'jobby' — the Scottish term for the word 'shit'.

9. Conclusion

By placing the 'The Broons' in unexpected situations, such as having a sexual encounter or visiting a therapist, these poems underline a contrast between traditional and new values, which leads the reader to measure and consider the differences. This criticism of beliefs and ideas is expressed through a mixture of drama and humour.

Comparatively, this study contends with three main objectives: the relevance of cultural references in Jackie Kay's poetry; secondly, the importance of national icons — in this case, 'The Broons' for Scotland; and, finally, Jackie Kay's examination of Scotland through the allusion to this famous comic strip. Arguably, these poems might be read differently by a person unaware of 'The Broons' comic and what they represent for Scotland. Therefore the reading of the poems is far more enriching for those readers who are conscious of this cultural reference and can readily perceive different layers of meaning.

This analysis is an introduction to a future research which will approach Jackie Kay's poetic voice through 'The Broons' by means of a contrastive corpus stylistics study. In this later work, two different corpora are created. The main corpus, includes the five

poems in which the author makes reference to 'The Broons'. The second one, a reference corpus, is made of fifty comic strips of the 1975 Broons annual. The research aims to further interrogate whether Jackie Kay makes use of the characters' language in the comic strip so as to create the poetic voices in these five poems.

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