

**PLOUGHING THE GLEN:
NATION AND RURAL REPRESENTATION IN
TWENTIETH CENTURY SCOTTISH LITERATURE**

BY

MARK BERGE

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of English
University of Manitoba
Winnipeg, Manitoba

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A Thesis/Practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of The University
of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree

of

Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation analyzes the image of the rural community in 20th century Scottish writing and suggests the important implications these various representations have for the political and cultural identity of the modern Scottish nation. The study asks how the changing image of rural life, its symbolic tradition, have been altered by broader social discourses such as national self-awareness.

In Scotland's case, the importance of the rural image is strategic in the country's struggle for a unique identity in the face of the dominating influence of its larger southern neighbour, England. Robert Crawford's *Devolving English Literature* clearly makes the argument that in valorizing the "provincial" within Scottish works, authors such as Hugh MacDiarmid and Lewis Grassie Gibbon, among others have attempted to show a fundamental difference between the two neighbouring nations and to assert a national identity which was independent of Britain. This study adds to Crawford's observations by examining precisely how literary constructions of the rural community have been used to accentuate, inscribe and create a strategy of difference in twentieth century Scottish literature.

Arguing from a cultural-material perspective, this study considers the historical relationship between the literary rural image within a variety of texts and, in turn, the range of critical receptions (journalistic, academic, popular, political) they have received throughout four formative periods in Scotland's recent past. As Timothy Brennan sums up in *Nation and Narration*, the process of nation-building relies on a choice among fictions: "Nations, then, are imaginary constructs that depend for their existence on an apparatus of cultural fictions in which imaginative literature plays a decisive role" (49). This thesis shows precisely which fictions have been written, promoted and discussed in portraying the rural Scottish community. The paper argues chiefly that the rural image is an important site of production for definitions of what it means to be "Scottish." How various receptions of this rural image serve a descriptive and organizing function in the ever-changing perception of Scottish identity is the focus of the dissertation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iii
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER ONE: WRITING A RURAL SCOTLAND	13
CHAPTER TWO: A RURAL INHERITANCE	51
CHAPTER THREE: REDEFINING THE RURAL	89
CHAPTER FOUR: POST-WAR POTATOES AND NATION-BUILDING	153
CHAPTER FIVE: DEVOLUTION AND THE RURAL IMAGINATION	209
CONCLUSION	246
WORKS CITED	254
WORKS CONSULTED	267

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Introduction

On the first of May, 1707, the Earl of Seafield, Chancellor of Scotland, confirmed the Act of Union with England with the now infamous declaration, “there’s ane end to ane auld sang” (Lynch 318). Scotland and its unique contribution to European culture ceased to exist as an independent, sovereign state and became a founding, if unappreciated, partner in Great Britain. The Commissioner, Sir John Clerk of Penicuik, best expressed the hesitation many Scots felt concerning this momentous occasion as he eyed the increasingly aggressive English and the real possibility of invasion. For Clerk the Union was the best of a bad situation and “the best expedient to preserve the honour and liberties of Scotland” (Lynch 315). If the optimistic intentions of the Scottish leadership were for some form of preservation of “Auld Scotland” within the larger framework of Imperial Britain, they sadly underestimated the social, cultural and political invasion of English influence that would occur over the course of three hundred years. Anglicization, associated with the general improvement of Scottish conditions by influential pro-Union supporters such as Edinburgh’s Select Society, or the proponents of the “Age of Improvement” such as Adam Smith and David Hume and London-based writers such as James

2 / Mark Berge

Boswell, led quickly to deep divisions in Scottish culture and hostility surfaced early in the uprisings of 1714 and 1745, which were as much revolts against Anglo-British cultural policy as they were resentment against the Hanoverian succession.

Armed uprising was not surprising given the nature and tone of English attitudes towards the Scottish people. Even before the Union, diplomacy between the two sovereign states was icy and harsh. England's Alien Act of 1705 which "threatened to treat all Scots (except those already domiciled in England) as aliens and to ban the main sectors of trade with England" (Lynch 311), complemented long-standing prejudices which, perhaps, culminated in the inflammatory attitudes of even well-educated men such as Dr. Johnson, who in 1763 stated that "the noblest prospect which a Scotchman ever sees is the high road to England" (Lynch 324). The results of the uprisings of 1715 and 1745 were almost to be expected as widespread discrimination levelled at Scottish patriots developed in England and the systematic repression of Scottish nationality within Britain by the gradual integration of Scotland into the subordinate role of "North Britain" became government policy. For their part in the 1745 uprising which saw the Jacobite defeat at Culloden, the Scots suffered the savage orders of "The Butcher" Cumberland (3500 men seized and 120 executed), widespread forfeitures of land, and the proscription of the incidental symbols of Jacobitism, the tartan and the bagpipes (Lynch 339). For nearly three centuries, Scotland, as a distinct cultural nation, has had to

integrate the contentious Union treaty, with all of its negative connotations, into a *Scottish* narrative which would allow for a broader concept of their political and cultural allegiances and preserve the nation with its “honours and liberties” intact.

Today, as the Scottish parliament sits for the first time in three centuries, Scottish nationalism enjoys widespread appeal and influence. The Scottish National Party or SNP, with its platform of complete independence for Scotland, gained 29% of the popular vote in the 1999 parliamentary elections, making it an important opposing force to the less militant Labour Party and its policy of Home Rule, a policy which traces its genesis from the period of revived nationalism before the First World War when the recognition that a greater voice for Scotland was needed within the Union. In 1999, it was the popular appeal to a nascent late twentieth century nationalism which prompted Sir David Steel, formerly a leader of the Liberal Democrat Party in the UK and now Presiding Officer of the Scottish parliament, to take his seat in the newly formed body and echo Lord Seafielde’s comments by announcing that the parliament was the “start of a new sang,” (Scottie@cqm.co.uk 15 May 1999) effectively restoring the nation to its former position in Scottish life.

Evidently, the metaphor of song, drawing as it does on the shared wealth of communal memory, is an important concept, and one which begins to explain exactly how the Scottish nation survived and maintained itself over the course of three hundred years of integration with the English. Walter Ong’s

4 / Mark Berge

Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word (1982), develops the hypothesis that “experience is intellectualized mnemonically” in oral cultures by “heavy patterning and communal fixed formulas” (36), creating a particular resonance for literate cultures whose texts are capable of reiterating and preserving such patterns over vast spans of time. Scottish culture, as the product of the textual, musical, visual and customary activities of the Scots, fortifies the character of the national identity and is revealed in texts where the “song” of national and daily life is elaborated, presented and, indeed, set for judgement by the community at large. Ong is quite clear concerning the community’s role in validating narratives and he emphasizes the topicality of all narratives. He writes: “oral memorization is subject to variation from direct social pressures. Narrators narrate what audiences call for or will tolerate” (67). In many respects, tolerance of a particular narrative, both in oral and chirographic cultures, indicates the degree to which a community accepts the narrator’s imagining of themselves and the nation to which they belong. One can easily argue that the ebb and flow of tolerance for a particular narrative pattern reveals the expectations a nation preserves regarding its self-image. In Scotland’s case, one blunt question remains unanswered: how did the Scottish nation manage to maintain and imagine itself over the centuries of turbulent rebellion and peaceful unification and, in particular, over the last one hundred years of an awkward modern nationalism in order to remain a cohesive enough community to become the confident and active nation it is today?

To answer this question in part, this dissertation will analyze the influential image of the rural community in 20th century Scottish writing in order to suggest the implications this representation has had for the political and cultural identity of the modern Scottish nation. The study will ask how this image has altered or been altered by broader social discourses such as class politics, religious differences and attitudes to landscape and tradition as the country has passed through periods of national self-examination. Rather than suggest, as the Scottish Marxist critic Tom Nairn does, that a discourse of rurality is a curse (*Curse* 120), the vehicle for violent social change in national movements where rurality is understood not as simply non-urban but in terms of the economic pejorative, “peasantry,” or “modernity’s undertow” (*Curse* 108), I would suggest that in Scotland a rural discourse has formed the basis for passive resistance to English cultural assimilation and the groundwork for imagining the existence of a Scottish nation in the 20th century. As with England’s preoccupation with the “green and pleasant land” of the “South Country (which of course includes Shropshire in its curiously elastic geography but excludes, for example, Cornwall)” (Short 2), Scotland, too, has conjured a rural geography to identify the nation to itself. Whether it is the mountainous north beyond the Highland line, the island regions, the Mearns, Lowlands or the Borders, Scots also rely on a independent vision of the rural nation which often clarifies the social, economic and political troubles which have hindered Scotland as a member of the Union.

The importance of such a study stems from observations made by Raymond Williams on the pervasive influence rural values have in British culture. He states that, "rural Britain was subsidiary, and knew that it was subsidiary, from the late nineteenth century. But so much of the past of the country, its feelings and its literature, was involved with rural experience . . . that there is almost an inverse proportion, in the twentieth century, between the relative importance of the working rural economy and the cultural importance of rural ideas" (*The Country and the City* 297). Although rural imagery in Williams' study promotes a distinct rural social consciousness which is set in contrast to the commercial utilitarianism of industrial Britain, Williams speaks of "rural Britain" as though no difference in perception existed between English and Scottish cultural attitudes towards the rural. In Scotland's case, the importance of the rural image is no less strategic in the country's struggle for a unique identity in the face of the dominating influence of its larger southern neighbour, England, and definite differences occur in its manifestation between the two countries. Robert Crawford's *Devolving English Literature* clearly makes the argument that in valorizing the "provincial" within Scottish works, authors such as Hugh MacDiarmid, Lewis Grassic Gibbon, Neil M. Gunn, among others have written into a national narrative perceptual differences between the two neighbouring nations and asserted a national identity which was independent of England and of Britain. This dissertation adds to Crawford's observations by examining precisely how literary

constructions of the rural community have been used to accentuate, inscribe and create a strategy of difference in twentieth century Scottish literature.

Arguing from a cultural-material perspective, this study considers the historical relationship between the literary rural image within a variety of texts and, in turn, the range of critical receptions (journalistic, academic, popular, political) they have received throughout four formative periods in Scotland's recent past. These periods coincide with an increase in debate on the nature of Scottish life within and without Great Britain and are marked by distinct changes in the portrayal of rural Scotland. As Timothy Brennan sums up in *Nation and Narration*, the process of nation-building relies on a choice among fictions and these choices are neither static nor absolute: "Nations, then, are imaginary constructs that depend for their existence on an apparatus of cultural fictions in which imaginative literature plays a decisive role" (49). This thesis aims to show precisely which fictions have been written, promoted and discussed in portraying the rural Scottish community and by extension, how they relate to the national identity. I will also argue that a distinct rural image unique to Scottish writing is an important site of production for definitions of what it means to be "Scottish." This position utilizes Michel Foucault's assertion that such discourse, "organizes the document, divides it up, distributes it, orders it, arranges it in levels, establishes series, distinguishes what is relevant and what is not, discovers elements, defines unities, describes relations" (*The Archeology of Knowledge* 6). In the case I will argue, the

document in question is the Scottish national image and the influence of the rural topos the subject of this study.

The initial chapter concerns itself with how various receptions of the rural image serve this descriptive and organizing function in the ever-changing perception of Scottish identity. As an introduction to the literature, this first chapter will establish the framework for a history of the portrayal and reception of the rural community in 20th century Scotland.

The second chapter will focus on establishing the nature of the representations of the rural community as Scotland emerged into the twentieth century. Along with an examination of the particular legacy left to Scottish writers before the First World War by the “Kailyard” school (1880 - 1914), with its sentimental, often nostalgic portrayals of rural life (J.M. Barrie’s *Auld Lycht Idylls* and S. R. Crockett’s *The Stickit Minister*), the chapter will investigate the images found in works by Robert Louis Stevenson, Margaret Oliphant, Jane and Mary Findlater, among others. This section will also take into account the academic concern with the “Scottish countryside” in journals such as *Blackwood’s*. The thesis will argue that representation of rural Scotland before the First World War maintained the impression of the Scot as a deeply patriotic figure with ingrained animosity for the “civilized” world of urbanized (English) Scotland in a chauvinistic and isolating portrayal of Scottish society. The purpose of such an argument is to establish that a historical discourse concerning itself with the organization and promotion of a discernable rural

image dedicated to elaborating an image of the Scottish nation existed in early twentieth century Scottish writing and that such an image was irrevocably disrupted when Scotland found itself questioning its role in the First World War.

The third section of the thesis focuses on the later literary challenges to the pre-World War I Scottish rural image and its conceptual framework. The most significant attacks on the early century's prevailing notions of Scottish rurality as a nostalgic, remote ideal emanated from the Modernist writers of the inter-war period, the so-called Scottish Renaissance, who rejected all "tartantry" and called for "realistic" representations of Scottish life. The sense that the Scottish people had become "divorced" from cultural traditions led such Modernist authors as Lewis Grassie Gibbon, Hugh MacDiarmid, and Edwin Muir to suggest that the nation was in decay and that a redefinition of the "provincial" was necessary in order to survive an increasingly bleak, impersonal future.

Characteristically, the Modernist search for universal truths in the most specifically local features of their individual backgrounds (such as Lewis Grassie Gibbon's portrayal of the Mearns in his epic, *A Scots Quair*) gave rise to the re-examination of the portrayal of country life in Scottish writing. The Modernist's attempt at rewriting Scottish identity by altering the features of the rural image may have failed due to the emphasis on the loss of tradition, a failed continuity and a "bogus peasantry," often informed by Marxist

ideology, which formed the backbone of Modernist representations of Scottish rurality. Hugh MacDiarmid's work, *A Drunk Man Looks at a Thistle*, is a fine example of the wish of the Modernist writer to jettison the sentimentalism which marked rural representation, but it disallows any value in the images of country existence as a viable force in defining the Scottish identity. How this shift in focus affected the literary representation of rural life in the years after World War II and to the 1970's is the concern of the 4th chapter.

The question of Scottish nationality, indeed, the notion of a Scottish identity, was raised to new prominence by the Modernist writers and continued to attract commentary and political action in the years leading up to the failed bid for political separation from Britain in 1979. In the years after World War II, deepening economic unrest over the failure of the heavy industries of the "Coal Belt," the rise of the Scottish Nationalist Party, the institution of BBC Scotland, and the vast promise of North Sea Oil intensified the search for unifying narratives for a Scottish nation. Robert Crawford has commented on the need for these consolidating features in cultural groups: "Often what small or vulnerable cultural groups need is not simply a deconstruction of rhetorics of authority, but a construction or reconstruction of a 'usable past,' an awareness of cultural tradition which will allow them to preserve or develop a sense of their own distinctive identity, their constituting difference" (*Devolving* 5). The fourth chapter concerns itself with the position writers of the late fifties, sixties and seventies established through their portrayals of the rural community in

light of a growing desire for national narratives. It will argue that writers such as Sydney Goodsir Smith, Compton Mackenzie, Erik Linklater, Alastair Reed, Edwin Morgan and Wendy Wood represented the rural in order to specifically express a Scottish culture with a immediate relation to a “usable past.” This fruitful period, I will argue, made extensive use of the countryside and its depictions to re-territorialize a cultural identity, to empower a national narrative of locality and regionalism which supplemented the growing expression of Scotland as an international, urban and cosmopolitan country. Though the failure of separation from Britain in 1979 shook the post-war generation’s faith in political independence, representations of the rural community in this period, I would argue, partly allowed for the conceptualization of a distinctive Scottish identity which would allow for further political action.

The fifth chapter of the dissertation concentrates on rural representation since the second explosion of Scottish writing in the 1980’s to the present. Just as old stereotypes of Scottish history were being questioned by a resurgence in Scottish poetry and fiction in the works of Ian Bamforth, Alan Warner (*These Demented Lands*) and Andrew Greig (*The Return of John MacNab*), the face of rural life was being re-examined in light of a confident nationalism which eventually succeeded in 1997 in gaining legislative powers for a Scottish parliament. The international success of the urban Scottish novel (Irvine Welsh’s *Trainspotting*, Alasdair Gray’s *Lanark*, James Kelman’s *How Late it*

Was, How Late) gave new prominence to a vision of modern Scottish life as urban in nature, but this image of Scotland is incomplete when a reader considers the enduring rural image in Scottish writing. There is a certain truth in Benedict Anderson's assertion that a nation "is imagined as a community, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship" (7). Many contemporary Scottish writers, I will argue, are imagining a new relationship with a "rural" discourse in order to better understand the country's position in relation to English literature and English writing. Writers such as George Mackay Brown (*Beyond the Ocean of Time*) and James Campbell (*Scottish Journey*) are concerned with representing the rural as an undiscovered country, to be investigated and explored in order to disrupt the enduring English stereotypes of Scotland and its culture. This strategy finds support in Giles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's ideas on the nature of national literature and the role of writing plays in interrupting old and forming new political relationships within society: "Because collective or national consciousness is often inactive in external life and always in the process of break-down, literature finds itself positively charged with the role and function of collective, and even revolutionary, enunciation" (*Kafka* 16). This fifth chapter and the conclusion will attempt to show that new representations of the rural community are immediately political and continuing to adjust the self-identity of the Scottish nation.

"The world can be as much the parish of a region as of a metropolis."

(Hywel Davis, BBC Lunchtime Lecture,
13 January 1965)

Chapter One:

Writing a Rural Scotland

The Scottish rural landscape, its bens, lochs, glens and "touns," has played a significant, if overlooked role in the emergence of Scottish nationalism in the twentieth century. A social as well as physical geography, rural Scotland has developed into a literary vehicle with its own set of metaphors, images, symbols and stereotypes. In the fierce cultural politics concerning Scottish identity which has erupted in this century, representations of rural Scotland have been used to engage in this debate and involve writers with the political, cultural and social distinctiveness of the Scottish nation. The familiar criticism that the images of country life have remained stagnant, untouched by contemporary concerns or incapable of change have little basis in fact when we observe that they have been shaped and re-shaped in the imagination of Scot and visitor alike by the popular media, Highland Games organizers, tourist boards, broadcasters and, perhaps most successfully, creative writers. Held collectively as representations of a unique "reality," the images associated with the rural narrative form part of a historical and discursive process which defines and helps elaborate the Scottish national and political experience in the twentieth

century.

The characteristics of the Scottish rural image are couched in a method of presentation which was identified as unique very early on in the twentieth century by G. Gregory Smith in his influential study, *Scottish Literature: Character and Influence* (1919). He noted that “in Scots the zest for handling a multitude of details rather than for seeking broad effects by suggestion is very persistent. When Allan Ramsay commended two of the authors represented in his *Ever Green* because they ‘painted to life’, he might have said this of nearly all the writers in his collection. Ramsay asserted that ‘everywhere it is the Dutch style - interiors, country folk, and town ‘bodies,’ farmyard and alehouse; everywhere a direct and convincing familiarity; little or nothing left out and much almost pedantically accurate’” (5-6). The comparison Smith makes to the masters of the Dutch style in visual arts, an appropriate one considering The Netherlands’ similar position in Europe as a distinct yet small nation, deflects the important recognition that in literary endeavour Scottish writers, as far back as Ramsay’s 18th century, made local, rural scenes a manner of expressing a “convincing familiarity” when representing Scottish life. Far from promoting an idyllic, traditional, pastoral literature through Classical images of the countryside, Scottish writers in the twentieth century are more comfortable with an unusual, almost radical, pastoral mode of writing, a “pedantic” and oftentimes searching accuracy, utilized to stem what is perceived as cultural assimilation into a wider and invasive British culture. The English writer, T. H.

Crosland could find no better accusation to hurl at the Scottish people than to comment on this feature of Scottish narrative. His harangue in *The Unspeakable Scot* (1902) is instructive: "Your proper child of Caledonia believes in his rickety bones that he is the salt of the earth. Prompted by that glozing pride, not to say by a black and consuming avarice, he has proclaimed his saltiness from the housetops in and out of season, unblushingly, assiduously, and with results which have no doubt been most satisfactory from his own point of view" (11). Indeed, Crosland's nearly hysterical reaction suggests that the affirmation of cultural difference between England and Scotland was well aided by the Scot's "salty" and persistent literary strategy. As Ong points out, the aggregative accumulation of "pedantic" detail reminds us of the mnemonic strategy of oral communities where expression "carries a load of epithets and other formulary baggage which high literacy rejects as cumbersome and tiresomely redundant because of its aggregative weight" (38). Such weight, however, also carries with it the community's memory of itself.

In a country where English has effectively supplanted the spoken language through political union and domination, Scottish literature in English is marked by the note of subversive denial towards cultural integration often in rural terms. As early as the 1550's, Robert Wedderburn, vicar of Dundee, readily pointed out the differences between the Scottish people and their English neighbours utilizing biblical-pastoral metaphor. In the *Complaynt of Scotland*, he wrote with incredulity of a unified British kingdom: "It is onpossible that

Scottis men and Inglis men can remane in concord undir ane monarche or ane prince, because there naturis and conditions ar as indefferent as is the nature of the sheip and volvis" (Miekle 154). Nor is there any doubt here about which is which. In 1725, Allan Ramsay's influential poem *The Gentle Shepherd*, reiterated this Scottish use of the pastoral emphasizing his rejection of a court and crown dominated by urban English "society" centred in London in favour of a rural life of uncorrupted tranquillity: "Thrice Happy life! That's from ambition free; / Remove'd from crown and courts, how cheerfully / A calm contented mortal speeds his time, / In hearty health, his soul unstained with crime!" (73). The sharp criticism of the urban life of the court in political terms, in essence, emphasizes the pastoral celebration of Scottish rural life that has continued even to this day as a means to resist English metropolitan influence and culture. Speaking of John Clare, the "Northhamptonshire Peasant," author of *Poems Descriptive of Rural Life and Scenery* (1820), Sidney Burris notes in his study, *The Poetry of Resistance*, that "to praise a community is to preserve a community, guarding it against cultural assimilation, and many of the methods Clare employed to celebrate his culture were 'counter-cultural'" (38). Clare is of interest to this study because he prefigures twentieth century writers such as Seamus Heaney, Neil M. Gunn, William Carlos Williams, in their stylistic concern for post-colonial place and identity. The element of counter-cultural expression in Clare's descriptions of rural life has manifested itself as well in Scottish twentieth century writing and added to a discourse which has

validated a uniquely Scottish rural identity which is often set against what is perceived to be the values of an English-dominated urban culture.

A familiar position within literary criticism is to suggest as Foucault does that discourse is deeply engaged in creating its own subject in order to create cultural meaning: "History, in its traditional form, undertook to 'memorize' the *monuments* of the past, transform them into *documents*, and lend speech to those traces which, in themselves, are often not verbal, or which say in silence something other than what they actually say; in our time, history is that which transforms *documents* into *monuments*. In that area where, in the past, history deciphered the traces left by men, it now deploys a mass of elements that have to be grouped, made relevant, placed in relation to one another to form totalities" (*Archeology* 7). In regard to literary enterprises and their relationship to these discursive processes, Brian McHale suggests that "narrative in particular recommends itself as a means of building foundations by constructing constructions because storytelling (at least in traditional forms) bears within its own (provisional) self-grounding, its own (local, limited) self-legitimation" (*Constructing Postmodernism* 5). The matter which concerns us here regarding a rural image in Scottish literature is that national narratives are deeply engaged in limiting their field of authority to exclude difference as well as establish a "legitimate" central discourse. The concepts which are elaborated, expanded and validated by texts of various compositions form the basis for even the most mundane of our everyday realities. Questioning how

Scottish writers organize and orient themselves towards a concept of a rural Scotland may suggest patterns of belief, continuities and perspectives on the ongoing process of national self-legitimization. As Benedict Anderson suggests, the nation is “an imagined political community” (6), and investigating the images of that community, shaped in the imagination, may point to a better understanding of its organization. At the end of the twentieth century, with concerns regarding representation for smaller nations on the global stage profoundly important, the relevance of understanding the nation’s social and political foundations become especially immediate.

This study does not seek to validate any one particular vision of the Scottish rural discourse, but to raise the profile of the images as they inform another important concept in Scottish society, the enduring belief that there is a Scottish nation. In contemporary Scotland, the relationship between nation and narrative is complicated by the fact that the Scotland has not been an independent state for nearly three hundred years. After the Union of 1707, administrative, military and financial decisions for Great Britain were made by the English-dominated parliament at Westminster. As an unequal partner in Union, Scotland has endured a lack of concern and a prejudiced ignorance of its cultural traditions. Anecdotes from Jim Hewitson’s *Scotching the Myths* suggest a long-standing bitterness: “Scots anger at being lumped in under the general heading of ‘English’ dates back at least to the Union. One story is told of Trafalgar, when Nelson ran up his legendary ‘England expects’ signal. There

were Scots scattered throughout the fleet but on one warship two messmates from the same clachan saw the message and one remarked: 'No word for puir auld Scotland.' The other smiled: 'Man, Geordie, Scotland kens weel enough that her bairns will do their duty - that's just a hint to the Englishers tae do theirs!'"(54). Increasingly over time, Scottish culture and institutions after the Union have been devalued in favour of a British, or English, standard. It was the British Lord Chancellor, Erskine, himself a Scotsman, nearly one hundred years after the Union in 1806 who quipped ironically, "I know something of law but of Scotch law I am as ignorant as a native of Mexico" (Lynch 321).

Erskine's ignorance in 1806 was complemented later in 1822 by the creation, under Walter Scott's direct supervision, of a staged tartan pageant of "Highland culture" for George IV's state visit to Edinburgh which bore little relation to reality according to Hugh Trevor-Roper, who quotes Lord Macaulay's disbelief at the "collective hallucination": "The last British king who held a court in Holyrood thought that he could not give a more striking proof of his respect for the usages which had prevailed in Scotland before the Union, than by disguising himself in what, before the Union, was considered by nine Scotchmen out of ten as the dress of a thief" (31). The growth of a romantic and escapist vision of Scotland was chiefly established in order to make a place for Scots in the British world and by 1850, the post-Union Jacobite revolts were long idealized and Scottish patriotism had become a Victorian tourist trap. Christopher Harvie comments: "Patriotic agitation gave continuing legitimacy

to fringe groups - Jacobites, Gaelic enthusiasts, Catholics, even Tories - who could tap emotions which the ruling consensus neglected. In due course, and helped by external sources like Queen Victoria and the tourist industry, patriotism evolved into Tom Nairn's great Tartan monster, the populist substructure which eventually issued forth in the music halls and the sentimentality of the Kailyard school. The political returns to 'real' nationalism were, like the Secretaryship [of Scotland], limited" (21). Harvie's conclusion has a real political undercurrent when we realize that Queen Victoria, herself, had co-opted Scottish culture as a part of her reign. Her purchase of Balmoral and subsequent reanimation of the trappings of a Jacobite court was uniquely influential in creating the mystique and the popularity Scottish culture enjoyed during the later half of the nineteenth century (Trevor-Roper 38). Politically, Scottish culture was made the subject of a condescending diletantism which made it wholly ineffective in dealing with Scottish social and political problems. Works such as James MacPherson's fraudulent *Ossian* poems of the early 1760's, initiated a wildly popular romantic Celticism in Scotland, and was encouraged by Victoria's imagined, romantic 'Hieland' culture of tartans and bagpipes. The result was to preserve English stereotypes of Scotland and push the Scot into the role of a "barbaric other," a role which Scots have struggled to overcome by co-opting the imagery associated with the authorized, monolithic and essentially English vision of Scotland and subverting it to assert that "a recognition of an all-embracing plurality or otherness which runs counter to

the valorization of central (institutional, canonical) authority - does not correct imbalances in power; it neutralizes power by promoting the cliché that everyone is the same in his or her difference" (Lecker 11).

In cultural matters, the antagonism held in English or "British" circles for politically separate and active linguistic and literary foundations was so complete that in 1867 Matthew Arnold could assert, with only a hint of nostalgic and imperialistic regret, that "the fusion of all the inhabitants of these islands into one homogenous, English-speaking whole, the breaking down of barriers between us, the swallowing up of separate provincial nationalities, is a consummation to which the course of things irresistibly tends; it is a necessity of what is called modern civilisation" (20). The development of a truly local "Scottish" identity, problematic as this has become in today's pluralist society, took its cue in the late nineteenth century, as Robert Crawford has observed of English regional writing, from precisely what Arnold saw as anti-progressive, a provincial strategy. Crawford comments: "to ignore the voice of the provincial in nineteenth-century writing in England is to distort and oversimplify the development of that country's literature. There are hidden currents between these provincial voices and their twentieth-century inheritors which have yet to be fully explored. Nevertheless, it seems undeniable that it was the un-English provincials and their traditions which contributed most to the crucially provincial phenomenon which we now know as Modernism" (*Devolving* 217). As we shall see in chapter three, many of the Modernist writers

in Scotland, influenced undoubtedly by the success of provincial writers like Joyce, Yeats, O'Casey and Synge in Ireland, were deeply concerned with re-writing the Scottish rural landscape as a means of moving against the current of English "civilisation." Faced with a Conservative establishment at Westminster who kept a tight rein on Scottish political and cultural bodies because it was thought Scots "would suffer from a failure to access the 'progressive' benefits of Westminster legislation" (Levitt 1), it is not surprising that nationally-minded Scots have sought to develop narratives which could assert cultural difference. One such avenue was to continue to validate the local, regional and rural Scottish character.

The significance of the countryside and pastoral imagery in early twentieth century Scottish literature has not gone unnoticed; nor has it only to do with political resistance to a perceived British cultural imperialism emanating from an urban, cosmopolitan perspective. The threat which was posed by the alienating effects of industrialization also provoked the promotion of rural imagery. William Power has noted that Victorian Scotland had few literary resources available to it to deal with the rapid and destructive build-up of the "coal-belt" stretching from Glasgow to Edinburgh:

Though Scotland had been severely industrialized, though the number of miners, artisans and textile workers was possibly greater than that of all agricultural workers and though Glasgow was one of the largest of British cities, it was still assumed, for literary purposes, that the majority

of Scots lived in rustic villages . . . The Scots people were vigorous industrialists and slum-builders, but they never reconciled themselves spiritually to their own urban creations . . . The fact of the matter is that social conditions in industrial Scotland at that time were somewhat beyond the scope of realism. (163)

The Scottish Victorian's reliance on the image of the rustic village and a distrust of urban landscapes has much to do with the perception that the Scottish people were continually in jeopardy of being divorced from an organic identity associated with a rural past. Edwin Muir, writer, poet and critic, suggested this connection as late as 1935 in his *Scottish Journey*:

A town was once as natural an expression of a people's character as its landscape and its fields; it sprang up in response to a local and particular need; its houses, churches, and streets were suited to the habits and nature of the people who lived in it. Industrialism, which is a mechanical cosmopolitan power -and the same in Prague as in Glasgow - has changed this. It makes people live in houses which do not suit them, work in places which two hundred years ago would have been considered as mad as a nightmare, and destroys their sense even of ordinary suitability; and it does all this because its motive force is a mechanical and not a human one. (21)

Muir suggests, rather than a reconciliation with the urban centre, a rejection of the cosmopolitan in favour of a Scottish rural and human ideal. His writings,

which will be examined in greater detail in chapter 3, reflect a strategy of provincial resistance which informs much of early twentieth century Scottish nationalist writing and belongs to a wider development in colonized countries, a rejection of the urban and administrative centres of power.

British difficulty in recognizing and accepting the claims of Scottish nationalism stems not only from a widely held perception in the first half of the twentieth century that English and British culture are one-and-the-same, but also from a persistent belief that a British national culture exists without significant resistance. Frank Gillard, Head of Programmes, BBC West Region, saw no contradiction, in 1955, in promoting a national British culture by aiding regional or even local programming. He stated that, "since a healthy national culture is based on healthy regional cultures, broadcasting which is one of the greatest instruments of our day for the nourishment of culture must accept some responsibility for the whole plant from the roots up" (Briggs *History* 624). This "healthy" attitude, however, meant taking responsibility for pruning the plant when it did not conform to the BBC's centralizing policies. The protests which marked the establishment of a regional BBC Scottish Radio service rather than a Scottish autonomous broadcaster were met by clinical coolness from J. C. W Reith, Director-General of the BBC in 1929, speaking about the cultural distinctiveness of the "Celtic Fringe." He comments: "The disadvantages, [concerning centralized broadcasting], of however definite a nature . . . have been in my mind all along. The local cultural loss should be, to

a considerable extent, offset by the quality of the London programme, and to a further extent by the activities still open to Regional Directors” (Briggs *BBC* 134). The extent to which BBC centralized programming reflected the general attitude in England that national cultures within the United Kingdom were subordinate to an Anglo-British nation is made clear by Reith’s statements. When television entered the public’s imagination in the early 1950’s, the divisions were further institutionalized by the difficulties presented in implementing the new medium. Robert Dunnett, television critic of the *Scottish Daily Mail*, wrote that “Scotland is not, however, entirely dependent on facilities for originating programmes within her own borders. We may expect rather more programmes of Scottish interest to be included in the London schedules. . . But, obviously, at present, for physical, geographical and financial reasons the pictures we will see on our television screens will be mainly of people who live in southern England and will reflect a southern English approach to life” (Coven 29). The lack of political will to address the unequal terms of television development swiftly led Dunnett to suggest, concerning the establishment in Glasgow of a Scottish television studio centre, that “if B.B.C building plans and priorities continue at the present rate, we can forget about this [the studio centre] for years” (Coven 28). Clearly, Scottish interests were seen to be low on the list of priorities with regard to broadcasting in the U.K.

The anticipated “activities” of Scottish broadcasting were slow in

becoming reality and were, for the most part, overtly parochial in nature due to the limited air time given the Scottish Home Service before the 1960's. An anonymous critic in *The Scotsman* of 1947 complained that "bagpipe music is limited to 10 to 15 minutes usually twice a week. These items form only a very small part of the full weekly programme" (7.1.47). In his study of Scottish broadcasting in 1949, John Highet concluded that merely 19.1 percent of the total broadcast time in Scotland could be attributed to Scottish programming and much of that was dedicated to traditional themes (11). It is perhaps significant that in 1923, the BBC's first dinner broadcast was the event of G. K. Chesterton's toast of Robert Burns on the 25th of January (Briggs *BBC* 364). Encouragement from the central London authority allowed the Regional Director to broadcast what he or she deemed to be Scottish material or of national interest and invariably resulted in a representation of Scottish culture based on popular stereotypes. The extent to which BBC executives saw regional programming as set-pieces for "culturally unique" programming, a showcase for ethnicity acceptable to its English audience and a Scottish Establishment eager to maintain British ties, can be seen in the events which were featured in television and on radio: Hogmanay, Burn's Night, the General Assembly of the Church, the Royal Highland Show, the National Mod of the Gaidhealach, and, not least, state visits with their preponderance of kilted authority (Briggs *History* 670). In its report to the influential Pilkington Committee, charged with an official review of the BBC's internal structure in the early 1960's, The Saltire

Society in Scotland specifically insisted that “it was not looking for a larger quota of material built round a Scottish parish pump” (Briggs *History* 674), but a Scottish perspective on local and national events. This complaint echoed the general dissatisfaction with the images and themes of portraying a “quaint,” rustic Scotland in the turbulent years of Scottish nationalist politics in the post-WWII era. However, radio programs which emphasized the rural aspect of the country, like *The Scottish Country Series* (1948) and *The Scottish Heritage Series* (1947), continued for some time to constitute a significant avenue for the portrayal of a Scotland unique in its national characteristics. In effect, the choices made by Scottish Regional Directors regarding the presentation of Scotland in the media were writing the nation through an outward badge of rural difference.

The debate over the nature and function of the modern nation has elicited, at the end of the twentieth century, several responses regarding the question of the mechanisms which form the nation’s inner workings. Unsurprisingly, at this late date in Postmodernism’s concern with narrative structure, the concept that the nation is constructed through literary means is well-favoured in critical circles. Timothy Brennan concludes that “nations, then, are imaginary constructs that depend for their existence on an apparatus of cultural fictions in which imaginative literature plays a decisive role” (49). Less accepting of the construct of the national identity, Eric Hobsbawn suggests that “modern nations and all their impedimenta generally claim to be

the opposite of novel, namely rooted in the remotest antiquity, and the opposite of constructed, namely human communities so 'natural' as to require no definition other than self-assertion" (*Invention* 14). Implicitly, these critics assert that the nation, whatever its elements or purposes, is a vehicle for the expression of a fluid, and often mutable, self-identity. The illusory permanence of the national image is based on a vision of the social world as sharply bounded and conceived of as homogenous, ethnic, cultural blocs. (Brubaker 274). The elusiveness of the nation's workings lie in the instability of its narrative fields to make concrete a "permanent" national identity in everyday life. Indeed, as Geoffrey Cubit stresses, these narratives make possible the various cultural and social politics which allow for self-expression: "Their assumed existence and importance form an imaginative field on to which different sets of concerns may be projected, and upon which connections may be forged between aspects of social, political and cultural experience" (1). With regard to the development of a Scottish national identity in the twentieth century, writers involved with the creation of such imaginative fields express Scotland's concerns within Great Britain relying on narratives which explicitly territorialize, in the concrete detail of rural terms, a Scottish identity.

The notion that the nation occupies a particular space, both figuratively and literally, forms an important cornerstone for the conceptual framework of the modern nation. Borders which are carefully guarded and maintained are perhaps the most overt example of the act of "territorializing" a national space

unique to a cultural group. Other, nonetheless tangible, examples of creating the differences implied by the nation space are to be found in the mechanisms of cultural production. The advent of national newspapers, state-funded radio and television stations, annual sports events, cultural festivals and representative arts bodies (national ballets, symphonies, and drama schools) all aid in the standardization of language, artistic tastes, political views and national symbols. Art and literature also play their part in forming the conceptual breadth and depth of the national space. In Scotland, the rural landscape has come to symbolize, in part, a defining element in what is considered “Scottish.”

For example, the image of a fictitious Drumtochty (fig. 1) taken from Ian Maclaren’s novel, *The Days of Auld Lang Syne*, published in 1895, illustrates the scenery and manner of Scottish country life which continues to dominate imagery associated with Scotland. The tight cluster of houses, surrounded by woods and facing a dirt road, is disturbed only by the leisurely pace of a single individual whose ramble comments on the calm and steady demeanour of the village. The photograph is a revealing glimpse of the Scottish character as envisioned by Maclaren and his publisher. In comparison, fig. 2 shows the imagined port town of Hamnavoe, Orkney from George Mackay Brown’s 1975 collection of news columns, *Letters from Hamnavoe*. The features demonstrate a marked similarity to Maclaren’s work; the huddled housing surrounded by the open hill behind, the few men fishing and chatting on the pier and the



DRUMTOCHTY—THE VILLAGE

[Fig. 1] Drumtochty – The Village. in Maclaren, Ian. *The Days of Auld Lang Syne* . New York: Dodd & Mead, 1895.



[Fig. 2] Hill and Harbour, from Mackay Brown, George, *Letters from Hamnavoe*.

Edinburgh: Gordon Wright, 1975.



[Fig. 3] Dornie near Eilean Donan Castle. *Photographs of Scotland*.

(<http://www.scotlandphotos.com/gallery/0090312.html>), Dec. 12 2000.

steady work of the fishing skip progressing in the background. The village or rural scene informs much of the promotion of Scotland as a tourist destination and as a means of identifying and commercializing the image of the Scottish nation. Fig 3, Dornie near Eilean Donan Castle (1999), is a representative sample of the photographs from a website which seeks to cultivate interest in Scotland for travellers. Again, the village setting of Dornie emphasizes the cluster of homes, the impressive and looming hillsides and the quiet security of Scottish life. The image of the village and its rural setting is directed not only at foreign travellers for commerce but to Scots themselves in order to reinforce the wide cultural appeal of the deeply-felt connections with landscape, community and nation which form a corrective to the depersonalization, materialism and isolation imagined in urban centres dominated by English names and business.

In a recent article of *The Scots Magazine*, a top-selling, Scottish-interest monthly, Paul Turner illustrates the pervasive influence of rural imagery in post-industrial Scotland. His description of Unst, the northernmost Shetland island, emphasizes a relationship between a rural past and daily modern living” “Crofting has largely shaped the landscape that we see today but small herds of Shetland ponies roam open hillsides above the hay fields. Anglers can seek out brown trout in the island’s lochs while a modern leisure centre offers a heated pool and sports facilities. Traditional music and dance events are held during the year, details appear on the notice-boards in local shops” (132) This

description, tailored for an urban, tourist audience, responds to the landscape by offering the features of a pastoral idyll (open, depopulated nature) and the comforts of modern conveniences. In the context of a Scottish-interest magazine, it also offers a relationship between “crofting,” “traditional music and dance” and the close-knit community which enjoys its local shops, promoting a scene imagined as typical of “Scottish” life. It is by no means as comprehensive as the many novels, short stories, poems, TV broadcasts or radio plays which adopt this landscape to express Scotland, but it does illustrate a complex set of values applied to a particular type of place and labelled “Scottish.” It is a popular construct which serves to express a facet of the national character and does so by creating in the disparate aspects of rural Scotland “‘a single symbol of complex vital and emotive import’ which, if an observer accepts it, allows for new and wider perceptions and understandings of how the things of the world fit together” (Raybin 26).

In addition, Homi K. Bhaba suggests in *Nation and Narration* that the fictions which form the basis for nationality are equally engaged in rejecting other narratives as well as authenticating and affirming a defining narrative. Bhabha writes: “In each of these ‘foundational fictions’ the origins of national traditions turn out to be as much acts of affiliation and establishment as they are moments of disavowal, displacement, exclusion, and cultural contestation” (5). Indeed, Walter Ong asserts a similar engagement in oral formations of experience when he states that “for an oral culture learning or knowing means

achieving close, empathetic, communal identification with the known, 'getting with it'" (45-46). The dismantling role literature plays in Scotland, questioning and revealing the discourses used by transnational, urban, British central authority, is matched by the assertions of nationhood which writers have developed by promoting, discussing and figuring the rural spaces of Scotland in close communal agreement with the national narrative. The contrast is a powerful method of resisting cultural influence while at the same time constructing a "usable past." To this date no detailed survey of the rural Scottish image exists, even though its role as a medium for national self-assertion has been of great importance. This study, of course, is an attempt to remedy this situation.

The gradual development of a rural, patriotic, Jacobite and vernacular literature in Scotland after the Union of 1707 must be placed historically in relation to the foundation of an Anglo-British, Whig, Enlightenment establishment in the major centres of Edinburgh and Glasgow in the 18th century. These contrasting concerns, both motivated by separate political, linguistic and religious differences, created the conditions for the rise of a literary nationalism whose focus was local, and oftentimes invented, tradition. Murray G. H. Pittock suggests that this development was in direct response to popular feeling against the imported, urban sensibilities of the south: "By 1745 popular Jacobitism was in its decline in London, where white roses were last reported on the 10th of June in 1723, although it survived in provincial England

for rather longer. In Scotland, however, the high cultural patriotism which rejected the new metropolitan norms implanted the folk tradition as central in a distinctively Scottish literary culture; and this can be seen as a key to the Scottish literary tradition from that day to this, through the work of people such as Ramsay, Fergusson, Burns, Scott, Hogg, Oliphant, Stevenson and Muir” (*Inventing* 115). The adoption of the folk tradition as a means to counteract and resist pro-British writing by nationalist writers of post-Union Scotland also meant that representing Scotland through its city life was largely rejected in favour of images of small towns where British leaders were gruffly mocked through the lens of local politics. In the imaginary village, Dreamthorp (1905), described in Alexander Smith’s often sentimental novel of the same name, this method is made explicit in the account of the local denizens, comparing them with the leaders of Britain and deflating them in an ironic fashion:

It is wonderful how the whole world reflects itself in the simple village life. The people around me are full of their own affairs and interests; were they of imperial magnitude, they could not be excited more strongly. Farmer Worthy is anxious about the next market ... the village doctor - happily we have only one - skirrs hither and thither in his gig, as if man could neither die nor be born without his assistance ... And the robustious fellow who sits at the head of the table when the Jolly Swillers meet at the Blue Lion on Wednesday evenings is a great politician, sound of lung metal, and wields the village in the taproom, as my Lord

Palmerston wields the nation in the House. His listeners think him a wiser personage than the Premier, and he is inclined to lean to that opinion himself. I find everything here that other men find in the big world. London is but a magnified Dreamthorp. (21-22)

Turning the microscope upon the countryside to suggest its broader social importance is clearly a validation of rural life opposed to the implied self-importance of the centres of power and reflects the strategy of declaring cultural difference which the nationalist narrative in Scotland utilized to oppose the Union settlement.

As the nineteenth century dawned, the persistent and complicated split in Scottish society of the eighteenth century which pitted Whig liberals in favour of anglicization and incorporating Union against factious Tory conservatives intent on defending full independence or federal Union had created two distinct narratives for Scotland's future. Charles Haws suggests the division between assimilationists and nationalists operated from 1707 onwards as two polarized political and cultural agendas which had their basis in the incomplete nature of the Union settlement: "The formal incorporating Union of 1707 left Scotland 'semi-independent' with its national institutions of kirk, law and education still intact. These institutions would later contribute to the dilemma by the sheer fact that they existed and could be built upon when individuals sought principles of devolution and independence" (21). The strategy of assimilationists was a heartfelt confidence in the "progress,"

economic or otherwise, Scotland had made under British rule and the positive effects of institutional reform. Henry Cockburn, a prominent Whig activist, refuted Tory legal challenges to constitutional reform by raising the spectre of pre-1707 hardships (ironically brought about chiefly by the failure of the Darien scheme, Scotland's ill-fated attempt to establish a colony on the Panama isthmus, and English hostility to free Scottish trade). Cockburn complained, "If these unhappy articles had served all the purposes for which they have been employed, the institutions of Scotland would have stood exactly as they did in the 1707" (*Edinburgh Review* lii 1830). Indeed, under successive Whig administrations the term "North Britain" gained widespread currency as a moniker for Scotland in cultural and political matters. Such a term suggested an integration into a broader British nation which relied on the centrality of London as its focal point and on the progressive commercial and industrial success of the cities.

On the other hand, nationalist strategy in Scotland relied on the preservation of a romantic "Auld Scotland" of pious values and a defiant individualism which was set in the communal scenes of the parochial village, the Highland fastness and lowland farms. In *Rob Roy*, Sir Walter Scott describes the Highland regions and its outlaws as a bulwark of justice, freedom and Scottish independence in contrast to the confinement of Glasgow. Francis Osbaldistone's initial meeting with Rob Roy illustrates this clearly: "Muckle," said the stranger, whose language became more broadly national as he

assumed a tone of colloquial freedom- "Muckle wad the provost and bailies o'Glasgow gie to hae him[Rob Roy] sitting with iron garters to his hose within their tolbooth, that now stands wi' his legs as free as the red-deer's on the outside on't" (192). Even in Whig circles, the image of rural Scotland remained a powerful motive image in the life of the country. The strident Whig supporter, Reverend Thomas Chalmers, Free Church minister of Glasgow, also brought to his ministries, rapidly expanding due to urban bloat and accompanied by many social ills, the vision of parochial communities based on his memory of his home parish, Kilmeny, in Fifeshire (Kidd 114). The popularity of Scott and Chalmers' choices saw the eventual institutionalization of a metaphor for Scottish society that has had long-standing implications and identified "Scottish" society with the rural village, comprised of the parochial school, church, cottar's homes and outlying farms. It is this image which can be found in the work of Susan Ferrier (*Marriage, A Novel* 1818), Robert Louis Stevenson (*Thrawn Janet*), but perhaps most famously of all, in Robert Burns' overtly nationalist poem, "The Cottar's Saturday Night":

Then homeward all take off their sev'ral way;

The youngling cottar's retire to rest:

...

From scenes like these, old Scotia's grandeur springs,

that makes her lov'd at home, rever'd abroad:

Princes and lords are but the breath of kings,

'An honest man's the noblest work of God;
And certes, in fair virtue's heavenly road,
The cottage leaves the palace far behind;
What is a lordlings's pomp? a cumbrous load,
Disguising oft the wretch of human kind,
Studies in arts of hell, in wickedness refin'd! (92)

The pious pastoral imagery and a critique of the vanity of aristocratic life in Burn's poetry suggests a conscious search for distinctive variances between the rural national identity of "old Scotia" and the less attractive "wretch of humankind," which may be construed as the pomp of Anglicized city life.

The risks involved in promoting a discourse of rural Scotland are fairly clear when surrounded by today's post-industrial, capitalist and urban society. Pastoral imagery and images of the rural countryside are bound to age-old conventions which reflect a Romantic, escapist vision of an Arcadian past and idyllic life. However, as Harold Toliver notes, these images are not necessarily tied to a pastoral idealism, but rely on the skill of the writer to manipulate them into revealing more contemporary concerns: "The difficulty in finding an effective balance between idyllic dreams and everyday functions of complex societies is increased when paradise becomes a distant Eden or future paradise, which are all the more unreachable and hostile to business as usual" (*Pastoral* 211). Scottish literature, as I will argue, frequently found itself struggling with keeping this balance between fantasy and reality as the

twentieth century progressed. The use of rural or pastoral imagery to validate a "Scottish" identity often fluctuated between nostalgic reminiscence, as with the turn of the century "Kailyard" writers, and social realism, best seen in the work of Hugh MacDiarmid and the Modernist "Scottish Renaissance" writers of the 1930s and 1940s. The end result of this struggle, however, has seen the creation of narrative conventions which have placed rural Scotland at the heart of nationalist claims of a distinct Scottish culture in a century where social, economic and cultural aspects of the country have been essentially dominated by English or British concerns and a great number of people have migrated to the city.

Beyond the tidy, nostalgic idealism of the Kailyard writers and the social critique of their Modernist successors lies the seemingly unstoppable growth of Scottish nationalist feeling in the twentieth century. Fading British imperial glory and the phenomenal growth and collapse of the Clydeside industrial machine made conditions ripe for civil unrest and political instability, leading to renewed calls for independence or self-government. Strangely enough, early organized political action for Home Rule came not from the overcrowded urban areas, but from the endemically poor rural constituencies. The first motion for Scottish self-rule was made in the House of Commons in 1890 by the Scottish Labour Party vice-president, Dr. G. B. Clark, member for Caithness and sponsored by the Highland Land League, a political organ for crofters seeking land reform. It was defeated by the U.K. majority 181 to 141 votes

(MacCormick 9). The motion was an understandable extension of the rural unrest which caused violent protest and sparked the Crofter's War in 1882. In April of that year, at the media-dubbed "Battle of the Braes" (an invocation of Jacobite folk rebellion), a force of one hundred Glaswegian police officers were pelted with sticks and stones when they attempted to evict crofters from the estate of Lord Macdonald of Skye (Lynch 375). This clash between an overtly urban, London-directed authority and rural patriotic Highlanders made for sensational news and the general feeling, both in the Highlands and Lowlands, supported the crofters in their quest for reform. In fact, some Social Darwinists were concerned that the nation as a whole would decline if the rise of urban Scotland was not checked by a constant influx of "strong stock" from the countryside (McCaffrey 78). The Crofter's War signaled a change in Scottish politics as it united both Highland and Lowland in liberal opposition to an increasingly conservative government in London. However, both areas responded to this new political climate by invoking a tradition of rural resistance even at a time when the sweat shops and mines of the Coal Belt were generating great wealth for the country. The symbols of national unity in late nineteenth century Scotland remained firmly rooted in the conception of Scottish society as a rural community.

Contrary to David McCrone's forceful assertion that Scottish nationalism "is relatively weak ... less ready to call up the ancient ghosts of the nation, its symbols and motifs, in its quest for independence," (*Representing*

Scotland 161), the widely used imagery of a rural “heartland” has been called upon frequently in the twentieth century in response to critical periods of national questioning. As S. Bruce and S. Yearly have stated, “tradition is clearly still an important source of inspiration and legitimation” (178) and in 1913, a year before the instability brought on by World War I, the establishment of the chair of Scottish History at Glasgow University was celebrated by the construction of an atypical Highland village, “An Clachan,” as a centrepiece of “Scottish” feeling and national pride (Lynch 356). Much later, in 1935, as war loomed again, a certain Mrs. Hutton published a book of reminiscences, “Dedicated to all Scots, near and far, who love the Homeland,” in which she argued “it is to be hoped that the proposal to re-populate the Scottish glens may speedily be put into action. Some people make objections to it on the ground that it looks like going back. That is not the case. It is rather a going forward to renewed life and vigour and rescuing the many whom we find huddled together in our large cities with no prospect of work. Some have been lured into the city by the dazzling lights and popular places of amusement but find, when it is too late, that they cannot earn an honest living. It must be admitted that country work is sometimes disagreeable, especially in winter, but those who value health will not mind that in the least after they have become accustomed to it” (32). The association between popular rural images and the interpretation of the national identity has, for a considerable time, been a manner of expression for the Scottish people. Clearly, Scottish nationalism may

not rally around the flag or dead kings, but it does represent itself with distinctly rural imagery and symbols.

Song often provides instances of these emotional symbols in a manner easily comprehended by its listeners and, for the musical Scots, ballads figure prominently not only as entertainment but as a way of expressing political messages. Popular groups such as The Corries frequently re-arrange older, traditional airs and melodies in order to appeal to their modern audiences. One such example is *The Lads Among Heather*, a traditional Scottish ballad sung by Jock Anderson and distinctly nationalist in its final stanza. Throughout, the piece places great emphasis on the Highland laddie and his traditions, but it also suggests that the nation itself is being built by a rural people scornful of urban pleasures and manners. The slight mocking tone in the use of English terms such as “elegant balls,” parties” and “the hall,” should alert the listener to the object of the singer’s contempt for English urban society:

Come all ye young lassies whar hae ye been
Sae sleepy and drowsy, I ken by your een
In all the wide world, you’ll ne’er find a frien’
Like the lads that were reared among heather

Chorus:

Awa’ wi’ yer satins, yer silks and yer shawls
Yer soirées and yer parties and yer elegant balls

For a dance in the barn's worth ten in the hall
Wi' the lads that were reared among heather

Tak' a walk roon yer cities, braw buildings outside
Gaze on their splendours and wonder with pride
And ships are being built on the banks o' the Clyde
By the lads that were reared among heather

When the Queen wants some sodgers, she kens whar tae send
Tae the mountains and the valleys, the hills and the glens
Wi' their bonnets and plaids, they're aye true tae the end
Are the lads that were reared among heather

Now England can boast o' the sweet scented rose
And Ireland can boast o' the shamrock she grows
But gi' me the land, where the clear water flows
And the mountains high cover'd wi' heather. (*Corries* 3-5)

The mixture of intentions presented here places particular emphasis on a patriotic, positive image of the countryside and further defines "the rural" as an integral part of Scottish national life perhaps even responsible for the industrial success of the Clydeside industrial shipyards. The Corries' re-arrangement of this piece in 1985 reflects the growing popular calls for national self-

government and the increasing influence of the Scottish National Party in Scottish politics by evoking a long tradition of utilizing rural imagery as a method of promoting Scottish interests.

In 1979, after twenty years of debate and hard economic conditions, a referendum on self-government was held in Scotland with dismal results for Scottish nationalists. Only 40% of voters supported devolution of legislative power and the turnout for the referendum was low. This result was disheartening for those who saw in the literature of the Scottish Renaissance (1920-1940) a renewed sense of national purpose and identity, extending even to fierce debates over the reintroduction of Scots as a literary language. In the works of this period a renewed sense of what "Scottishness" was sparked a general interest, and oftentimes rejection of, pre-WWI Scottish literature and its perceived naivete and nostalgic preoccupation. The First World War, as noted by many critics, was a watershed for Scottish literary culture, but the cultural break that occurred after the war is, perhaps, not always as pronounced as generally thought. The creation of a Highland and rural identity, through the activities of writers like Scott, Burns and Galt, formed a powerful link to an imagined past which could be placed in direct relation to that of England's "rural garden," making it inherently effective as a political statement. Charles Withers suggests:

Many of the symbolic elements characterizing Highlandism in the nineteenth century were, then, rooted in earlier myths. What is also true

is that they were a reflection in a certain way of more prevalent ideological constructions concerning the past and national identity, in England especially. English nationality during the 1800's is typified as essentially rural at just the same time that England was becoming massively urbanized and industrialized. Wiener's notion of the 'Janus face' of English culture is directly applicable to nineteenth century Scotland where, in literature at least, the experience by most Scots of urban life is passed over by writers who focus more on rural themes. Without denying the importance of "Kailyardism" to these cultural representations . . . what is also undeniable is that the Highlands, particularly but not only the historical Highlands, had become during the nineteenth century a major element in Scotland's national identity.

(154)

The influence of the rural Highlands as a motif for the Scottish identity did not come to abrupt end after the nineteenth century, but carried forward from earlier constructions to form a more complex political, social and cultural relationship with the writers who developed a broader definition of "rural Scotland" and of the Scottish identity. In many ways, the growth of Scottish literature in the twentieth century firmly grounds itself in the development of a rural discourse which forms an important aspect of what Deleuze and Guattari have labelled a "minor literature," where "everything takes on collective value" (*Kafka* 17), and that "the impossibility of not writing" a national consciousness

(*Kafka* 16) forms the need to continually recreate the rural landscape in literature for political and cultural distinctiveness.

This process of recreation is perhaps best seen in the events and writing which occurred after the failure of Devolution in 1979. In the mid-80's a young, gritty, realistic urban literature developed and began to tackle the difficult task of representing the cityscapes of Scotland in nationalist terms and gained world recognition with writers such as James Kelman, Irving Welsh and Alasdair Gray. Glasgow's renaissance as the European City of Culture in 1989 marked its redevelopment as a cultural capital. The continued development of North Sea oil deposits began to pay dividends and Scotland found itself on the cusp of economic prosperity for the first time in almost eighty years. As a result of all of this activity centred upon the urban and suburban development of Scotland, literature concerned with rural themes may seem remote. However, as the steady sprawl of the cities continues and "globalization" empowers Scottish industry, Rural Scotland still functions as both a remedy from urban alienation and standardization and the means through which Scots can assert the continuity and complexity of "Scottish" values. Ong suggests that such reliance on traditional narrative ensures that communal knowledge is not supplanted by novelty. Old forms and themes are made to interact with the present in order to incorporate modifications to the narrative, but they are present to manage interaction and not to dismiss it (41-42). The rural image which appears after 1979 can most readily be seen to be conceptually

territorializing the nation once again within the confines of the rural narrative but with some very creative solutions for the present..

As if in answer to the new-found confidence of the Scottish nation in relation to its self-identity, in September of 1997 the Scottish electorate voted overwhelmingly to a scheme for Home Rule and for the establishment of a Scottish parliament. The important step of devolving legislative power from the British political system was greeted enthusiastically as a reinstatement of former Scottish independence. Neil MacCormick, Regius Professor of Public Law at the University of Edinburgh, could hardly contain his delight over the promise of the Scotland Bill: "Acts of Parliament are not a literary form renowned for simplicity or clarity. But the Scotland Bill has some plain things to say, starting from its very first clause: 'There shall be a Scottish Parliament.' Those of poetic or historico-romantic disposition may regret that the draftsman did not insert 'again' after 'shall.' From one point of view, that's what it's all about. The Scots lost their parliament in 1707, and now they want it back" (11). That the retrieval of a parliament for Scotland is fundamental to its statehood is unquestionable, but what it means to the concept of a Scottish nation is less clear. Today, a new literary force (once again called a Scottish renaissance) is sweeping through Scottish society and rewriting the myths and traditions of "Bonnie Scotland" to suit contemporary tastes. However, this does not imply a rejection of the images of a distinctively rural Scotland, but a re-integration of its symbols and images into a new Scottish identity. After nearly three centuries

of British authority, Scotland has emerged at the end of the twentieth century with political, economic and cultural control of the nation in their own hands. In this new situation, the role of a literary past which relied on a rural discourse to define a distinctive "Scottishness" remains a discernible feature of Scottish literature.

*"Fresh fields and woods. The Earth's fair face,
God's foot-stool, and man's dwelling place,
I ask not why the first Believer
Did love to be a Country liver?"*

Henry Vaughan, "Retirement"

Chapter Two:

A Rural Inheritance

In 1894, the Scottish poet, John Davidson looked out over the burgeoning Clydeside village of Greenock and to the sea beyond and observed a Scottish landscape where "Old and New / Weltered upon the border of the world" (Lindsay *Davidson* 67). The contemplation of the growing forces of modernity and the resulting duality inherent in his village scene led Davidson to reflect not only on the effects of recent industrial expansion into the village's traditional, rural life, but also on the dominant forces which were shaping the Scottish identity as the century came to a close. In Greenock the excitement of the "New" in the phenomenal rise of Scottish heavy industry to international prestige precipitated prosperity for a few, labour unrest, political dissent, economic and demographic shifts of unprecedented magnitude. This upheaval also meant coming to terms with the legacy of the "Old" Scotland of the mid-1800's, a popular cultural and literary image of the Scot's 'couthy' rural upbringing and dry peasant wisdom tinged with Calvinist and Knoxian dogma, mixed with a large dose of Tartantry and wild "Hieland" adventure. The

popularity of such an image for many literary and nationalist Scots formed a demonic undertow which ignored the hardships of the urban slums and romanticized the Scot in his own country. Like Davidson, who fleetingly recognized a modern nation in his imagery, the nationalists of the time, immature as they were, began to assert themselves in a variety of ways. Some called for the reclamation of a Scottish parliament for Scots everywhere, while others sought a return to complete independence. It is hardly surprising that a poet like Davidson was thrilled at the prospect of change in his Clydeside village but was also hesitant when identifying what that change would mean for Scotland and the Scottish identity. For many at this time, preservation of a Scottish image nearly bereft of political and, perhaps, imaginative force came into direct conflict with the need for change which, it was feared, meant making concessions to English, urban, literary models. The poet, Sir Alexander Gray provides a melancholy reminder of the Scot's stubborn refusal to accept English conceptions of the countryside in his defiant poem, "Scotland":

Here in the Uplands
The soil is ungrateful;
The fields, red with sorrel,
Are stony and bare.
A few trees, wind-twisted -
Or are they but bushes? -
Stand stubbornly guarding

A home here and there. (Lindsay *Modern Scottish Poetry* 33)

Unknown to Davidson or Gray, Scottish international industry would fall into dereliction in a few short decades as war and politics sapped the strength from the Clydeside factories. The confidence Scottish nationalists felt in the early 1880's would falter as conservatives sponsored Unionism and Home Rule replaced the hope of complete independence. The promise of a dynamic, industrial and metropolitan Scotland withered as rationalization of the heavy industries took hold and plant closures became commonplace.

Unemployment, rising prices and substandard housing caused many Scots to question the political will of London to address Scottish problems and encouraged some to seek political power of their own. As Charles Haws has noted, "Scottish nationalism was relegated to the intellectual elitists and substantial kailyard tradition" (23). The "kailyard tradition" in Scottish literature, often compared with the "cabbage patch" style in American literature, fostered the popular rural image and grew unchecked into what Thomas Knowles described as "the sentimental and nostalgic treatment of parochial Scottish scenes" (14). As difficult as it is to focus on the characteristics of late nineteenth and early twentieth Scottish literature, scenes of parochial and rural Scotland featured prominently as a central motif as the country struggled towards a political and cultural identity within the United Kingdom.

For all the Kailyard's excesses, or perhaps because of them, rural

narratives and images of Scotland were widely popular with Scottish readers and writers during the period of four decades which preceded the First World War. Under the guidance of the enthusiastic patriot, ex-minister and dedicated editor, William Robertson Nicoll, scenes of rural Scottish life erupted into the pages of *The British Weekly*, *The Scotsman*, and *The Bookman*, among many others, arguably fueling the commercialization of a singularly idealized vision of the Scottish "folk." Beth Dickson complains that this development abetted the continued impoverishment of the Scottish writing tradition through the cultivation of what she considers a mainly a false sense of the Scottish cultural identity. She states: "If novelists lacked a perceived tradition, they also lacked critical appreciation. The so-called 'Kailyard' novels, although they exhibited an idealised and false version of Scottish life, were enormously successful. The hard facts of Scottish reality had been transformed into the matter of nostalgia and distinctive Scottish speech and custom were shown as quaint, old-fashioned, but most importantly, as something belonging to the past and therefore irrelevant to the modern world" (51). Rather than blame the authors of these "Kailyard" texts in hindsight for a "lack of critical appreciation," I would argue that it is this manufactured tradition, the sheer weight of its popularity and influence, which helped shape the reaction of Scottish nationalism to the question of the Scottish identity in the early decades of the twentieth century. It is the intent of this chapter to investigate how the narratives, images and themes concerned with rural life functioned in or

supported the revival of Scottish nationalism in the formidable period spanning the early 1880's to the beginnings of World War I.

In his influential work *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780*, E. J. Hobsbawm suggests of the historical development of the nation that "after 1880 it increasingly did matter how ordinary common men and women felt about nationality. It is therefore important to consider the feelings and attitudes among pre-industrial people of this kind, on which the novel appeal of political nationalism could build" (45). Without going into a debate on just who comprises the bulk of "ordinary common men and women," Hobsbawm's study of nationalism makes clear that popular, nationalist feeling is often informed and limited by contemporary narratives and its characteristics are reinforced by the particular recurring images that appear in literature, media and politics. Indeed, as it is endorsed by popular feeling, nationalism frequently reinvents itself in order to remain relevant to current cultural events. As Ernest Gellner suggests, "Nationalism is not what it seems, and above all it is not what it seems to itself. The cultures it claims to defend and revive are often its own inventions, or are modified out of all recognition" (*Nations* 56). In effect, popular attitudes and nationalist narratives often work in tandem for national self-justification.

It is precisely this partnership which keeps national and cultural identities from stagnating, from becoming irrelevant to the teller and the audience he/she seeks to reach. Brian McHale elaborates on the role of

narrative invention in his *Constructing Postmodernism*. He writes: “just like all the other stories, [theory] every putative metanarrative is conditioned by the situation of its telling, the identity and interests of its tellers and audience, the purpose for which it was told, and so on” (6). Formulated in the early half of the century in the work of such Scottish writers as Sir Walter Scott, John Wilson and David MacBeth Moir, the popular image of the Scot as a rural character living in close connection to a wild Highland landscape was inherently political in nature, romanticizing and disarming the Scot in the English imagination. However, as a narrative construction it also legitimated the notion that a Scottish identity existed outside the comfortable centre of its audience’s urban, middle-class, British-oriented readership. Such an image served the “common” Scot as a reminder of an imagined rural past and fanned the flames of a Scottish nationalism which would take hold in the latter half of the nineteenth century and consolidate its position in the twentieth. As a result of this stress on a provincial, rural Scottish character, Scottish nationalism, in defiance of British Imperial transnationalism, has consistently relied, in part, on an invented rural mythology as the charter for a national culture.

The long history of political discourse framed within a folk tradition reliant on rural imagery had great bearing upon late nineteenth and early twentieth century Scottish writers who attempted to elucidate the Scottish character. Scottish nationalism, it may be argued, was forever coloured by the fact that it could not reconcile itself to the Anglicized city at its heart. Edwin

Muir, the poet, struggled with his admiration of his literary precursor, Sir Walter Scott, because Muir's nationalist principles could not place Scott into the rural literary history he envisaged as Scotland's tradition. He wrote: "Men of Scott's enormous genius have rarely Scott's faults; they may have others but not these particular ones; and so I was forced to account for the hiatus in Scott's endowment by considering the environment in which he lived, by invoking the fact - if the reader will agree it is one - that he spent most of his days in a hiatus, in a country, that is to say which was neither a nation nor a province, and had, instead of a centre, a blank, an Edinburgh, in the middle of it" (2). The distance Muir places between the politics and identity of the "British" city of Edinburgh and the patriotism of the countryside drives a sharp wedge between the culture of "The City" and the culture of "Scotland". So deep was this divide that in 1995 Alastair Scott could write, not without a growing sense of reflective unease, of his personal identity as a Scot by specifically referencing geographic regions understood to be "acceptably" Scottish. He writes: "Scotland was far too big and varied to authenticate intimate and personal relationships with its entirety. No, specific parochial attachments were required. 'Belonging' meant where your family had its roots, where your neighbours had known your granny for half a century. This could be Unst or Wester Hailes or Kirriemuir or Govan, but it couldn't be East Scotland or *Longitude 3°W, Latitudes 55°55' to 57°40'* [sic] (which would have suited me just fine, encompassing Edinburgh and Elgin); and this is where I became

unstuck" (4-5). Scott's definition of his Scottish identity echoes Willa Muir's own observations of her husband, Edwin Muir, and his feelings of unease when confronted by the urban landscape within Scotland. She notes: "in the urban noise and dirt of Glasgow he became at once a displaced person" (*Belonging* 18). In the long history of Scotland, it is this feeling of displacement in their own country which prompts the Scot's resistance to British intrusion and influences the shape which it assumes. The countryside becomes a motif for belonging and tradition.

Ever since the Union with England in 1707, the idea of ruralism had frequently hinted at the political situation between the Pro-British and Anti-Union factions within Scotland as Murray Pittock points out in *Inventing and Resisting Britain*:

Another major Jacobite theme was found in the idea of ruralism and retreat, which had been popularly attached to the Stuart cause since the 1640s (Ogilby makes a thematic connection between 'sequestration' as 'a chosen seclusion or withdrawal' and the seizure of Royalist estates). As a theme, it reflected real political circumstance and its sad necessity, and after 1688 was used by writers such as Pope in *Windsor Forest* and the *Epistle to Burlington* and others as diverse as Major-General Alexander Robertson of Struan and the Countess of Winchilsea, to show both the fertility of Stuart monarchy and the moral purity of ruralism, an ideological claim also reflected in the depth of hostility felt towards both

cities in general and the City in particular as hotbeds of Whig corruption.

(37-38)

In these terms, ruralism as a literary theme expressed not only a nostalgic longing for a lost Scottish independence and revived anti-British feeling but also gave a moral imperative to the development of Scottish nationalism at the end of the nineteenth century. This moral aspect was not lost on the members of one of Scotland's last remaining national institutions, the Church of Scotland.

In 1850, the Free Church Minister, James Begg, one of the earliest of the modern Scottish nationalists wrote: "We are sinking in our national position every year . . . The very passes of our mountains interdicted - the fishing of our rivers monopolized - our public grounds and gardens shut up - the Parliament of England despising us, our natural guardians joining in the oppression" (Hanham 75). It is indicative of a politically-charged narrative strategy that Begg chose to underline the forced disconnection with the landscape to make his nationalistic arguments. The consciousness of a relationship between the Scottish identity and the wilderness/rural areas provided Begg with the means to suggest a rural Scottish character which many took for granted. In song, Robert Louis Stevenson's lyrics for *In The Highlands* echo Begg's concerns: "In the highlands, in the country places where the plain old men have rosy faces, / And the young fair maidens quiet eyes, quiet eyes, where essential silence cheers and blesses, / And forever in the chill recesses / Her more lovely music

broods and dies" (Butler 3). The insistence on the countryside as the identifying yardstick for the Scottish people was a potent weapon against the perceived threat from the "anglicized" and secular cities. Begg was not alone in relying on this method of rural resistance.

Hugh Trevor-Roper has made his case that the construction of a rural Highland Scot had little to do with the political and cultural "realities" of the Highland inhabitants. He asserts: "Indeed, the whole concept of a distinct Highland culture and tradition is a retrospective invention. Before the later years of the seventeenth century the Highlanders of Scotland did not form a distinct people. They were simply the overflow of Ireland" (15). Whether or not this statement is accurate, by the mid-1800's Victorian Britain and Scottish nationalists alike were reveling in the construction of a Scottish national image replete with Highland outlaws, tribal Chieftains, poor but dignified crofters and invented treatises on clan systems and tartans by the equally fantastic Sobieski Stuart brothers. This image was so powerful and seductive to an age dominated by Romantic sentiment that Queen Victoria herself expressed a deep association with her Scottish subjects and proclaimed, without a hint of irony, that she herself was a Jacobite at heart (Lynch 337). In a period of conflicting interests, where old and new images of Scottish society jostled to be the voice of a rejuvenated Scottish nationalism, many writers, indeed the vast majority, chose to adopt rural themes informed by earlier "British" Victorian constructions as emblematic of a unique Scottish society. By appropriating a

discourse of rurality to suggest differences between English and Scottish culture, Scottish writers were, perhaps unwittingly, creating a national space which demanded attention from its readers and suggested national distinctiveness.

An explanation of the Scottish preoccupation with the local or rural image and its association with nationalist narratives is best articulated in John Moss' work on Arctic writing. He states that "for people native to a place, landscape provides the dimensions of consciousness. It is an extension of personal being, as intimate and far-reaching as genealogy. The Inuit imagine themselves within a landscape as an existential fact. For the rest, however, the Arctic story is an expression of our fall from grace with the physical world: landscape is a condition, context, or metaphor" (115). In Scotland and for Scots, not surprisingly, this observation paradoxically applies in both ways. After nearly two centuries of Union with England many Scots of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century were removed from an organic relationship to the physical landscape of the country but, in the popular imagination, the land and the rural communities embedded within it still served as a common definition of what it meant to be "Scottish." Often, the image in narrative was constructed overtly as one of defiance and resistance to English encroachment. John Buchan's novel, *John Burnet of Barns* (1898), one of his earliest works, provides a good example of such a strategy of opposition in its description of the hero's home:

The house of Barns stands on a green knoll above the Tweed, half-way between the village of Stobo and the town of Peebles. Tweed here is no great rolling river, but a shallow, prattling stream, and just below the house it winds around a small islet, where I loved to go and fish; for it was an adventure to reach the place, since a treacherous pool lay not a yard below it. The dwelling was white and square, with a beacon tower on the top, which once flashed the light from Neidpath to Drochil when the English came over the border. (20)

The isolation of the home in the landscape and the solitary beacon of warning set the stage for a tale of Jacobite resistance to English aggression. In Scottish rural narratives of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century many instances of pastoral setting are used to make clear the political isolation and distinctive reaction of Scots to their independent condition. The literary response to the nationalist narrative of Scotland's "rightful" place in Union was as much an affirmation of an imagined relationship with the glens, bens, islands and villages of the landscape as it was an assertion of Scotland's industrial contributions to Victorian Great Britain.

The "reality" of turn of the century Scotland is a complex and difficult subject to examine because much of the period's attitudes and leanings were reactions to Victorian norms which were slowly collapsing. The Victorian contributions to Scottish society encouraged the formation of a Scottish identity which was a confusing blend of Romantic Jacobite sentiment and

aggressive industrial and Imperial expansionism. Victoria's establishment of Balmoral in 1848 as a royal residence, complete with audience room bedecked with a bewildering array of tartans, confirmed the prevailing fashion for an imagined Highland culture and put an ironic stamp on, and added further bitterness to, the general depopulation of the Highlands for the Clydeside shipyards and the coal mining operations of the central urban belt which had continued apace since the late 18th century. Every sector of Scottish society has been influenced by the development of this overtly romantic characterization which, it may be argued, was designed to clothe sober realities with a palatable and deeply hierarchical appearance. Indeed, for a brief time, Scottish literature and more radical nationalism were submerged by the popularity of the Highland image created chiefly by forces driving English writers to embrace rural imagery in their own country. Charles Withers remarks that "many of the symbolic elements characterizing Highlandism in the nineteenth century were ... rooted in earlier myths. What is also true is that they were a reflection in a certain way of more prevalent ideological constructions concerning the past and national identity, in England especially. English nationality during the 1800's is typified as essentially rural at just the same time that England was becoming massively urbanized and industrialized. Wiener's notion of the 'Janus face' of English culture is directly applicable to nineteenth century Scotland where, in literature at least, the experience by most Scots of urban life is passed over by writers who focus more on rural themes" (154). Scottish

literature, then, was also marked by the duality of the age seeking stability amongst social upheaval and was characterized by G. Gregory Smith in his seminal work, *Scottish Literature* (1919), as the “antithesis of the real and the fantastic” (20), and named “The Caledonian Antisyzygy.” Smith’s recognition of the polarity in Scottish literature is only one of many signals that at the turn of the century Scotland was deeply engaged in a process of refashioning itself as a nation within the Union.

Whether it was the establishment of Highland Games, the popularity of Jacobite ballads or academic works on folk tradition, the consequences of such attention to an imagined Scottish culture, or more accurately a Celtic Highland construction, nevertheless raised the profile of Scotland within Great Britain and created a tentative awareness within the country itself of Scottish national interests. In 1843 Thomas Carlyle, a staunch supporter of British Union, hinted at the need for Scottish emblems for purely political reasons: “A heroic Wallace, quartered on the scaffold, cannot hinder that his Scotland become one day, a part of England: but he does hinder that it become, on tyrannous unfair terms, a part of it; ... If the union with England be in fact one of Scotland’s chief blessings, we thank Wallace withal that it was not the chief curse” (*Past and Present* 12). The first stirrings of a national debate in Victorian Scotland on the sensitive issue of the terms of Union came with the formation of the Association for the Vindication of Scottish Rights in 1853 which demanded a greater role for Scotland in British affairs (Lynch 357). The

formation of the Scottish National Constitutional Association in 1867 was followed quickly by institutional bodies such as the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, the Scottish Text Society and the reinstatement of a Secretary of State for Scotland in the 1880's (Scott *Last Purely Scotch* Age 20). The Scottish Labour Party's adoption of a platform of Scottish Home Rule, modeled on the Irish Home Rule position, signaled a distinct shift in Scottish political life towards liberal-nationalist policy and a desire for greater independence for Scotland within Great Britain. It is very clear that by the turn of the century, whether constructed or not, political and cultural forces within Scotland were actively engaged in sponsoring nationalist goals and styling new nationalist narratives.

These goals are remarkable in one respect because they relied on the assumption of the moral, political and social "purity" of the Scottish rural village. Lord Provost Chisholm of Glasgow, an influential and progressive minister and politician, warned his United Free Church congregation in 1900 that moral laxity and indifference would lead to a failing not only of the soul but also of the nation. His comments suggest a spiritual and political bond between the nation and the country towns and villages which are moral models, not only for the cities of Scotland, but for every proud Scot nationalist. He lectures: "I am afraid we must cease to talk about the sins of our great cities, because intemperance and impurity and gambling have seized and taken hold of our towns and country villages [applause] and these have become great crying national sins" (quoted in Withrington 45-46). In much of Kailyard

writing, deeply sentimental and nostalgic, the moral bastion of rural innocence was also the stronghold of an imagined Scottish identity. In J. M. Barrie's *Sentimental Tommy* (1896), for example, the lowland village of Thrums is reproduced in the minds and habits of exile Scots living in London:

In Thrums Street, as it ought to have been called, herded at least one-half of the Thrums folk in London, and they formed a colony, of which the grocer at the corner sometimes said wrathfully that not a member would give sixpence for anything except Bibles and whisky. In the streets one could only tell they were not Londoners by their walk, the flagstones having no grip for their feet, ... When mixing with the world they talked in the English tongue, which came out of them as broad as if it had been squeezed through a mangle. (67)

The rural romanticism which prevails in Kailyard writing is expressed here in political terms by reference to the Scottish "colony" and elaborates a Scots character uniquely attached to the mythical village of Thrums. It is only one instance of the Kailyard's use of the rural village as a means to elaborate a Scottish national identity.

Gillian Shepherd, in her article on "The Kailyard," suggests that Kailyard writing is "on one level; parables - brief, vivid tales designed to make a universally comprehensible, morally improving point" (312) and on this level the influence of the Church on Scottish culture is incontrovertible. However, even the powerful image of the stereotypically harsh, dogmatic Church of

Scotland of the nineteenth century was tempered often by the practical, redemptive, down-to-earth manners and values of an imagined rural society. S. R. Crockett, another of the infamous Kailyard novelists, relied on rural scenery and rural character to inform his notion of the Scots nation. His novel, *The Lilac Sunbonnet*, is typical of Kailyard writing in that a young cleric, Ralph Peden, arrives in rural Dullarg lacking the personal social graces afforded only in the country. He is described by his father as “well grounded in the fundamentals; his head is filled with godly fear, and he has sound views on the Headship; but he has always been a little cold and distant” (13). His piety is based on a chauvinistic and narrow belief in the Marrow Kirk of Scotland which Ralph compares favourably not with other churches but with other nations. Reading Luther’s Commentary, Ralph suggests that if Luther had been privileged enough to minister for Marrow Kirk he may have been issued a writ for heresy, and also adds, “of course, he did well enough for Germany, a country of great laxity, where as in prelatric England, they drank beer” (16). On his arrival at Loch Grannoch from Edinburgh, Ralph’s righteousness is set in contrast to his surroundings, a typically Scottish rural scene: “He could just see one little bit of Loch Grannoch gleaming through the trees, and the farm of Nether Crae set on the hillside high above it. He counted the sheep on the green field over the loch, numbering the lambs twice because they frisked irresponsibly about, being full of frivolity and having no opinions concerning Luther to sober them” (16). Being from the city, Ralph high-handedly

condemns rural life and is made to look ridiculous, even unpatriotic, by the novel's other main character, Winsome Chatteris.

Winsome presents to the reader the stereotype of the rural Scottish maid which occurs frequently in late nineteenth century writing. Gruff, independent and beautiful, she is fiercely proud of her rural surroundings and Scottish heritage. Illustrating the Kailyard school's rejection of urban manners and attitudes, Winsome is thoroughly repulsed by Ralph's educated righteousness. When she and a friend encounter Ralph on a hillside, Ralph panics at meeting them and runs away. He accidentally leaves behind his commentary on women and Winsome immediately recognizes it for urban attitudes. Winsome reads: "Women, especially the younger of them, are become gadabouts, chatterers in the public ways, idle; adorners of their vain selves, pamperers of their frail tabernacles -' Winsome threw down the book and almost trod upon it as upon a snake. 'Tis some city fop,' she said" (31). The Biblical allusion, the Virgin Mary treading upon the serpent of sin, lends weight to Crockett's method of distancing Winsome's character from the urban, and emphasizes her Scottish "purity". The novel's unlikely but predictable progress sees Winsome and Ralph come together as lovers and at the moment of their mutual recognition of this fact Crockett ritually invests the pastoral scene with chauvinistic, nationalistic sentiment. The lovers, rejecting *Eros* for spiritual love, become symbols of a geographic and metaphysical union which has nationalistic overtones. Winsome and Ralph meet in the glen:

Ralph's humour was slower and a little grimmer than Winsome's, whose sunny nature had blossomed out amid the merry life of the woods and streams. But there was a sternness in both of them as well, that was of the heather and moss-hags . . . It is now their day of love and bounding life. And there are few people in this world who would not be glad to sit just so at the opening of the flower of love. Indeed, it was hardly necessary to tell one another.

Laughter, say the French (who think that their *l'amour* is love, and so will never know anything), kills love. But not the kind of laughter that rang in the open dell which peeped like the end of a great green-lined prospect glass, out upon the glimmering levels of Loch Grannoch; nor yet the kind of love which in alternate currents pulsed to and fro between the two young people who sat so demurely on either side of the great, many-spiked fir-branch. (205-206)

The narrator's intrusion here is present to suggest that the rural simplicity of Winsome and Ralph's love, accompanied by the naming and detailing the features in the landscape, is what makes this scene uniquely Scottish (rather than French, or indeed English). The episode promotes the difference by relating the scene to other nations. The popularity of many hundreds of such Kailyard narratives made an important contribution to the image of a Scottish nation as rural in character, even if idyllic and illusionary in form and content. As a result, however, representations of Scottish rural life became often heavy-

handed, chauvinistic and far from allowing for a successful relationship to grow between nation and rural space.

The most heavy-handed and nostalgic representation of rural Scotland is perhaps to be found in the work of the Kailyard novelist, Ian MacLaren (a.k.a. John Watson), in particular, *Beside The Bonnie Brier Bush*. His creation of Drumtochty, another small village nestled in a glen, is populated with characters whose overt patriotic ruralism gives strength to the idea that MacLaren saw Scotland as “a patchwork of diverse, equally enfranchised communal identities” (Schoene “Scottish Multiculturalism” 56). I would further clarify this observation to suggest that MacLaren’s Scotland consisted of the diversity and personal independence he found in the small rural village rather than the increasingly similar cities. Consistently in his novels, the nature of Scottish rural living is compared directly with English and Scottish city life, suggesting that the city-dweller loses his/her distinct national identity whether one is in London or in Glasgow. Lachlan Campbell, welcoming his daughter's return home from London, is quite clear in his distinction between city and rural folk: “Weel, Flora, ye've got back frae yir veesits, and a'tell ye we've missed ye maist terrible. A' doot thae sooth country fook haena been feeding ye ower weel, or maybe it was the toon air. It never agrees wi' me. A'm half chokit a' the time a'm in Glesgie, and as for London, there's ower mony fook tae the square yaird for health” (106). In the same vein, Flora's reply to this sentiment confirms the argument that the novel emphasizes the urban as impersonal,

directly contrasting the direct contact of the rural villagers with the cold detachment which the city offers. Flora remembers:

It was a beautiful night in London, but I will bae thinking that there iss no living person caring whether I die or live, and I wass considering how I could die, for there iss nothing so hopeless as to hef no friend in a great city. It iss often that I hef been alone on the moor, and no man within miles but I wass never lonely; oh, no! I had plenty of good company. I would sit down beside a burn, and the trout will swim out from below a stone, and the cattle will come to drink, and the muirfowl will be crying to each other, and the sheep will be bleating, oh, yes! ... It is a busy place, a moor; and a safe place too. (108)

MacLaren's other well-know piece, *The Days of Auld Lang Syne*, also emphasizes in national terms the distinction between Drumtochty's "natural" simplicity and English culture's artificiality thereby suggesting Scottish honesty, integrity and lack of pretension. The narrator affirms:

Each community has its own etiquette, and in an advanced state of civilisation such beautiful words as 'Mister' and 'Missus' are on every one's tongue, some lonely Northerner perhaps saying 'Mistress,' to the amusement of footmen and other persons of refinement. While Drumtochty was in its natural state, and the influence of Southern culture had scarcely begun to play on its simplicity, we had other forms of speech. It was good manners to call a farmer by his place, and had any

one addressed Hillocks as Mr. Stirton, that worthy man would have been much startled. (241)

On the whole, the Kailyard novelists were concerned with constructing nostalgic, patronizing and chauvinistic texts concerned with Scottish rural life. However, their promotion of a Scottish national type which was rustic deeply influenced many other writers of the period, including R. L. Stevenson, Neil Munro and the dramatist James Bridie, and should not be discounted in studies of Scottish nationalism of the period.

The popular image of rural life in Scottish literature before 1914 was not entirely dictated to the nation by the pens of the Kailyard novelists. Whereas Islay Murray Donaldson could assert in 1985 that *The Lilac Sunbonnet* was “no pastoral idyll but a real unidealized rural society where men are rough and wash in tin basins by the stable door,” (291) others, such as T. W. H. Crosland could compare Barrie, Crockett and MacLaren’s work unfavourably with George Douglas Brown’s construction of the village of Barbie in *The House With the Green Shutters*:

From Thrums and Drumtochty the blest to Barbie, which is also in Scotland, may be fairly described as a far cry. In the beautiful communities conceived by Drs. Barrie and Maclaren the milk of human nature flows like a river; everybody lives, not for his or her foolish self, but for somebody else; everybody dies for somebody else; all bachelors are faithful to the sweethearts of their youth ... all the women make the

best butter in Galloway; all the girls are pretty and angelic of temperament, and, in short, Thrums and Drumtochty are little bits of heaven dropped on to the map of Scotland. But Barbie is not of heavenly origin in the least ... Nowhere in letters does there exist such an unsophisticated revelation of the minds and habits of a savage and barbarous people as is to be found in this book. It is fiction, of course; but it is that kind of fiction which has been written from close observation, and it amounts to an authentic document. (87-88)

Brown's work, contemporaneous with the Kailyard school's output and influenced by them, is today lauded as a foundation for the modern Scottish novel and could be said to be an antidote to the chauvinistic patriotism of the Kailyard but it does not depart from imagining the Scottish identity as essentially one that is anchored in rural life.

If Thrums and Drumtochty are blest, Barbie is an underworld populated with characters who seem to prey upon each other's misfortune. The main character, John Gourlay, is consumed with his own pride, symbolized by the imposing house with green shutters overlooking the village, and is a caricature of the miserly, harsh and dogmatic Scot. His intentions of becoming an important man, indeed, the chief man of Barbie are deflated from the beginning of the novel by Brown's narrative intrusions which cast doubt on Gourlay's intelligence: "The man had made a dogged scorn a principle of life to maintain himself at the height which his courage warranted. His thickness of

wit was never a bar to the success of his irony. For the irony of the ignorant Scot is rarely the outcome of intellectual qualities. It depends on a falsetto voice and the use of a recognized number of catchwords. 'Dee-ee-ar me, dee-ee-ar me;' 'Just so-a, just so-a' 'D'ye tell me that?'" (23-24). Brown's criticisms of Gourlay and Barbie seem directed, for the most part, at the assumption of age-old peasant wisdom and moral superiority in Scottish culture portrayed in the works of Barrie, Crockett and Maclaren. Brown mercilessly, perhaps even with undue relish, exposes the materialism and petty hatred he observed in Scottish rural life, but one could argue that Brown's perception only strengthens the links between the Scottish identity and a more "realistic" version of the rustic image with its blemishes intact. The narrator concludes that "even if Gourlay had been a placable and inoffensive man, then, the malignants of the petty burgh (it was scarce bigger than a village) would have fastened on his character, simply because he was above them. No man has a keener eye for behaviour than the Scot (especially when spite wings his intuition, and Gourlay's thickness of wit, and pride of place, would in any case have drawn their sneers)" (65). This vision of the Scottish character is far removed from the quiet lanes of Thrums and Drumtochty, but as an expression of nationalistic sentiment it remains firmly rooted in the rural.

Barbie is not without its redemptive qualities. Gourlay's son, John, the unfortunate victim of his father's vicious authority and his own stunted emotional growth, elaborates on the connections between himself and the land

with which he identifies:

Young Gourlay felt that leaving Barbie for good would be a cutting of his heart-strings. Each feature of it, town and landward, was a crony of old years. In a land like Barbie, of quick hill and dale, of tumbled wood and fell, each facet of nature has an individuality so separate and so strong that if you live with it a little it becomes your friend, and a memory so dear that you kiss the thought of it in absence. The fields are not similar as pancakes; they have their difference; each leaps to the eye with a remembered and peculiar charm. That is why the heart of the Scot dies in flat southern lands; he lives in a vacancy. (147)

As Beth Dickson has suggested, Young Gourlay's imagination is a danger to him (53) and his eventual destruction comes from his immaturity. However, the rural setting of Barbie provides John with a sense of his own individuality and personality, which his father finally crushes by sending him to Edinburgh for education. Brown makes clever use of the stereotype found in many Kailyard narratives, that of the young scholar going off to be educated in the cities for the good of the village. The destructive nature of John Gourlay's coercion condemns both Young Gourlay and Barbie to a hapless spiral of degeneration.

Margaret Oliphant's *Kirsteen*, is related to Brown's novel in the manner in which the young heroine must negotiate a sense of individuality between the two worlds open to her: a tradition-bound rural Scotland of the past and a

hostile, patronizing urban London with its uncertain future. Oliphant's novel, set in the turbulent Napoleonic era, juxtaposes the naïveté of Kirsteen's upbringing with the uncaring cruelty of the metropolis. Her fierce pride in her once-powerful Scottish name and family (Douglas) remains an anchor for her identity throughout the novel and reflects her belief in the values which she grew up with at her father's country estate. Oliphant is attentive to scenes where Kirsteen must encounter the stark reality of Scottish urban life and often portrays these meetings as confrontations between an alien urban landscape and the security of the familiar countryside. Kirsteen's flight into exile towards Glasgow is a good example of this contrast:

To find the house of Margret's friend was not easy in the great grimy city which was Kirsteen's first experience of a town. The crowded streets and noises confused her altogether at first. Such visions of ugliness and dirt, the squalid look of the high houses, the strange groups, some so rich and well-to-do, some so miserable and wretched, that crowded the pavements, had never entered into her imagination before. They made her sick at heart; and London, people said, was bigger (if that were possible) and no doubt more dreadful still! Oh that it could all turn out a dream from which she might wake to find herself once more by the side of the linn, with the roar of the water, and no sickening clamour of ill tongues in her head! But already the linn, and the far-off life by its side were away from her as if they had passed centuries ago. (127)

As Francis Russell Hart states in his study, *The Scottish Novel: Smollett to Spark*, "Related to the myth of national character is a long-lived passion for the local past, for the history of clan and family, burgh and parish. Local attachment can be found everywhere in Scottish history. Parish and burgh have been the settings for historic events and developments. Personal identity is closely associated in law and lore with place name and hereditary locale" (2). Oliphant uses the tension between country and city in Kirsteen's character to examine this stress on the local identity in the Scottish character. It is the linn, glen and hills of Argyllshire, so deeply connected with family and name, which support her sense of self and at the same time reinforces a national construct. Kirsteen's reply to her sister's bold statement that the Douglas name was unknown in Glasgow reveals this connection: "That can scarcely be in Scotland,' cried Kirsteen proudly, 'not even in Glasgow" (141). The separation Kirsteen makes is instructive. The image of Scotland is one which grudgingly makes room for its urban locales, preferring the landscape of county life.

Also standing predominantly in the landscape of Scottish fiction is the village of Crossriggs in the novel of the same name by Jane and Mary Findlater. Published in 1908, the book is an Austenesque tale of a young woman's struggle for independence and self-realization in the Scottish small village. Crossriggs is much like Kirsteen's home, Drumcarro, in that it provides Alexandra Hope with a sense of her own identity as a Scottish woman. When asked where she would live given the choice, Alexandra's answer is to stress a

fated inevitability concerning her place in her surroundings. To the question, she says, "I don't know, I'm sure. I know several places I wouldn't live in, but few places are chosen - most are preordained!" (192) The Findlater sisters were sensitive to the limitations of village life, but chose to give Crossriggs a central position from which Alexandra draws much of her strength as a character. As Paul Binding notes in his introduction to the novel, "the 'three or four families in a country village' are seen very much *sub specie aeternitas* according to a vision whose light derives from a strong and indigenous Scottish tradition" (xiii). However, as much as Crossriggs is "a tight little society within a very small circle" (8), Alexandra is content with being a part of the tradition of Scottish village life. The busy-body narrator of the novel backhandedly gives us the impression that it is the insignificance of the village which is the catalyst for Alexandra's wonderfully curious character: "'It's a shame,' we used to say, 'that Alex should waste all her youth and cleverness mouldering in Crossriggs!' But if Alex felt this, she never said so - and I don't believe she did feel it; as a healthy stomach will assimilate almost anything in the nature of food, so her magnificent mental digestion throve upon the unpromising materials that surrounded her. Life was a continual feast to Alex in those days, no one need have pitied her" (7).

Alexandra's peaceful life is disrupted by the many hardships she must endure before the novel is complete: financial distress, social humiliation, tragic love and despair. Her rejuvenation is as much a realization of the value of

her surroundings as the inheritance which she receives from her dead Aunt Clare. Leaving Crossriggs behind to see the world with her father, Alexandra catches a final look at the town and in elegiac tone mourns the loss of the Crossriggs in her imagination:

As the train left the station next morning, Alex look out of the window. She caught a last glimpse of the blue hills, the woods, the village, and the old church. Saw [sic]once more the pine trees that marked the new mound in the churchyard, where Van was lying now, and she sighed for the passing of much that had been sweet, as she looked her last at Crossriggs. (377)

Alexandra profoundly recognizes the part the village played in her development and as she carries this revelation forward in her new life, her awareness of the Scottish countryside echoes the novel's beginnings: "Did not the first snowdrops that struggled up to the light from under that iron sod sigh out indescribable promise in their faint suggestive breath? Even the enveloping veils of mist, the grey distance, the low hills that stood beyond the village seemed a fitting background for the lively scene of human life that was enacted there" (3). Crossriggs remains, both for Alexandra and for the reader, an essential backdrop for a novel of Scottish life.

This connection between Scottish people and place and a sense of location inform Violet Jacob's work as well. Her novel *Flemington* (1911) is a fictional account of the historical Jacobite uprising near Montrose in 1745 and

chronicles the divisions between Tory and Whig supporters in the Montrose area. Regional literature flourished in the pre-World War I years and Jacob's detailed description of Montrose and Angus in connection with the Logie and Flemington families is punctuated by the sense that the events that occurred there are recorded in the landscape. The Romantic Jacobite-hero-turned-Whig-spy of the novel, Archie Flemington, finds himself a fugitive on the run and as he rests the landscape foreshadows the coming tragic events:

Hurrying across the Montrose road and making for the place where the ground began to fall away to the Basin, he sat down on the scrubby waste land by a broom-bush, whose dry, burst pods hung like tattered black flags in the brush of green; their acrid smell was coming out as the sun mounted higher. Below him the marshy ground ran out to meet the water; and eastward the uncovered mud and wet sand, bared by the tide ebbing beyond Montrose, stretched along its shores to the town. (57)

The “tattered black flags” and “acrid smell” of the land prefigure the lost battles the Jacobites will suffer and illustrate how the landscape is intimately connected with the Scottish Jacobite cause. Jacob's focus is often on how the landscape comments not only on events but on the characters present. Mr. Duthie, the morally righteous Whig Minister, is “oppressed” by the unsuitability of the Flemington's “homely approach” to their manor (24), ironically aligning the minister with the cultivated world of great wealth found in Edinburgh. That Jacob was conscious of her nationalistic identification of

Scotland with a rural topos is made clear by her use of the landscape to support the notion of a nation under siege.

Flemington was published in 1911 at the time of the Glasgow Exhibition, when nationalism was gaining ground in Scotland (Anderson "Introduction" xiv). Although the novel is an indictment of the violence which consumed family, friend and nation, Jacob's descriptions of the landscape are tailored to show a countryside and nation dragged, beaten and regulated into submission. The reason for this is quite clear. Jacob provides in her rural landscapes both a statement of potential and a warning of what nationalism can achieve. In the following passage the wonderfully muted and heady features of a landscape at peace are quietly contrasted with horror of the retreat at Glen Esk. The end of the passage hints that the desolation which has been inflicted on its inhabitants is laid at the feet of the "Prince in the North," a distant figure, almost unconnected with the land :

July spread a mantle of heather over the Grampians . . . The greyness of the summer haze lay over everything, and the short grass and the roots of the bog-myrtle and thyme smelt warm and heady, for the wind was still. The sun seemed to have sucked up some of the heather-colour out of the earth; the lower atmosphere was suffused with a dusty lilac where, high overhead, it softened the contours of the scattered rocks. Amongst carpets of rush and deep moss, dappled with wet patches, the ruddy stems of the bog-asphodel raised slim, golden heads that drooped a

little, as though for faintness, in the scented warmth. . . No one looking along the windings of the Glen, and drawing in the ardent quietness of the summer warmth, would have supposed that fire and sword had been through it so lately. Its vastness of outline hid the ruined huts and black fragments of skeleton gable-ends that had smoked up into the mountain stillness. Homeless women and children had fled down its secret tracks; hunted men had given up their souls under its heights. The rich plainland of Angus had sent its sons to fight for the Prince in the North, and many of those who survived to make their way back to their homes, many had been overtaken by the pursuit that had swept down behind them through the hills. No place had a darker record than Glen Esk.

(179)

Here, the dark, rural landscape provides the only escape from the horrors of war. The women and children flee down “secret tracks” and the ruined village is hidden by the land’s vast outline. Jacob’s novel is a fine example of the use of the landscape to suggest the connection between nation and people is one which is cultivated in the land’s features. The imagined history of *Flemington* draws on this association in its tale of a Jacobite turned Whig spy to suggest the identity of the Scot lies within his/her relationship with the local features of the Scottish landscape.

Such a connection is made strikingly clear when imagination must fill the void of actual experience. The figure of Robert Louis Stevenson looms large

over the landscape of Scottish letters at the turn of the last century for his intimate and stylistic language. Marshall Walker treats Stevenson with an eye to his particular literary gifts: "Most early products of his pen, and some of his later ones, offer more elegance than thematic meat. Complete professionalism and stylistic achievement are his only consistencies" (197). Ill health made Scotland a dangerous place for Stevenson to reside and his home was mostly in London, and later, the South Pacific. However, the images of Scotland in his novel, *Kidnapped* are recovered from a memory of the village, moors and mountains he associated with his Scottish homeland. The presence of the Scottish countryside in Stevenson's work is often a deliberately peripheral voice which is placed in opposition to the urbanized, hierarchical world with which Stevenson was well acquainted.

In *Kidnapped*, the young David Balfour must leave the country town of Essendean for his Uncle's manor in Edinburgh. As David finally views the city from a distance, the reader is given ample visual warning of Edinburgh's true character. David stops short and explains: "I saw all the country fall away before me down to the sea; and in the midst of this descent, on a long ridge, the city of Edinburgh smoking like a kiln. There was a flag upon the castle, and ships moving or lying anchored in the firth; both of which, for as far away as they were, I could distinguish clearly; and both brought my country heart into my mouth" (13). His eagerness to leave "that quiet countryside" (11) does not last very long as his encounter with his miserly, devious Uncle Ebenezer leads

to the Uncle's plot to have David kidnapped by pirates for money. The irony of David's situation is hinted at by the unassuming Mr. Campbell, minister of Essendean, who sees David off to his new life in Edinburgh. The minister attempts to guide David: "Be soople, Davie, in things immaterial," said he. "Bear ye this in mind, that, though gentle born, ye have had a country rearing. Dinnae shame us, Davie, dinnae shame us! In yon great, muckle house, with all these domestics, upper and under, show yourself as nice, as circumspect, as quick at the conception, and as slow of speech as any" (10). Mr. Campbell's advice concerning "genteel" Edinburgh is wasted on the house of Uncle Ebenezer which lacks servants, is ramshackle and mean in its entertainment. Indeed, after his struggle to regain his rightful inheritance from his Uncle and his patriotic adventures with Alan Breck, a Highland, Jacobite fugitive, David finds himself saying a strained goodbye to his Highland friend and returns uneasily to the city which is his future. Symbolically, Edinburgh remains for David a foreign landscape which cannot match the harmony he felt when at Essendean. He wanders into Edinburgh:

It was coming near noon when I passed in by the West Kirk and the Grassmarket into the streets of the capital. The huge height of the buildings, running up to ten and fifteen stories, the narrow arched entries that continually vomited passengers, the wares of the merchants in the windows, the hubbub and endless stir, the foul smells and the fine clothes, and a hundred other particulars too small to mention, struck me

into a kind of stupor of surprise, so that I let the crowd carry me to and fro; and yet all the time what I was thinking of was Alan at Rest-and-be-Thankful; and all the time (although you would think I would not choose but be delighted with these braws and novelties) there was a cold gnawing in my inside like a remorse for something wrong. (283)

The language of illness (“vomited passengers”), oppression (“The huge height of the buildings”) and aimlessness (the crowd who carry him “to and fro”) clearly suggest to the reader that David’s well-being as a Scottish patriot is troubled within this urban landscape. Like Kirsteen, David is given the task of navigating the road of Scottish patriotism caught between the lost world of the genteel rural and the chaotic and alien landscape of the city. This dilemma should not surprise the reader, however, since Stevenson’s imagined Scotland is one which emphasizes the loss of innocence and the growth of a patriot in the world of the English.

As the overcrowded cities became more and more the final destination for poor Scottish migrant workers, Scottish writers became aware of the devastating social conditions of the Scottish people. The literary image of the rural nation became a hoped for idyll, but more than this, a commentary on the course the nation was taking in regard to its development. John Davidson was one such poet who recognized the consequences of the rapid shift to urban life and its meaning for the country as a whole. His poem, “A Northern Suburb” (1897) punctuates the “unnatural” direction of city life, the loss of the rustic

village and its impact on the Scottish poor:

Nature selects the longest way,
 And winds about in tortuous grooves;
A thousand years the oaks decay;
 The wrinkled glacier hardly moves.

But here the whetted fangs of change
 Daily devour the old demesne -
The busy farm, the quiet grange,
 The wayside inn, the village green.

In gaudy yellow brick and red,
 With rooting pipes, like creepers rank,
The shoddy terraces o'erspread
 Meadow, and garth, and daisied bank.

With shelves for rooms the houses crowd,
 Like draughty cupboards in a row -
Ice-chests when wintry winds are loud,
 Ovens when summer breezes blow.

Roused by the fee'd policeman's knock,
 And sad that day should come again,
Under the stars the workmen flock
 In haste to reach the workmen's train.

For here dwell those who must fulfil
 Dull tasks in uncongenial spheres,
Who toil through dread of coming ill,
 And not with hope of happier years -

The lowly folk who scarcely dare
 Conceive themselves perhaps misplaced,
Whose prize for unremitting care
 Is only not to be disgraced. (Lindsay 86)

The concerns noted here are echoed in the later socialist poetry of Edwin Muir, Eric Linklater and Hugh MacDiarmid in the 1920's and 1930's and which I will deal with in Chapter 3. The quiet and peaceful "village green," becomes a consoling image for Davidson and this aspect of his writing is part of larger

tradition of the rural image as a feature of a Scottish national character.

Scots throughout the four decades before the First World War were aware of the rising winds of modern nationalism in Europe and were not content to allow the Victorian English perception of Scotland to dominate their national identity. Scotland as a national entity was debated, scrutinized and reinvented by clergymen, politicians, amateur historians and writers. It became very important to Scottish nationalism in the late decades of the 19th and early decades of the twentieth centuries that Scots themselves took control of prevailing stereotypes to reintegrate them into Scottish literature for nationalist purposes. Scotland as a distinct nation located within a rural landscape of village, glen, mountains and farms became a defining feature which Scots could use against prevailing English attitudes. As Eric Hobsbawm concludes of national movements in this period: "It is also clear that entirely new symbols and devices came into existence as part of national movements and states, such as the national anthem . . . the national flag . . . or the personification of 'the nation' in symbol or image" (*Invention* 7). The characteristic use of rurality to suggest the features of the Scottish national character is precisely this sort of symbol. The attributes which were ascribed to the "anglicised" cities made the urban world in Scotland a feature and representation of English cultural domination. Many Scottish writers in this period suggested a picture of the rustic, but polite countryside, in order to differentiate themselves from the strong English literary tradition which saw Scotland as uncultivated in its

rusticity, even wild. Courting this attitude, Scottish writers appropriated the image and used it to assert a national image which undermined the expectations of British cultural hegemony.

However, the symbol of Rural Scotland, as manifested in the popular Kailyard tradition before 1914, was inherently retrospective and elegiac in tone. Very few dissenting voices, George Douglas Brown amongst them, complained of the vision the Kailyard novelists were spreading. The First World War and the social movements which were active afterwards would have profound consequences on Scottish nationalism and, in turn, the literary images which formed the notion of the Scottish nation would change to accommodate the new "reality." The promise of a Scottish cultural renaissance which was hinted at in the 1880's would be fulfilled in the 1920's and 1930's by writers such as Hugh MacDiarmid, Edwin and Willa Muir and Lewis Grassie Gibbon, but it would entail an almost complete revisioning of the symbols of the country, including the idea of the rural nation.

*The rose of all the world is not for me.
I want for my part
Only the little white rose of Scotland
That smells sharp and sweet - and breaks the
heart.*

Hugh MacDiarmid, "The Little White Rose"

Chapter Three:

Redefining the Rural

The outbreak of the First World War in Europe provided Scottish nationalists of all persuasions with the stimulus for a thorough examination of the Scottish nationalist endeavour, its goals and its self-perception. The war and the issues of national identity it raised were instrumental in creating a heightened awareness of Scotland's weakened cultural state within Great Britain. Until 1914, Scotland's position as part of a larger British whole, incapable of becoming complete in itself, was accepted in politics and supported through the ruling Liberals' Home Rule policy; in religious matters, the Church of Scotland was only just recovering from deep divisions created by the Disruption of the Church in the 1840's; and in literature, a self-defeating vision of an innocent rural past which judged Scotland's present as inadequate to the task of nation-building was popular for its nostalgic resistance to urban, English culture. Nevertheless, despite this stubborn perception of Scotland's shortcomings, movement towards a new national self-consciousness was

galvanized by the hardships of war and a new generation of writers intent on reformulating Scottish letters and the imagery associated with it.

Enlisted into this reformation of the Scottish nation, the rural discourse which dominated Kailyard writing was harshly stripped of its naive qualities and put to work expressing a cultural, historical and political reality for Scotland far removed from the Wordsworthian Romantic vision of escape in "Stepping Westward" where "the dewy ground was dark and cold; / Behind, all gloomy to behold; / And stepping westward seemed to be / A kind of *heavenly* destiny" (Gill 314). The influence of Modernist writers such T. S. Eliot, James Joyce and W. B. Yeats on the style and manner of this revolution in presentation is unmistakable, but far from elaborating on the expanding urban world of Scottish society, Modernist writers in Scotland concentrated their efforts on adapting the provincialism found in Kailyard writing in order to comment with greater freedom on Scotland's national identity instead of following the English example of highlighting the polyglot cityscapes. Robert Crawford has suggested this in his informative *Devolving English Literature* when he makes the connection between earlier nineteenth century writers and the Scottish Moderns. He explains: "There are hidden currents between these provincial voices and their twentieth-century inheritors which have yet to be fully explored. Nevertheless, it seems undeniable that it was the un-English provincials and their traditions which contributed most to the crucially provincial phenomenon which we now know as Modernism" (217). These

provincial "currents" in Scotland, an inheritance from a long association with cultural marginality, approached the question of national identity chiefly through the imagery and symbols of the rural world. The First World War was instrumental in catapulting the issues of Scottish nationalism to the fore and created the conditions for an assertive, confident literary scene which was eager to sustain a rural discourse for its exploration and defence of national characteristics.

Like Auden, Hemingway and other writers faced with urbanized, industrial and capitalist society so readily accessible, Scottish writers embraced socialist, and in some cases communist, ideology with a view to introducing an equality into Scottish society based on ancient founding concepts of the Scottish nation found in monastic documents such as *The Declaration of Arbroath* (1320) which stressed the dignity of the individual, the importance of the community, and the freedom of Scotland to choose its own destiny. In the turmoil of an age undergoing transition change was aggravating to some and frustratingly slow for others. Edwin Morgan, the noted poet and essayist, colourfully described the Scottish cultural situation before the war in familiar, domestic terms. He complained that Scotland resembled "an old pot seething with dissatisfaction which fortunately can be relied on never to come to the boil" (*Crossing* 17). The literary endeavours of the 20's and 30's, now commonly known as the beginnings of a Scottish Renaissance in arts, culture and politics, played a substantial role in releasing the hold that the innocent pastoral world

of the Kailyard had on the Scottish psyche through a concentrated effort of revealing past deficiencies, detailing the mundane and illuminating the specifics of rural character and landscape. Not every one was pleased with this development as a journalist in the Kirriemuir Free Press makes clear: "The 'Kailyard' writers of a generation ago gave us pictures of Scottish life at its best. The tendency to-day is to go to the other extreme, and, in dealing with rural life in particular, to gloat foully" (Gibbon & MacDiarmid 208). Nevertheless, the "old pot" image of Scotland used by Morgan provides a hint of the concern many writers of this period had in further categorizing and highlighting the nation as a familiar, domestic construct. The object was not to "gloat foully" on the rural image, but to elaborate upon it in an effort to reject the materialism and high culture which informed English Modernism. The consequences of this movement in the inter-war period was to further strengthen the rural discourse as a support for a Scottish national debate and to highlight its role in the formation of a Scottish identity.

In the years during and between the two World Wars, Scotland would boil over from the agitation caused by this new generation of writers who were not content with the rural naivete of the Kailyard school. A backlash of feeling against the impotent nostalgia of Kailyard writing made necessary a reformulation of the rural construct long associated with an antiquated cultural model in order for the writers of the Scottish Renaissance, as they became known, to move forward with their vision of a modern Scotland. This vision,

although radically different in its presentation, ideals and literary style, relied on the familiar images of Scottish rural life to project a vibrant, concrete and relevant Scottish identity. The Scottish critic Stephen Maxwell neatly sums up the direction inter-war writers were taking: "The Scottish landscape is celebrated less for its imminent qualities than for its capacity to uncover for the observer an ultimate human reality" (204). The relationship between writer and rural landscape flourished in this search for a transcendent and universal "reality" and re-visitations to the "Scottish landscape," so long the domain of the Kailyard writers, paradoxically gave life to the new school's invigorated universalism via the features of local Scotland. This concern for the "wee burgh" was part of a complex response which engaged national and international developments in an effort to develop cultural distinctiveness; to find an expression of the national self in local features. Eric Linklater wrote in 1935 on the choices novelists faced when attempting to deal with the elusive Scottish identity: "They may avoid Scottish themes; or deal with them in a parochial spirit that belittles what is already small enough; or confine themselves to some remote parcel of geography, to some distant fragment of life, and find in that solitary corner a significance that is clearly lacking in the whole" (Hart 207). Noticeably, the narratives written about the corners and fragments of Scottish rural life gave provinciality a deeper bearing on a period when the economic, social and cultural identity of the British empire was ebbing away.

In 1901, as we have already seen in "Writing a Rural Scotland," Chapter 2, George Douglas Brown's *The House With the Green Shutters*, decried the sentimentalism and nostalgia of the Kailyard writers, but the novel remained a lonely, dissenting voice to the turn-of-the-century's closed and parochial construct of the Scottish identity which Tom Nairn provocatively labelled "sub-cultural Scotchery" (164). It was not until John MacDougall Hay published *Gillespie* in 1914, discussed later in this chapter, that another writer would as seriously question the prevailing rural image of Scottish life in novel form. Once this questioning took place, however, a torrent of criticism was aimed at the writers of the Kailyard works for their denial of Scottish life and their continuing promotion of a style of writing which had little connection to the general understanding of the nation's difficulties within Britain. As Ernest Gellner reasoned: "Modern life *is* contact with bureaucrats: shop assistants, railway clerks, etc., etc. It is this which pushes people into nationalism, into the need for the congruence between their own 'culture' (the idiom in which they can express themselves and understand others) and that of the extensive and interconnected bureaucracies which constitute their social environment" (Hall 11). In Scotland, the rediscovery that the formal, urban-centred bureaucracies formed a British "other" pushed Scottish literature into the role of minor literature where the use of regional language and images of rural territory served, and may still serve, the function of affirming a revolution from within the major literature. "The revival of regionalisms, with a reterritorialization

through dialect or patois, a vernacular language” asks Giles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, “how does that serve a worldwide or transnational technocracy?” (*Kafka* 24). The fact that Scottish literature had in the past, and in particular during the reign of James IV (1488-1513), played as central a role in Scottish social life as English literature had played for the English is displayed by such great poets, or Makars, as William Dunbar and Robert Henryson. These poets’ achievements made it very clear to modern writers what Scotland had lost in the intervening years. The First World War, with its emphasis on national, collective action, radically refocused Scottish priorities for a period of four years and gave prominence to intense local and regional pride which, after the hostilities, gave Scottish nationalist writers the opportunity to express further dissent against the belittling vision of Scotland as “quaint” and “charming” in its rusticity. The explosion of interest in Dunbar’s poetry (“He is the Pompeii of British poetry,” wrote Alexander Smith (Bawcutt 1),) led to an affirmation by a select group of writers that Scottish writing could become again important to the nation. The exploration of the rural image in more “realistic” or, in hindsight, Modernist terms, gave many nationalists opposed to the parochialism they perceived in Scottish writing an avenue of resistance. They were no longer bound to the conventions of the Victorian image of Scotland, perhaps best illustrated in the work of Sir Walter Scott or the myriad of Robert Burns imitators, and were more than eager to subvert the expectations of the British establishment, a public caught up in the jingoism and atrocities of

World War.

The horrible callousness of the British leadership in the war, willingly sacrificing hundreds of thousands of colonial troops for dubious gains, spelled the bloody end of the endearing and primitive world of Thrums and Drumtochty in the Scottish imagination. In his frank diary of his war experience, La. Cpl. George Ramage had no illusions that his world had changed irrevocably. He wrote: "‘Killed in action’ is a wrong description. Many are killed sleeping quietly in the trenches, calmly cooking their food with thoughts far away from war. They are struck down by invisible, unheralded, sudden, silent (comparatively) bullets. They are butchered while lying in the sun. If they were advancing, firing or using the bayonet, they would have the consolation that they have a chance of giving as much as they got" (Yeoman 393). In the main, casualty figures for Scottish troops were astronomically high. The Royal Scots suffered 40% casualties at Gallipoli, the 2nd Cameronians (Scottish Rifles) suffered 70% losses at Neuve Chapelle, and for the 5th Cameron, Gordon, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, losses of 400-500 men per battalion were not unusual at the Battle of the Somme (Royle 15). The public's acceptance of such losses drove many writers to a deep scepticism and a rejection of the simple manners and morality of the Kailyard school which tacitly advocated an attitude of endurance and unquestioning loyalty. The impulse to radically recreate the pastoral image of Scotland into something more immediate and charged with the anguish of an entire generation at war

found many adherents, especially among war poets. Charles Murray's "When Will the War Be By?" encapsulates in Scots regional vernacular the weariness and loss of youthful innocence in the figure of a Scottish farm maid attending her chores. She wonders: "This year, neist year, sometime, never, / A lanely lass, bringing hame the kye, / Pu's at a floo'er wi' a weary sigh, / An' laich, laich, she is coontin' ever / 'This year, neist year, sometime, never, / When will the war be by?" (Milton 5). In these short lines Murray resists the temptation to alienate his rural Scotland from the influence of the outside world as Barrie, Crockett and Maclaren had. Indeed, his poem suggests, in the ballad quality it assumes, an immediacy to events far beyond the glen. The lonely walk of the farm girl along the cowtrail is accompanied by the image of the flower, an instrument of fate in the girl's hands, a choice between the fulfillment of her wishes and the endless drudgery of war. The choice is taken from her sharply, however, as she is "coontin' ever": the war is in control of her situation and Murray's poor farm girl is a reminder of Scotland's own condition, a nation subject to Imperial control.

The explanation of Scotland's role in the war is tied to its own limited part in Imperial politics, but as casualties mounted a consequence of greater external, political pressures was the intense search for a more relevant or personal meaning for the suffering. Characteristic of war-time images of rurality is the power writers gave to the imagined landscape to recover lost priorities and to heal psychological scars. In John Buchan's "On Leave," (1917),

a soldier comes home to bury his only child and his war-weariness gets the better of him. He climbs the nearby hill, Lammerlaw, and for a moment is released of the dehumanizing memories of war by the vision he sees there of hills, heather and wind:

But up frae the howe o' the glen
Came the wait o' the simmer een.
The stink gaed oot o' my nose,
And I sniffed it, caller and clean.

The smell o' the simmer hills,
Thyme and hinny and heather,
Jeniper, birk and fern,
Rose in the lown June weather.

It minded me o' auld days,
When I wandered barefit there,
Guddlin' troot in the burns,
Howkin' the tod frae his lair.

If a' the hills were graves
There was peace for the folk aneath
And peace for the folk abune,

And life in the hert o' death. (Royle 30)

In this instance, Buchan's rural landscape becomes a vital presence spanning generations of the living and dead. The poet's memory of childhood spent in direct relation to the land reaffirm the soldier's faith in not only in humanity but in the structure between the imagined countryside and his sense of life's purpose. By offering this relationship to the reader, Buchan suggests a method of inquiry into the social, artistic and personal which many Modern writers of the period were struggling to elucidate, a method which, in T. S. Eliot's opinion was "a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and a significance to the immense paradox of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history" (480). With the chaos of war all around them, writers concerned with Scotland's historical narrative strove to give concrete shape to the country's self-image by revealing its communal, village landscape and by raising the problems which beset the countryside they identified national priorities and began to address them.

William Power, in 1934, wrote of the Kailyard and Anti-Kailyard positions in literature suggesting that "the clash between Drumtochty and Barbie was typical. The Scot is inclined to see life in morning glory or thunder haze" (9). By the outbreak of war in 1914, the opposition between the Kailyard and the Anti-Kailyard writers was slowly supplanted by those works which were introducing a new note into Scottish letters: works written by Scots for a Scottish audience in an effort to pronounce a Scottish identity removed both

from moralizing and debasing narratives. As mentioned, John MacDougall Hay's *Gillespie* (1914) forms an apt partner for George Douglas Brown's *The House With the Green Shutters* (1901) for their almost identical concern in revealing the Kailyard image as utopian and devoid of self-criticism. Hay's portrayal of Brieston and the surrounding farms goes farther than Brown's use of Barbie in the manner in which reference is made to wider events and their effect on the village's way of life: international trade, Imperial desires and politics play their part in Hay's vision of a disturbed rural world. Hay was deeply concerned, as Brown was, with the falsely idyllic notions of Scottish morality, piety and innocence which feature so readily in the work of Barrie, MacLaren and Crockett, but he was also concerned with sounding a note of hope for a nation plagued with problems. When talking about his greedy protagonist, Gillespie Strang, Hay believed that "the growing spirit of materialism in Scotland needed a Gillespie" (Murray & Tait *Gillespie* v), revealing the concern he had for the future of Scotland directed, as it was, by outside influences.

MacDougall Hay's perception precedes the rallying cry of Charles Murray's poem "A Sough o' War" (1917) with its defiant insistence that Scotland can act on its own as a nation for its own interests. However, the poem illustrates the conflict between the desire to defend Scotland's national honour and the fact that Scots had no control whether they joined the conflict or remained neutral:

The corn was turnin', hairst was near,
But lang afore the scythes could start
A Sough o' war gaed through the land
An' stirred it to its benmost heart.
Nae ours the blame, but when it came
We couldna pass the challenge by,
For credit o' our honest name
There could be but the ae reply.

An' buirdly men, fae strath an' glen,
An' shepherds fae the bucht an' hill,
Will show them a', whate'er befa',

Auld Scotland counts for something still. (Royle 99)

Murray's tone here is one of defiant resignation to facts he makes plain for all to see. That the war was "nae ours the blame" reveals the sensitivity of the subject, but for their "honest" name they will do the right thing according to the Scots sense of justice and spiritual well-being. For Scots, the instrument of the vernacular language, coupled with an appeal for men from "strath an' glen" or "shepherds fae the bucht an' hill," forms a feature of their social environment, an ethnolinguistic fact that the land and language are inseparable. It is this connection and direct appeal to the features of landscape which MacDougall Hay takes up in his imagery to combat the creeping materialism, associated with urban culture, in Scottish society.

Accordingly, Briston and its farms serve as a symbolic barometer, not only to Gillespie's rapacious character, but to the state of the community as a whole. As Gillespie gradually buys the town cunningly from his neighbours, the land begins to die of drought and disease:

The firmament was laid in bands of blue steel. Inch by inch the awful heat crept up over the land, smiting it as with searing irons to brown, yellow, white, and in the end, when children began to die, to an appalling black.

The streams around Lonend and Muirhead shrunk. Lochan Dhu, in the hills, sobbed out its life to the water-lilies. The pools and marshes became black hollows, and the shallow head of West Loch Briston was leprous with dry salt. Far up the head streams, where the damp nests of green things are, the juniper fell in dry twigs, the heather was ablaze, and a great smoke hung on the hills ... The hillsides above the town lifted their bare rocks, quivering and grey, like bones in a fantastic body, and were deserted of birds which haunted the river-sides for frogs. ... The sea slouched in its oily calm, silent and glassy, until 'the very deep did rot.'

(225-6)

The insistent naming of place and the metaphor of the body which pervades this description suggests an attempt at clarifying a genealogical presence for the ancestry of the community. Robert Kroetsch speaks of similar Canadian narrative strategies noting the function of such images and their place in the

construct of a national identity. He affirms: "Our genealogies are the narratives of a discontent with the history that lied to us, violated us, erased us even" ("Beyond Nationalism" 65). The physical changes which descend upon Brieston, reminiscent of the divine plagues which afflicted Pharaoh's Egypt, are a reflection of Hay's discontent with the idyllic narratives which ignore the moral decrepitude of Gillespie's unrepentant capitalism and its effects on the community. Gillespie's "canny" ways are antithetical to the life of the village and are identified as cannibalistic by the narrator: "Gillespie sat at the kitchen table over his ledger in a brown study. The bones of the impoverished town were his for the lifting, and he saw himself squeezing out their marrow" (244). Gillespie's character suggests everything negative about a period of social change which affected Scotland dramatically. New technologies, economic revolutions and social upheaval caused by the war influenced Scottish society as much as any other country, but Hay's warning, in the figure of Gillespie, touches on the abandonment of a Scottish, spiritual dimension to national life. This warning is countered by the hope for rejuvenation in the figure of Mrs. Galbraith, Gillespie's foil.

Whereas Gillespie is a newcomer to the village, Mrs. Galbraith is "of a landward stock" (33). The death of her husband, through Gillespie's agency, forces her from Muirhead farmhouse nearly destitute. The religious imagery Hay uses to describe her plight echoes the hardships of Christ and alters Mrs. Galbraith's character, and the land she comes from, to suggest archetypal

proportions. The narrator elaborates on her connections to the land: "The roots of her life had gone deep into the farm - the byre, the lea, the stubble, the weight of gold upon the corn, the ruddy face of autumn upon its flanking woods, the holy silence of its snowy uplands, the sacrament of eve in the glades, the solemn requiem of the sea. To tear these roots up would be to leave her bleeding - to death she thought. The cross of Calvary is always erected on a green familiar spot" (38). Opposing his mercantile plans for the town, Mrs. Galbraith's symbolic crucifixion at the hands of Gillespie gives her greater strength to see the futility of the materialism Gillespie represents. The entire landscape of the novel comes to her aid in suggesting a greater wealth all around her. As she struggles to make a living for herself on the land, she is transfigured by the sight of an enchanted Brieston:

She passed through a back gate, walked along a dike side, crossed at the top of a potato field, passed through another gate, and came on the harvesters. At the sight her step became light; her body swung free and rhythmically; her face was transfigured. It was a cloudless autumn day. The hush of fading things, of leaves dropping silently, lingered on the dew-drenched trees. The long valley below, in which lay Brieston, was grey with mist, and suggested a lake of amethyst, with here and there a lance of gold sinking into the soft billows. The wide sweeping view accentuated the curves of the country; and the light toned down its edges. The hills rose in yellowing slopes beyond Muirhead to the sky

with wavering fires on their face. The slopes, billowing one into the other, appeared as if lifted by a mighty wind and arrested when their crests were about to break. Beyond all was high Beinn an Oir, assailing to the eye, towering up like something supernatural. (170)

The vision Mrs. Galbraith receives, with its overtly feminine (“curves of the country”) and masculine (“Beinn an Oir...towering up”) harmony, suggests a mythic dimension to the landscape which unites the Christ-like Mrs. Galbraith with the rural countryside in a symbol of regeneration. MacDougall Hay leaves Mrs. Galbraith among the ruins of the Strang family at the end of the novel suggesting that the hope of the community lies in this spiritual connection and the ageless relationship of the Scot to rural life. The final image fortifies the novel’s movement towards death and necessary rebirth at the hands of a solitary ploughman and Mrs. Galbraith’s final words complete the circle: “Passion and greed, love and dreams, lust and madness, were all vanquished, were all vanished; grief and shame, yearning and hope, were all at rest; faces had faded away; things dissolved; nothing was left but the earth, about to renew life at the hands of another transitory ploughman . . . ‘Earth to earth, dust to dust,’ murmured Mrs. Galbraith, as she shook the tears from her eyes. The ploughman on Muirhead Farm went on ploughing the lea, ministering to the faith that is imperishable in the breast of man” (488). Far from nostalgia, MacDougall Hay’s portrayal of the rural community of Brieston strives to unite the past and present into an organic picture of Scottish reality, and using a

gendered symbolism leaves Mrs. Galbraith as an agent of this unification. The ramifications of MacDougall Hay's novel on nationalist symbolism can be seen throughout the period in question.

The changing relationship between the image of the countryside and the forces of Scottish nationalism after the First World War was partly a result of the war's abrupt intrusion and thwarting (temporarily) of the growing national movement in 1914. Even though Scotland joined the fighting and sent large numbers of recruits, the desire to fight for national goals was lukewarm at best. Recruiting poems of the day saw the need to use regional rather than national and Imperial affiliations to encourage enlistment. J. C. Milne's short poem illustrates the issues of identity raised in war-time Scotland by his appeal to picturesque Lochnagar rather than any form of nationality: "Fecht for Britain? Hoot awa! / For bonnie Scotland? Imph, man, na! / For Lochnagar? Wi' clook and claw!" (Milton 24). This emphasis on region flourished in a climate of war fever and was reinforced by the desperate situation Britain found itself in at the beginning of the war. During the worst of the labour shortages rural farming areas became essential to the war-effort as food scarcity became a dangerous threat, especially after bad harvests in 1916 and the disruption produced by the Irish Rebellion. In the *Kirkintilloch Herald* of 9 January 1918, an appeal went out for everyone to cultivate as much as possible for the good of the nation: "Every man with a garden, if he is a patriot, will resolve in the new year to make it produce more for his own table than 1917 . . . he must stock his larder from

his garden - not a day, or an hour must be wasted throughout the whole year to produce the desired results. The hours spent digging every Saturday afternoon are worth far more to the country than cheering on the football crowds” (Round et al, 15). The appeal to the “gardener” in every Scot places great, if heavy-handed, emphasis on those “country” values long associated with village life in a national context; hard-working, rugged and moral individuals validated the rural in its historical position as a feature of the nation in the minds of the authorities hoping to tap into patriotic appeal. The tone of the appeal, however, lends a desperate edge to the gap between the idyll of the backyard gardener and the reality of the food shortages, made worse by the “frivolous” amusements at the football pitch. The emergence of an extraordinary author who could eliminate the gap between the perceived “real” and “imagined” landscapes of Scotland as a function of Scottish self-identity was desperately needed between the wars and luckily just such a writer appeared after Armistice with tremendous force.

Hugh MacDiarmid, an immensely influential writer between the two World Wars, strides through the garden of rural Scotland like a bull in a china shop. On the subject of the Kailyard writers, he was impatient at best, more than likely, savage. His comments on J. M. Barrie’s *Peter Pan* are representative. He wrote, “Barrie is acceptable only in increasingly homoeopathic doses: no matter what happens to Peter, other people - if they are not born idiots - grow up; and it is therefore certain that Barrie’s immortality will be of an exceedingly

partial and intermittent kind" (*Contemporary* 3). With a concrete nationalist vision for reviving Scottish literature in European and International traditions, MacDiarmid was not kind with those who he perceived to be working in a parochial manner. Of the Highland novelist, Neil Munro, MacDiarmid had this to say in his series of essays, *Contemporary Scottish Literature*: "Neil Munro has literally no place in British, let alone European, literature: he simply does not count: his existence - his popularity - is simply a commercial phenomenon, an element (of comparatively restricted nature) in contemporary entertainment, of no particular literary consequence at all. It is only when one narrows the field to - not British nor European but - contemporary Scottish literature that he acquires any appreciable stature as an artist" (5) MacDiarmid was unapologetic in his assertion of a Scottish tradition which he traced back to the medieval Scottish court poets, Dunbar, Douglas and Henryson. What he criticized most of all was the failure of Scottish society to invoke its own traditions in national life. He wrote in *Contemporary Scottish Studies*: "The denationalisation of Scottish life and our educational system - the lack of any cultural centre - the absence of literary movements of any kind - the tremendous puritanical and practical bias that afflicts us - all these and other associated factors have prevented the development of any 'sense of Scotland', any comprehensive or creative attitude to Scottish life and destiny" (110). For MacDiarmid, the revival of a Scottish "attitude" in modern literature was paramount and his use of the Scottish rural landscape pivotal in the transition

from nostalgic defeatism to defiant nationalist self-justification.

MacDiarmid's early creative energies are informed by his strong sense of place and its relationship to an identity he fiercely interrogated. He wrote of the youthful fascination with his rural origins in *Growing up in Langholm*: "As we grew up, too, we learned to savour the particular qualities and rites of Langholm in comparison with other Border burghs; the joys of Langholm Common Riding compared with those at Selkirk or Hawick, for example; the peculiar shibboleths of local pronunciation; the historical associations of our corner of the 'Ballad-land' rife with its tales of raidings and reivings and with the remnants of peels; the wealth of local 'characters' who were still about" (Bruce *The Land* 30). The affection MacDiarmid had for his picture of rural Scotland displays itself in the rigour he leveled at investigating rural images and in the emotive power he allowed his elemental portraits of country life to contain. In *Penny Wheep* (1926), the familiar image of the Scottish farm girl is given a turbulent, darkly suggestive tone which avoids the sentimentality of earlier versions of the character and exposes, in the vernacular, an unromantic vision of country life:

The fairmer's lass has kilted her coats

An's muckin' oot the byre,

Her hair is a' about her een

An' her braid face is fire.

*'The worms ha'e a' come oot o' the earth
An' streek their lengths a' airts.
Their reid nebs eisen i' the sun
But wae's me for oor herts!*

*'The aidle-pool is a glory o' gowd
- My hert is black inside,
The worms may streek to their herts' content
'But they ha'e nocht to hide.'* (51)

The success of the poem is embodied in the girl's dramatic secret hidden in the dank, earthy landscape of the working farm which is punctuated by the contrasting freedom of the worms. Reminiscent of the later Yeats' "Crazy Jane" poems, in particular "Crazy Jane Talks with the Bishop," the imagery is darkly concerned with sexual conduct and the colloquial language is focussed on the coarse or rough nature of the girl's life. Compared with H. D.'s poem of the same period, "Helen," with its airy classicism, or F. S. Flint's romantically ideal "Beggar," MacDiarmid's poem is revealingly rooted in a harsh, local, Scottish experience which takes advantage of the preconception of rural life as innocent. The effect is one which confronts the reader and the codified rural stereotypes with a figure who, in gender, situation, and concerns, embodies an unspoken resistance to the cultural order. This is just one instant of MacDiarmid's use of the setting of the farm, mountain and glen to suggest a

means of expressing the energy of a new political and cultural reality in Scottish poetry.

Language, history and the rural image intermingle in *Gairmscoile* (1926) and show a glimpse of the connection between poetry and the rural Scottish image MacDiarmid was cultivating. Pulsing throughout the poem is a landscape of rocks, rivers and mountains that speak infrequently, but with a Dionysian strength. The narrator addresses Wergeland: "Wergeland, I mind o' thee - for thy bluid tae / Kent the rouch dirl o' an auld Scots strain, / - A dour dark burn that has its ain wild say / Thro' a' the thrang bricht babble o' Earth's flood" (66). Complementary to *Gairmscoile*, *The Eemis Stane* (1925) portrays the entire Scottish world hanging in an uneasy balance as the poet tries to read through a blizzard of memory eternal words cut into an unsteady stone. The language is decidedly weighted with time, unpredictable energy and the silence of a rural autumn night. It is as though MacDiarmid encapsulates the Scottish condition in the combination of an unreadable landscape striving with his language to create a new consciousness :

I' the how-dumb-deid o' the cauld hairst nicht

The warl' like an eemis stane

Wags i' the lift;

An' my eerie memories fa'

Like a yowdendrift.

Like a yowdendrift so's I couldna read
The words cut oot i' the stane
Had the fug o' fame
An' history's hazelraw
No' yirdit thaim. (Grieve & Scott 8)

In 1923, MacDiarmid was formulating his poetic definitions and asked the question of his countrymen in "Braid Scots and The Sense of Smell": "can we produce physical-spiritual effects by employing Braid Scots which we cannot encompass through Standard English?" (Herbert 27). MacDiarmid's answer in *The Eemis Stane* is most readily in the affirmative, but to achieve this cultural goal of a "Scottish" relation to poetry, MacDiarmid relied on time-honoured images of rural life and the Scottish countryside for this overtly political goal.

In many respects, MacDiarmid's early work lays the foundations for his poetry collection, *Stony Limits* (1934) which develops the theme of land, language and identity with greater precision. During a difficult period of financial and personal hardship, MacDiarmid took refuge in a rent-free croft on Whalsay, Shetland with few amenities. In the resulting work he manages to show the awareness he gained by this reduction to fundamentals, to rock and wind, and his delight at discovery is apparent. He wrote: "here [Whalsay] it surprises one to discover how easily even the presence of trees and rivers can be dispensed with and how, instead of a sense of loss, we soon realise that their absence throws into relief features we seldom see or underprize because of

them - the infinite beauties of the bare land and the shapes and colours of the rocks which first of all impress us with a sense of sameness and next delight one with a revelation of the endless resources of Nature albeit in subtle and less showy or sensational forms than we are accustomed to appreciate in regions of more profuse development" (Kerrigan 189). A reader may note the rejection of "profuse development" in favour of "bare land" and recognize the strategy of emphasizing the subdued, immensely varied nature of the Scottish landscape in aid of recovering a construction of national identity. The pointed use of inclusive language; "we are accustomed," attempts to claim a solidarity with other Scots on a point of identity.

It is in "On a Raised Beach," within the collection, that MacDiarmid uses the landscape around him best to enunciate his possession of identity and recognize an intimate connection between the rocks strewn on the beach and himself. It is in the existential confrontation between the material world and the spiritual that MacDiarmid formulates a relationship between language and image which can "adapt an essentially rustic tongue to the very much more complex requirements of our urban civilisation - to give it all the almost illimitable suggestionability [sic]" (Kerrigan 55). The vernacular is subsumed within the poem to the requirements of a Scottish English but the imagery is decidedly that of the tradition of rural writing in Scotland:

I am no more indifferent or ill-disposed to life than death is;

I would fain accept it all completely as the soil does;

Already I feel all that can perish perishing in me

As so much has perished and all will yet perish in these stones.

I must begin with these stones as the world began. (Grieve & Scott 167)

This relationship between stone and man is celebrated throughout the poem and the significance of the wilderness image may remind the reader of MacDiarmid's earlier glimpses of the wild energy of the rural landscape. However, here it is made an expression of vibrant, passionate life with the power to rejuvenate rather than an expression of the dire conditions the country found itself in:

- Nay, it is easy to find a spontaneity here,

An adjustment to life, an ability

To ride it easily, akin to 'the buoyant

Prelapsarian naturalness of a country girl

Laughing in the sun, not passion-rent,

But sensing in the bound of her breasts vigours to come

Powered to make her one with the stream of earth-life round her.

(Grieve & Scott 169)

The energy which MacDiarmid brings to his vision of Whalsay's bleakness is a substantial leap in the Scottish tradition of figuring the rural in literature. Not merely an expression of a moral certitude or a pastoral innocence, the landscape MacDiarmid proposes is one which embraces a search, an overtly sexual and pregnant exploration, not only for the national, but the individual

self:

What happens to us
Is irrelevant to the world's geology
But what happens to the world's geology
Is not irrelevant to us.
We must reconcile ourselves to the stones,
Not the stones to us.
Here a man must shed the encumbrances that muffle
Contact with elemental things, the subtleties
That seem inseparable from a humane life, and go apart
Into a simple and sterner, more beautiful and more oppressive world,
Austerely intoxicating. (Grieve & Scott 172)

The force of "On a Raised Beach" lies in this intoxicating and hopeful mixture of land and self, but it is in another poem of MacDiarmid's where this inebriation deals with the Scottish situation with more of an eye to the riddle of the Scottish national identity.

MacDiarmid's most celebrated poem *A Drunk Man Looks at a Thistle*, is in his own words a "gallimaufry" in broad Scots verse. Influenced by T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, the form makes use of a wide-range of styles ranging from journalism, heroic metre, ballad and lyric. The psychology of the Scottish identity which MacDiarmid employed to inform his long poem was greatly influenced by G. Gregory Smith's notion of the "Caledonian antisyzygy," a

colourful definition of the contrasting forces at work in the Scottish character, and forms a main source for the structure of the poem. Smith wrote in *Scottish Literature* (1919) on the (dis)unities of the national literature:

We find at closer scanning that this cohesion, at least in formal expression and in choice of material, is only apparent, that the literature is remarkable varied, and that it becomes, under the stress of foreign influence and native division and reaction, almost a zigzag of contradictions. The antithesis need not, however, disconcert us. Perhaps in the very combination of opposites - what either of the two Sir Thomases, of Norwich and Cromarty, might have been willing to call 'the Caledonian antisyzygy' - we have a reflection of the contrasts which the Scot shows at every turn, in his political and ecclesiastical history, in his polemical restlessness, in his adaptability, which is another way of saying that he has made allowance for new conditions, in his practical judgement, which is the admission that two sides of the matter have been considered. If therefore Scottish history and life are, as an old northern writer said of something else, 'varied with a clean contrair spirit,' we need not be surprised to find that in his literature the Scot presents two aspects which appear contradictory. (4-5)

In relation to the portrait of rural Scotland, MacDiarmid's understanding of the conflict between the imagined edenic rural past and his harshly realistic vision of the countryside as a source of rejuvenation is central to the poem's

duality. He accomplishes a pitched contrast by adapting the pastoral lyric for his purposes, a form which, according to Harold Toliver, entails “a convenient way of talking about some aspects of literary history and theory: its renewed inspection of the nature of artifice and fictions makes it frequently an index of poetry’s continuously revised relationship to its external world” (*Pastoral* 18).

MacDiarmid’s poem adopts a mock-pastoral tone by suggesting that his drunken narrator, lying in a ditch, has the capacity to formulate a complaint against other poets and their superficial verse. The entire question of the Scottish identity frames the initial lines making use of pastoral imagery and offering a vision of the country’s possible regeneration in a figure of a blind bird in its nest among the symbolic thistles:

(To prove my saul is Scots I maun begin
Wi’ what’s still deemed Scots and the folk expect,
And spire up syne by visible degrees
To heichts whereo’ the fules ha’e never recked.

But aince I get them there I’ll whummle them
And souse the cratur in the nether deeps,
- For it’s nae choice, and ony man sud wish
To dree the goat’s weird tae as weel’s the sheep’s!)

Heiftez in tartan, and Sir Harry Lauder!

Whaur's Isadora Duncan dancin' noo?

Is Mary Garden in Chicago still

And Duncan Grant in Paris - and me fou'?

Sic transit gloria Scotiae - a' the floo'ers

O' the Forest are wede awa'. (A blin' bird's nest

Is aiblins biggin' in the thistle tho'? . . .

And better blin' if'ts brood is like the rest!) (21-36)

Ironic in its content, this declaration begins a wide-ranging attack on Burn's suppers, Haggis, and the Tartan Monster which popularly forms the conceit of a Scot's identity. This attack builds towards the mesmeric introduction of a single image couched in the unreality of the narrator's drunken state, making it all the more dream-like: the image of the thistle growing on a hillside: "*Jean! Jean! Gin she's no' here it's no' oor bed, / Or else I'm dreamin' deep and canna wauken, / But it's a fell queer dream if this is no' / A real hillside - and thae things thistles and bracken!*" (101-104). The surprise of the narrator at this vision of a "real hillside" covered with thistles, a distinctly rural image, suggests the significance of the setting to the central theme, the nature and composition of the Scottish identity.

The thistle image, and the rural background which frames it, ranges throughout the poem, appearing in several significant guises, one the more fantastic than the next. A symbol of Scotland's nationhood, MacDiarmid

invariably connects it with traditions, and the awareness of their loss, which the poem strives heroically to rebuild. It is not a question of nostalgic reminiscence since MacDiarmid undercuts any easy access to those traditions through the irony of the drunken narrator, but, nevertheless, they reoccur with stubborn frequency. One of the most powerful manifestations is the giant, swaying thistle over a festival crowd gathered for rural fair. The scene is distinctly carnivalesque or Dionysian in its features, suggesting a riot of activity, the disintegration of hierarchy and moral judgement. The poem concludes with the final image of the very hills looking on as part of the celebration:

Drums in the Walligate, pipes in the air,
Come and hear the cryin' o' the Fair.

A' as it used to be, when I was a loon
On Common-Ridin' Day in the Muckle toon.

The bearer twirls the Bannock-and-Saut-Herrin',
The Croon o' Roses through the lift is farin',

The aucht-fit thistle wallops on hie;
In heather besoms a' the hills gang by. (454-462)

MacDiarmid's insight in using the image of the phallic thistle's connection with

the rural community and its sense of a national self is one which he gathered from Nietzsche's ideas on consciousness. Catherine Kerrigan suggests that "Nietzsche's rediscovery of the pagan elements of life in the Dionysian cult of Classical Greece highlighted the importance of our relationship to the physical world, stressing as it did that consciousness itself had developed from our interaction with nature" (2). For MacDiarmid, the necessary development of a Scottish identity corresponded to the difficult recovery of this relationship with nature and the enigmatic Scottish symbols which continually elude the frustrated narrator. Despairing of the thistle's, and his own, "reality," the Drunk Man contemplates the scene of his existence:

-Mounted on a hillside, wi' the thistles
And bracken for verisimilitude,
Like a stuffed bird on metal like a brainch,
Or a seal on a stump o' rock-like wood?

Or am I juist a figure in a scene
O' Scottish life A.D. one-nine-two-five?
The haill thing kelters like a theatre claith
Till I micht fancy that I was alive! (285-292)

The thistle stands among the symbols in the poem as a reminder of a nationalist principle, but the small town, rural landscape and even his own sexuality provides an important frame of reference for MacDiarmid's attempt

at recovering a Scottish identity, one which other writers would build upon in unique ways.

The insistent search for the scene of "Scottish life" by the Drunk Man, like the reflective wanderings of Bloom in Joyce's *Ulysses*, ends in the voice given to the woman who inhabits the edge of the poem's dream vision. The Drunk Man, even though his boisterous fantasy completes itself on a note of quiet harmony, has his illusion punctured by his wife, Jean. Although he has "Silence left, the croon o' a'," (2671) to account for his confident self-consciousness, Jean does not let the illusory nature of his "discovery" go unnoticed. Her interruption is a reminder, both for the Drunk Man and for the reader, that a vital reality will not be denied its immeasurability. The Drunk Man ends the poem: "O I ha'e Silence left / - 'And weel ye nicht,' / Sae Jean'll say, 'eftir sic a nicht!'" (2710-12). The question raised by Jean's character in the poem is what role, if any, has gender played in the forming the rural image in the inter-war period and how has it contributed to a national consciousness? No shortage of works exist which advance an image of rural Scottish life as masculine, patriarchal and traditional as is the case in English writing. However, in terms which address the development of Scottish national life, modernity brought to the portrayal of gender a political dimension which sought to deny English cultural hegemony through a contrasting image of gender not based on English social values but on local conditions. Scots shared with the Irish a nationalism which used a particular strategy of resistance

described by Terry Eagleton: "If modernism is among other things a last-ditch resistance to mass commodity culture, Irish nationalism would set its own ancient spirit of aristocracy against the dismally standardized society on its own doorstep, and so act out in its own way the radical conservatism of so much modernist art" (*Heathcliff* 280). Scottish nationalist writers, in many varied and contrasting methods also used a "radical conservatism" in their portrayal of gender and rurality in order to highlight the capacity of rural women, or at least their image, as social and political actors in the effort to resist an English standard which insisted on gender roles promoted by England's urban, middle class. In particular, two authors who practice a studied relationship between gender and landscape, Neil M. Gunn and Lewis Grassie Gibbon, deserve closer attention.

Christopher Whyte complains in his article "Fishy Masculinities" that Neil M. Gunn's novel *The Silver Darlings* (1941) "is not about the maturing of a human being. Its theme is the construction of a masculinity (one of many possible, although it seeks to be mandatory). The novel propounds a myth of masculinity" (55). Whyte objects, essentially, to the myth-making aspects of the novel which he finds "insufficient to contain the unpalatable realities beneath" (49). Finn, the young man whose life forms the subject of the book, must undergo the arduous, if altogether too familiar, passage from boyhood to manhood at a time when his culture is also in transition from traditional Highland ways to the unfamiliar fishing lives they must build on the coast on

account of the Highland Clearances. If the novel builds a masculine mythology to understand the new situation which Finn and his family find themselves, it is essentially due to the implications of losing the relationship between the land and their sense of identity as a culture. Gunn is careful to suggest that the old Highland culture requires a new relationship between both male and female in order to recover the lost harmony between Highlander and the landscape. The “unpalatable realities” of the novel are dealt with in the character of Finn, who must reforge the mythological connections between himself and his Highland ancestry both on a personal and a cultural level in order to complete the Highlander’s transition towards a new society. Finn’s progression to a new understanding of his culture is illustrated in the way he, and others, imagine the surrounding landscape.

The symbolic loss of his father, Tormad, to a British Navy press gang creates an important disruption in Finn’s ability to recover a Highland cultural past and helps establish a recurring theme in the novel, the sacrifice of the old for the good of the community. Tormad remembers the group’s first winter on the barren sea-coast, forced out of the Highland straths and glens by the landowner. He muses: “Often they ate the wrong thing and colic and dysentery were everywhere. Old men, trying to live on nothing to give the young the better chance, had become unbelievably gaunt, so that children would run from them, frightened” (13). It is not only old men and women who are sacrificed as symbols of the culture’s unity, but in the opening pages of the

novel Tormad's marriage to Catrine is also torn apart by the necessities of their new life on the coast in the opening pages of the novel. Tormad attempts to sooth Catrine as he prepares to leave for the fishing: "Under his talk she was quietening - indeed his words had brought a soft emotion into his own throat - and he thought they had never come so near to a grown-up understanding of life together, when suddenly, her fingers gripping his flesh, she threw her head back and looked right into his eyes. 'I'll never let you go,' she said. . . It was hard and challenging, without any warmth. Her eyes were suddenly those of an enemy, deliberately calculating, cold as greed . . . She twisted her legs round his legs, so that he staggered and they nearly fell . . . The strangling pressure on his neck was irking him. Impatience beset him. This was too much. He finally set his strength against her and tore her arms from his neck" (11). Disruptions and loss of the Highland cultural structures and those who represent its continuity in the ancient form mark the novel's beginnings and its earliest casualty is the masculine image.

Tormad's death marks a permanent removal from the life of Finn of one of the links between a Highland culture as it was in the glens and mountains and the male mythology which accompanied it. Tormad is physically a reflection of masculine farm culture and the earthy Pictish ancestry of his people, as his description illustrates: "Tormad's heels sank into the earth. He was a heavy broad fellow, a little above the average in height, with black hair that sometimes glistened. His eyes were a very dark blue and had an expression

in them exasperated and sad” (13). He cannot help but reflect on the alien nature of his new life on the sea and as he pauses on his way to the boats, the beginnings of settlement he sees around him only galvanizes his opinion that the fertility they left behind in the hills is more a reflection of their identity as a community. The contrast, in his thoughts, is accentuated by the mountain imagery of the past and the turf huts, which resemble grave mounds, of the present. Tormad reflects: “The ground sloped down to a narrow flatness before it tumbled over a steep fae of earth and broken rock to the sea-beach. All that primeval hill-side of heath and whin and moss was slowly being broken-in to thin stripes of cultivated land by those who lived in the little cabins of stone and turf dotted here and there with rounded backs like earth mounds. They had come from beyond the mountain which rose up behind them, from inland valleys and swelling pastures, where they and their people before them had lived from time immemorial. The landlord had driven them from these valleys and pastures, and burned their houses, and set them here against he sea-shore to live if they could and, if not, to die” (12). The topographics of Tormad’s description make one thing clear: the Edenic fall from the Highland valleys spells the end of his way of life and the masculine tradition he acknowledges. It is left to his wife Catrine and his unborn son, Finn, to build a new tradition once Tormad takes his way of life to the grave.

Catrine, however, symbolizes the feminine half of Highland culture’s unity which, forced from the land, has crumbled. The allegorical association of

the feminine with the land is necessarily stronger and more difficult to overcome for Finn's development in their harsh, new situation. The traditional relation between blood and security invested in the feminine and the lost straths become hated reminders of Tormad's loss to Catrine and she turns upon them as Tormad rejected the scenes of the turf houses and their meanness. She muses darkly on the loss of Tormad in images which tie her shattered life together with the symbolic rowan tree and the blood of its berries: "This pallor of living began in somewhere at the back of her mind to be blood-stained in the next two days. It was as though in a dream, in another life, she heard the words: *Blood: rowan-red*. The words were soundless, a haunted rhythm, but their colour was bright as rowan berries or arterial blood" (43). Catrine, throughout much of the novel, is a constant reminder of the ghost of a cultural identity displaced and wounded, linked to the lost glens, symbolically bleeding the very blood which made it whole. Catrine faces the rest of the novel struggling to forget the alienness of her surroundings. It is ironic that after fleeing Tormad's memory in Dale, she leaves for Dunster in chapter 2. "Catrine Goes to a Strange Country," reveals her friend's father, Old David, reading to her the twenty-first psalm, "*The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want*". The choice is a haunting for Catrine as Tormad and she had often read the psalm before night as an intimate married rite. The psalm's message is one of harmony and peace in the relationship between land and sea and Catrine's reaction to its reading is a deep gloom and sorrow: "Old David and Kirsty got to

their knees, and Catrine following them, buried her face in her hands. She did not hear one word of his prayer, her mind and body blinded " (68-69). It is at this point that Catrine starts to fear and hate the sea and begins to encourage Finn in a life of crofting. The relationship between land and sea, idealized in the psalm, becomes a conflict between Catrine and Finn, representative characters of the older Highland way of life and the new life on the ocean respectively. Catrine, herself, recognizes her part in this symbolic struggle:

She stopped, for though she knew what she was going to say was true enough - how she herself was making a little at the gutting for the use of the house, the need for working the croft properly and breaking in land lest the ground officer get at them, for Finn to concentrate on the home and grow up into a man to take the burden away from Granny . . . all were not so much reasons, however true, as excuses for covering over the ultimate truth, which was simply her fear of what the sea might do to Finn; and because she knew this, and was honest in her ultimate self, she stopped talking; her hand fell limp and her head drooped. There was no way of making the boy understand. No way. She saw it was inevitable and natural. This was the beginning of the new loneliness. (173-74)

This broken relationship between landscape, gender and culture in the novel, is only made whole once again through the agency of Finn, who must re-create the masculine tradition he has lost and reject his mother's Highland sense of identity for one created out of the ruins of the older culture.

In essence, Finn must come to terms with the failed tradition of his father and mother and build the new community with sea-men like Roddie, the “mad viking,” who acts as the male principle in the novel after Tormad’s death. As mentioned earlier, the use of a radical pastoral, calling from itself a new “perspective by incongruity” (Toliver *Pastoral* 1), emphasizes change and conflict, but relies on the establishment of a harmony which has its roots in the past. The first image we see of Finn is as a little boy chasing a “grey fool” butterfly in a primeval forest, a name which points to both Finn’s vision of himself as an old man and the grey, old Druid in a circle of stones at the end of the novel. The butterfly, acting as a guide, draws Finn away from his mother’s side and leads him into a “strange” forest where he hunts a brown trout and experiences a sense of wonder as he views the crofts from a hill. The narrative becomes insistent with Finn’s newly found independence: “The burn wound its way down between the steep braes, and sometimes he had to climb and sometimes to slide, but soon he came to a part he had never seen before, and then he knew he was safe from his mother’s eye” (91). He discovers the landscape for the first time on his own and it is wild, potent and pays attention to him. A relationship is formed which he can identify. He notices: “There was something in this wood a little bit like what there was in the butterfly, only it was very much stronger than he was, just as he was stronger than the butterfly. Now and then the wood was like a thing whose heart had stopped, watching” (93). This presence which he feels in the woods is given shape in his

imagination in masculine terms throughout the novel. Significantly, he sees Roddie, the seaman, a figure which is evocatively Poseidon-like in his description, emerge in the burn as if called by the circle of ancient standing stones to confirm Finn's decision to go to sea: "To tell the truth, he rather liked being there then, though the stillness of the lichened stones would sometimes make him wonder. But the darkness was a different matter. What was hidden in the dark was the marrow that was hidden in the bone . . . Down through the dimness beyond the burn Finn saw a tall, dark figure come silently. His flesh ran together and his knees trembled . . . the figure came to the edge of the burn, crossed it, disappeared, and through aeons of time Finn waited - until it reappeared, first the dark head against the bright water, then the dark body, coming toward him. He sank down through his knees. The figure came on, and just before the great cry of terror got past his throat, he saw it was Roddie" (189-91). Finn's relationship with this masculine presence in both the sea and landscape is one which must be formed gradually and only after he has gained his full independence from his mother, by denying her, can he realize his part in the cultural reconciliation between the masculine and feminine principles in the novel.

Finn's rejection of his mother, partly due to her relationship with Roddie and Finn's need to purge the last vestiges of the older Highland culture, drives Finn into the final independence of manhood in the association of the landscape and the seaboard that the novel has been leading to since Finn

chased his butterfly into the woods. His first reaction against his mother is to try and cut himself off from the community by becoming a sailor, a man without a relationship with the land, in what is perhaps a reflection of Tormad's forced removal, but he is unsuccessful because the ship has its full complement (495). Later, after seizing the opportunity and buying his own boat, Finn realizes his adulthood at the standing stones where his vision of Roddie took place and the narrator puts great emphasis on his manhood's connection with the ocean: "Finn was feeling tired and wretched . . . The thought of this culminating act in the growth towards responsible manhood had so often excited him that perhaps he was now suffering no more than a temporary reaction . . . In fact, when Finn lifted his mind, he saw the clean green seas running, and knew that freedom was there, and adventure, and the song of man's strength . . . Then would come upon him a freedom that would have in it the gaiety of revenge over all the cluttering doubts and anxieties of the earth" (563). Finn's wretchedness, however, is not assuaged by his independence and rejection of the croft.

In a reversal of Tormad and Catrine's separation, Gunn allows the love between the young herring worker, Una, significantly the same name as Truth in Spenser's *Fairie Queene*, and Finn to develop and form the basis for a new relationship which will unite male and female, land and sea into a cultural entity that derives its strength from the landscape of the Scottish seaboard. Finn meets Una on the road after leaving the standing stones and roughly grabs

her: "Finn pinned her arms and broke her strength. . . he forgot himself altogether, and kissed her hair and ear. But when her strength was broken, he felt ashamed of what he had done, not only to her but to himself. . . he let his arms fall. 'All right,' he said indifferently, yet with deep underlying enmity and anger. 'You can go.' But she continued to lie against him, breathing heavily. 'Why don't you go?' he demanded, and put his palms against her shoulders. But she would not be shoved off. She gripped him, hiding her face. He felt its pressure against his neck. . . He pushed her head back relentlessly. She struggled against showing what he would find in her face. But he found it and the world went blind against her mouth" (567-68). The reconciliation between Finn and Una is a symbolic one which mends the torn Highland culture and allows Finn to find his place in the village and to harmonize the old culture of the straths with the new society of the sea. His final vision blends past and present into one picture of himself as the EveryScot, the "grey fool" who watches over the continuity of the race: "He saw himself as an old enough man by that time! A white-haired old man, head of a tribe, sitting on this knoll in quiet thought, his sea days over! . . . Like the figure of the white-haired man he had once imagined here" (583-584). Finn is only able to take his place in the community by the symbolic union of genders which his relationship with Una represents. It is significant for this study because it suggests that the perceived disruptions in Scottish culture are imagined as forces of land and sea by Gunn. As much as the gender arrangements are based on a belief in a "transhistorical,

atemporal rightness" (Whyte 59) to their construction, the application of specific features of the land make them a reflection of how Gunn perceived the culture's value systems. The use of landscape to suggest a cultural identity in transition is one feature of Gunn's work which reoccurs with persistent frequency.

Ewan MacLeod, the hero of Gunn's *The Lost Glen*, like MacDiarmid's Drunk Man, is a character who has failed to live up to expectations within male society and by investigating himself and his village forms a new relationship between himself and the land he feels he has misunderstood. A failed "lad o' pairts," Ewan returns home from university to the staring eyes of his neighbours as a reminder of the Kailyard tradition's fierce judgment of inadequacy made on those who did not succeed in the wider world. However, the village, as Ewan encounters it, is distinctly male and is presented as threadbare and crippled itself in spirit: "A huddle of grey houses, straw-thatched, lying to the earth with an aged decrepitude that humped their backs. Seven of them all told. No life stirred urgently nor cry of child. An old man came to a gable-end and, his shoulders hunched, stood looking towards Ewan. A middle-aged man ploughed slowly in a field. . . Ewan's eyes fell on the houses that now seemed to be huddling for warmth, and all at once he saw them mean and wretched, and understood that they were dying, thin-blooded and miserable" (59). Ewan, faced with the real prospect of having to leave for good, becomes intent on ignoring the town's disregard in contradiction to unwritten

rules and to come to an understanding of his place in the village. His initial criticisms are directed at age-old heroic narratives, aggressively masculine in content, which paint all Scots as “primitive” or “savage” and validate only the past as a source of identity. He comments: “Laments and warlike strains and that sort of tribal stuff - we’re away back in the delightful tribal stage. We have never evolved beyond that. We’re living in a dead past like ravens on a dead sheep” (107). Ewan’s rejection of the masculine narrative of Scottish history opens the novel to other possibilities, particularly those which lend themselves to an expression of a new harmony between place and spirit.

Ewan confronts, in his search for self-identity, questions that point to his lack of identification with the masculine culture he finds all around him. He explores questions and images of his recently drowned father which tug at the heart of his Scottishness and he finds few answers: “His emotion had overwhelmed him again, until once more the vision cleared. His father, out in the open, sun and wind and land and sea. Night with lonely, friendly lights in the darkness. Colin MacKinnon playing ‘The Lost Glen,’ so that the darkness became an ache and the glen extends to a universe set with stars . . . Was not this the place that his race had come out of? And was it not the spirit that his race have ever been connected with? . . . The Land of the Gael, the shore-haunts of the Norseman - what held them now?” (42). Broad ideas on race, place and spirit define the concerns of the cultural nationalist movements of the 20's and 30's and John Hutchinson categorizes the way narratives of this

period expressed a sense of nationality: "They engage in naming rituals, celebrate national cultural uniqueness and reject foreign practices, in order to identify the community to itself, embed this identity in everyday life and differentiate it against other communities" (16). In Gunn's novel, in terms of gender, Ewan's exposure of the impotence of the male narrative is, in effect, the impetus to form an identification with a new relationship found in the discovery of the "Lost Glen," an Eden where the old distinctions are removed and hope lies in initiating new beginnings. Ewan tells the reader that, "after walking miles and miles in a mist and more miles in the dark, he became exhausted. He lay down and fell asleep. When he awoke in the morning the sun was shining in a little glen, and he knew when he looked at it that it was not only a lost glen or a glen at the back of beyond, but that it was a glen where never a human foot had been before. He emphasized that it wasn't a queer or uncanny glen. It was simply innocent of the human being" (240). Ewan's discovery of the "lost glen" is in much the same vein as Finn's vision of himself as an old man in *The Silver Darlings*. At the moment of Finn's vision of harmony or unity for the future of the village there is an immense stillness in the landscape and a moment of awe. The narrator of *The Silver Darlings* remarks: "Finn's thought suddenly quickened, and for an intense moment the knoll took on its immemorial calm. Time became a stilled heart-beat" (534). The recovery of this harmony between self and cultural identity in *The Lost Glen* is also couched in the features of a particularly Scottish landscape. In very

interesting ways, both Gunn's *The Silver Darlings* and *The Lost Glen* suggest an inscription of Scottish nationality by validating the notion of rural community as a source of self-definition and does so by recourse to a myth of rural origins.

In a more demanding and complex presentation of such myth-building, the trilogy by Lewis Grassie Gibbon, *A Scots Quair* (1932-34), forms a landmark in the Scottish literary landscape by virtue of its remarkable skill in presenting the story of a Scottish woman's struggle with the complexities of her self-identity. Chris Guthrie's steady drift from farm to town to city details not only the personal changes she struggles with but the social, economic and political changes the entire country undergoes in the wake of industrialization. Douglas Gifford notes that the first book, *Sunset Song*, by far the most successful of the trilogy, is fashioned after laments for Scotland which can be found in other major Scottish works: "The Floo'rs o' the Forest' was Jean Elliot's eighteenth-century lament for the Scottish dead of peasantry and nobility who perished at the battle of Flodden in 1513. It was the Sunset Song of the Golden Age of Scottish Culture, which under James IV - also killed at Flodden - had produced peace, poetry and a stability for Scotland all too rare, and not to be seen again for three hundred years" (*Gunn & Gibbon* 71). The figure of Chris Guthrie is the focus of Gibbon's prose elegy for a living landscape which slowly ceases to have any organic relationship with its occupants. The rural world of Chris Guthrie is partly a dream world, but it reflects Gibbon's concern that the loss of a Scottish imagination would lead to disillusionment and cultural suicide. For partly this

reason, Gibbon was intent on re-fashioning a notion of Scottishness on his own experience of the land.

In tone and mood, Gibbon's novels reflect his deep conviction that any image of rural Scotland must be purged of the romanticism of the past and be re-written to reflect a harsh and proud reality. He wrote:

When I read or hear our new leaders and their plans for making of Scotland a great peasant nation, a land of little farms and little farming communities, I am moved to a bored disgust with those pseudo-literary romantics playing with politics, those refugees from the warm parlours and lights and policemen and theatre-stalls of the Scots cities. They are promising the new Scotland a purgatory that would decimate it. They are promising it narrowness and bitterness and heart-breaking toil in one of the most unkindly agricultural lands in the world. They are promising to make of a young, ricketic man, with the phthisis of Glasgow in his throat, a bewildered labourer in pelting rains and the flares of head-aching suns, they are promising him years of a murderous monotony, poverty and struggle and loss of happy human relationships. They promise that of which they know nothing, except through sipping of the scum of Kailyard romance. (Donaldson 5).

Despite this sometimes bitter description, rurality plays a significant role in Gibbon's *Sunset Song* as a reference for a universal humanity, and more specifically, a "Scottish" humanity with unique features taken from Scottish

knowledge of the country. In the poem, "The Land" Gibbon is quite explicit that the national voice has its roots, not in the stereotypes of Victorian tourism or industrial progress, but in the attitude of the people to the vicissitudes of nature and to the communion they share with the land itself. He begins tongue-in-cheek:

Once an Anglo-Gaelic novelist took me round Loch Lomond in his car
and we drank good whisky and talked about Lenin; and I've an uncle
once dragged me, protesting, up Lochnagar, in search of a sunrise that
failed to appear - the sun hid that morning in a diffusion of peasoup fog;
and I've viewed the Caledonian Canal with suitable commercial
enthusiasm and recited verse (as a small boy at concerts) about the Dee
and Don, they still run on (a phenomenon which elicited complacent
clappings of commendation from my audiences); and I've eaten trout by
Loch Levenside. But I refuse the beetling crags and the spume of Spey;
still I think they are not The Land.

That is The Land out there, under the sleet, churned and pelted
there in the dark, the long rigs upturning their clayey faces to the spear-
onset of the sleet. *That* is The Land, a dim vision this night of laggard
fences and long stretching rigs. And the voice of it - the true and
unforgettable voice - you can hear even in such a night as this as the
dark comes down, the immemorial plaint of the pewit, flying lost. *That*
is The Land - though not quite all. Those folk in the byre whose lantern

light is a glimmer through the sleet as they muck and bed and tend the kye, and milk the milk into tin pails, in curling froth - they are The Land in as great a measure. (Donaldson 4)

Whereas the English countryside is often portrayed in terms of fertility, innocence and genealogical continuity, Gibbon's Scottish landscape is one of endurance, fierce passion and rejuvenating toil.

In what reads like an announcement of his intentions to undertake the portrayal of a "Scottish" community of old rooted values, Gibbon satirically calls up the ghosts of the Kailyard and anti-Kailyard novels in his prologue to *Sunset Song* to banish their romantic assumptions. The narrator refers to the idyllic "bonnie brier bush" of MacLaren and the hard "green shutters" of Douglas Brown in a bewildered, dismissing tone: "So that was Kinraddie that bleak winter of nineteen eleven and the new minister, him they chose early next year, he was to say it was the Scots countryside itself, fathered between a kailyard and a bonny brier bush in the lee of a house with green shutters. And what he meant by that you could guess at yourself if you'd a mind for puzzles and dirt, there wasn't a house with green shutters in the whole of Kinraddie" (31). The issue that lies at the heart of *A Scots Quair* is very much the same preoccupation as in *The Silver Darlings*, the detailing of a culture in transition, but with richer involvement in structuring the Scottish response to a rural identity. As David Kerr Cameron states in his introduction to the novel, "Chris, whose odyssey is the thread of Gibbon's trilogy, faces a dilemma deeper and

even more profound. It is the eternal dilemma of the country child: to dull the mind to the wider cultural horizons or to turn one's back for ever on an ancestral landscape, aware of the betrayal in the blood? Chris is trapped between two cultures and between the past and the future" (8). In Gibbon's novel, the relentless movement towards the city and the standardized culture it represents means only one thing, the failure of a Scottish imagination and the Scottish nation. The bonds between language, personal relationships and rural landscape serve as a construct for Gibbon's Scotland under threat.

The structure of the novel reproduces the rhythms of rural life and celebrates the cyclical nature of cultivating a landscape in the pattern of the chapters themselves. A prologue and epilogue, both titled, "The Unfurrowed Field", frame four separate sections of the novel corresponding to the nature of agricultural life: Ploughing, Drilling, Seed-time and Harvest. The implication of this cycle and its progression from birth to death suggests that rural Scotland as part of Chris' self-identification is doomed to pass as its historical and narrative significance fades. The first note of this suggestion is sounded in the intrusion of the mechanical into the age-old patterns of Kinraddie life. The summer drought and the motor-car (driven by an stereotypical urbanite) both suggest the aridity and disregard for humanity that threatens Kinraddie. The narrator comments: "The roads you walked down to Kinraddie smithy or up to the Denburn were fair blistering in the heat, thick with dust so that the motor-cars went shooming through them like kettles under steam. And serve them right,

they'd little care for anybody, the dirt that rode in motors, folk said; and one of them had nearly run over wee Wat Strachan a fortnight before and had skirled to a stop right bang in front of Peesie's Knapp . . . And the motorist, he was a fair toff with leggings and a hat cocked over his eyes, he'd said *Keep your damn children off the road in future*" (32).

Contrasted with this intrusion from the larger, outside world is Chris' first encounter with the countryside around Kinraddie as her father brings the family to their farm, Blawearie, from Aberdeen. The family struggles in a storm to drive through the Grampian hills and Chris has a vision of what could be the Greek historian Polybius (200-118 BC) crying out at the coming of the Gaulish explorer, Pytheas (300 BC), who may have visited the area as reported in Polybius' *Histories*. Chris is flabbergasted by her vision: "For out of the night ahead of them came running a man, father didn't see him or heed to him, though Old Bob in the dream that was Chris's snorted and shied. And as he came he wrung his hands, he was mad and singing, a foreign creature, black-bearded, half-naked he was; and he cried in the Greek *The Ships of Pytheas! The ships of Pytheas!* and he went by into the smore of the sleet-storm on the Grampian hills" (42). This odd vision invests the landscape with the timelessness of legend and myth, and Leonard Orr suggests that this blending of ancient narratives of the past within the present may constitute an "attempt to recreate in art the order that was now lacking in the outside world through the allusion to myth or the borrowing of epic structures" (2). Gibbon reminds

us of the presence of myth in the landscape when he borrows from the Pythean legend of early Scotland and that its significance lies in the fact that Chris perceives it as a dream, something which will guide her consciousness to elusive "truths".

The promise of revealing myth, however, remains locked in the hills and dales of the Scottish countryside as is the Scots language in Gibbon's novel as Chris is invariably driven by the historical forces of materialism into the town of Segget. Before she is pushed by circumstance from the farm of Blawearie, Chris imagines a concept of Scotland which paints the country as a remote, but fertile, mother figure, resisting the elements and giving life in the patterns established by the agricultural seasons in spite of the people's disregard. Her thoughts are directed in response to her skeptical brother's statement that Scotland was dead or dying: "And, daftly, Chris felt a sudden thrust of anger through her heart at that; and then she looked round Kinraddie in the evening light, seeing it so quiet and secure and still, thinking of the seeds that pushed up their shoots from a thousand earthy mouths. Daft of Will to say that: Scotland lived, she could never die, the land would outlast them all, their wars and their Argentines, and the winds come sailing over the Grampians still with their storms and rain and the dew that ripened the crops - long and long after all their little vexings in the evening light were dead and done" (165). For Chris, the land exists as an extension of herself and this is essential to the central conflict of the novel made plain by Gibbon's description of the split between

the “two Chrisses” (37), one drawn to the integrity of the land and its language and the other to the wider horizon of the world and cosmopolitan English. As in MacDiarmid’s use of G. Gregory Smith’s notion of the dual nature of Scottish literature, Gibbon intimates that “Scottishness” lies with the natural or rural world in contrast to an English cultural standard which is “civilized. The narrator states:

Two Chrisses there were that fought for her heart and tormented her.
You hated the land the coarse speak of the folk and learning was brave
and fine one day and the next you’d waken with the peewits crying
across the hills, deep and deep, crying in the heart of you and the smell
of the earth in your face, almost you’d cry for that, the beauty of it and
the sweetness of the Scottish land and skies. You saw their faces in
firelight, father’s and mothers and the neighbours’, before the lamps
were lit up, tired and kind, faces dear and close to you, you wanted the
words they’d known and used, forgotten in the far-off youngness of their
lives, Scots words to tell to your heart . . . And the next minute that
passed from you, you were English, back to the English words so sharp
and clean and true - for a while, for a while, till they slid so smooth from
your throat you knew they could never say anything that was worth the
saying at all. (37).

Chris’ lifelong struggle with the events which alienate her from the
“Chris” who yearns for Scots words ends in a grand circle as Chris finally leaves

the city, Duncairn, to live out the rest of her life in the countryside near Blawearie, where the novel begins. In a final vision, the images of people she has known range through her mind, comforting her, and pointedly ending on the face of her long dead mother which melts into the reality of the landscape before her. She dreams: "And sometimes in the middle of that work in the house or tinkling a hoe out in the parks she'd close her eyes a daft minute and think nothing indeed of it all had happened - Kinraddie, Segget, the years in Duncairn - that beside her Will her brother was bending to weed, her father coming striding peak-faced from the house, she might turn and see her mother's face and she'd open her eyes and see only the land, enduring encompassing, the summer hills gurling in summer heat, unceasing the wail of the peesies far off" (496). In many ways, this vision of the land calls the reader back to Chris' mother's words which suggest an avenue of reconciliation for the dual nature of Chris at this stage in her life. Early in the trilogy, Chris' mother advises her: "*Oh Chris, my lass, there are better things than your books or studies or loving or bedding, there's the countryside your own, you its, in the days when you're neither bairn nor woman*" (33). Chris' return to the country is a reminder of this ageless, genderless period of communion between the self and the land. In Gibbon's work, as in Gunn's, the dream of a mythic unity of a Scottish national self and the individual is established by a re-imagining of the relationship between humanity and the living rural landscape.

Turning from literature for a moment, the conflict which is portrayed so

vividly in Gibbon's novels between the threatening image of mechanized urbanity and the picture of Scotland as a robust wilderness was far more advanced in 1935 than Gibbon allows. The Association for the Preservation of Rural Scotland, founded in 1926, was publishing pictorial collections of the Highlands and essays on rural areas all designed to halt industrial development proclaimed by the Association as undesirable "from a national point of view" (*Scotland's Heritage* v). The language of preservation used by the Association is illuminating for our study in that it forewarns of dangerous menaces to the nation as well as the countryside, painting the forces of industrialization as interlopers in the garden. They wrote in *Scotland's Heritage of Beauty as Affected by Water Power Schemes* (1935): "This book is issued by the Association for the Preservation of Rural Scotland in an endeavour to preserve a part of Scotland's natural beauty which is threatened, and to give some indication of the wonderful country in which it is proposed to construct certain hydro-electric undertakings, including dams, pipe-lines, power-stations, etc., under the Caledonian Power Scheme. The country that is menaced is that large tract up Glengarry to Loch Hourn and through Glenmoriston, one of the few areas of beautiful country in Scotland left unspoiled by man" (i). The litany of Scottish place names is a common strategy in nationalist arguments to allow the reader to locate the areas and to associate them with the beauty and grandeur the writer is attempting to invoke. The method is practised by a letter writer in the *Scotsman* of 29th November, 1935 with greater effect:

Yet surely, in truth, the supreme and unanswerable objection to these schemes is the fact that they devastate Scotland's most lovely places. With the examples of Rannoch and Lochaber and Galloway before us, supporters of these schemes can no longer claim that they do not mean the destruction of natural beauty. And that is a crime and a sacrilege which nothing save dire necessity could justify. Some of the world's most lovely scenery is our land's priceless heritage, and we are its trustees. This generation has betrayed that trust as no generation ever did before, and we shall most richly merit the curse of posterity if we merit the destroyer any further to mar the perfection of beauty in our Highland glens.

Inflammatory words such as "sacrilege," "crime," and "the destroyer," reveal a conflict between the sacred and profane images of Scotland in this writer's perception of a Scottish landscape. As a conceptual metaphor of the Scottish nation, the rural landscape itself is passed down to "generations" in an affirmation of a genealogical "posterity" which is identified as Scottish for the purposes of establishing a defiant identity. Other titles by the Association include John Francis Baily's *Trees and Shrubs for Housing Schemes and Roads* (1938) and *The Development of Highland Water Power* (1941), indicating that the Association was intent on at least minimizing the effects of development on rural Scotland, but as writers in this period were already realizing, the portrayal of the Scottish countryside as an edenic garden was incompatible with the

modern industrial nation and had to be modified to make way for the pipe-line and power-house in the glen.

Some may see this rejection of the urban reality of Scotland in the inter-war period as too naive or at worst, a utopianism which leads to idyllic fantasy. Edwin Muir was one poet, writer, and essayist who did not shun writing about the cities and their distinctions, but his fears that the city was, as a social, economic and political structure, an import from another culture were expressed in his travel journal, *A Scottish Journey*. He argued that the development of towns and their effect on the national character were grossly affected by the stunting effects of Industrialism which he abhorred as a spiritless condition, alienating the Scot from a rewarding relationship with the countryside. He expounds: "A town was once as natural an expression of a people's character as its landscape and its fields; it sprang up in response to a local and particular need; its houses, churches, and streets were suited to the habits and nature of the people who lived in it. Industrialism, which is a mechanical cosmopolitan power -and the same in Prague as in Glasgow - has changed this. It makes people live in houses which do not suit them, work in places which two hundred years ago would have been considered as mad as a nightmare, and destroys their sense even of ordinary suitability; and it does all this because its motive force is a mechanical and not a human one" (21). Accordingly, he calls Glasgow, "This No Man's Land of civilisation" (102), but with a modicum of fairness, he recognizes that Glasgow is representative of the

urban, modern Scotland of the 30's, however much he hates the place. His reservations are aimed more at Glasgow's resemblance to Manchester rather than to a Scottish town and that "the proof of its vitality being that it influences rural Scotland in all sorts of ways, while rural Scotland has no effective influence on it" (102). Muir's description of Glasgow is characteristic of this period's view that the Scottish modern city is an "incomprehensible distortion of nature" (114). Nature, and the Scottish identity which is associated with it, are located in Muir's humane, rural Scotland.

In *Variations on a Time Theme* Muir displays the preoccupation he had for mythic themes and he embellishes his poem with visions of wasted land, not unlike T.S. Eliot's famous poem, which becomes a symbol of thwarted Scottish culture. The poet asks: "How did we come here to this broken wood? / Splintered stumps, flapping bark, ringwormed holes, / soft milk-white water prisoned in jagged holes / Like gaps where tusks have been" (Aitchison 60). The destructive beasts of Scottish history, in Muir's view, were the agents of an uncaring Kirk and the urban English bent on dismantling an organic relationship which characterized Scottish culture up until the time of the Reformation. In *SCOTLAND 1941*, it is not only the historic characters of Scotland who are relegated to become faint memories in books, but the fertile land itself becomes a character forced into oblivion:

We were a tribe, a family, a people.

Wallace and Bruce guard now a painted field,

And all may read the folio of our fable,
Peruse the sword, the sceptre and the shield.
A simple sky roofed in that rustic day,
The busy corn-fields and the haunted holms,
The green road winding up the ferny brae.
But Knox and Melville clapped their preaching palms
And bundled all the harvesters away,
Hoodicrow Peden in the blighted corn
Hacked with his rusty beak the starving haulms.
Out of that desolation we were born.

.... (Lindsay 41)

In many respects, Muir's hope to celebrate a lively vision of Scottish agricultural life before the twin plagues of mechanization and religion desolated a landscape of "simple rustic" people, recalls the Kailyard's naivete, but, as Willa Muir stated in her autobiography, *Belonging* (1968), both Edwin and she took great stock in their country upbringing and Jungian notions of the collective unconscious to assert that their rural background was a defining feature of their identity. She states: "we inherited, each of us, a primitive simplicity from our Orkney and Shetland forebears which was likely to be wide open to vibrations from our tribal unconscious. Behind our more or less civilized frontages Edwin and I each had a large area of primitive feeling, a greater proportion of simplicity than is usual in Britain, a simplicity which

more sophisticated people call naivete. We had inherited it from islanders who practised co-operative not competitive ways of living, and so in each of us that simplicity was keyed to general goodwill" (22-23). Inheritance and collectivism were of great importance to the Muirs in their perception of a Scottish way of living.

In the inter-war period, the influence of socialism and Jungian ideas which supported notions of tribal identity were important aspects of a discourse of difference established by nationalist Scots. For Ernest Gellner, this kind of nationalist thinking "inverts reality: it claims to defend folk culture while in fact it is forging a high culture; it claims to protect an old folk society while in fact helping to build up an anonymous mass society" (124). In Scotland, with its perceived lack of high culture, this inversion of reality was not necessarily a negative aspect of establishing a communal identity. If this is the case, clearly for both Willa and Edwin Muir, the defence of "civilized" rustic society, disassociated from urban complexity and materialism, was an attempt, through popular psychological and social ideas to construct a high culture which reflected in their eyes a "true" Scottish identity, a "simplicity" of feeling that had its roots in the countryside and the rustic values of self-sufficiency and communal support. The Muirs joined many others in an attempt to establish a popular cultural ideal by asserting an essentially rural identity for Scotland which had much more psychological and social depth than their Kailyard predecessors.

What emerges most clearly from the writers, organizations and critics of the inter-war period is a continuing preoccupation with mythic themes of conflict and reconciliation of the rural with the rise of urban, material culture in Scotland. Protagonists, such as Chris Guthrie, Finn and MacDiarmid's *Drunk Man*, undertake self-defining journeys through varied landscapes of afflicted or changing cultures, but discover a sense of identity in archetypal symbols where rural Scotland figures predominantly. Transitional and modulating visions of Scottish culture are favoured for their direct commentary on the literary culture of the past, in particular the rural innocence and self-effacing pose propounded by the Kailyard novelists. This commentary reveals the inadequacy of a rural image built upon a utopian morality or romantic sentiment and suggests its inappropriateness for a world which suffered through the devastation of World War. Instead, a concentration on the difficulties that beset rural Scotland and the notion of its threatened survival provided the foundations of a discourse which supported the nationalist conception of cultural resistance located spiritually in the countryside.

As Benedict Anderson notes in his study of nationalism, successful nationalist movements of this century have grounded themselves in territorial and social space and that Great Britain shares with the former Soviet Union "the rare distinction of refusing nationality in its naming" (2). This statement, which embraces the international culture of English Great Britain, obscures the fact that Scottish nationalism was very busy in the inter-war period with

reterritorializing the Scottish nation within a conceptual rural space. As shown in this study, urban Scotland was approached by many important writers with suspicion, even outright hostility, as representative, not of an organic Scottish culture, but as an imported English cultural standard. Writers of this period were not solely bent on figuring the rural world in their works but a large majority of the canonized Scottish poetry and prose deal with the notion of Scottish identity by re-imagining a relationship with rural life. This strategy of resistance to Great Britain, I would argue, is not new in Scotland and may reflect earlier methods used by Jacobite and Victorian Scots who were subsumed as a cultural minority into the larger English nation. Murray Pittock suggests of Scotland in the 1700's that "The shift in representation of Scottish royal and national identity towards the localized and vernacular during the Jacobite century helped demonstrate national difference in the face of the triumph of the Anglocentric case in the pamphlet war, a triumph which at the time culminated in Union and subsequently had longstanding consequences for British historiography" (30). The image of rural Scotland in the discourse of Scottish national identity may accurately be called a vehicle for this demonstration of national difference in-between the two World Wars because, as a unique territorial and linguistic space, comprised of glens, straths, bens, islands and lochs, it asserted a liberating provincialism which qualified the growing demands of universalism by English Modernism.

Tom Nairn, in *The Break-up of Britain*, too quickly jumps to the

conclusion that “When, from the 1920's forward, intellectuals began to try and look at what had happened in a more nationalist fashion, panic was the natural response. . . .There is no ‘ground upon which one may stand foursquare’, one is forced to exclude, to condemn, to say No to practically everything. The only terrain available is the Kailyard, from which flight of course is obligatory” (168-69). This study, it is hoped, has shown that writers during the period in question had plenty of ground to stand on “foursquare” and that this ground was firmly located, not in the Kailyard, but in a countryside that was rejuvenated through narrative which stressed its mythic dimensions and that had the ability to support nationalist claims through the assertion of national difference. This strategy would have important ramifications for the utilization of rural imagery after the turmoil of the Second World War as Scotland developed a more confident nationalist position within Great Britain and began to turn its attention to the burgeoning cities, Glasgow and Edinburgh, as centres of Scottish culture.

*"Parishes dwindle. But my parish is
this stone, this tuft, this stone
and the cramped quarters of my flesh and
blood."*
Norman MacCaig "Climbing Suilven" 1955.

Chapter Four:

Post-War Potatoes and Nation-Building

The literary momentum achieved by the writers of the Scottish Renaissance of the 1920's and 30's gave fresh perspective to nationalistic writing in Scotland and fresh import to, and a heightened awareness of, the metatextual codes informing a Scottish cultural construction which images of rural life, and the countryside in general, promoted. The application of a cohesive literary image of rural Scotland for nationalist purposes, however, was temporarily suspended by the events of the Second World War, but was by no means abandoned when Scottish writing came under the scrutiny of the War Office. As a catalyst for change, the Second World War demanded a harsh revision of the projected radiant future that the early Renaissance writers hoped for the country. In revising the images of Scotland's rural landscape to reflect a utilitarian activism, Scottish nationalists and non-nationalists alike gave renewed vigour to the ideal of a unified, rural, working nation.

Scotland was noted for its loyalty in the war effort and every effort was made by Scots to support the aims of Great Britain, but the post-war period

witnessed an increasing militancy in Scottish nationalism in its claims for some form of political independence. Ian Levitt writes: "The devolution issue re-emerged in early 1949 when the Covenant Movement began another campaign on the issue of Home Rule. The tactics adopted, including a suggested plebiscite, were more calculated than in 1947, aimed in part to broaden the Movement's legitimacy, but also to embarrass the Government by showing that its stance was unreasonable" (22). The support for Devolution and calls for full independence during the influential years of the 1950's, 1960's and 1970's increased steadily, and led directly to the 1979 Devolution Referendum which won an electoral majority but failed to win 40% of the total electorate, a condition necessary for the Devolution Bill to pass as specified in the cautious and conservative Cunningham Amendment (Yeoman 448). The blow took nationalists by surprise and the confidence built up over the thirty year period after the war seemed to be lost in an instant. The commentator Neal Ascherson asked in bewilderment at the time: "A year ago, nobody could have sensibly expected such a result. Why did it come about when we voted on Thursday?" (Yeoman 449). Ascherson's amazement displays the lost confidence Scottish nationalists felt in the progress that had been made in the past thirty years, progress which was important for the tone, application and structure of rural Scotland and for its relationship with nationalist narratives. The countryside's role as an active chorus to the underlying political struggle for independence was crucial given the fact that the factories and heavy

industry of the Clyde were merely a shadow of themselves after the war. Scotland emerged from the Second World War victorious but weakened immeasurably both in materials and in spirit.

The genuine, but often carefully cultivated, patriotism of the war period placed an inordinate emphasis on the heavy industries and shipbuilding centres of the Clyde heroically withstanding Luftwaffe assaults within the censored newspapers and magazines of Scotland for the purpose of “national” resistance. One writer, in compassionate yet defiant tones, detailed the destruction of the Clydebank residential and industrial areas in biblical proportions. He wrote on the twenty-fifth of April, 1941 in *The Clydebank Press*: “I made no whine of complaint yet, in my soul, I was, like Christ, in Gethsemane. I thought of all the poor people who were enduring the full force of the German blitz; how they were being killed and injured and rendered homeless wanderers if they escaped death ... so many of them, with no protection save their tenement closes and houses, and blind chance, everyone of them hoping to escape from this fiendish, murderous tornado of modern warfare. Hell was let loose upon Clydeside that night” (Yeoman 432). Though the focus here is on the heavily populated areas of the Coal Belt, the writer’s escape to the garden of Gethsemane underlines two metaphoric impulses that reveal this Scot’s reliance on a familiar polarizing discourse and a narrative support for his nationalism. The stark contrast between the anonymous, collective urban hell of “modern warfare” and the isolated, individualistic, yet

becalmed angst of the metaphorical garden marks in this particular Scottish writer the divide between the impersonal and the personal, chaos from structure, anarchy from the nation. When war came to an end in 1945 and Scotland became anxious for its economic and cultural sovereignty under rationalized English governments, Scottish nationalists used this impulse towards the deeply reflective garden scene in Scottish writing to find the concrete and practical explanations for Scotland's rights to independence. Their renewed energy and focus was directed towards establishing a politicized and more immediate version of the Clydesider's garden which could give impetus to a revision in the way in which ordinary Scots felt about the country, and the countryside in particular, as a whole. The clarion call of the earlier Renaissance writers to proceed with cultural independence invariably led post-war authors to alter substantially the decades old construct of the nation as a rural haven for the devout, "couthy" Scot and to replace it with a discourse of rural struggle in politically charged narratives.

Contrary to perceived notions of Scotland as an industrial centre during the 1940's, the importance of the Clydeside industries actually diminished in the war as English factories took the bulk of orders and factory space in Scotland was relegated for use as storage rather than production (Lynch 441). The war brought little in the way of new industry. Economic instability after the war and the inevitable collapse of the British empire's strength in the twentieth century renewed, in nationalist quarters, the hopes for an independent Scottish

state. These hopes bloomed suddenly when “King” John MacCormick took centre stage in Scottish nationalist politics and organised the Scottish Convention’s assembly of March 1947. Representatives of political parties, church officials, local authorities and trade unions, in a rare show of unity, drafted a constitutional scheme and passed unanimously a motion for immediate Home Rule (Harvie *Scotland and Nationalism* 171). This alternative constitution was to become the foundation of a petition for Scottish self-determination, known as the Scottish Covenant, which at the third assembly of the party garnered two million signatures. As a consequence of these hopes for greater independence, rural Scotland was drafted into nationalist arguments by the alteration of its literary characteristics to reflect the new ideals of the new activism. Literary images of rural Scotland became increasingly far from benign, utopian and moralistic tales of rural life and concerned with more immediate questions of national identity, social inequalities and the practical matters (communication, transport, law and education) of the new nation-builders.

The growing belief that Scotland, like other small nation-states such as Denmark or Holland, could be agriculturally self-sufficient, politically responsible, and even, by comparison, on an equally productive footing with England, resulted in a vast change in the formulation of rural Scotland in progressive nationalist circles. The reminiscences of “bygone days” ceased to be relevant to nationalist aims and the countryside was recognized as a vital

part in the arena of national change. The Scottish Secretariat issued a pamphlet in 1943 by Archie Lamont which plainly attempts to validate the argument that Scotland's rural nature was its potential. Lamont writes: "Let us look for a few moments at the resources and potential prosperity of Scotland, and at the effects of the dead hand of Westminster. In proportion to present populations of the two countries, Scotland is by nature a country of greater resources than England. Scotland, with about 4,000,000 acres suitable for tillage, has roughly a third of the arable land in Britain ... We can produce more potatoes to the acre than England can" (11). The same arguments were still being used in 1947 by Douglas Young, the noted poet, in one of his many six shilling pamphlets, where he extolls the virtues of the Scottish countryside:

As land is any community's basic resource, being the surest source of its food supply, the main necessary of life, Scotland is *prima facie* likely to benefit from economic separation from overcrowded England. Looking more narrowly at the land question, one sees that five million acres of Scotland are arable or potentially arable land, giving one acre per head of cropland. Denmark and Holland are self-sufficient in food-products with only one acre per head. . . Scotland has also ten million acres of pasture-land or reclaimable grazing, much of it at present wasted on deer or sheep, but capable of sustaining an enormous dairying and meat-cattle industry . . . Reviewing these economic possibilities, and contrasting them with the present situation, one sees, first, that the

Scottish people themselves are denied the full benefits of the wealth of their land and their labour. (*International Importance* 9-10)

Young and Lamont's expressive commentary reveals a broader understanding, or underlying perception, of the fact that the image of a productive and fertile Scottish countryside was intimately linked to the potential for political action in Scotland. No longer viewed as a quaint, peasant-inhabited utopia, rural Scotland in media and literature changed to become one of the weapons in the nationalist arsenal.

Not even the Depression could stem the certainty that the various political groups had that Devolution would eventually occur and those who rallied for complete independence from Britain seized upon the promotion of a Scottish identity tied to the imagery and potential of its agricultural landscape. This strategy was, and remains, a powerful tool for those seeking to make distinctive Scottish history and culture by establishing a geographic profile to describe the country's national unity and "otherness". In relation to the early decades of the century, the tendency to look backwards in time to a glorious but futile past was supplanted after the war by a desire for a "clean slate". According to David Williams, the preoccupation with fragmentation and the failure of the past in mainly *fin de siècle* writing was gradually supplanted by high Modernist writer's hopes for organic unity and equilibrium. Williams writes: "The disunity and disintegration which fascinated the Decadents according to Trehearne seems reversed by high Modernists such as Joyce,

whose work features a focus on wholeness, proportion and order” (6). This emphasis on unities was most certainly carried over into the mid-century in Scotland by the dislocating events of the Second World War but was also modified in reaction against the perverse nationalism of the Nazis. For this reason many of Scotland’s efforts to consolidate into a modern cultural nation were called into question by prominent artists and writers who saw nationalism as an ideology of exclusion. The long debate over the site of a Scottish National Theatre was symptomatic of the wariness most Scots felt in asserting “nationalist” claims. Roger Savage documents the many difficulties of establishing the National Theatre after the war: “Among the literati of the time, Neil Gunn was sympathetic but in a rather guarded, skeptical way (was there enough national ferment in the Scottish soul?), while Fred Urquhart was more positive; though, having given a proselytising article on the subject of the title ‘The Case for a Scottish National Theatre’, he admitted in the article itself to being ‘chary . . . about the word ‘National’ - it savours too much of the madness which all over Europe today is the cause of bitterness and strife” (Stevenson and Wallace 26). In many ways, this reluctance to express national forms had lasting effects on the formation and structure of post-war Scottish cultural nationalism as that which was deemed “Scottish” was divorced from the excesses of fascist nationalism, chiefly a paternalistic past and a racial vision of the “homeland”.

As has been already stated, the literati of Scotland had waded into the

national debates in the influential pre-WWII years and continued to do so, influencing politics and the cultural conception of rural Scotland in the public eye. Hugh MacDiarmid and Edwin Muir readily engaged each other in public print and many of the leading writers supported public action in an attempt to bring a greater voice to an identifiable "Scotland". Sidney Goodsir Smith, a poet and friend of Hugh MacDiarmid, wrote an influential, nationalistic pamphlet which strove in a general historical manner to suggest that the tradition of Scottish writing had existed since the early days of the kingdom, but qualified that tradition as one which had little to do with loss and estrangement. Grabbing the attention of the public by suggesting that the Scots literary tradition was unbroken and defiant was as important as arguments concerning the economic well-being of Scotland. Unsurprisingly, Goodsir Smith is outspokenly negative in his criticism of the Kailyard writers and the Burns imitators who are presumed too unimportant to be mentioned in this tradition, but he is enthusiastic when speaking of more internationally known figures such as Robert Louis Stevenson and George Douglas Brown who "suddenly showed the extraordinary power of survival of the Scots tradition" (26).

His own work shows a dedication to exposing the bourgeois complacency and fear of change that he saw represented in the continued use of Kailyard stereotypes. In "Luss Village," the Morphean atmosphere of the somnolent, nearly dead, rural village is echoed by the very landscape which seems exhausted of creativity. Recalling Lamont and Young's nationalistic

arguments on productivity, the final image of three young people intent on reading scripture instead of working the fertile meadow all around them signals the poem's fading into the sleepy heat of a past populated by the ghosts of the Kailyard:

Such walls, like honey, and the old are happy
in morphean air like gold-fish in a bowl.
Ripe roses trail their margins down a sleepy
mediaeval treatise on the slumbering soul.

And even the water, fabulously silent,
has no salt tales to tell us, nor makes jokes
about the yokel mountains, huge and patient,
that will not court her but read shadowy books.

A world so long departed! In the courtyard
the tilted tombs still gossip, and the leaves
of stony testaments are read by Richard,
Jean and Carol, pert among the sheaves

of unscythed meadows, while the noon day hums
with bees and water and the ghosts of psalms. (Murray 119)

Goodsir Smith's attack on the pastoral stereotypes of the Kailyard can readily

be seen in the reference to the “tilted tombs” who gossip and more directly in phrases such as “the world so long departed,” but his work did not, like George Douglas Brown, stop at leveling scorn at the Kailyard. Another note is sounded by his “Highland Portrait,” a poem which glimpses beyond the stereotypes and distinguishes between a literary rurality that is stagnant and one which has a value not yet recognized in Scottish letters.

“Highland Portrait” concentrates its efforts in washing away the veneer of romanticism from the imagined Highland scene and revealing the rougher details of Highland life by the constant stream of water which pours down upon the poem. Absurdities such as ducks diving into “stylish seas” are noted. The bleak existence stared at through a woman’s struggle with the elements and the empty forms of the “phantom chieftains” are realized and washed away. Throughout the poem we are invited to glimpse behind the facade of the past imposed on the present and to explore a very immediate and relevant rural landscape. The final stanza of the poem acknowledges the landscape’s direct and elemental relationship to the life and death of the Highlanders, and the poet finds in the expression of “antiseptic passions” the unusual clarity which suggests a new artistic birth. The poem begins with a torrent of water:

Castles draw in their horns. The stones are streaming
with fine Highland rain. A woman’s struggling
against the sour wet wind in a black skirt.

Mist on the mountains. Waterfalls are pouring

their tons of water with a hollow roaring.

The phantom chieftains pass the heavy port.

Fences straggle westwards. Absurd cattle

lift their shaggy heads through humming water.

A duck dives coolly into stylish seas.

Hotels are sleeping in their winter colours.

The oil skinned sailors wear their gleaming yellows.

Glencoes are wailing in the hollow trees.

Country of ceilidhs and the delicate manners,

obstinate dowagers of emerald honours,

the rain has worn your metaphors away.

Only poor rays of similes are shining

from brooches and from buckles. The complaining

barren rock and ravens fill the day.

Nothing to say except a world has ended.

The waters of Polldubh, direct and splendid,

will hump unsteady men to a boiling death.

Yet from the shaking bridge of fascination

we see in these the antiseptic passion

whose surgeon's reason is a kind of birth. (Murray 203)

Readers of Goodsir Smith's work may be inclined to look upon his all-embracing vision of a continuous Scottish history, literary or otherwise, as a personal crusade for recognition that a Scottish nation existed. He even suggested that the reason for the Scottish state's lack of coherence was due to the extreme democratic traits inherent in the Scot which invariably lead to a breakdown of national unity because every Scot is "a one man party" (*Short Introduction* 7). Like Wendy Wood, the noted Scottish nationalist activist, Goodsir Smith was intent on examining the literary models of the past as well as the political implications of writing in Scotland in a radical fashion both in language and idea. Not unlike Wood, his criticism of Kailyard ruralism was designed to reconstitute a rural world which reflected his ideals of literary historicity and to reject the dependence which the Kailyard represented. What Goodsir Smith tried to accomplish through his poetry is a resounding positive answer to the question, is there a Scottish literature?

Indeed, as literary Scotland became aware of the question, so too did many nationalist groups and individuals eager to explain the nation's character to the public. Interrogation of national distinctiveness, social differences and cultural values began in earnest as the sense of a national structure developed out of the debates fostered by the myriad of marginal parties (some might call them sects) which were formed in response to the inability of mainstream

politics to move beyond British (English) party politics after the war. George Thayer's comments echo Goodsir Smith's complaint that vituperative and garrulous in-fighting damaged Scottish nationalist success more than external pressures. Thayer writes: "The history of Scottish nationalism, unlike Welsh and Cornish nationalism, is the story of the inability of people with similar goals to work together in harmony. From 1885 to 1928, Scottish nationalists were scattered among a variety of organizations such as the Scots National League, The Scottish Party, the Scottish National Convention, the Scottish National Movement, the Scottish Home Rule Council, the Young Scots Society and the first and second Scottish Home Rule Association" (189). Rather than affirm that this scattering of nationalist action amongst many players hindered the rise of Scottish nationalism, I would suggest that the groundswell of support drew intellectuals, the middle-class and general workers into a new unity amongst the Scottish people for some form of direct action. Gordon Bryan glances in this direction in his *Scottish Nationalism and Cultural Identity in the Twentieth Century*. He writes:

During these decades [1940-1970], Scottish nationalism had more sympathy than votes, but the daring capture of the Stone of Scone, the ancient coronation stone of Scotland, from Westminster in 1950, revealed broad popular support for Scottish Nationalism. Leading intellectuals like Neil Gunn, Hugh MacDiarmid, Naomi Mitchison and others urged more creative socialist and radical policies and called for a

more militant approach to Scotland's cultural problems. The apparent calm and security of post-war Scotland may have been preparation for the in-fighting to follow. None could foresee the convincing electoral victories of the Scottish Nationalists in the 1970's. (xi)

A significant part of the "radical" action which was cultivated by thinkers in Scotland during these critical decades was the reassociation of the rural image with the spirit of independence which, after Depression and war, now worked its way into the fabric of Scottish society. Economic and political extremity encouraged radicals who were more than willing to reinvent rural Scotland into a political landscape for their portrayal of fierce Scottish determination, differing values and cultural identity.

The identification of a landscape which was uniquely "Scottish" and which represented social values and political values opposed to the conspicuous materialism and Englishness of urban life was, like the infant Scottish National Party, a resilient yet powerless association. Widespread discontent amongst writers with the internal and external perception of their country led to extreme actions as well as radical writing. The strategy which Wendy Wood, the radical Scottish activist and outspoken nationalist, took to activate the relationship between politics and rural literary expression was to make practical and direct the influence of the landscape on her own nationalism. Her choice to take over a ruined croft in the Highlands and live off the land inspired Moray MacLaren to dispel the connections between

sentimentalism and rurality. The introduction to Wood's *Mac's Croft* (1946) makes plain Maclaren's admiration and patriotism:

This is a book which shows that it can be done. When anyone expresses the wish to live in, by, and from our own country, the commonest way of dismissing his or her aspirations is to use the one word, sentimentalist. If you announce, on behalf of the aspirant, that he or she really intends to work and produce in the country, a scornful eyebrow is raised. If you press further and ask why the will, the intention, and possibly the capacity to produce milk, butter, eggs, meat, fish, and so on, should be more sentimental than the 'realism' of balancing ledgers, pursuing pieces of paper called bank-notes or adjusting averages, the truth comes out. 'It can't be done'...You are left with the impression that no one who has once tasted the joys of civilisation, as discovered in cinemas, 'milk' bars, palais de dances, and shop queues, could support the frightful conditions of rural existence. (9)

Independence and self-sufficiency in a rural world are keynotes in Maclaren's comments and these attributes take on distinct political associations when Wood refers to them. Wood explained the beginnings of her activism partly as a result of seeing the countryside neglected by the British government and the Scottish people themselves. She wrote in her autobiography, *Yours Sincerely for Scotland* (1970):

In 1913 my husband and I went on a tour of the Highlands in our car. We

went to remote glens, saturated with beauty and peace, but also strewn with the walls of roofless crofts sited among green patches which has once been food producing. Having seen on the Continent the small holdings of Belgium and France and knowing what these had added to the economy of those countries, I was troubled. The sense of an accumulative wealth of food possible in the fertile glens and of forestry in the high tops and heather moors had a sobering effect on the joy of travel. When we came to Stirling we went up the Wallace Tower, but before the climb I looked up at the figure that stands on the corner of the building, sword upheld. It was then that I suddenly realized why that sword was raised, why truth is greater than death. (57-58)

Recalling Archie Lamont's complaint that Scottish productivity was going to waste, Wood's militancy is expressed in her belief in the pictorial and literary expression of her cultural and national concepts simultaneously embedded in the landscape and history. For the fiercely independent Wood, the stability of her perceptions concerning the Scottish nation stem directly from an association between the rural majesty of the Highland landscape with the classless individualism of Scottish culture.

In *From a Highland Croft* (1952), she recounts her days spent in the social experiment she undertook with her husband to regenerate her abandoned croft in the Highlands. An eloquent passage seems to point directly to the way in which she viewed her rural surroundings as the source for a new

beginning for Scottish history. She writes: "All the hard ugly things like bits of old iron, broken fence palings and even bits of twisted wire looked beautiful under their ermine mantles, and the muted sounds made the world a sanctuary. The field was a page of unwritten history until next morning, when the rabbits had inscribed their adventures on it" (7-8). Wood's ruralism and extremism (she was present when the Stone of Scone was taken from Westminster) should be viewed in the light of the desire for independence which gripped Scotland after the war when it became apparent that little would change in the political relationship between England and Scotland. Indeed, the situation grew steadily worse for Scotland as "rational government" became the vogue in England.

Post-war Scotland was a greatly altered country after Winston Churchill's promises to decentralize power from Westminster into the hands of a professional Scottish bureaucracy became reality. Devolution from Great Britain in the mid-twentieth century began, not as a feature of nationalism, but as a reaction to the threat of socialism by a British administration intent on maintaining a hold on Scottish affairs. Churchill stated firmly his objection to "the supervision, interference and control in the ordinary details of Scottish life and business" (Harvie 119), but he also kept a protective eye turned toward Scotland, particularly in regard to the rise of socialism. He explained that he did not "wonder that the question of Scottish home rule and all this movement of Scottish nationalism has gained in step with the growth of socialist authority

and ambitions in England. I should never adopt the view that Scotland should be forced into the serfdom of socialism as a result of a vote in the House of Commons" (Harvie 119). As Christopher Harvie pointedly notes, ironically a vote in the House was not necessary for Scotland to be chained to England for a further forty years. All that was needed was an extension of the civil service, under the rubric of The Scottish Office, into Scottish daily life to ensure Great Britain's role in Scotland. Harvie writes: "In 1937, the Secretary of State supervised, along with one parliamentary under-secretary, 2,400 civil servants . . . By 1970 Labour had added a second Minister of State. Six political heads, and two law officers, supervised 8,300 civil servants. Even after thirteen years of Thatcher and Major this figure had risen to 10, 700 in 1992" (118-119). The phenomenal growth of the civil service, run by successive Tory and Labour governments in England, through the latter half of the twentieth century provided Westminster with the means of supplanting a Scottish national government by providing a weak show of devolving powers into Scottish hands.

This administrative strategy was aided by a split in Scottish society which saw Scottish conservative interests oppose Devolution on the familiar grounds of the threat of decreased national influence, poorer trade and cuts to social welfare. Ian Levitt comments that "conservatives remained opposed to any form of political devolution for three principal reasons. First, much of Scotland's poor housing and health record was due to the impact of the

depression reducing worker's wages. Without Treasury grants it would be difficult to maintain the necessary level of social investment. Second, industrialisation had meant that Scotland's economy was 'inextricably intermingled' with that of England and devolution might create an impediment to free trade. Third, a parliament would induce a 'provincial outlook' in the Scottish mind, like southern Ireland, and result in the Scottish voice being excluded from post-war international 'councils', again to the detriment of its economy" (*Scottish Sentiment* 20). What is striking about this assessment, and descriptive of the Conservative Party's gradual failure in Scottish society, is that poor social welfare (the housing situation in the country was bleak in 1950), trade discrepancies (which took extreme form with the discovery of "Scotland's Oil" in 1970 and the subsequent debate on who controlled its development) and a "provincial outlook" were already in evidence in Scotland well into the late twentieth century with the Union intact. What conservative Scots didn't realize was that writers who were exploring the rural landscape as a backdrop to their "Scottishness" were not promoting provincialism, but encouraging Scots to visualize their release from British society by questioning the tenets of their own cultural identity. This exploration was a necessary action as the development of new communication technologies were emerging as powerful disseminators of cultural material and were inevitably centralized in London. Scottish cultural expression in the post-war period was weakened by such a development and by the heavy hand of central government.

Political extremism, such as Wendy Wood argued for, to counter the anti-nationalist policies of the British government never really surfaced on the scale she would have supported. Instead, as the century progressed, debate and argument took the action out of political militancy and pamphlets concerning less direct or subversive activities continued to flourish. Douglas Young's "Plastic Scots and the Scottish Literary Tradition," a record of an address at the Masonic Hall in Glasgow, 1946, is just such a work. That Lallans was still a language in which to compose poetry was principally upheld by Young in support of the Scottish Renaissance group of writers. However, the article qualifies its own argument by suggesting that the development of Scots as a vernacular would not proceed as an organic development but as an effect of literary practice. Unconvincingly, the article reverts to political slogan in its closing lines: "Lallans is a language of a nation, Hugh MacDiarmid and others are restoring it in full vigour for all the purposes of national self-expression, starting with poetry . . . After prolonged coma, Scotland is waking up, and the Renaissance in Lallans is only one manifestation of this process" (31). Young's enthusiasm for Lallans was, eventually, misplaced as the constructed language never reached the mass of Scottish readers and even Hugh MacDiarmid abandoned it in his poetry. The force of literary nationalism was hampered by this concern for a national language and the lack of recognition that Scottish society was for all practical purposes, and had been for some time, a society where Scots, Gaelic and English co-existed and was unlikely to change.

Communication between Scottish national groups became muddled and misdirected, aided in part by new technologies which by their very construction favoured the voice of England.

The development of BBC Television played its role in limiting Scottish national expression by curtailing regional languages and homogenizing political reactions. As the mid-century mark passed Scotland's broadcasting freedom, as well as her political independence, was increasingly on the wane as decisions were made in London by the BBC governors. Asa Briggs writes that "between 1945 and 1955, so long as radio remained the dominant medium, the Regions enjoyed a period of considerable autonomy. BBC Television, however, was organized from the start on a national basis, and as its coverage spread, what Regional activity was permitted was grafted on to a national system. It could not develop 'from below'" (Briggs 623-24). Robert Dunnett's small essay in *The Scottish Daily Mail Television Handbook* of 1952, "A Challenge to Scotland," is informative for its intentions to present a unified image of "Scotland," but blatantly exposes the BBC's lack of initiative in providing Scotland with its own roster of programming. Dunnett writes: "Scotland is not, however, entirely dependent on facilities for originating programmes within her own borders. We may expect rather more programmes of Scottish interest to be included in the London schedules. . . But, obviously, at present, for physical, geographical and financial reasons the pictures we will see on our television screens will be mainly of people who live in southern England and

will reflect a southern English approach to life" (Coven 29). The unequal terms of television development in Great Britain may have also had considerable political reasons and Dunnett concludes, concerning the establishment in Glasgow of a Scottish television studio centre, that "if B.B.C building plans and priorities continue at the present rate, we can forget about this for years" (Coven 28). Instead, as the *Handbook* displays, Scottish television was to continue as a vehicle for Tartantry and tourism. Six photographs sum up the concerns of the Scottish Television broadcasters in the pamphlet; Loch Ness and Ben Nevis are seen in their natural splendour, The Tattoo at Edinburgh Castle and the Highland Reel at the Aboyne Highland games, along with two photos of football (Scotland versus England), grace the page with the caption as follows: "Some of the beautiful scenery and interesting events with which Scotland, by means of outside broadcasts or the Television Newsreel, can enrich the Television Screens of the United Kingdom" (Coven 56-57). In many respects, the continued concern of the cultural authorities to illustrate Scotland as a picturesque retreat from daily life aided the deflation of Scottish political militancy in the period between 1945 and 1977 by presenting a landscape which was benign and passive rather than energetic and full of potential. Moving beyond a nostalgic rural image toward establishing a role for a working countryside in the nation's iconography became increasingly difficult for nationalists as centralized authority labelled the countryside as "beautiful scenery," and were capable of spreading that message to a wide audience.

The result amongst Scottish writers was a growing sense of constriction and restriction, “an absence of both a significant past and a meaningful present” (Norquay 259). Reinventing the nation in literature and, in particular, the Scottish countryside, into a vital and energized presence on the national stage became a contentious issue as writers struggled for definitions of what constituted “Scottishness”. Nationalists were fighting both the traditional perceptions of what rurality described and urging a new generation to establish a significant future for Scottish nationalism. Alastair Reed’s poem, “Scotland” embodies this struggle in the poet’s eager reaching for the abstractions that populate the hopeful, natural world only to have them shattered by the old stereotype of the Scottish religious crone reminding him of his ancestral burden:

It was a day peculiar to this piece of the planet,
when larks rose on long thin strings of singing
and the air shifted with the shimmer of actual angels.

Greenness entered the body. The grasses
shivered with presences, and sunlight
stayed like a halo on hair and heather and hills.

Walking into town, I saw, in a radiant raincoat,
the woman from the fish-shop. ‘What a day it is!’

Cried I, like a sunstruck madman.

And what did she have to say for it?

Her brow grew bleak, her ancestors raged in their graves

as she spoke with their ancient misery:

'We'll pay for it, we'll pay for it, we'll pay for it!' (Reid, *Weathering* 25)

Reed's hopeful, "angelic" landscape, draped in halos and alive with shivering "presences," is curtailed by a history of failure. The land becomes a grave for the lost causes of Scottish nationalism. Reed's poem points to the self-aware, inward gaze which denies the rejuvenation of the nation in favour of what Edwin Muir called, "a country which is becoming lost to history" (Campbell ix). The crone figure, a representation of Calvinistic morality and the failure of Scottish history, blights both the poet's imagination as well as the landscape which holds the nation's promise.

Many of the most important writers of the 1960's struggled to reconcile the symbolism of a rural landscape with the implied personal and national harmony it offered with the stark, disorganized world of post-war Scotland. Eric Linklater, a novelist from the Orkney Islands, dealt with this struggle in his book, *A Terrible Freedom* (1966) through the metaphor of a journey to the Highlands. The novel revolves around the post-war restlessness of a mature man whose dreams are interposing themselves on his reality. The record of his dreams introduce surreal situations into his ordinary and mundane life and concern themselves with memories of a lost love, Mary, and a dissolute son who is about to marry. Resident in London, this Scottish man takes a journey

into the further reaches of Scotland's Highlands and comes to grips with his memories, his past and his restlessness. His acquaintance with two Highland sailors, dour in their manner yet enigmatically passionate, seems to rekindle a love for his lost country. The novel ends with the narrative shifting to the son, who has discovered the journal of his father's dreams and travels and the reader comes to realize the father has died at sea, reconciled to his own life, rounding Cape Wrath.

Linklater is careful to give his Scottish landscape an ancient majesty that is intimately connected to a feeling of well-being, of acceptance of place. He also ensures that such a peace is beyond the reach of mortal man. His unnamed protagonist remarks: "Loch Torridon, for example, and Upper Loch Torridon, are truly majestic, with a sort of majesty that induces the quiescence of a seemingly perfect satisfaction, and the wondering query, what more can one want? One lies within the huge shelter of hills that rose to the sky before any other part of Britain had breached the waves - or so the geologists say - and for a long evening of dark blue and gold I thought I could live there for ever. But that, of course, was nonsense, and we sailed on, still to the north" (201). The further he progresses to his fateful destiny at Cape Wrath, the protagonist begins to feel the distance between himself and this "ancient majesty"'s possible disappearance. It is as though what he perceived to be remote begins to appear familiar and it is significant that language bridges the gap between harmony and disharmony. Like many Scottish writers of this period, Linklater

makes a case for language as a defining element in the identity of the people. The isolated, alienated city-dweller is faced with the loss of an intimate connection with nature and also the loss of a shared communal experience in language. His attempts to imitate the sounds of his companions portrays a desire to cross the boundary between the “real” world and a “Scottish” world of his imagining, significantly, one which has all the harmony of music. He writes: “On we went, and north of Loch Torridon, north of Loch Ewe, are the Summer Isles that lie under a long, lean peninsula reaching westward beyond a minute village with the magnificent, choral name of Achiltibuie. I have no idea what it means, but as Roderick pronounced it - with full power to the guttural and then the lingering cadence of Hebridean vowels - it sounded like an incantation, some phrase of hidden meaning, from a lost drama of the Gaels. I repeated it, in my poor imitation of his sonorous voice, until I could almost imagine village maidens, shrill and desperate, crowding to the shore and crying against the wind, ‘Achil-ti-buie!’ - while from the roaring waves, grinding on the beach, the great dog-headed Atlantic seals bellowed responses - ‘Achil-ti-buie!’ and their monstrous invitation to the deep. It is a place where the old magic of life seems as domesticated as a washing-machine in the kitchen of a modern flat” (202). Linklater constructs his novel with all the features of a quest narrative; a desire for harmony, the metaphor of the journey serving as the catalyst for personal growth and the final lesson passed on to his son, but he also uses the rural landscape of Scotland to fulfill the protagonist’s wish, the discovery of a

national identity, a national self built upon the surroundings and language of the land. Kailyard writing implied that this relationship was implicit, a natural extension of the Scot's personality, and not a quality to be recovered as in Linklater's novel. Unlike writers like Grassie Gibbon who bleakly saw the collapse of Scottishness under urban development, Linklater portrays a world where rural harmony is attainable for a time and community a redemptive feature to be felt internally. These differences mark the novel as important in a study of the uses of the countryside in a national literature during the turbulent years of the 1960's and 1970's where economic and political strife offered little escape from urban decay and anglicization .

The reassessment of what constituted Scottish literary rurality took the form of a sustained investigation of the popular traditions which emphasized a literature of provincial decline, rural grimness and defeatism so prevalent in past assessments of Scottish culture and history. As Gavin Wallace has noted of popular novelists John Buchan, Eric Linklater and Compton Mackenzie, each writer's work "is marked by a tendency to indulge in an interplay between English and Scottish personae, a willingness to participate in the cultural, creative and political issues surrounding the Renaissance while indulging in the identifiably English mannerisms and overtones, in narrative style and lifestyle, against which so many Scottish writers of the time were reacting" (247). In the heady, progressive socialism of post-war Scotland, the willingness to address issues concerning popular traditions was often seen as inadequate,

particularly by those establishing new forms in Scotland's cultural landscape. Oscar Lewenstein, director of the Glasgow Unity Theatre Society, bluntly stated that Scotland possessed an "overwhelming proletarian character," and therefore "a truly National Theatre in Scotland today can only be a theatre based upon the working class, a theatre with a 'folk' character" (MacKenny 161). Theatre in Scotland, under the nearly total direction of troupes such as the Glasgow Unity Theatre or 7:84 Scotland, and staged chiefly in Glasgow and The Edinburgh Festival, rarely indulged in rural representation and was dominated by scenes of urban life relevant to its audience.

Why Scottish drama has been so concerned with the plight and condition of the urban Scot is a vast question and well beyond the scope of this dissertation. Scottish drama is a notable absence in the construction of a rural discourse and the reasons are quite numerous. A popular tradition of music hall entertainment formed the first stirrings of a theatre tradition in Scotland, and these variety acts chiefly concerned themselves with contemporary discourse and urban daily life (Folorunso 183). Based in the cities, audiences were more entertained by familiar surroundings rather than a countryside left chiefly to novelists and poets. A later example of this feature in Scottish drama is John McGrath's acclaimed, *The Cheviot, The Stag and the Black, Black Oil* (1973) which adapted the eviction of the Highlanders in The Clearances to tell the story of Scottish Oil's incursions into Scottish urban life. The play modifies historical material and presents it in a way to relate to its urban audience. The

play's Glaswegian entrepreneur, Andy McChuckemup, suggests a Highland development which echoes Glasgow's rampant urban sprawl: "So - picture it, if you will, right there at the top of the glen, beautiful vista - the Crammen Inn, High Rise Motorcroft - all finished in natural, washable, plastic granitette. Right next door, the 'The Frying Scotsman' All Night Chipperama - with a wee ethnic bit, Fingal's Caff - serving seaweed-supper-in-a-basket, and draught Drambuie. And to cater for the younger set, you've got your Grouse-a-go-go" (48-49). The rural remains a vehicle for describing the urban in McGrath's play, and altering the grand, "beautiful vista" of the Scottish landscape to include the materialism of the urban world is one example of how the rural was utilized in urban drama.

As it is today on the stages of Scotland, it was the choice of the urban Scot in the 1940's, living in crumbling and overcrowded tenements, to opt for drama that was immediate and ripe with accessible political commentary. For this reason, thousands flocked to Robert McLeish's *The Gorbals Story* (1946) and Ena Lamont Stewart's *Men Should Weep* (1947) to experience the social commentary these plays made on the gritty and ugly reality of Glasgow life. Urban realism in the theatres of the 1940's could be glimpsed in the tenement settings of Stewart Conn's *I Didn't Always Live Here* (1967) and in the desolate world of unemployment, crime and drug-abuse in Simon Donald's *The Life of Stuff* (1992). Randall Stevenson has noted that "theatrical vision in the last thirty years has at last reached the kind of areas where most Scottish life takes

place, making it possible to inhabit them a good deal more imaginatively” (110). Scottish theatre has, unlike other cultural forms, concerned itself chiefly with charting the urban Scottish condition to critically explore its audience’s reality. However, despite the growing city population and the public’s desire for urban rejuvenation in Scottish writing, it is not the case that all Scottish creative writers abandoned critical commentary on Scotland’s ‘other’ reality, rural Scotland. In farcical and immensely popular writing, the novels of Compton Mackenzie illustrate how rural discourse again reshaped its niche in the iconography of the Scottish identity yet kept its critical awareness, becoming an accepted avenue for social commentary.

Compton Mackenzie’s Highland novels *Monarch of the Glen* (1941), *Whisky Galore* (1947) and *The Rival Monster* (1952), typify the caustic wit of the West Hartlepool author and his ambitions to use the perception of rural Scotland as politically impotent and socially backwards to make an ironic political and cultural comment on the relationship between England and Scotland as well as the Scottish identity itself. *Whisky Galore*, perhaps the most successful of the trilogy, is based on a true incident concerning a cargo ship foundering off the coast of Eriskay. Some 50,000 cases of Scotch whisky were aboard bound for the lucrative markets of North America. Since it was one of the most difficult commodities to obtain during the war, and the islanders were critically short of “the water of life,” it was decided by the islanders to salvage the cargo privately at any cost. The Customs and Excise officers were powerless

to stop the wholesale scavenging of the stranded ship and while it was never discovered how much whisky had been taken, there was no shortage in the island for the duration of the war.

The novel establishes the Englishman, Captain Waggett, as leader of the local Home Guard and local moral guardian, a gentleman who cannot fathom the gloom of the islanders caused by their lack of whisky. The humour of the novel is derived chiefly from the fact that Waggett's values are so clearly unlike the native islanders. That there is no understanding between Waggett and the islanders sharpens the novel's criticism of British social structure. Waggett is a decent, well-intentioned, but pompous Englishman who regards the islanders as wild, half-mad anarchists. In a revealing exchange with the schoolmaster concerning the island's Home Guard, Captain Waggett's complaints expose the gulf between him and his fellow islanders:

'Well, something must be done to make them realize that they are under military discipline.'

'I'm afraid there's not much anyone can do, Captain,' the schoolmaster insisted. 'You'll never make the people in the Islands do anything they think is a waste of time.'

'They waste a lot of time in talk,' Captain Waggett snapped.

'Ah well, Captain, they don't think that such a waste of time. And anyway they'd consider they were wasting their own time. What they dislike is having their time wasted for them by other people.'

‘Are the people of the two Toddays going to claim that they know more about what must be done to win the war than the Prime Minister?’

Captain Waggett inquired in lofty disgust. (334)

The contrast intentionally points to the lack of understanding between the rural inhabitants of a “far-flung” corner of Britain and the “cultivated” authorities, a symptom of the inequalities in Scottish life that Mackenzie continually stressed. His nationalism was grounded in territorial and social spaces which he insisted were wholly Scottish and egalitarian. In 1929 he wrote using floral metaphor: “Let us turn to our own background and forsake utterly the enticement of an alien and for us unnatural culture. We have grafted ourselves upon the rich rose of England. It has flourished on our stock. We have served it well. But the suckers of the wild Scots rose are beginning to show green underneath. Let them grow and blossom, and let the alien graft above, however rich, wither and die” (Wallace 249). By the time he wrote *Whisky Galore*, Mackenzie’s organic metaphor of union, and its Scottish half, was given real substance in the symbolic marriage of the Englishman, Sargeant-Major Odd to the local woman, Peggy.

As the couple are married in the small village of Little Todday, the event is marked by a celebration, not only of the marriage, but of Todday culture itself. The narrator reports: “The houses at which the bride and bridegroom stopped to be greeted were all flying small flags, including at two the Japanese flag the nationality of which was unknown to those who flew it. Anyway, what

did it matter? The flags were not flown to celebrate an international event but to express in colour the pleasure of the people of Little Todday that Peigi Ealasaid was married to the Sarchant [sic]" (504). The note of indifference to nationalism is short-lived in the novel's conclusion since the arrival of the groom's mother from Nottingham marks the stark differences and similarities in the English and Scots view of the world. Mrs. Odd is stunned to learn that Duncan Bàn has no conception of the centre of her world. She asks him: "Was you ever in Nottingham?" 'No, I was never there. It'll be a fine city, I daresay.' 'Not so bad. It's not dear old London of course, but what place is?' 'I was never there either.' 'You was never in London?' Mrs Odd gasped. 'Well, if that hasn't torn it!'" (493). For Mrs. Odd "dear old London" is the source of civilized society whereas for Duncan the Todday's are alive with a mystical society, " a fairy host, thousands and thousands and thousands of small glittering craytures[sic]. My [Duncan's] grandfather saw them once" (512). In many respects, the fictional islands of Todday, with their wide variety of peoples, including those of the world of fantasy, and landscapes, is a careful attempt to present Scottish culture with all its multifarious characters intact within rural isolation, where its "alienness" is allowed to flourish, both as a negative and positive influence on the culture's unity. "Civilization", as described by Mrs. Odd, is defeated in the Toddays by the interruption of whisky galore and the title of the novel elaborates on the "wildness" and distinctiveness of the island's culture. *Whisky Galore*, in the final reckoning, is a novel that rejects a homogeneous, anglicized

culture in favour of a marriage of peoples and landscape and it is significant that the symbol of a rural marriage drives the novel forward.

In an extended commentary inserted by the narrator, ironically because the bar at the Snorvig Hotel was so gloomy "it [was] only fair to give a picture of the islands in happier times" (285), an illuminating excerpt is given by the "well-known topographer" Mr. Hector Hamish Mackay from his book *Fairie Lands Forlorn*, reminiscent of Victorian travel books which painted wonderfully elaborate and fanciful descriptions of Scotland. Mr. Mackay notes that the aspect of the two Todday islands, like the Lowlands and Highlands of Scotland, have shaped the character of the islanders themselves:

Little Todday is not so very much inferior in superficial area to its sister island and probably earned its qualifying adjective by the comparative lowness and flatness of the vivid green machair land framed by long white sandy beaches, which contrasts with the more rugged aspect of Great Toddy. Here the soil is peaty and the shores rockbound, while three of its hills, of which Ben Sticla (1400 feet) is the most conspicuous, rise about a thousand feet. The contrast in appearance between the two islands is so remarkable that we are not surprised to learn the inhabitants of both have preserved for hundreds of years an equally remarkable independence of one another, and differ considerably not merely in character but even in religion, Great Todday being Protestant and Little Todday Catholic. (285-286)

The marriage between the island's landscape and the people's characters is emphasized here in order to establish the divisions between the two islands and the people's culture. However, later in the novel we find that the island culture is not just a simple binary but is constituted of varying shades of beliefs and practices according to their local situations. Garryboo "with its houses dotted about at different angles on the green machair was the only part of Great Todday which resembled the landscape of Little Todday, and the people there were regarded by the rest of the island as only a little less barbaric than the papist inhabitants of Little Todday itself. The people of Garryboo, on the other hand, regarded with contemptuous pity the fierce struggle of their neighbours in Great Todday with rock and heather and sour peaty soil" (307). Mackenzie establishes other areas of the two islands as regional "oddities" to emphasize the patchwork nature of the islands' character. The result is that Mackenzie, with the reader's implicit consent, can parody specific narrative images of Scotland and criticize their portrayal of the nation.

Mr. Mackay, the fictional author quoted in the novel, is often artificial in his florid account of the islands and the reader is made immediately suspicious of his sentiments concerning the landscape he is observing. He writes:

Let us lean back in our deck-chairs and watch the great sun go dipping down into the sea behind Little Todday. Is that St Brendan's floating isle we see upon the Western horizon? Forsooth, on such a night it were easy to conjure up that elusive morsel of geography. And now

behind us the full moon clears the craggy summit of Ben Sticla and swims south past Ben Pucka to shed a honey-coloured radiance over the calm water of the Coolish, as the strait between the two Toddays is called. Why, oh why, the lover of Eden's language asks, must the fair Gaelic word Caolas be debased by map-makers to Coolish, so much more suggestive of municipal baths than of these 'perilous seas'? Alas, such sacrilege is all too sadly prevalent throughout Scotland. We turn our gaze once more to rest spellbound upon the beauty of earth and sea and sky and to let our imagination carry us back out of the materialistic present into the haunted past. (286)

Mr. Mackay searches in vain for "the haunted past" and a ruralism flavoured by ancient Gaelic place names and "honey-coloured radiance" and this conflicts with the "materialistic" present of the two Toddays. What emerges from Mackenzie's preoccupation with exposing these inadequate narratives is that his use of rural scenery is designed to comment on the inaction and lack of will the islanders have for change. Social commentary, especially in the satiric form Mackenzie uses, makes the novel fairly unique in the tradition of using rural Scotland to reflect the nation both to the world and itself.

Mackenzie is most critical when exposing the inadequacies of the present in the events that occur in the village pub. As a meeting place and social gathering point, the pub or bar is often figured in literature as a place where information is passed on and friendships maintained. A regular of the

Great Todday pub, Captain MacPhee, a stereotype of the wizened sea captain, is unfortunately refused his daily portion of his favourite whisky because of the critical shortage of the drink in the islands. The pub is limited to serving only beer and a pub without whisky, it is suggested, is a quiet, lonely place of little comfort. The narrator relates the scene in all its stark grimness:

The ancient mariner, who was sailing the Seven Seas before the Franco-Prussian war, emitted such a tremendous gasp of amazement that his great white beard shivered like a grove of aspens.

'A Thighearna bheannaichte,' he exhaled, 'what are you telling me Roderick?'

'I'm telling you you've had two pints of peer [sic] this evening, Captain MacPhee, and no man can have more.'

The ancient mariner turned on his heels and walked out of the bar without another word. Outside, they heard the shingle of the terrace crunched by his resolute footsteps ...

An hour later Dr Maclaren came into the bar, where by now the frequenters were all sitting in front of empty glasses.

'Did the Captain seem all right when he left here?' Dr Maclaren asked sharply.

He was told what had happened.

'Well, the shock has killed him.' (289)

The grim and nearly ridiculous scene stretches our compassion for the old man

whose existence seems to revolve around his afternoon drink and points through farce to the inaction and lack of will which Mackenzie seems to suggest is the failure of the present to adapt to changing times. The decaying atmosphere in the village pub permeates the novel's narrative as even the stories of the village are glossed over by the local bard who, trying to translate the Gaelic stories for Sargeant Major Odd, gives up after a short attempt: "Duncan found the piece of paper on which the Gaelic version was written out and began: 'From over the sea a warrior came to our green and sunny island as long ago there was a son of Donald who was banished ...' he broke off. 'Och, that's just all about an old tale of this MacDonald who came here and found the seal-woman and she put love upon him and they had quite a family. It goes on for two or three verses, but it all happened a long time ago, and I'm sure you won't want to be hearing all that rigamarole tonight'" (453). Mackenzie's novel is persistent in using the village and its inhabitants to expose the inertia and inadequacies of Scottish literature, and is insistent that the only manner in which to address this inaction is to reveal the narratives which form the Scottish identity. *Whisky Galore*, as the title suggests, is an excessive, satiric commentary on the derogatory perception of the "tartan wee islands" in the Scottish literary canon for the purposes of national identification. Perhaps for this reason the very recent adaptation by BBC Scotland, discussed in Chapter five, of Mackenzie's *Monarch of the Glen* still remains as popular today as the book was in the 1940's.

Turning from satire for the moment to discuss another sort of enduring literary form, Robin Jenkins' 1955 novel *The Cone-Gatherers*, is, as Iain Crichton Smith's introduction called it, "deceptively simple, indeed simple enough to be a sort of fable" (Jenkins 1). Indeed, the tension between Calum, the misshapen, Christ-like cone-gatherer, and Duror, the obsessed gamekeeper, makes clear the conflict between regeneration and destructive hate in the confines of the forest of the aristocratic Lady Runcie-Campbell. Like *Whisky Galore*, Jenkins' novel makes use of a rural setting to make the pointed commentary that Scottish society can no longer position itself comfortably as the imagined utopia or dystopia of a moral realism. As one of the incidental characters in the book remarks, "in a world that's at war we can't expect sanity from every man we meet in a wood" (214). Jenkins' novel makes immediate just such a meeting which proves to have ramifications beyond the contrast between good and evil.

The novel's resemblances to John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* cannot be ignored as both novels revolve around an emblematic pair of brothers. Jenkins creates the characters of Neil and Calum; one practical, responsible and embittered through society's injustices and the other modeled in the tradition of the holy fool; innocent, simple-minded yet blessed as an *idiot savant* with unique insight. As Steinbeck's novel exposes the cruelty and economic harshness of Depression America by emphasizing a bleak landscape, Jenkins' novel makes particular use of the traditional manners and scenery of the Scottish rural manor to suggest the stratification and stagnation of a way of

life unwilling to change. The country estate, fortified “behind its private fence of giant silver firs” (7), and the people who inhabit its environs, is in miniature a representation of Scottish society forced to face the coming of modern warfare and drastic social change. As Crichton Smith enthusiastically points out, Jenkins’ novel is suggestive in its use of the metaphor of natural growth to allude to the need for regeneration, not only of society, but of the Scottish psyche. Crichton Smith writes: “The wood represents the unranked plethora of natural things where flowers and plants of various kinds consort harmoniously with each other. It is the essential garden, the dear green place, described with effortless ease and distinction. And in that garden, perched mostly on the tops of trees, Neil and Calum work at their trade, gathering the seed that will regenerate the wood” (Jenkins 1-2). Neil and Calum, like Lennie and George, are strangers that are accepted with sympathy and kindness by the workers of the village. However, they are assigned to collect cones to replenish seed stocks from a wood that increasingly becomes for the two men the “only place where unfriendliness flourished and kindness withered” (107). Calum’s Christ-like sacrifice, or more accurately his murder by the hate-filled Duror, provokes Lady Runcie-Campbell’s discovery of her own Christian hypocrisy and inadequacies of the traditional personal and public relationships that constitute the society of the rural manor and consequently, by extension, the larger Scottish world beyond the hedges and parks of the rural estate.

Douglas Gifford suggests that Jenkins accomplishes this re-ordering of

society by following a pattern which informs many Glaswegian novels, a pattern referred to by the critic David Craig as the Scottish habit of “reductive idiom,” where “images of growth and sense of place are effectively struck down, frosted, faded, blacked out. Vision is lost” (Gifford *Dear Green Place* 6). Gifford’s informative perspective suggests a level of questioning in post-war Scottish fiction that made a priority of adjusting the archetypes of landscape and rurality to suit modern ideas. Gifford explains that “the metaphor for a non-spatial, non-landscape idea of creativity and imaginative fertility” (*Dear Green Place* 6) was, for Glaswegian novelists, the logical outcome for writers who rejected a discourse built upon edenic pastoralism. Jenkins’ novel, with its cast of troubling figures, questions the limitations of a moral code which blocks independent imagination from developing, but the forests and remote areas of the country estate form half of a divided symbol; the country estate remains both the source of cultivated tradition and history as well as the seedbed for the freedom and equality of which Neil and Calum are active agents. The symbolism of *The Cone-Gatherers’* setting is not reductive in this sense but a progressive clarification of the conflict between modernity and innocence.

The method which Jenkins employed to accentuate this struggle in the narrative is most clear in the opening scenes in which Neil and Calum are picking cones high above the forest floor in the canopy of the estate’s trees. Jenkins is adept at contrasting the harmony of the woods, the only place where the simple Calum “was as indigenous as a squirrel or bird” (8), with the chaos of

the wider world and the hate which encompasses Duror, the game warden. The method destabilizes the narrative, throwing Neil, in particular, and other characters, such as Lady Runcie-Campbell, into doubt about their role in a shifting society. Neil is portrayed as the stolid worker who bitterly resents Lady Runcie-Campbell's privilege and his own poverty, and this makes him continually question the manor's social structure. He complains: "Yonder's a house with fifty rooms . . . every one of them three times the size of our hut, and nearly all of the empty . . . We're human beings just like them. We need space to live and breathe in" (10). The novel establishes early the intrusion of such questions into the closed world of the country estate and the shock of the opening paragraphs echo the shot which kills Calum, whose humpback body, angelic face and compassionate nature make him representative of the vulnerable. The two men are nearly "at home" in their work but are intruded upon by the machines of war and a single gunshot:

It was a good tree by the sea-loch, with many cones and much sunshine; it was homely too, with rests among its topmost branches as comfortable as chairs.

For hours the two men had worked in silence there, a hundred feet from the earth, closer, it seemed to the sky round which they had watched the sun slip. Misted in the morning, the loch had gone through many shades of blue and now was mauve, like the low hills on its far side. Seals that had been playing tag in and out of the seaweed under the

surface had disappeared round the point like children gone home for tea. A destroyer had steamed seawards, with a sailor singing cheerfully. More sudden and swifter than hawks, and roaring louder than waterfalls, aeroplanes had shot down from the sky over the wood, whose autumnal colours they seemed to have copied for camouflage. In the silence that had followed gunshots had cracked far off in the wood. (7)

The destroyer and war planes disrupt the peace of the countryside like Duror's inexplicable hatred for Calum shatters the social fabric of the manor. Duror, who "since childhood . . . had been repelled by anything living that had an imperfection or deformity or lack" (19), is trapped into a ever-deepening malaise which is represented by his feelings that the woods are being contaminated by Calum and his brother, a view which Lady Runcie-Campbell shares initially, but is forced to confront when her own Christian charity is put to the test.

Jenkins is careful to establish in *The Cone-Gatherers* that the landscape of the manor and the people and nature within it are part of a harmonious "dear green place," and that Lady Runcie-Campbell's aristocratic possession of it is counter to Christian values. In the beginning of the novel she is portrayed as a proud, sensible woman whose tender feelings are trivialized by her sense of duty. Instructing Duror to send her son on a deer hunt, she exposes the conflict between the manor's traditions and her sense of Christian mercy. She muses: "Captain Fogan . . . has a belief that nothing impresses the scenery on

one's mind like taking part in a deer shoot, especially if you get a kill. . . Often it's a cold wait for nothing. And if you're lucky and shoot a deer, well, I suppose it is sentimental of me to think that a living deer is much handsomer than a dead one" (57). This conflict is only made concrete for her as she cruelly ejects Neil and Calum from an unused cottage during a terrible storm later in the novel. Her blind haughtiness to the two men is rejected by her son, Roderick, whose frail health concerns her greatly and forces Lady Runcie-Campbell to examine her actions:

In none of her many rooms that morning could Lady Runcie-Campbell find decision and rest; the one where she sought them most was Roderick's.

As soon as they had returned to the house after the storm, she had insisted he take a bath and go to bed . . . Shame over her treatment of the cone-gatherers had numbed in him the zest and courage which for the past two years she had watched growing slowly in him, like some rare, beautiful, and fragile flower. Yet no matter how she looked at it, whether from the point of view of conscientious parent or responsible landowner or practical Christian, she could not see how in the circumstances she had done wrong. (172)

Her inability to see clearly the source of her unease puts Lady Runcie-Campbell in direct contrast with her son's "unnatural" sympathy for Calum and Neil, and shakes her confidence in her position enough that she suggests, out of

indignation, that Neil and Calum leave. For her, they are not only a negative influence on her son but a contamination of the very wood she believes she owns: "For me anyway," she says, "the wood will feel healthier and look lovelier with them gone" (177). The irony of this statement is that her own gamewarden, the protector of her forest, is clearly infected with hatred for the two cone-gatherers.

The climax of the novel eventually brings Lady Runcie-Campbell into direct contact with the realization that her pride has blinded her to her Christian duty and signals a regeneration of herself and the landscape around her. In an attempt to imitate the two cone-gatherers, Roderick becomes dangerously stuck in a tall pine. Lady Runcie-Campbell, influenced by Duror's slanders against Calum, sends for the two cone-gatherers, but she does so with righteous anger: "She had spoken with a sense of sacrifice: her son was to be saved by an obscene misshapen labourer; his virginal body was to be handled by hands, or paws rather, accustomed to bestial practices" (207). Even though she is uncomfortable with, and is beginning to realize the evil in the twisted figure Duror has become, a man "from some gruesome other world where a child's toy became an obscene symbol" (192), when Neil refuses to aid Roderick she is forced to face her unChristian conduct. She is compelled to swallow her pride and go to the cone-gatherers to ask for their help, symbolically making the difficult journey through the forest to Scour Point, the "most beautiful place on the estate" (191) and to "the furthest limits of her

being" (221):

As she ran, and stumbled, climbed fences, jumped over streams, scrambled up banks and plunged deep into leaves, Lady Runcie-Campbell tried to make her anger against the cone-gatherers grow. Their insolence, independence and their even more outrageous attempt at revenge, resulting in the prolonged danger to her son, were surely just reasons for hating and despising them; for wishing Duror well in his intention to chastise them into decency and obedience and for vowing, when all this was over, to obliterate the forester's false yellow smile of comprehension and forgiveness . . . As a mother, as a landowner, as a Christian even, surely she was justified? Yet not for a second of that dreadful journey to the Point did she convince herself. (220)

The searing self-doubt in Lady Runcie-Campbell's mind gradually alters her perception of the world around her and this has concrete examples in the way Jenkins allows her to see the landscape as if for the first time. Once she reaches the Point she perceives a living, Scottish narrative in the very trees that populate the estate. She observes: "Never had the loch been so potently beautiful: it was as vast, bright, and detailed as in a dream; and there seemed to be a wonderful interpretation, if it could only be known . . . There, too, dreamlike, were the pines, her favourite trees, making against sea and sky what had always struck her as Scottish gestures, recalling the eerie tormented tragic grandeur of the old native ballads" (221-222).

As her eyes are opened to the landscape around her, Lady Runcie-Campbell's regeneration has its ultimate price in the death of Calum at the hands of Duror. The Christ-like sacrifice of the angelic hunchback is the catalyst for Lady Runcie-Campbell's understanding of her callousness and blindness to the world around her. As Calum hangs dead in the branches of the giant firs, Jenkins ties the two images of blood and the fir-cones together in a powerful symbol of rebirth for Lady Runcie-Campbell. Her new-found pity signals not only the rejuvenation of her own character but the hope for Scottish society as a whole. The shocking sight of Neil struggling to free Calum from the branches provokes a strong reaction from her: "First she said: 'Help him, Baird.' Then she went down on her knees, near the blood and the spilt cones. She could not pray, but she could weep; and as she wept pity, and purified hope, and joy, welled up in her heart" (223). Jenkins' novel uses the rural setting of the estate and forests to accentuate and describe the conflict between a Scottish society where inequality and the lack of Christian charity are accepted as "traditional" and the egalitarianism and companionship of the forest. The bloody relationship between Lady Runcie-Campbell, Neil, Calum and Duror is a symbol of this conflict which is only resolved when Lady Runcie-Campbell undergoes a self-critical journey through a wilderness she only comes to acknowledge at the end of the novel. The beauty of the loch, in her chastened eyes, reflects the harmonious world she is moving towards by becoming self-aware.

The hopes for the renewal and regeneration of the Scottish nation, illustrated by the final optimism of Jenkins' novel, grew steadily in nationalist circles as a number of events aided the nationalist cause. The Scottish National Party made progress at the 1961 Bridgeton by-election where Ian Macdonald came a close third. The following year, William Wolfe - SNP chairman from 1969 to 1979 - succeeded in coming second at the West Lothian by-election. Party membership rose steadily throughout the 1960's as more and more Scots viewed the gap between the richer south and poorer north widening. In 1966 the SNP contested the largest number of seats ever in a General Election. In a total of 23 seats the party won 14.3 per cent of the vote. The most important triumph for the SNP came on the 2nd of November 1967, when Mrs Winifred Ewing won the Hamilton by-election thought to be a Labour stronghold. (Lynch 444) Winnie Ewing's success transformed Scottish politics, despite the fact that she lost the seat at the General Election in 1970. The discovery of oil in the North Sea off the coast of Scotland also added to the growing excitement and confidence nationalists felt they had a right to celebrate. The atmosphere of the time and the way it affected the image of the country as vital and productive is readily viewed in the poetry of Edwin Morgan, in particular, in *The Second Life* (1968) which was both a celebration of the urban as well as the rural.

In 1968 the influential poet and critic, George Bruce, wrote in his popular anthology, *The Scottish Literary Revival* that "forty years ago the

literature of the then recent past might have suggested that Scotland was populated by quaint locals. We might have been a degenerate Thrums. Perhaps the least that can be said about this anthology, which attempts to give some account of the poetry written by Scots over the past forty years, is that the poets now apply themselves to matters of general concern. As a result, the mental map of Scotland has begun to be plotted” (8) Edwin Morgan, the pioneer of “concrete poetry” in Scotland was also an influential figure in establishing a mental map for Glasgow in the imagination in Scots. His efforts, however, were not confined to his local urban haunts, but his appreciation for the place of the countryside in his poetic vision was as profound. For Morgan, the relationship between authority and Scottish nationalism was best expressed by the unique metaphor of freedom found in the Scottish rural. He stated:

I don't like big mouths, I don't like Big Business, I don't like Big Brother. Except in my more athletic moments, which may be my best, I prefer small pictures, short poems, the Chaconne in D minor to the Mass in E minor. In a big-scale country you walk your legs off for a trifling re-arrangement of the scenery. Around Lochinver a couple of hundred yards means a split new view. And I have often seen a little hill in Harris collapse to half its size when a cow appeared on the top of it. It needed the intrusion of the known, ordinary object to show the hill at its proper height. I think it is a part of patriotism to stare at the hill till there's a cow on it. (*Crossing the Border* 240)

His poetic style took advantage of this metaphor and a form which intended to use words much as a painter would use representational forms. An emphasis on the visual and auditory aspects of poetry encouraged the development of poetic spaces which differ from traditional metaphors of place. Christopher Whyte comments that "A reading of Morgan's love poetry which fails to take account of its doubleness, of the extra space it provides, has limited value" (4). "From A City Balcony," in *The Second Life*, presents to the reader exactly this unique "doubleness" in the intermingling of the rural and urban in just such a liberating "extra space," a poetic gap which is invested by Morgan with the potentiality of meaning. As he addresses his loved one his mind dreams up a rural image of liberation:

How often when I think of you the day grows bright!
Our silent love
wanders in Glen Fruin with butterflies and cuckoos -
bring me the drowsy country thing! Let it drift above the traffic
by the open window with a cloud of witnessess -
a sparkling burn, white lambs, the blaze of gorse,
the cuckoos calling madly, the real white clouds over us,
and then the witness was my hand closing on yours,
my mouth brushing against your eyelids and your lips
again and again till you sighed and turned for love.
Your breast and thighs were blazing like the gorse.

I covered your great fire in silence there.

We let the day grow old along the grass.

It was in silence the love was.

Footsteps and witnesses! In this Glasgow balcony who pours
such joy like mountain water? (38)

This single example, which illustrates that Morgan was aware of the powerful associations between the Scottish landscape and the perception of liberation, is successful because it lifts the personal (ie. his affections) into the realm of the public and vice versa. The balcony is both a viewpoint from which the poet can view the imaginary rural scene he conjours, and a platform from which he can be viewed by his fellow Scot. That he chooses to imagine a rural scene is significant of its place in even the urban poet's repertoire.

Morgan's perception of the Scottish rural was often complemented by his concern that the city was often neglected in the poetic imagination. Many writers of this period, including Robert Garioch (*Jephthah and The Baptist* 1958), Muriel Spark (*The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* 1969), and William McIlvanney (*Docherty* 1975), were charting the social manners and structures of urban Scotland. *Terry Street* (1969), Douglas Dunn's famous collection of poems, subtly indicates the adjustments of modern Scots to their changing social conditions and attitudes to the countryside by making the reader aware of the influence of natural landscape in poetic language, even in the heart of the Clyde shipyards. "Landscape with One Figure" brings together the imagery

of wildlife and landscape painting to indicate the close relationship between place and the author's identity. The poem incorporates the industrial and the natural in such a way to make both part of a Scottish landscape unique in perspective:

Shipyard cranes have come down again
To drink at the river, turning their long necks
And saying to their reflections on the Clyde,
'How noble we are.'

The fields are waiting for them to come over.
Trees gesticulate into the rain,
The nerves of grasses quiver at their tips.
Come over and join us in the wet grass!

The wings of gulls in the distance wave
Like handkerchiefs after departing emigrants.
A tug sniffs up the river, looking like itself.
Waves fall from their small heights on river mud.

If I could sleep standing, I would wait here
For ever, become a landmark, something fixed
For tug crews or seabound passengers to point at,

An example of being part of a place. (28)

Dunn's poetic act of claiming a territorial space for himself by becoming part of this dream landscape is in many ways a claim on continuity. This claim is significant in this poem, and in *Terry Street* in general, because of the way Dunn manages to reterritorialize the urban scene with natural, rural imagery. The integration of the rural and urban suggests both the continuity of tradition or history with the transitory nature of human achievement. Given that in the ten years between the publication of *Terry Street* and the 1979 Devolution Referendum, the Scottish nationalist movement would boom and suddenly deflate, Dunn's poem is a stark reminder that, however much we wish we could "sleep standing," conflicting elements do not always mix amicably.

Oliver Brown, the noted Scottish socialist and undoubtedly one of the main leaders of Scottish nationalist thought in the period from the 1930's to the 1970's remarked long ago that "Scotland needed the Alps and God gave her the Cheviots" (Lynch 445). The landscape image is very apt considering Scottish nationalists throughout the post-war period began to realize the place of the rural countryside in national strategy. It has been argued here that the post-war era began the long process of constructing political and cultural barriers to English hegemony which eventually led to the 1979 referendum, a significant, if failed attempt to assert Scottish nationalism. Practical nationalist goals were reflected in the emphasis on a rurality which was composed of agricultural production levels, mineral potentials and cultural uniqueness. The reaction

against a bureaucracy which seemed intent on mollifying Scottish concerns rather than addressing the harsh economic conditions which prevailed after the war created the conditions for the rise of a more militant Scottish nationalism. When the Stone of Destiny was removed from Westminster Abbey in 1950-51 by nationalists, the act exposed the desperation Scots felt in the prevailing relationship with Britain. Scotland's rural image was adopted by nationalists and made more immediate by questioning the "quaint" aspects of the rural image and modifying it to play an active part in politics, both cultural and political.

Writers in Scotland approached rurality in differing ways but what is common to most in this period is the expression of regeneration for an identity viewed as inadequately formed for nationalist purposes. In prose and poetry the exploration of what constituted the "Scottish rural" was qualified by subversive commentary on social norms, represented by uplifting examinations of spiritual hope and dream-like fantasies of liberating emotions. This subversive strain in Scottish writing during the long decades between the war and the failed 1979 referendum added to the social conscience of the nation, forcing many to confront the usage of the rural landscape in the Scottish psyche as Wendy Wood did in 1950 when she wrote: "The hills are no longer topographical items, their contours have become a part of my brain, as intimate as the pattern on the hearthrug" (*Moidart and Morar* 12). It is this realization of the intimate connection between place and identity that comes

to fruition during the post-war period and which remains one of its strongest features. The rural discourse, already a powerful connection for Scots, features predominantly in this awareness and is used by nationalists to construct the nation as a unified community. Francis Russell Hart writes that: "In a paradoxical new small-nation internationalism, Scotland's nagging sense of provinciality takes on a new meaning. Cosmopolitanism has generated giant neocolonial bureaucracies trapped in paranoid arms races. Cultural and ethnic pluralism, no longer merely picturesque, becomes a recipe for civilization's survival. It becomes the wisdom of humility and moral realism to recognize that man's is a 'village mind,' that allegiances are most real when local" (206). By supporting the discourse of a radical pastoral mode in Scottish writing, nationalists are able to recover from the failed 1979 referendum more determined than ever to devolve power from Westminster. Rural Scotland remained a powerful metaphor of communal stability for the marginalized Scot. As T. C. Smout concludes, "older pictures show us a world beyond memory but not beyond fellow feeling" (Kidd ix). How this "fellow feeling" developed the rural image in Scotland will be the focus of the next chapter.

*A landscape of lumps of stone.
Yes, I know there's grass
and a few scrubby trees,
but the rock is everywhere,
poking its bones out at all angles,
and man squats uncomfortably between.*

John Killick "Lewisian Gneiss Outcrops" 1983.

Chapter Five:

Devolution and the Rural Imagination

After the disappointing collapse of the 1979 Devolution referendum Scottish nationalism seemed destined for the hinterland of the British political arena. Margaret Thatcher's rise to power in the 1979 general election saw the reduction of the SNP to a mere two seats in Westminster and a dismal 17% popularity rating in the polls (Lynch 448). The desire for a monolithic form of national independence, which many Scots in the previous three decades had envisioned would proceed from a successful campaign based on persistence, seemed almost extinguished. Nonetheless, paradoxically, it was the very imbalance of power resulting in Thatcher's strong Conservative majority in the 1979 general election which revived Scottish nationalist fortunes in the 1980s and 1990s, and finally led to Devolution in 1998. The "Thatcherite Era," as it is often referred to by unabashed conservatives and gloating liberal analysts, had the effect of deepening the chasm between regional authorities and a centralized government intent on governing by heavy-handed dictates such as the widely-unpopular Community Charge (more popularly known as The Poll

Tax and first initiated in Scotland as a trial). When the Conservatives finally came to the lowest ebb of their popularity in Britain by the autumn of 1990, their only option was to oust Thatcher from the leadership in a humiliating *coup d'etat*. In the general election that followed in 1992, John Major and the Conservatives won only two seats in Scotland, and, at the present moment, the Conservatives continue their abysmal record north of the border under Iain Duncan Smith with only a single representative in the whole of Scotland. This evident dissatisfaction with the Tory government, and the prevailing discontent with Westminster rule, has played directly into the hands of those who continue to seek independence for Scotland within Europe under a federal scheme. The pressure put on the Labour government of Tony Blair in the 1990s to improve England's political relationship with Scotland, Wales and Ireland by implementing Labour's long-held policy of Home Rule for the distinct countries of the UK was unbending. In the autumn of 1998, Scottish nationalists realized a long-standing goal when the population finally voted overwhelmingly to accept Devolution from Britain, setting into motion an entirely new path for Scottish politics and cultural life.

Such a sea-change of attitude towards the certainty of self-determination did not come without drastic revision of existing cultural preconceptions. After the 1979 Referendum, the retreat of the SNP allows for the breathing space writers and thinkers needed in order to develop alternative strategies and conceptions of the nationalist goal. Failure paradoxically allows

for other options to be examined, other methods of looking at the nation-space to be considered, and for difficult questions to be aimed at the direction of political and cultural action. Danny Boyle's enormously successful film, *Trainspotting* (1995), an adaptation of Irvine Welsh's novel of the same name, examines the nihilism of a generation brought up on the conflicting diet of national pride and failure while at the same time exploring the simmering resentment of the heroin addict, Renton, and his feelings of being alienated from his own country and from the power to change it. In the film, the perceived backwardness of an identity based on rural patriotism is exposed in clear terms by the young Renton. The protagonist and his three friends find themselves in a picturesque Highland landscape, encouraged by Tommy who intends to take them on a rejuvenating walk. As might be expected, the landscape proves to be of little interest to Spud and Sick Boy, but Renton reacts violently to Tommy's overtures for escape into the "fresh air," which, for Renton, is stale packaging for a self-defeating identity. With the Highland mountains serving as a backdrop, Tommy urges the group on:

TOMMY. Well, what are you waiting for?

RENTON. Vomit.

SPUD: This isn't action, old boy.

TOMMY: It's the great outdoors! It's fresh air!

SICK BOY: Look Tommy, we know you're getting a hard time off of Lizze,
but there's no need to take it out on us.

TOMMY: Doesn't it make you proud to be Scottish!

RENTON: It's shite to be Scottish! We're the lowest of the low, the scum of the fuckin' Earth! The most wretched, miserable servile, pathetic trash that was ever shat into civilization. Some people hate the English, I don't. They're just wankers. We, on the other hand are colonized by wankers! Can't even find a decent culture to be colonized by. We're ruled by effete assholes! It's a shite state of affairs to be in Tommy, and all the fresh air in the world won't make a fucking difference! (Boyle 1995)

Boyle's direction of this scene cleverly presents his Scottish audience with a recognized communal image of Scotland and connects Renton's anger at his own impotence to that of the nation. In essence, the return to the pristine "fresh air" of the Scottish rural is questioned with a force not seen since George Douglas Brown's *The House with the Green Shutters*, but Renton's outburst is a rare show of passion from one so removed from everyday life. Turning his back on society to a world of heroin illusions, Renton's own lack of control over his environment is partly to blame for the "state of affairs" he despises. It is revealing that Tommy, the only ordinary one in the eclectic group, presents the Highland scenery to Renton and the audience as a possible solution for their despondency. Renton's rejection of it in this light seems dismissive and blind to the fertility it represents.

Renton's impotence in the face of life recalls the twisted tale of Frank

Cauldhome in Iain Banks' debut novel, *The Wasp Factory* (1984) in which a young teenager living on an isolated island first confesses to three murders as a child and ritualizes the murder of wasps in a complicated machine (The Factory) of his own devising. The intelligent, insightful teenager's attempt to control his environment ends in the revelation that his accidental castration by a dog as a child was only a story made up by his father who literally has "constructed" Frank, through the use of male hormones, from Frances Lesley Cauldhome. Upon this revelation, Frances recreates the symbols which have driven her understanding of her identity, turning rural isolation, previously despised, into inner fertility:

Believing in my great hurt, my literal cutting off from society's mainland, it seems to me that I took life in a sense too seriously, and the lives of others, for the same reason, too lightly. The murders were my own conception; my sex. The Factory was my attempt to construct life, to replace the involvement which otherwise I did not want. (183)

In both Banks' and Welsh's novels there is an insistent note of interrogation and confrontation concerning identity and space which goes hand-in-hand with the renewed sense of critical questioning and activism which developed after the failed referendum. Ong is again useful in analyzing these two authors because they openly "situate knowledge within a context of struggle" (44).

Frances' personal revelation comes only after confronting those around her in verbal and physical combat. Interpersonal relations, whether they be Renton's

close circle of friends and confidants or Frank/Frances's painful relationship with Mr. Cauldhame and her victims, are the arena in which this questioning takes place. Societies which have the rural construct directly accessible to them engage in this hand-to-hand combat to reveal stark questions about themselves and their nation.

David McCrone, a leading critic among a new generation of Scottish academics asks pointedly, "What is distinctive about Scottish culture? My question is: why should there be an obsessive search to find one; why is the question even framed in this way; where does it come from? The answer is that it derives from an older, essentially 'nationalist' assumption that all societies worthy of the name should have a distinctive culture" (*Representing Scotland* 169). In this study, earlier nationalist strivings for a "distinctive" rural cultural construct, whether it be a post-romantic symbol of liberty, a productive and energized figure on the political stage or a radical badge of difference, have all conflated and expanded upon the nation by the promotion of geographic awareness and have identified the rural landscape's social, political and artistic relationship with the uniqueness of the Scottish character. With persistent reoccurrence, Scottish writers have attempted to recolonize the country through the definition of a Scottish space located in the familiar wilderness or the backwardness of the rural surroundings of the glens in order to validate the distinctive national culture. Gregory Jusdanis argues that this contrary position, at once accepting colonization and insisting on safeguarding

tradition, creates the conditions for new national cultures. He writes:

“Backwardness may necessitate the copying of models; but in this process originals are born” (101). Without devaluing McCrone’s questions, what Scottish writers have been attempting to do in the course of the twentieth century is appropriate the methods of a colonial past and apply them to their own vision of a Scottish future. Sneja Gunew’s article, “Denaturalizing Colonial Nationalism,” criticizes an implanted Anglo-Celtic Australian writing for invoking just such a “cluster of organic images” rooted “in the land itself, for what, after all, differentiates a post-colonial Anglophone natural culture if not ‘the’ land, the uniqueness of the landscape” (99). In Scotland’s case, coming to terms with two centuries of “a strategy by which they wrote themselves into English culture” (Kimpel 137), has meant the staging of an imaginative conquest, or reconquest, of their own landscapes in the twentieth century.

The desire of nationalists to create what in effect were “counter-spaces,” or *aporia* within British culture, by their nature “irreconcilable with adjoining space, leads to the idea of space as breathing-space, a survival chamber hollowed out within the foundations of an oppressive system, something like a vacuole within a cell of plant tissue” (Ascherson 10). One of these cultural “spaces” can be clearly glimpsed by the reappropriation of Highland dress by Scottish national football supporters, the so-called “Tartan Army,” which is a clearly visible sign of difference and a marker of good-natured resistance to

colonization. The message sent by such appropriations is one of confident nationalism and a willingness to reach backwards in history for symbols of cultural identity. A rural discourse in Scottish writing, in the last three decades of the twentieth century, has operated in a similar way. Literary, visual, political and touristic interest in the Scottish rural landscape and community have provided another answer to McCrone's provocative remarks; what remains distinctive about Scottish culture is the ability of a rural discourse to preserve and promote an evolutionary national path which continually struggles to provide a radical critique of homogenizing influences.

McCrone's query raises the debate on the nature of the nation in the late twentieth century and is an interrogation of the personality of the human community itself. In Scotland's case, the poet Ian Bamforth in *Sons and Pioneers* (1992) suggests in an image of the unknown wilderness that the prospect of a renewed future lies within its potential, that the relationships between man and land are the matter of human survival and hope. His poem "Men on Fire," turns a critical eye on the twisted self-loathing of Scotland's past, and discovers its future at "the hard edge of the landscape" where a salvaged language and religion are incorporated into the shy, liberating symbol of the startled deer on the "wet track":

Being a land of dissent and magnificent defeats
it evolved a subtle theology of failure, stealing its own thunder
wherever two or three were gathered together

and the occult plumbing groaned querulously beneath the boards. . .

Yet it thrived on its own lost cause, and the mark of Cain
was a lefthandedness it practised righteously - . . .

Out of it, sons and daughters have no clear sighting
of how an apple-tree opens the debate
but know it does, since they find themselves
on a mission without a motor, reciting the plot backwards.

While pavements become rain-sleeked and lustral
and an oddly buoyant cargo gospel
swims through anti-matter to the hard edge of the landscape.
Like a native technology, it starts from what's left

and salvages its own future, a startled Doric narrative
stalking the wet track, tongue and tinder
to its radical children, shy to touch the incontrovertible ores
of a faith that has lately outgrown its disappointment. (124)

Bamforth's last line is a positive indication of the increasing confidence writers of the post-referendum failure began to feel as it became clear that an entire reformulation of the nationalist goal, its "subtle theology," seemed necessary in

order to recover from electoral defeat and maintain pride in a Scottish identity. Bamforth's "startled Doric narrative" in the wilderness, salvaged from the past but indicating the future, and steady faith in the "incontrovertible ores" of Scottish culture, suggests by the return to the wilderness metaphor a figurative space from which Scottish culture could begin to assimilate the lessons of the past.

For other inquisitive Scots, the question whether Scotland had a distinctive national culture was not a difficult issue to approach, but remained a topic for exploration. Much like Ian Bamforth, many found the chance to interrogate the past and place it in relation to the present a tempting way forward from political uncertainty. James Campbell connects the formative, nationalist era of the Scottish Renaissance of the 1930s with the present by imitating Edwin Muir's travels in *Scottish Journey*, discovering in his own *Invisible Country*, that "nothing [he] saw while traveling through a different kind of depression from Muir's fully contradicted the bleak tone of his remarks . . . , yet in another way, which this book is part of the effort to understand, everything did; for, fifty years on from his journey, Scotland is no more 'lost to history' than it was then" (x). Revisiting Muir's imaginative construction of the Scottish nation in the last decades of the twentieth century clarifies for Campbell his literary ties to the past. The interest in salvaging a "contemporary" Scotland, a formation which combines many different relationships (political, religious, linguistic, artistic) in an effort to reconstitute

a confident Scottish cultural self not "lost to history," often begins with the Scot's relationship to the rural past. In Campbell's comments on the Highlands, for example, there is a conscious attempt to redress the balance of populist opinion, creating an entirely different conception of what the rural Highlands mean to the Scot. A more stark contrast to Renton's outburst against the "fresh air" of the landscape would be hard to find. He writes: "Eviction, depopulation, dereliction, dilapidation, wasteland, wilderness . . . What relation does the meaning of these words and others which are spoken and heard so often in the Highlands, bear to its famous scenic beauty? For the one is inextricably linked to the other, and to consider them apart is merely to shelter in the comfort of an illusion - in this case, of a kind of rural paradise, to which (as is usually so in such divine places) the natives do not subscribe" (139). The increase in collections of essays concerned with the Scottish landscape as a cultural expression of the identity of the Scot has grown in the 1980s and 1990s to encompass many different disciplines. This proliferation suggests that confidence in defining rural spaces without the detrimental baggage of the Kailyard being applied to the author has developed apace. *The Land Out There: A Scottish Land Anthology* by Bruce George and Frank Rennie concentrates on poetry dealing with Scottish geography and its literary expression; illustrations and painting collections such as Douglas Hall's *William Gilles and the Scottish Landscape* (1980) intimate that the visual landscape is unique to the Scottish identity; finally, even tourist material

directed towards visitors make claims for a more comprehensive relationship between the land, the past and the Scot. Gilbert Summers attempts to explain this unique connection to foreigners, but his language could easily be directed to Scots themselves in *Exploring Rural Scotland* (1990):

Scotland is different from other parts of the UK. Independent or not, Scots have stubbornly clung to their own identity, in spite of the leveling efforts, conscious or otherwise, of the media, government from London or waves of incomers from the south. They have also remained remarkably friendly.

Perhaps their still-surviving sense of identity is helped by the characteristics of the land which, particularly north and west of the Central Lowlands, is in many places rugged and uncompromising. These northern heartlands are also remote enough to generate excitement and a sense of adventure in even the least imaginative visitor. (1)

As Scotland emerged from the 1979 Devolution referendum questioning what had gone wrong, it is fairly clear that a rural discourse still had the emotive influence to shape what exactly people considered "Scottish." However, another aspect of Scottish writing was beginning to erupt onto the literary scene with tremendous force and its influence on the rural imagery of Scotland should not be overlooked.

In 1981, a landmark date for Scottish literature, Alasdair Gray published *Lanark: A Life in Four Books*, and succeeded in adding Glasgow to the Scottish

imagination. Gray's novel has often been compared to James Joyce's *Ulysses* in the manner in which it uses a complex narrative technique to interweave myth and the local, suggesting epic proportions and populating the landscape of Glasgow with symbolic figures as a means to confront the debilitating cultural insecurity prevalent in Scottish society. Richard Todd has remarked of Gray's work that "he has managed to do what even MacDiarmid failed to, which is to bring experimental writing into the Scottish and thus European mainstream, and to free Scottish literature from the exclusively realist and other limitations it had laboured under till then" (161). The novel often addresses the fundamental disability of Glaswegians to move beyond the superficial characterization of the city and does so by exposing the literary poverty of the city. Duncan Thaw, Lanark's alter ego in the novel, tries to explain to his counterpart, Kenneth MacAlpin, the reason for the Glaswegians' cultural deprivation:

. . . if a city hasn't been used by an artist not even the inhabitants live there imaginatively. What is Glasgow to most of us? A house, the place we work, a football park or golf course, some pubs and connecting streets. That's all. No, I'm wrong, there's also the cinema and library. And when our imagination needs exercise, we use these to visit London, Paris, Rome under the Caesars, the American West at the turn of the century, anywhere but here and now. Imaginatively Glasgow exists as a music-hall song and a few bad novels. That's all we've given to the world

outside. It's all we've given to ourselves. (243)

Lanark is regarded by many commentators as an ambitious project of visionary scope and influence, but its focus is set firmly on reshaping the Scottish landscape with Glasgow at its centre. In terms of a rural discourse and its part in Glasgow's regeneration, the countryside remains a remote and distasteful presence just beyond reach of Duncan's interests.

In one of the only scenes to take place in the countryside, Duncan takes a bus to Glencoe in an attempt to win the affections of a young woman for whom he has sexual feelings. As the coach leaves the city confines he immediately becomes ill and despondent, reacting quickly to his surroundings and judging the wilderness to be a dead and oppressive presence. The narrator remarks: "beyond Dumbarton his breathing worsened and now he tried to forget it by concentrating on the ache the vibrating glass made in the bones of his skull. In the passing land outside the colours were raw green or dead grey: grey road, crags and tree trunks, green leaves, grass, bracken and heather. His eyes were sick of dead grey and raw green" (178). Suffocated and feeling crowded upon, Thaw's laboured breathing and headaches are a result of his stifled emotions, and the life present in the rural scenery oppresses him as it continually alienates him from an ease of spirit he cannot possess. As the bus stops at a loch, Thaw's impotence surfaces violently as an elderly man comments on the vista:

'Aye, from scenes like these Auld Scotia's grandeur springs.'

Thaw looked upward and saw huge chunks of raw material hacked about by time and weather. From cracks in the highest a rocky rubble spilled over heathery slopes like stuff poured down slag-bings. A boy and girl in shorts and climbing boots strode past him down the road, the boy with a small rucksack bumping between his shoulders. The climbers by the bus cheered and whistled after them: they joined hands and grinned without embarrassment. The assurance of the boy, the ordinary beauty of the girl, the happy ease of both struck a pang of rage and envy into Thaw which almost made him choke. (178)

Thaw's inability to join this idealistic, rural scene is compounded by his own self-loathing and thwarted feelings. The scene placed before him remains suffocating because he cannot relate it to his experience. However, Thaw's counterpart, Lanark, eventually recognizes the liberation in being part of the accumulation of time and place in the countryside, like the build-up of raw organic material to which Thaw protests. In the novel's final lines, which resemble the markings of a tombstone, Lanark's awareness of his identity, his maturity and sense of place, becomes a statement of archeology, of belonging and rebirth. The markings of space in the final lines suggests, with its tombstone metaphor, that life resembles a landscape being written upon again and again, like a palimpsest:

I STARTED MAKING MAPS WHEN I WAS SMALL SHOWING PLACE,
RESOURCES, WHERE THE ENEMY AND WHERE LOVE LAY. I DID NOT

KNOW TIME ADDS TO LAND, EVENTS DRIFT CONTINUALLY DOWN,
EFFACING LANDMARKS, RAISING THE LEVEL, LIKE SNOW. I HAVE
GROWN UP. MY MAPS ARE OUT OF DATE. THE LAND LIES OVER ME
NOW. I CANNOT MOVE. IT IS TIME TO GO. (560)

The timeliness of Gray's novel presented to Scots a new way to imagine one of the country's greatest cities, and began a rejuvenation of Scottish literature based on the city landscape. Ironically, this rejuvenation is once again called a Scottish Renaissance and its focus on the urban landscapes has shifted attention of young writers such as Irvine Welsh and Iain Banks to Edinburgh and Glasgow. The rural discourse in Scottish writing has been increasingly put on the sidelines of "exciting new work", but the recognition of the city's place in the national identity brought more attention to Scottish literature as a whole and increased the momentum for a definition of "Scottish" writing. Place and identity, thrust to the fore of Scottish literary endeavor, became the means to remap the cultural nation as a honeycomb of affiliated "spaces" with which the Scot could identify. Rural space, in the form of quiet villages and island life, plays as much a part in this new construct as the slums of Edinburgh or the docks of Glasgow.

1981 also witnessed the publication of George Mackay Brown's *Portrait of Orkney*, a hybrid text which offers the reader several perspectives on Mackay Brown's island home. It is an introduction to Orcadian culture, a tourist guide on the island's neolithic and medieval past, a poetic work, and a cultural essay

on Orcadian identity; all roles which it fulfills with great skill and sensitivity. Mackay Brown's voluminous output over the course of forty years rarely strayed from his principle belief that Orkney was "a small green world in itself" (*A Calendar of Love* 7), and *A Portrait of Orkney*, in many ways, seeks to place Orkney, as a cultural region, within the context of its own history. Far from being a political Scottish nationalist, Mackay Brown's concerns echo Alasdair Gray's cultural nationalism by engaging the local and reserving a sidelong glance for the national stage. Mackay Brown is fully conscious of the differences and similarities which bind Orcadians to the Scottish, and emphasizes the features of the landscape to explain the Orcadian identity. He writes: "Islanders who do not belong to Kirkwall see in the faces of the capital lineaments not discernible in the outlying parishes and islands: an alertness (for want of a better word) springing perhaps from centuries of commercialism and close-knittedness. Stromnessians, too, are said to have their own speech and cast of countenance. 'The Orkney Face' contains within itself great variety. All that can be safely said is that the earth and skies and sea that people live among get worked at last into the flesh and bone" (*Portrait* 16). The genealogy of the Orcadian community, in Mackay Brown's work, is "a mingled weave" (7) of the various influxes of peoples who have settled the islands. Significantly, for Mackay Brown, like his fellow Orcadian Edwin Muir, writing is an act of celebrating the rural culture which has developed over history and inspires with its seasonal cycles and endurance. In his autobiography, written just

before his death in 1996, he wrote a statement of his poetic beliefs while viewing the ruined crofts of Rackwick, a small rural village only recently resettled:

It may be that art, looking before and after, exists to celebrate a good way of life that has vanished, and may be again. We must always be on our guard not to romanticise: life in a place like Rackwick must always have been stark and dangerous and uncomfortable (imagine three generations crammed into two small rooms, with little privacy, and the men with the salt dampness never out of their clothes, so that the torments of rheumatism and bronchitis came often with age). Yet I believe that their closeness to the elements, their pursuit of whale and herring and their anxious tending of the corn all summer, the winter flame on the hearth that their own hands had dug from the moor, while - if the harvest of sea and land had yielded an adequate bounty - the cupboard was well stocked till spring; that kind of life is more meaningful by far than the lives of people who set out each morning for an office by train with *The Times* to read; a holiday in Spain with wine and sun the only oasis in their desert. (*For the Islands I Sing* 83)

In his Booker-nominated novel, *Beside the Ocean of Time* (1994), Mackay Brown formulated in his particular saga-like prose this intimate connection between history, place and identity. His navigation through the currents of Orcadian culture illustrate the use of the mythic to explain this relationship to

his readers.

Mackay Brown's most successful novel celebrates foundations, seasons and the human spirit in an episodic fashion which has a daydreaming boy who grows to manhood at its heart. The young Thorfinn Ragnarson, "the laziest and most useless boy" in Norday is also the most imaginative. His fanciful wanderings bring the reader along with him on Viking cruises, as squire to a knight on the way to Bannockburn, and as an iron-age settler of the islands. As the daydreaming boy turns into a man and poet, Mackay Brown uses this episodic manner to emphasize Thorfinn's personal connection, through time and place, with all of the island's varied personalities and mythologies as the narrative moves through age after age. As the reader follows Thorfinn's progress through childhood to manhood, the continuity of the narrative, and time's progress, breaks down and Thorfinn is at once a farmer at the time of the Napoleonic press-gangs and a journalist at the cusp of World War II. The narrator interrupts the tale at one point with a revealing aside which owes much to Mackay Brown's fervent Catholicism and his belief in the timeless mysteries of that religion. The narrator reveals Thorfinn as a participant in a larger narrative, one which binds the community together as much as it binds all humanity into one story. He explains:

But why time should be devoted to such an unsatisfactory person, 'the idle useless boy', nobody would have been able to say then. The great English sage of the eighteenth century declared that every man has a

book in him - I take that to mean that every man's life-story is a unique event, a meaningful strand in the immense unfolding web of mankind. . .

The body laments, the body dances; from somewhere deep within, in the heart's heart, or from beyond the furthest star, the good angel, the guardian, is playing on his pipe. . .

Every dance, every lifetime, is unique, and that infinity of dances from every race and from every era, is of incalculable value, and comprehends the great ceremonial dance of mankind. But the music will not be known in all its glory until it is rounded with silence.

So it has been thought by some, and so I in part believe, on those rare occasions when the burden of the mystery is lifted a little. (130-131)

In Thorfinn's case, his dance takes place in the islands of his birth and they colour his experience adding to the "ceremonial dance of mankind" which the narrator believes in. Thorfinn becomes an Orcadian Everyman whose connection to the history and myths of the village, the fields and the sea coast become the imaginative content for his progression through life even to such an extent that he becomes embroiled in a favourite Orcadian legend, as the husband to a selkie, a half seal-half woman creature of myth.

Thorfinn imagines, in the period of the Napoleonic wars, another sort of ritual at a crucial point in his life, a moment where the "seal people dance to music unheard" (151), and finding one of the seal-women's skins on a rock he forces her to come with him to his croft to be his wife. Mackay Brown often

refers to this legend in his work to invoke the sense of memory and deep-seated mystery that legends create. In *A Portrait of Orkney* he explains that these stories are “attempts to come to terms with certain mysterious matters in a people’s surroundings and circumstances - to explain things which would otherwise be baffling and therefore hostile” (111). Thorfinn’s relationship with the seal-woman, Mara, is archetypal in its characteristics by the way it attempts to explain the community’s, and Thorfinn’s, inability to come to terms with Mara’s strangeness. When Thorfinn invites her across the threshold of the croft she “brings with her the coldness of sea and starlight” (155). Mara’s coming is accompanied by “black whispers and wonderings” (159) amongst the villagers and she eats nothing that comes from the field, only food from the sea. Over time, Mara is gradually accepted by most of the people but her alienness is never forgotten. One day a group of young men bring a dead seal to the farm and Mara erupts in fury, startling everyone. Thorfinn manhandles her indoors and calms her but the inability of the two to come to terms with their incompatibility leads to their eventual separation. There is a touching scene in which Mara seems almost to forget her origins by eating an oatcake but the gulf proves too wide for her to cross: “for the first time ever she had broken an oatcake and dipped it in the honey-jar, and half lifted it to her mouth - a thing she had never done before. But at the very last moment her appetite refused the morsel, she put it back on the table. Two solitary tears glittered in her eyes” (173). Mara rejoins the seals by escaping while Thorfinn is at the Lammas Fair,

the differences between them insurmountable.

Mackay Brown's use of the legend here is related to the "twentieth-century" Thorfinn's experience of the modern world's encroachments into the plain and slower patterns of village life. Before Thorfinn dreams of Mara, three mysterious strangers arrive in the islands and begin to survey the farms without an explanation. Many are angered by what they see as a complete disregard for their world. The surveyors "didn't seem to care what the islanders thought of them. They climbed through fences and trespassed on fields; they even walked through the young green corn of the Glebe and the Bu" (135). The surveyors are as alien to the village as Mara was, even listening to their own "unheard music" of "chanted numbers" (135). The men come and go with no immediate indication of their purpose and Thorfinn is left to enjoy the landscape of the islands returned to its tranquility: "the greens of meadow and pasture, the bronze of harvest in a dozen fields, surging in the wind; . . . it seemed, from so high up, to be an idyll of peace and absolute security" (139-140). Thorfinn lapses into his dream of Mara at this point and it is the theme of incompatibility, of inescapable differences between Mara and himself within the dream, and the surveyors and the islanders in the "real" world, which has a direct bearing on Thorfinn's eventual understanding of the island's place in his identity. After his dream, Thorfinn wanders to Edinburgh to write but ends up dissatisfied, lost and alienated. As a foreigner in his own country, he contemplates returning to the islands to recover the "unheard music" of the

selkie's dance. He muses to himself: "If he were to return to Norday (he reasoned) it might not be too late to celebrate what was left of 'the glory and the dream'. He had known the island was a desert now; but the spirit of a place is not so easily quenched. If he were to work a few barren acres, sail to the lobsters . . . Then - it was just possible - out of those endless immemorial arduous rituals, the dance might break" (216). Mackay Brown's novel ends on this note of unmistakable hope which the ritualization of the relationship between man and landscape will bring to Thorfinn. Throughout Mackay Brown's work, he strove to impart a similar message perhaps most clearly expressed in his autobiography, *For the Islands I Sing*. He wrote: "I mention farmers and fishermen because they figure so largely in the stories and poems I have written. The two rhythms of land and sea I have tried to weave into my work; they are, in one sense, different and opposed, and yet, once taken into the imagination, they beget a pattern and a harmony" (12). There is little doubt how important the rural and its associated rituals were for Mackay Brown, and how central it featured in his attempts to bring to the modern day Orcadian a clear sense of cultural identity within a multicultural Scottish context. His work initiated amongst many admirers a more sensitive representation of the landscape and the modern Scot's relationship with the rural.

Many writers of the past two decades have imitated Mackay Brown's preoccupation with "elemental" relationships between man and the Scottish landscape for the purpose of celebrating cultural identities within Scotland.

Gregor Lamb, an Orcadian also, wrote a sweeping epic in saga-style called *Langskaill* (1998), which tells the story of a medieval Orcadian family at the time of the Scottish takeover of Orkney. The tale is gripping and plainly seeks to give an account of Orcadian customs and mannerisms which are still present in the islands. John R. Allan writes in a collection of north-eastern Scottish essays on his collection of poems, *The Fisher Communities* (1981):

Having written so much about the fishermen I realise I have missed the most important thing. Among the best of them there is a simplicity and dignified way of living and a complete integrity that is seldom found anywhere else. The wisest of them are very simple people who have come to an understanding of essential things; and, having broken out of the rigid confinements of the tribe, voyage through strange seas of thought alone, keeping an even course. They stand very square among all the confusions of the world and they have a power of greatness in them. (Donaldson & Young 34).

The recurrent "backwards glance" to a rural life of simplicity and clarity is in itself utopian. However, the writers just mentioned do not, as the Kailyard writers had in the early 1900's, wallow in a lost world but seek to clarify the uncertain present by establishing a relationship with a distinct rural past. Nowhere is this more obvious than Andrew Greig's novel *The Return of John MacNab* (1996) which is self-consciously based on John Buchan's *John MacNab* (1920).

The Return of John Macnab is a loose retelling of John Buchan's story of three English sportsmen who establish a pseudonym, John MacNab, in order to set a gentlemanly hunting wager with three Scottish landowners. The object of the wager is that John MacNab can poach a salmon, a pheasant and a deer from the respective estates and deliver it to the owner unseen. Greig alters the original to infuse a political dimension which has a "pointed barb in its tail," as well as a commentary on gender in Scottish society. Three Scotsmen and a Scottish woman are substituted for the three Englishmen and the three Scottish landowners are changed to an Arabian sheik, a Dutch corporate millionaire and finally, and most striking of all, an unnamed Royal figure (presumably Prince Charles) and Balmoral which are the final challenge for the revised John Macnab. The novel is self-conscious of its predecessor as the characters use Buchan's novel as a guide to their own escapades. In many respects, Greig's novel is a symbolic appropriation of the discarded past to comment on the immediate present. Importantly, the setting for all of the challenges is the foreign-owned rural countryside (Balmoral is actually protected by MI5 commandos) which comes to symbolize the appropriated heart of the group's Scottish cultural identity and the freedoms which the pseudonym of John MacNab is resurrected to restore. The group's challenge itself is abundantly clear as a political statement:

TO WHOM IT CONCERNS

You are hereby informed that, for reasons too numerous to mention but

which include an excess of rain, midgies, boredom absentee landowners and the Criminal Justice Act, the undersigned intends to take a salmon or a brace of grouse or a deer, from the estates of Mavor, Inchallian and Balmoral respectively . . . In addition, a wager is proposed with the owners of these estates. The game will be taken and returned to you. The loser will pay £5,000 to the charity of his/her choice, and in addition undertake to vote for the political party of the winner's choice in the next general election, which cannot come soon enough in the undersigned's opinion. (i)

In marked contrast to the confident nationalism of John MacNab's challenge, the four members, as individuals, are care-worn people with very few illusions, and the constant striving of each of them to come to terms with the desperation and lack of focus in their lives only passes once they experience the silence and clarity the countryside provides. As in Mackay Brown's work, the landscape becomes a healing presence and a focal point for their struggle against the alienation they feel in their own country.

The male MacNabs appear first in the novel as the original group of three who are intent on their secret, but ill-thought out plan to carry out the wager. They are joined later by the journalist, Kirsty, when she exposes the ineptitude of their plan and quickly revises their strategy for the better. Kirsty's initial relationship to the group is distant as she feels her gender alienates her from the men, but she becomes closer to them over time as her value as an

individual becomes clearer. In essence, as she moves further from the “urban reality” she relies on to define herself, the more the barriers she has erected between herself and the male MacNabs disappear. She is, however, not unlike the male MacNabs as she is unsure of herself and her direction in life as any of the others. Greig comments on this contemporary malaise by concentrating on the relationship between Kirsty and her surroundings. Our first glimpse of Kirsty after she joins her new found friends is high in the hills, realizing for the first time her blindness to the countryside all around her. Her feelings of inertia and disillusionment are echoed in the description of the Cairngorms given by the narrator as “beached purple whales”:

It’s unfortunately true - go take a look if you don’t believe me - that in the morning light and with the dew still on the slopes, the Cairngorms look like beached purple whales. Stranded and ruinous. A beautiful disaster slowly dying under its own weight.

Up on the hillside above her cottage, Kirsty hugged her knees and sighed. Despite having lived here for two years, she wasn’t really an outdoors person. For her reality was still bars, clubs, streets, shops, good times. Reality was urban. For her, the hills were just a backdrop. She didn’t have a feel for them as part of the action, the way someone like Lachie or the MacNabs did.

Would they accept her? If they don’t, what other game did she have left to play? (39)

The question of reality, and the landscape's part in the MacNabs' lives, makes frequent appearance in the novel as the characters undergo personal changes and begin to understand what they are fighting for. For each of them, the rural landscape comes to play a part in a personal mythology of success, self-worth and harmony which they had previously lacked. Greig successfully marries rural Scotland with the conspiratorial and secret world of the MacNabs' personal journey as a foundation for change.

The alterations in each character are profound as the agency of the landscape aids them to a new understanding of the relationships in the country. Murray, the local council politician and fly fisherman, is assigned the difficult task of catching the prize salmon while the others create diversions intended to throw the wardens off his trail. The escapade becomes so important to him because he struggles with a sense of failure in his job and family life. His own revelation comes as a result of being surrounded by memories of his childhood which the simple act of fishing in the glen's stream brings back to him. He remembers:

The admission rippled across his mind that he wanted this not just as a small up-yours at the rich bastards who owned what should never be owned, like land and water and people's lives for starters. There was an atom of delight in the thing itself, to be back fishing again, a joy that went back to when he was a wean in Ayr, with his dad, before the family ever moved to the city. Somewhere along the line he'd lost that delight.

Busy busy busy, trying to keep head above water and change the world, even just a wee bittie. Except in moments with the weans, he's lost the joy. (42)

Like Murray, Neil, another middle-aged man with family problems, comes away from the adventure of John MacNab with a wholly different sense of his world. After shooting the contested grouse in extremely difficult circumstances, Neil has a sense of immense accomplishment and personal well-being which is also echoed in the vibrancy of the landscape. The question of ownership and reality again comes to the fore as he sits staring at the hills:

The sun was hot on his legs as he changed out of the damp tweed breeks and pulled on an old pair of black 501's. For a while he just sat looking down the slope at the burn flashing and khaki-coloured hills beyond.

There was nothing virtual about this reality. This was as real as a warm dead bird in his hands. This belonged to itself, not to Maurice Van Baalen. On this ploy for once they were creators, not consumers, and that made all the difference. That's where the healing lay. (167)

Greig makes use of the rural setting to pose a challenge, not only to the powers-that-be, but for his readers as well. As political statement, *The Return of John MacNab* is decidedly confident in suggesting that the people of Scotland are the benefactors of the land they occupy. As a personal statement, Greig uses the countryside to suggest the healing power of an immediate relationship with the land. For this reason, the novel uses the simplicity and clarity of the rural

landscape to comment on the muddled and complicated present of each of the character's lives. The end result is a delicate story on the Scottish hills and their power to restore a sense of identity and harmony in the individual as well as the nation.

Alan Warner, author of *These Demented Lands* (1998), suggests in a radically contemporary way that the Scottish landscape, as a collective image, has the power to alter perceptions and can act as the catalyst for the reformation of the identity of the nation and the individual. The hallucinogenic figures and transformed, brooding landscape which the protagonist of the novel passes through on her journey are reminiscent of the Oedipal journey of recovery through a watchful Hades. Indeed, the opening scene of the book, a small ferry trip to a remote Scottish island, echoes Oedipus' passing to Hades on the ship of the dead. However, this ferry is upturned by a larger, passing car ferry bearing the ironic name of "Greenock," the industrial Clydeside town, and is accompanied by the words "Psalm 23" (4) which reminds us that, "beside restful waters He leads me; / He refreshes my soul" (Psalms 23:2). The "waters" of the protagonist's passage are anything but restful, however, as her own ferry begins to sink and the last she sees of it is the almost desperate, stenciled words, "In God We Trust" (6) on the stern. With all hope of returning to the mainland lost, the protagonist reaches the island by swimming with a jerry can and once there tries to reach a man named simply, The Brotherhood at the Drome Hotel, described vaguely by one of the harbour workers: "That's a

right weird place out yon, we'd never dream of holing up in it" (14). Warner is clearly suggesting comparisons with Joseph Conrad's *The Heart of Darkness* at this point, because as she progresses further inland towards her goal, the remote island begins to reveal a wild strangeness, a suggestive familiarity and a primal savageness to the protagonist.

The symbolic emergence from near drowning at sea brings the yet unnamed woman to the island hungry for life and acutely aware of her surroundings. As she comes ashore and finds her way into the wilderness of the island, the protagonist finds a bed of moss and in language which emphasizes nourishment and abandonment to the forces around her, refreshes herself with greedy vigour. The language in this episode even borders on the erotic. She notes: "at the end of the glen, in the versant of the extinct volcano I came to the floor of moss, a-drip with water. Little droplets clinging to the frothy emerald and curly serrations of the lichen. My tongue flicked at the diamonds of liquid then my lips clamped onto the moss, by rubbing my face side to side with the base of my tongue right out I could gulp down gallons and taste the salady smeg of raw blossoming life. I could connect to our fetid origins the faded, damp places. I found a pink growth and kneeled, my arse up in the air as I shoved my face deep-deeper into that planetary sponge of mossflowers, biting away at the base" (25). Her regenerative communion with nature on the island provocatively relates to the later revelation of her pregnancy suggesting the fertility of the rural island extends beyond the merely symbolic. Indeed, as if to

reinforce the notion of the islands as a focal point for growth, her encounter with the moss is interrupted by a group of cattle drovers, who are actually university students following ancient cattle paths in an attempt to prove the hypothesis that cows could swim to the island and breed (26).

Further, the landscape of the novel serves many of the characters as a site of transit, of progressions from one state to another or one place to the next. The drovers are, by no means, the last strange group the protagonist encounters intent on finding paths through, over and out of the island. She later meets a logger who tells her that his workers are burning the woods, breaking the rocks and dynamiting the riverbed, "trying to deepen the river, so we [the loggers] can float the logs right out of the Interior and down river towards The Drome to barge them away up Sound" (35-36). She comes across a Knifegrinder who believes that he has touched a piece of alien spacecraft (47). As much as the island seems a living force as the protagonist moves through the rough country, its alien nature is brought to the reader's attention by these strange encounters. The reason, perhaps as in Conrad's novel, is that as the reader begins to accept the place with its fantastical aberrations, a recognition of its necessary place in the identity of the protagonist also forms. As we come to know Morvern Callar, her search for a way to navigate away from the island and its eccentric characters becomes increasingly paramount. It also becomes apparent that any return to the mainland must also separate her from the "raw blossoming life" which she encountered when she first arrived.

In a final, biting letter to her estranged, bourgeois father, Morvern reveals her pregnancy with sarcastic glee and a protectiveness which marks her wonderfully contemporary character. The events which finally lead to the burning down of the Drome Hotel and the Brotherhood's exile from the island are remembered by Morvern as part of her escape from the island. She recalls a significant episode concerning the Aircrash Investigator, the man who helped her escape from The Brotherhood's manipulation. Lashed to the very propellor of the plane he was sent to find and stumbling around in the wilderness, the Aircrash Investigator appears to Morvern as a Christ-like figure and she imagines his passage through the island as a reflection of her own, even suggesting the healing role of the moss-filtered waters from earlier in the novel. His emergence from the woods gives her the first indication that she too can escape from The Brotherhood's insanity. She recalls:

In my imagination I thought loads about his lone crossing - the propellor lashed across his shoulders, under the changing skies from which dark winds came - those clear stars near the derelict tracking station - the hollow clangs of the abandoned observatory. Closely he passed, chin pushed into his chest - a flame, bright and warm as sirius-glint in the frozen air: a burning at the base of his long spine; always knowing if he stumbled forwards on his front he might never rise again. .

..

On, to the end of the glen, the black cattle-drove roads flooded so

he, for the first time, in the water around his feet saw the image, the shocking ancient image he showed the world, reflected amongst the clouds in the clear, shallow floodwaters. Beyond he came to a dripping cliff, water rattering down the moss clumps so's he held his open mouth the drips and his naked torso contracted and tightened as the icy water spattered it, yet it was here he leaned against the base of the wall, shivering till he slept. And dreamt his river-dreams. (190-193)

It is significant that Morvern imagines the Aircrash Investigator's crossing in this way because it so closely resembles her own coming to the island. The landscape through which both pass is an unyielding but rewarding presence which leaves them both with the certainty of continued life. The Aircrash Investigator, with the propellor still weighing him down, reveals that Morvern is pregnant, effectively releasing Morvern from The Brotherhood's control. The "rave to end all raves" commences that very night and Morvern leaves the island symbolically in a coffin (215) passing from the wilderness to a rebirth on the mainland. Warner's use of the rural landscape illustrates the continuing development in Scottish writing of using the land as a conceptual space where emphasis on contemporary reactions to the "unreality," or "rawness" found in the wilderness or rural features of the Scottish hinterland is used to highlight the "otherness" of the rural, giving it an authority to speak as an authentic voice of the Scot in tandem, or in opposition, with the more international cultural voice which the urbanized world demands.

In a world in which the homogenizing effects of international communication, global commerce and travel create the conditions for a “packaged” cultural model to be conveniently sold to tourists, the struggle to identify a personal relationship between the Scot and his/her nation has left many writers skeptical of any success. However, the need to define and represent culture through a host of associated rituals, images and customs represents the desire for navigable relationships within the community and within the nation for the individual. Miroslav Hroch suggests that this desire itself is enough to shape the chief elements of a perceived nation in his article, “Real or Constructed.” He writes:

Even if national identity is not the sole determination of an individual’s place in society, one cannot ignore the fact that from a certain point in the history of modern Europe there have existed large groupings of people who are integrated by a combination of several kinds of relationships (economic, historical, political, religious, linguistic, cultural, geographical, etc). And by their subjective perception of a collective consciousness of belonging together. Many of these ties could be mutually substitutable, but among them, three stand out as irreplaceable: a memory of a common past, treated as destiny of the group; a density of linguistic or religious ties enabling a higher degree of social communication within the group than beyond it; and a conception of the equality of all members of the group organised as a

civil society. (93-94)

Arguably, Scottish culture shows all the indications of being just such an integrated construct or matrix of relationships based on a shared memory, language and a unique *civitas* in the form of a past history of self-determination, a clearly identifiable speech and a unique set of laws and customs. It is not surprising, then, that writers who seek to explore contemporary society for signs of the process of national renewal would look to the rural countryside as a source of continuity. It is granted, however, that since the referendum of 1979 the urban has revealed more of the imagination of the Scot than in past decades, but more often than not, the rural or regional remains the voice of the "other" in Scottish writing.

Even in James Kelman's notorious urban novel, *How late it was, how late* (1994), the blind drunkard, Sammy, thrown out on the street, beaten by the police, shoeless and suffering amnesia, imagines his release from his problems in rural wandering. The effect is startling since Sammy is so obviously the bruised product of an urban society which is uncaring and brutal and virtually without hope. The relationship between Sammy and the countryside is, as he describes, simply one of personal independence. He muses: "Cause even if ye're blind ye've got to wander. Sammy had aye liked wandering. That was one thing. He didnay so much like it, he loved it, the auld wandering; up hill and down dale, ye wander up ye wander down, that was Sammy" (285). The reader cannot help but feel that the freedom which Sammy craves is not to be found

in the streets of Glasgow but in the hills and dales of the glens and mountains whose voice is faintly heard in the background of Kelman's novel.

In many respects, it is the faint, conspiratorial, and regional voices which have rejuvenated the rural discourse in Scottish writing in the last two decades of the twentieth century. The British cultural monolith, cracked beyond repair, has allowed for Scottish writers to explore those rural spaces with a new rigour. Instead of the portrayal of the rural community as a practical, economic ideal for the nation, the individual's personal relationship to the hills and glens of Scotland and the effect of that relationship on the community have been investigated more fully. The microscopic has superceded the macroscopic in the search for a Scottish nation and this is reflected in narratives which attempt to reveal the intimate association between an imagined rural landscape and the individual.

*What would the world be, once bereft
Of wet and wildness? Let them be left,
O let them be left, wildness and wet;
Long live the weeds and the wilderness yet.*

G.M. Hopkins

Conclusion:

The imaginative creation of the Scottish nation in the twentieth century has been an evolutionary process in response to both nationalist and non-nationalist dreams for the Scottish community. The late decades of the nineteenth century and early years of the twentieth saw the rise and rejection of what can only be called a unique Scottish historical artifact; Kailyard writing and its sentiment remained popular fare well after its heyday, and the earnest struggle to undo the quaint, highly localized, rustic vision of the Scottish rural community it promoted has triggered an entire century of debate, argument and fierce condemnation. Writers have ever since struggled to reinvent the nation in guises which share a desire to explain the nation to itself in rural images. The social and economic development of Scotland in the last century has, indeed, been a tortuously long road as industry has risen and collapsed in spectacular fashion. In these terrible social conditions, hope for a better national life was based on a strategy of formulating an identity which could provide a cohesive force for a people historically divided. The rural discourse in Scotland served the purpose of providing a collective identification for a community dominated, not only by industrial and urban blight, but by English

language and literature as well.

Attempting to describe a Scottish nation will always raise eyebrows and questions because of the nation-state's aggressive tendencies towards homogenizing the voice of individuals. One can easily query the legitimacy of a country's quest for a singular national culture when a great variety of different ethnic groups form the basis of its society. How can the promotion of a singular nation begin to take into account the pluralism of the modern state? Homi Bhaba suggests the kind of cultural violence that these questions raise when he ends his essay, "Dissemination: Time, Narrative and the Margins of the Modern Nation," with a celebration of "colonials, postcolonials, migrants, minorities-wandering peoples who will not be contained within the *Heim* of the national culture and its unisonant discourse, but are themselves the marks of a shifting boundary that alienates the frontiers of the modern nation" (315). The cost of denying marginal people their part in the modern nation is, without doubt, a substantial one, but the role of the nation cannot be lightly dismissed if the cohesion of these different cultures, ethnicities and political aspirations are to be maintained within a social, political and geographic area. Benedict Anderson's description of the nation as an "imagined community" suggests the inclusiveness needed to preserve identities and distinctiveness in the face of colonizing aggression from other nation-states. The fluctuating discourses which make up the elastic boundaries of cultural nations serve to curb anxieties and define territories for the use of the individuals within, as well as

without, a national culture. For this reason, rural landscapes, and even the concept of rurality, has an important impact on the Scottish nation, a country where landscape has played a defining role in its history, both as a geographic and political entity and as well as a literary construct.

To indicate that Scottish authors, media personalities, and politicians in the twentieth century have, with single-minded compulsion, consciously fashioned a rural paradigm to explain Scots to themselves would be making an assumption too simplistic to convey the complex interactions between modern Scots and their perception of a unique rurality. Throughout this dissertation, the pervading influence of industry, technology and urban culture has made its presence felt through the radical and controversial reactions of authors attempting to deal with contemporary Scottish society's often forgotten metropolitan areas in a country that has been imagined as a uniquely rural nation. The influence of the rural in Scotland can be witnessed by the many writers and ordinary citizens over the century who have fought for this "hearty" public space by gesturing grandly to worn images of Culloden's bloody field or dredging up the Kailyard naïveté to suggest an innocent past in which Scotland was a "wholesome" nation. This is, perhaps, the worst kind of imperial historicism, a narrative practice which ceases to engage reality, but instead attempts to order it in a sequential pattern suited to the notion of a people's "ancient heritage." There are certainly many popular Scottish writers such as Nigel Tranter (*The Bruce Trilogy*, *The MacGregor Trilogy*), Kathryn Lynn Davis

(*Child of Awe*) and Arnette Lamb (*Chieftain*) who attempt to bring to life a heroic Scotland which entertains and reinforces the idea of a movement of history towards a single goal, the eventual independence of the once-free Scottish nation. Jonathan Kertzer remarks in his chapter, "The Nation as Monster," that "romantic historiography sets itself the contradictory task of recapturing the past while maintaining its remote uniqueness. The historian has to 'retain distinctions [between past and present] while at the same time affirming unity and continuity'" (117). The seductiveness of such a historicism, indeed, is a kind of two-headed monster which attracts and repels through its false promise and its exclusionary requirements. However, when investigating Scottish writers who are less engaged in such nationalistic fantasies, one finds that writers who utilize the Scottish rural are often employing a characteristic, radical, pastoral mode of writing which confronts immediate events and provides fresh commentary on issues of national import for Scots everywhere. Cairns Craig notes in his book *The Modern Scottish Novel*, that "the space of Scotland is the space in which the conflicts of the world can be brought out into the open, since Scotland's space operates as a synecdoche of the wildness beyond the boundaries of the narrative of Imperial history" (238). This writing, informed as it is by Scottish cultural tradition, maintains a valuable perspective on the ever-present, Anglicized, urban world in which most Scots move in their daily lives.

The interplay which occurs between people residing in Scotland and the

fictions, or histories, they support as a group speaks volumes about their perceived identity and the rural world they present points to a belief in a shared set of values. This often fluid perception is intimately linked to notions of territory, both historical and personal. Michel Foucault, writing in *The Eye of Power*, suggests that the emphasis on landscape opens the door for an examination of the discourses of power. He writes, "a whole history remains to be written about spaces - which would at the same time be the history of powers - from the great strategies of geopolitics to the little tactics of the habitat" (149). What has been examined here, in this dissertation, is a history of rural space and its importance in establishing a "power" in the social fabric of Scotland. The discourse of rurality establishes a community in the imagination, and like its English equivalent, the Scottish variety strives to inscribe a history of fierce independence, to recover a space tied to Scottish interests and describe a people with a distinct cultural past and future. However, as we have seen, this does not mean that the Scottish rural image is a static one. The mutations, over time, of the fictional rural suggests a constantly renegotiated space, at one time central to the Scottish imagination and at other times at the peripheries of acceptability. If the Scottish rural is a "power," capable of helping to shape the national culture, it is one which has ebbed and risen again over time. Returning again and again to this self-same yet fluid image of rurality keeps the history of the Scottish rural available in the minds of Scots in order to aid in the reconfiguration of the present. Social memory acts in this

way in order to establish boundaries, eliminate existing ones and change a society's relationship with the past and future.

The iconography and literary depiction of the rural landscape of Scotland and the physical geography which surrounds the communities of that nation is a relationship which undergoes frequent rewriting. The reasons for this fluid relationship are to be found in the Scots own quest for a cohesive national identity beyond the constraints of the British Union. As a literary, political and cultural image, the countryside has functioned as a vehicle for debate and a platform for questions concerning the construction, boundaries and spirit of the modern Scottish nation. The Scot who traverses the wild Highland range or works the land in the villages of The Mearns is still a potent symbol of independence, self-reliance and self-determination. It would be difficult to deny the cultural significance of this image and its relationship to nationalist politics in Scottish society given that throughout the twentieth century, most notably in periods of national debate, rural imagery has played an important part in territorializing a usable past which has served to create the sense of difference needed for the expression of a distinct cultural nation.

Rural spaces in Scotland are, as in many other countries, under pressure from development and population growth. Tourism has rapidly increased adding to the strain on the rural landscape. Tourism, however, also plays an important role in bringing individuals, foreign or local, in touch with a imagined place. Through commercial images, the Scot is inundated by a rural

portrait which supports a familiar pictorial metaphor for "Scottishness".

Tourist guidebooks, maps, and travel reports tend to point out important sights and control local meanings. In their presentation of the Scottish rural, these touristic documents again emphasize a place regarded as uniquely Scottish, creating intimate links between place and culture. In many respects, the framing strategies for the nation that these guidebooks represent are only a reflection of the literary and media presentations of the Scottish rural which have continued unabated in the 20th century.

Both in literature and other media, the Scot's relationship to the Scottish countryside has depended both on popular representations as well as literary works in a participatory association. Strikingly, this is demonstrated in the recent TV adaptation of Compton MacKenzie's Highland novel, *Monarch of the Glen* by Ecosse Film (2000-2002). In the series, Archie MacDonald, a young urbanite, running a trendy London restaurant learns he has inherited Glenbogle, a run-down estate in the wilds of the Scottish Highlands from his eccentric father. The young man's gradual realization of his alienation in London and his desire to make something of the crumbling estate, reiterates a common thread in Scottish culture that emphasizes the Scottish rural as a space for personal, as well as national, awareness. This separation of the rural into a reserved social and political space is not surprising considering the history of a people whose urban centres were socially and economically pressured to adopt a British or Anglo model. Local rural communities

preserved the differences between the influx of English influence and a perceived "Scottishness" for a longer period than the centres of Edinburgh or Glasgow. For much of the twentieth century a rural consciousness has helped provide a symbolic structure for a Scottish identity.

The world's perception of Scotland as a modern, post-industrial society is a fairly recent development in relation to Scotland's long and illustrious history. The recent reassessment of the relationship with Great Britain has gone hand in hand with a reevaluation of the symbols of national identity. The "touns" lochs, glens and bens of the rural landscape have formed a lasting impression on Scots as a backdrop for political and social nationalism. As with any cultural phenomenon, for a concept to have vitality its meaning and symbolism must be shared by a community. The Scottish rural, and its clearly defined symbols, have developed over time and through shared experience. It remains to be seen what the eventual impact of the political restitution of the parliament will be on the image of the Scottish rural landscape and for the Scottish identity. As the twentieth century has passed and Scots find themselves in a new century with a national assembly of their own, how they begin to reinvent the rural landscape in their writing will, no doubt, have a great impact on how they see themselves and their culture. Echoing the concerns of Scots three hundred years previous, the enduring persistence of the rural in Scottish writing continues to shape a community intent on setting itself apart with its honour and liberties intact.

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